The Role of Islamic Movements in Enhancing Da‘wah Work: The Malaysian Experience

BADLIHISHAM MOHD NASIR1

*AHMAD SYUKRAN BAHARUDDIN2,3

NORHIDAYU MUHAMAD ZAIN1,4

1Islamic Civilization Academy, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 81310 Johor Bahru, Johor, Malaysia

2Faculty of Syariah and Law, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, 71800 Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

3Centre of Research for Fiqh Forensics and Judiciary (CFORSJ), Islamic Science Institute, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, 71800 Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

4Centre for Sustainable NanoMaterials (CS Nano), Ibnu Sina Institute for Scientific and Industrial Research, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 81310 Johor Bahru, Johor, Malaysia

*Corresponding author: ahmadsyukran@usim.edu.my

Published online: 15 August 2019


To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.21315/kajh2019.26.s1.7

Abstract. Da‘wah work was one of the main means that helped spread Islam throughout the Malay Archipelago. The advent of Islamic resurgence in 1970s that came along with the emergence of influential Islamic movements had transformed the da‘wah work to become more sophisticated. This paper attempts at understanding the relationship between the traditional da‘wah work and the Islamic movements in Malaysia before looking in-depth at the development of Islamic movements in establishing and improving da‘wah methodology and institutions. Findings reveal that the Islamic movements played a very significant role in reforming da‘wah work. They had introduced an alternative system in da‘wah work that had been manifested either in their own private institutions or through advocacy of da‘wah work policies as well as in its implementation within the existing da‘wah work. The findings also prove that the differences in political ideology were not a major obstacle for them in developing da‘wah work in the country. In conclusion, despite the varied understanding and approach of Islamic movements, their contribution in developing the nation through da‘wah work is significant. Overall, the Islamic movements now have to improve the quality of their da‘wah work and learning process in order to face current challenges and obstacles.

Keywords and phrases: Islamic movements, da‘wah work, Malaysia experience, spiritual movements, da‘wah contribution
Introduction

Da ‘wah work played an important role in the spread of Islam in the Malay world. Traditional methods such as preaching and lecturing in sura (prayer rooms), mosques and pondok (Islamic traditional schools) by Islamic scholars were used in order to strengthen understanding of Islam which was newly introduced among Malays. This period refers to the 14th century, when Islam first came to Malacca and introduced non-formal da ‘wah work to the local people. Islamic scholars at that time used to teach and give lectures in traditional ways, from person to person, person to groups, group to another group until they become large group of crowds. This kind of method includes the teaching of Islam as a religion, and as a tool to explain the basic of this religion to the people. According to Mohd Nor Munutty (1984, 46) and Hashim and Langgulung (2008), the Islamic da ‘wah work had evolved since Parameswara (later known as Megat Iskandar Syah) embraced Islam in the year 1414. The Islamic scholars played important roles in spreading Islam whereby the king and the people used to learn from them. This kind of da ‘wah work was continuously practised until it was interrupted by the colonial power (Portuguese) in 1511. Modern education system was then introduced (vernacular education system), but at the same time, the Malays were still loyal to the traditional system of learning such as of the pondok and this continued until the presence of British independence of Malaya in 1957.

However, the independence of the country triggered the modernisation of da ‘wah work thus replaced the roles of Islamic scholars in developing da ‘wah work although some of them were directly involved in the current national Islamic education. Their roles were not well appreciated due to negative perceptions within society that believe da ‘wah work was just a tool to support Islamic movements especially in the realm of politics. Some of them even accused that da ‘wah work was being exploited by Islamic movements and associated it with negative images such as it being anti-government and anti-development. In addition, the image of the da ‘wah work institutions established by Islamic movements was worsened by weaknesses of their infrastructures and management systems. However, recently, the da ‘wah work institutions established by Islamic movements began to attract the interest of Muslim society. Due to this fact, Islamic education system and da ‘wah work established by the Islamic movements need to be designed in accordance with the changes in the new millennium. The establishment of the da ‘wah work by Islamic movement has also resulted in the establishment of several Islamic educational institutions. This paper explores on the contributions of Islamic movements in Malaysia in nurturing the development of Islamic da ‘wah work based on the sufi path, politic and social welfare.
Islamic Daʿwah Work through Islamic Movements and Motivational Influences

Yahaya Abu Bakar (1983, 33 & 50) pointed out that in the early arrival of Islam from Arab regions to Malay Archipelago, Islamic scholars played an important role in daʿwah work by teaching the fundamentals of tawḥid, fiqh, prophetic history, tasawwuf, al-Qurʾan and other Islamic related sciences in mosques and palaces. During the period of 14th century until the colonisation of Malacca in 15th century, figures like Syed Abdul Aziz, Maulana Abu Bakar, Qadi Yusof, Maulana Sadar Jahan and Maulana Jalaluddin were those who nourished the Islamic daʿwah work tradition in Malacca according to the records by R.O. Winstedt and W.G. Shellabear. Their role was then inherited by local Islamic scholars such as Hamzah Fansuri, Shamsuddin al-Sumatrani and Nuruddin al-Raniri, who were based in Aceh (from 16th to 18th centuries), an Islamic daʿwah work centre after Malacca was conquered by the Portuguese. The prolonged debate over tasawwuf among the scholars had created several notable works such as Syarāb al-ʿĀsyiqīn, Asrār al-ʿĀrifīn, Syarḥ Rubāʿī Ḥamzah Fansūr, Bustān al-Salātīn and Hujjāj al-Ṣiddīq li dafʿi al-Zindīq (Hall 1962, 39–43; Hashim 2010).

Since the arrival of Islam to the Malay world, tasawwuf movements were collectively involved in spreading Islam through daʿwah work. The basic of Islamic studies especially that is related to religious rituals and manhaj tasawwuf (the methodology of tasawwuf) remain the core subject in the daʿwah work (tarbiyyah) of tasawwuf movements until today. Among the nine tasawwuf groups which were introduced by Syed Naquib al-Attas, only a few of them are actively involved in developing daʿwah work institutions with the objective of spreading knowledge to the society (Al-Attas 1985). For instance, the development of daʿwah work-oriented institution, Madrasah Saydiyyah by Tariqāt Aḥmadiyyah at Rasah, Negeri Sembilan in 1935 has emphasised the purpose of this institution towards nurturing an Islamic-based daʿwah work for the people in bearing the meaning of “amr bi al-maʿrūf” and “nahy ʿan munkar” which is one of the pillar in Islamic teachings. Although the madrasah is not as well-known as other Islamic institutions in its era, it successfully produced many local Muslim scholars and helped the development of Islamic daʿwah especially in the southern part of the country. Nonetheless, this example of daʿwah work development is being voided by the ignorance of most of the tariqāt (tasawwuf school) movements that only focus on tariqāt ritual practices such as zikir and so on.

Generally, tariqāt movements are still committed to conservative Islamic tradition (traditional way of thinking and acting) even though a few of them began to accept the assimilation of modern daʿwah work system with Islamic tradition.
For instance, the establishment of Al-Arqam by Ashaari Muhammad in the late 1960s resulted from weaknesses of *tarbiyyah* and Islamic spiritual elements of PAS (an Islamic political party) which he was a part of. In other words, Al-Arqam can be assumed as an alternative *sufi* movement especially in relation to *da’wah* work. In short, Al-Arqam was founded in 1968 as a small community of *da’wah* when its founder left PAS to start a group on his own. He started to conduct his own study circles (*usrah*) to deliver teachings and discussions on Islam with his family, friends, neighbours and colleagues. At a certain point, he reached a large community and gained a secured recognition as a *dā‘ī* (preacher) in delivering Islamic preaching and thoughts. The name of *al-Arqam* was inspired from the name of a Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) companion, Arqam bin Abī al-Arqam who bequeathed his house for the early rise of Islam. It was in resemblance of their earlier campaign which was in a “white house” (a painted white house) where they met and conducted learnings in the centre of Kuala Lumpur. Therefore, in the earlier presence of Al-Arqam, they used the name “Kumpulan Rumah Putih” to refer to a group that was established from meetings in a white-painted house. Later, Ashaari changed the group named to “Jemaah Darul Arqam”. They later emerged as a strong political and ideological community after they first set up the community called “Medina Al-Arqam” in 1971 and established numbers of branches worldwide (Shiozaki 2015; Zaleha 2006). They had their own economic and *da’wah* work system, and a strong organisational structure. Despite their strong political and ideological strategy, the movement was banned in Malaysia on 5 August 1994 by the National Fatwa Council of Malaysia as they had disseminated deviant teachings and ideologies towards Muslim community in Malaysia (Fauzi 2005).

The development of religious *da’wah* work (*tarbiyyah*) in Al-Arqam was based on their struggle to implement their own concept which was the integration concept of *farḍu ʿain* and *farḍu kifāyah* in their *da’wah* work institution. They believed that Islam gave due importance to both individual and collective obligations, known as *farḍu ʿain* and *farḍu kifāyah* respectively in order to fulfil the perfection of religion. This concept also highlighted the importance of acquiring *da’wah* either from the formal or informal way to raise and develop human capital values for the sake of life according to the Islamic teachings. This concept appeared throughout the Medina Al-Arqam whereby the followers developed and sustained their daily living maintenance through the manufacturing and the production of halal processed food and products. These skills display how they practised and trained their followers on the process of maintaining halal food and doing a sharia-compliant management that promoted Islamic economy. Informally, this kind of *tarbiyyah* attracted many people to Islamic teachings and *da’wah* work. As mentioned earlier, the concept of *da’wah* work is put into practice and they used
nabawi teaching aid (an assisting tool or method in teaching) similar to the study made by Harun et al. (2015).

This da’wah work concept emphasises the need to master other branches of knowledge as part of farḍu kifāyah resulted in the spreading of Al-Arqam da’wah work system even in a limited condition that differs from other mainstream Islamic da’wah work systems or vernacular system. The integration of farḍu ‘ain (through the connection with Allah) and farḍu kifāyah (through the connection with people) in Al-Arqam da’wah work system can be seen in their village located in Sungai Penchala, Kuala Lumpur. The da’wah work concept also consisted of practising several sūfī ritual practices such as mawlid tahlil (commemoration to the Prophet Muhammad). They also performed wirid (which was practiced by sūfī group among the globe) to gain inner strength to one’s own aptitude, character, desires and power. This practice led to good attributes (mahmudah) in human beings which will enable them to perform well in daily life and hereafter as taught by Islam. In fact, they consistently organised religious talks and study circles towards the residents in Medina Al-Arqam. These activities, directly and indirectly intensified the excellent roles played by an Islamic movement to encourage the growth of Islamic da’wah work (Zaleha 2006).

In order to implement the system, Al-Arqam formed Shu’bah Tarbiyah wa al-Ta’lim (da’wah work and learning division) that focused on Islamic studies and other sciences. Yayasan Al-Arqam and Pusat Latihan Perguruan Al-Arqam were responsible for managing religious da’wah work. These institutions were established in order to gain and polish human capital value of Muslim according to their concept of da’wah work. Meanwhile, academic institutions were established to offer school certificates. According to Abdul Rahman Abdullah (1993, 82–84) and Yusof (2007, 33), Yayasan Al-Arqam was design to become a university but failed due to a leadership seize initiated by Ustaz Mokhtar Yaakob. Generally, the Al-Arqam da’wah work system was only being practiced by its members without the involvement of the public. Al-Arqam’s approach which was isolated from the current mainstream da’wah work system has failed to provide an alternative Islamic da’wah work system that was on par with the current da’wah work system.

The development of Al-Arqam da’wah work system was hampered due to the official ban of this movement in 1994. Then, this movement tried to resurrect itself through the establishment of Rufaqa’ and Mawaddah but they were focusing more on the advancement of business and art rather than da’wah work. Rufaqa’ (registered as Rufaqa’ Corporation) is actually the reappearance of Al-Arqam through a business entity to their continuity of assets and business matters and has been banned by the government in 2007 (Ahmad Fauzi 2015, 178). However, from
a daʿwah work point of view, Rufaqa’ and Mawaddah were seen as more successful compared to Jemaah Tabligh, a sufī oriented movement initiated by Indian Muslim in the 1950s. It was founded by Maulana Muhammad Ilyas (1885–1944/5) which emphasised on the priorities of supplications, prayers and also entreaties in overcoming the destruction caused by secularism (Sharifah Zaleha 1993). This Islamic movement originated from India and prioritise daʿwah as their ideology to influence people. This “all men” organisation’s main concern was to improve moral credibility among Muslims (Sharifah Zaleha 2003, 58–59). There was no initiative to develop daʿwah work institutions by Jemaah Tabligh since it solely focused on rituals and is informally centralised at certain mosques in Malaysia. This movement also seemed to lack enthusiasm albeit government’s effort on promoting daʿwah work. Therefore, Abdul Rahman Abdullah (1993) categorised Jemaah Tabligh as a traditional-conservative Islamic movement compared to Al-Arqam which was considered as a traditional-progressive movement.

In addition to sufī movements, the role of Islamic teaching institutions known as pondok which originated from Patani, Thailand and Indonesia facilitated the early development of Islamic daʿwah work. Among the well-known figures associated with pondok institutions included Sheikh Daud Abdullah al-Fatani and Sheikh Tuan Haji Junus from Sumatra. They taught and produced notable religious books for students’ reference. In this system, the pondok were first built around a mosque or prayer room that acted as a teaching centre. Generally, they used one-way teaching method where teachers explained and did not solicit feedback from students. The students also practically learnt the implementation of an Islamic way of life (Badriyyah Hj. Salleh 1984, xxiii–xxv). After finishing their studies, the students will open their own teaching institution (pondok) in their hometown. The role of pondok institutions in providing Islamic daʿwah work could not be denied although they were not as open as the current daʿwah work system. In comparison to the current daʿwah work system, the roles of pondok in nurturing Islamic daʿwah work can be seen as a legacy of the oldest influential Islamic daʿwah work institution in the country (Mohd Nor Munutty 1984, 46). It is believed that pondok had no standardised curriculum of daʿwah work when it was first established in Malaya. The syllabus of daʿwah work then tended to be assimilated from the scholars who had returned from their studies from Middle-East countries. Hence, the daʿwah work syllabus that was taught then seemed to be similar to what the scholars had experienced in their early life as students. This means that the da wah work at that time did not adopt other system than Islamic daʿwah work and retained the traditional Islamic daʿwah work legacy. In fact, the current daʿwah work system evolved from the period of colonialisation.
Realising that the traditional pondok institution could not cope with the challenge of colonial da’wah work, Malayan reformists at that time established madrasah concept of da’wah work. Kaum Muda movement introduced ʾismāḥ (reform) thought for da’wah work development in Malaya. Kaum Muda figures like Syed Sheikh Ahmad al-Hadi, Sheikh Mohd Tahir Jalaluddin and Haji Salleh Masri were influenced by the Salafīs movement, Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Reda who advocated the concept of Pan-Islamism. Kaum Muda proposed four ideas and reformations in Malaya as follows:

1. Fighting for the advancement of the ʾumma through understanding and appreciation of religion. They concluded that the downfall and retrogression of Islamic society were not because of Islam itself but solely due to the negligence in understanding and appreciating it.

2. Expanding the ʾumma’s thinking skills through ʾijtihād (the ability and right to decide exactly what should be done) and eradication of taqlid (unquestioning adoption of concept or idea) practices.

3. Nourishing knowledge through reformation of Islamic da’wah work – initiating schooling system by assimilation of modern Western knowledge.

4. Upgrading the status and function of women in Islam.

These ideas were channelled through madrasah (schools) such as Madrasah al-Masyhur and Madrasah al-Quran in Penang (1914), Madrasah al-Hadi in Malacca (1917), Madrasah al-Idrisiyyah in Perak (1922) and Madrasah Zainal Abidin in Terengganu (1925). The da’wah work approach by Kaum Muda had been modernised by introducing new subjects such as Arabic language [nahw and ʿaraf (grammar), muḥādathah (communication), ādāb (literature), inshāʾ (essay writing)] and other general subjects (science, mathematics, English and general knowledge) in addition to the existing traditional Islamic studies such as public speaking or debates and handcraft. Outdoor activities such as lectures and debates, nasyid, sewing, writing and sports were also introduced. The teaching method was also changed through the usage of blackboards, chalks and text books. A unique evaluation system through examination was introduced in which student who failed the examination will not be promoted to a higher level. This concept of da’wah work as taught in madrasah concept signifies how the Islamic movements group reformed – from the ideology of ʾismāḥ – played a great role in encouraging the growth of Islamic da’wah work within the integration of other branches of knowledge. The value of Islamic da’wah work had been raised to a higher level through this comprehensive concept of da’wah work. It was a great momentum that triggered the government to provide further efforts on Islamic da’wah work sectors later at that time through national da’wah work policy.
Islamic movements in the past had tremendously triggered the development of Islamic da’wah work in Malaysia. This development has been motivated by several factors and influences. The factors can be divided into internal and external that were specific to each movement. Religion/theological and social factors influenced several movements such as Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS). PAS, a movement that practised Integrated Entity Model (IEM) had been influenced by their determination to fulfil internal aims and missions towards emphasising Islamic surrounding across the country. IEM refers to a political entity that functioned as an Islamic movement that involved in all activities and Islamic movement agendas including Islamic education, da’wah work, social and tarbiyyah (Muhammad Fathi 2017). The motivation in developing Islamic da’wah work was also because of the entity’s firmness agenda that prioritises all aspects of Islam including da’wah work. They believed that the continuity of this agenda could be achieved through Islamic da’wah work starting from the lowest level of kindergarten to the tertiary level of da’wah work. This factor had also initiated other Islamic movements in general to reform the da’wah work system. Secondly, it was the current situation of society at that time that triggered these movements to develop Islamic da’wah work. The current situation at that time (in the 1970s) involved social and political factors. With these reasons, the ultimate goal of these movements is to promote the welfare for people based on Islamic foundations. Indirectly, the participation of Islamic movements was linear to the Islamic principles in leading and guiding the people. This was because leaders were responsible to manage the nation through the principles of justice and blessings written in the Qur’an and Prophetic tradition. It was also to respond with the needs of integration in da’wah work (Shuhaimi Haji Ishak and Abdullah 2013). Thirdly, the external influences of international movements such as the successfullness and achievement of Ikhwanul Muslimun (Muslim Brotherhood) in different countries, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS) in Indonesia, AK Party (AKP) in Turkey, Al-Nahdah Party in Tunisia was also one of the factors. Islamic movements in Malaysia were influenced by these successes and they hoped to achieve at least the same level of achievement.

**Development of Da’wah Work Institutions by Islamic Movements**

Reformation of the religious da’wah work system boomed in the early 1970s in line with the rise of Islamic movements. A new dimension of religious da’wah work took place as a result of the emergence of Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) which inherited the Islamic struggle among students and intellectuals in Persatuan Kebangsaan Pelajar Islam Malaysia (PKPIM) and al-Rahmaniah. Tarbiyyah approach which consisted of secular and Islamic studies provided a platform for various institutions of religious da’wah work. ABIM introduced their thought through their first private school, Yayasan Anda in 1971. This private
school was established to help dropouts among Muslim students to enter local universities. These students were influenced by Islamic approach as existed in haraki form of Ikhwanul Muslimun through activities such as usrah (intellect circle), tamrin (training) and qiamullail (night prayers). Haraki literally derived from the word harakah which means “movement”. It was a practical application of da’wah in addressing people to all teachings and rulings of Islam through Islamic movement. This approach appeared to be closely linked with Islamic movement of Ikhwanul Muslimun since 1928 which promoted Islamic da’wah work in a simple manner for the sake of producing integrated Muslim personality and Muslim community thus building the Islamic government for the whole world (Hussin and Solihin 2013, 12). Activities such as usrah, tamrin and qiamullail were meant to deliver the da’wah work through the tarbiyah approach in flexible ways. As for example usrah could be described as a study circle that connected the members through discussions of knowledge that could be conducted anywhere, anytime and in any situation. Tamrin was a training session to develop human potential skills in enhancing human capital values in an organisation. Meanwhile, qiamullail was extra supplications or prayers after night sleep before the dawn that builds and strengthen Muslim’s faith towards Allah.

The purpose and role of Yayasan Anda have attracted the interest of many Western researchers such as Judith Nagata (1984, 77) who considered Yayasan Anda as a da’wah work institution that used religion as the main basis in facing the mainstream national da’wah work. In short, the purpose to produce students who excelled in both secular and religious fields could be attained even without using traditional approaches such as religious schools (madrasah) and pondok. This was due to the da’wah work concept introduced by the Islamic movement that covered all aspects of life in building great human resources for the sake of nation and religion. However, ABIM also defended and modernised pondok institutions and religious schools, and an example would be Ma’had al-Ummah in Chemor, Perak. ABIM then increased their efforts in tarbiyyah systematically, starting from childhood through to the tertiary level. A few da’wah work institutions such as Taman Asuhan Kanak-Kanak (TASKI) in 1979, Sekolah Rendah Islam (SRI), Sekolah Menengah Islam (SMI), Institut Pengajian Ilmu-Ilmu Islam (IPII) and Institut Perguruan ABIM (IPA) were opened to public.

Due to this fact, ABIM can be considered as a pioneer of modern da’wah work introduced by Islamic movement. The development of these institutions did serve their aspiration to provide an alternative to Islamic da’wah work in the society. Intellectual culture which is considered as the heart of the Islamic awakening in ABIM was introduced through its higher da’wah work institution – IPII – in the form of “Islamisation of knowledge”. This idea was being manifested through the
provision of Islamic spirituality and manners in each subject. For instance, apart from offering Islamic courses such as Qur’anic studies, hadith and Arabic, other courses such as comparative law, social sciences and Islamic political thought (that are the combination of secular and Islamic da’wah work) were also offered by IPII. The scholastic level of IPII was enhanced through twinning programs with other local and overseas universities (Badlihisham Mohd Nasir 1999b, 263–266). This denotes that the implication of Islamic movement on da’wah work development in Malaysia also affected and extended to academic institutions abroad thus bridged Malaysia with other countries in terms of da’wah work.

ABIM’s dream to establish their own da’wah work institution became a reality when IPII was upgraded to Kolej Darul Hikmah (KDH) on 15 June 2012 under Bina Ilmu, a company owned by Koperasi Belia Islam ABIM. The establishment of KDH can be seen as a continuation of the previous tarbiyyah programs by ABIM, starting from TASKI, SRI and SMI. The purpose of the establishment of KDH was to glorify Islamic civilisation by embracing Islam as the way of life. In order to fulfil this aspiration, basic Islamic courses in IPII were upgraded as compulsory courses and being combined with other professional or academic programs to produce faithful, knowledgeable, competent, ethical and viable human resources. Although KDH only offered courses at the diploma level, the competency of KDH in producing recognisable academic programs was confirmed by the involvement of well-known figures such as Siddiq Fadhil and Mohd Nor Munutty as their academic staff. In addition, the ability of KDH to publish Jawhar Journal that involved many international authors proved that it could be an alternative platform for intellectuals to voluntarily channel their ideas especially in the context of da’wah in this country.²

Moreover, ABIM was also indirectly involved in the process of Islamisation of mainstream da’wah work. The members were said to have a role in drafting the national da’wah work policies and dominated certain da’wah work institutions. The involvement of ABIM increased as the National Education Policy was launched in 1987. Idris Jauzy, Mohd Nor Munutty and Wan Mohd Nor (former ABIM’s leaders) were among ABIM intellectuals who gave their opinions and ideas regarding the Islamisation of da’wah work policy and these ideas could be referred to in a book titled Reformasi Pendidikan di Malaysia. Their thought was similar to the idea proposed by Anwar Ibrahim who believed that the Islamisation process could only be attained if a new system based on Islamic principles, methods and contents was introduced (Badlihisham Mohd Nasir 1999b, 71–89).

However, ABIM’s effort to channel their ideas and approaches through government da’wah work institutes failed when its former president, Anwar
Ibrahim was sacked as the Deputy Prime Minister in 1998. ABIM “lost control” of International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), which was once perceived as Universiti Islam ABIM to other Islamic movements but this never hindered ABIM from continuously cooperating with other government da’wah work institutes. Many ABIM activists were actively involved in contributing their ideas through da’wah work institutions especially when Pakatan Rakyat successfully ruled Selangor through the General Elections in 2008. Kolej Universiti Islam Selangor (KUIS) which was once known as Kolej Islam Selangor Darul Ehsan (KISDAR), was upgraded into a university college and this has provided an opportunity for the Islamic movement to widely spread its influence in the higher da’wah work institute. ABIM activists were actively involved in some programs in KUIS such as the Regional Seminar Commemorating 100 Years of National Hero of Mohammad Natsir, a da’wah and Indonesia da’wah work figure who had greatly influenced ABIM and Islamic movements in Malaysia. A seminar organised by Wadah Pencerdasan Umat Malaysia (WADAH) in collaboration with KUIS and officiated by Dato’ Seri Anwar Ibrahim was believed to be a new catalyst to the Islamic movement in spreading their ideas among the intellectuals.

According to Badlihisham Mohd Nasir (1999b) in his paperwork entitled “Metode Dakwah Gerakan Islam Tanahair: Sorotan Terhadap PAS, ABIM dan JIM”, the aspiration of ABIM in emphasising tarbiyyah and da’wah work was followed by Pertubuhan Jemaah Islah Malaysia (JIM), a social missionary movement that originated from Islamic Representative Council (IRC). JIM was established on 27 July 1990 as a new platform of da’wah of the Malaysian Islamic student movement which began in the United Kingdom (UK) in the 1970s. Muslim students studying in the UK turned to the comfort of Islam as a complete way of life to strengthen their belief in Islam, having stayed away from home in an alien and challenging environment. They began to share their understanding of Islamic teachings with other Muslim students and local communities and adopted the “Islamic life”. They then established IRC which had some influence from the Ikhwanul Muslimun movement. This “return to Islam” spirit went back with the activists/reformists when IRC members returned to Malaysia in 1975. Some of them chose to join ABIM as a new platform of da’wah, and some joined PAS after their former leader, Anwar Ibrahim left the movement. Due to their unfruitful journey in the new organisations, they began to set up JIM as the continuation of IRC’s aspiration. As mentioned, when it failed to dominate PAS and ABIM, IRC came out publicly with an image of tarbiyyah and islah through some programs which were professionally and systematically organised by professionals and corporate figures. Like ABIM, JIM began to be recognised through programs such as Institut al-Quran, Da’wah Training Institute IWC-JIM and da’wah work institutions such as primary and secondary schools and colleges.
One of JIM’s *da’wah* work institutes, Al-Amin School, emphasises on the *tawhid* principles by developing and producing a better *Rabbani*, knowledgeable, faithful and virtuous Muslims. They should also be able in forming life, society, nation and world as demanded by the al-Qur’an and Sunnah and tackled public interest (*maslahah*) related issues in society. The general purpose of *da’wah* work of this movement was to create a generation of *muttaqin* who would have the ability to appreciate Islam and uphold it as a whole. Therefore, the priority was given to the use of Arabic language and the curriculum was taken from some religious schools in Kelantan and Terengganu whereby the aspects of spiritual, academic, social skills and modern technology were put into consideration in the selected curriculum (Zatul Akmam Yusop 1993, 45–46).

In fact, there are 30 primary and secondary religious schools under JIM which prove its commitment towards the development of *da’wah* work and Islamic education. In addition, Kelab Rakan Siswa Islah Malaysia (KARISMA) was established on 2 May 1999 as an effort for JIM to increase the number of its members among students at institutions of higher *da’wah* work. The purpose of this body was to implement *islah* and *da’wah* to the student community. The use of informal *da’wah* work by JIM was partly due to its openness approach without the need to use the organisation’s name. The *islah* method which emphasises on activities that related to informal *da’wah* work seems to be relevant and practical to the needs of society. Thus, JIM had an advantage in offering social care services such as Raudhatul Sakinah (RS) which was founded in August 1998. It serves as an institution that provides shelter and counselling to teenage girls who are victims of social problems. It helps them to improve their self-confidence and eventually be an asset to the society and religion. RS educates the adolescent girls who fall victims to social illness. The *da’wah* work program implemented at RS are religious *da’wah* work, communication-based courses and technical skills such as computer training, handcrafting, sewing and cooking. Moreover, a youth club known as Kelab Remaja JIM (KRJ) was established to focus on empowering youth and to enhance the *da’wah* work growth for the youth. Practically, all of these efforts cannot be done by formal *da’wah* work institutions in this country (Saari Sungib 1993).

Overall, the programs and institutes managed by JIM or its members are not much different to that established by ABIM. Although JIM is not able to match ABIM’s popularity locally, it manages to increase the number of Al-Amin schools in urban areas. Due to its professional image, more high-educated parents send their children to these institutes. The presence of JIM in developing *da’wah* work institutes triggers the cooperation between *ulama’* and intellectuals in the current *da’wah* work (Malik 2012). However, on 29 December 2012, JIM was officially
dissolved and the vision in nurturing the Islamic da‘wah work is being done until now through a new platform of islah called Pertubuhan IKRAM Malaysia (IKRAM).

The Efforts of Political Entities in the Development of Islamic Da‘wah Work

The effort to strengthen Islam through the pondok school system was continued by PAS in 1951 due to the government’s priority towards English, Malay, Chinese and Tamil schools in the mainstream da‘wah work over religious schools. This secular approach made way for PAS to indirectly broaden its influence in traditional da‘wah work institutes such as pondok and religious schools. The relationship between PAS and these institutes started since the establishment of Maahad Ehya al-Syarif in Gunung Semanggol, Perak (1934) which subsequently produced many Islamic movements in the form of political parties like Hizbul Muslimin (1948). Many organisations like Hizbul Muslimin and Maahad played an important role in the establishment of PAS in 1951.

The pondok school system (usually associated with PAS’s nest) operated in a very poor condition especially in term of facilities. However, the effort made by PAS in their da‘wah work was proven effective when this political party took over Kelantan in 1959. The existing national da‘wah work and promotion of Islamic education was maintained and strengthened. PAS established Lembaga Penasihat Rancangan Dasar PAS Kelantan that discussed da‘wah work issues and needs of a holistic Islamic education system. The plan to build an Islamic university in 1963 failed due to the contravention of the Education Act which gave the authority of establishing universities to the federal government. Islamic Centre for Higher Studies (also known as Nilam Puri) was established and only had one faculty, the Faculty of Syariah, which was opened in 1971. In 1968, this institute was known as Yayasan Pengajian Tinggi Islam Nilam Puri, Kelantan and within the same year, the Faculty of Syariah was recognised by Al-Azhar University in Egypt to be on par with its Faculty of Syariah and Law. The students from Nilam Puri were directly accepted to join the courses offered by Al-Azhar University. At present, Nilam Puri is part of Akademi Islam, Universiti Malaya (Asri Muda 1993, 83–86). Many of its former students became prominent figures. In summary, the commitment of this party in da‘wah work that also promoted Islamic education provided opportunities to many Kelantanese to pursue their study at a higher level compared to other states in Malaysia.³

The modernisation of da‘wah work institutes under PAS started since the former leader of ABIM, Fadzil Muhammad Noor joined the party in the late 1970s. Previously, not many reformations in da‘wah work had been done by PAS even
Badlihisham Mohd Nasir et al.
under the coalition government with UMNO from 1974 until 1978 since PAS could only act as a pressure group. PAS demanded the establishment of more Islamic da’wah work institutes such as Maktab Perguruan Islam which was founded in the 1970s and Islamic universities as suggested by its Deputy President, Professor Zulkiifli Muhammad since the 1960s (Mustapha Ali 1993, 115). However, PAS’s ambition to have more Islamic universities as a continuation of Kolej Islam Malaya was halted by the establishment of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, a national da’wah work-oriented university. Kolej Islam Malaya which previously planned to be upgraded to Universiti Islam Malaysia was turned into Kolej Islam Kelang, proving there was an effort to stop the role of Kolej Islam Malaya (Zulkiple Abd Ghani and Abdul Ghafar Don 2005). Kolej Islam Malaya has a sentimental value for PAS since it has produced many Islamic scholars (ulama’) and PAS leaders.

In the early 1980s, PAS’s image transformed from being solely a political party into a da’wah movement which emphasised on da’wah work and tarbiyyah. This is proven by the role of Institut Barakan (1976), an unofficial pro-PAS da’wah work centre (was originally said to be a private school pro-ABIM like Yayasan Anda). This institute turned into a private school that used the curriculum and da’wah work set up by Ministry of Education and acted as a centre in spreading da’wah and aspiration of the party. PAS also was actively involved in establishing da’wah work institutions ranging from kindergartens to higher da’wah work institutions like ABIM. Pusat Asuhan Tunas Islam (PASTI) was founded in 1982 to provide da’wah work for pre-school students and is opened to the public regardless of political background. This is proven by the fact that 70 percent of the students came from families who are not members of PAS. In 1996, it was estimated that PASTI had 100 branches, 2,000 teachers and 30,000 students. PAS officially introduced its primary and secondary schools in 1995 and 1996 respectively, when Muassasah Darul Ulum and Sekolah Darul Ulum (SRIDU) were founded and managed privately. There were other institutes such as Sekolah Rendah Agama al-Munir in Terengganu and Madrasah Taufikiyah Khairiyah al-Halimiyyah in Kedah. In addition, there were a few affordable private colleges like Kolej Profesional Kosis-Kohilal (1995) and Institut Teknologi Ibnu Sina (1997) which followed the concept of private higher learning institutions but emphasised on Islamic studies (Badlihisham Mohd Nasir 1999b, 195–199).

PAS not only expanded its own da’wah work institutions but also developed its existing da’wah work institutions such as religious schools and pondok by introducing the concept of integrated da’wah work with the establishment of modern pondok in Bachok, Kelantan. However, PAS focused on defending the traditional Islamic education practised by pondok and religious schools which seemed to be neglected by the government. PAS was totally against the government’s decision
to stop funding the religious schools which have caused financial crisis to these schools. These religious schools were proven to contribute to the advancement of daʿwah work by producing prominent Islamic figures and professionals (Abdul Hadi Awang 2005).

The success of Pakatan Rakyat in the 2008 General Election to win over five states resulted in the revival of religious schools. In addition to the effort of the federal government in giving special funds through Jabatan Pendidikan Islam dan Moral (JAPIM), Ministry of Education, Pakatan Rakyat continuously provided assistance to religious schools. The funds for religious schools in Perak and Kedah were reinstated. Even though Penang was governed by DAP, its minister, Lim Guan Eng provided RM1.5 million to fund 17 religious schools in order to emulate a prominent caliph, Umar Abdul Aziz. The same happened in Selangor where Gobind Singh Deo personally provided funds for Tahfiz al-Hira Academy, implying that religious schools, which were accused as “producing” terrorists by the West, were no longer a threat to non-Muslims. The step taken by the government in taking over some of the religious schools and transforming them into aided schools indicated that this polemic will be resolved and benefit Islam and religious schools.

Yayasan Islam Kelantan (YIK) which was first known as Jabatan Sekolah-Sekolah Agama Kelantan (JASA) was established in 1974 as a result of an enthusiastic effort by PAS in managing and developing Islamic daʿwah work institutes in Kelantan. In June 1979, its name was changed into Yayasan Pelajaran Islam Negeri Kelantan until 1983 and eventually into YIK until today. The objective of YIK was to produce faithful Muslim, virtuous, knowledgeable and qualified enough to serve and build a family, nation and community. YIK introduced two daʿwah works in parallel based on Al-Azhar University and the national curriculums to enable its students to sit for national examinations. YIK’s daʿwah work is increasingly accepted in Malaysia; at least 14 secondary religious schools outside Kelantan and even the Islamic Council of Singapore used its syllabus and examinations under the supervision of YIK. In 1998, 800 of YIK’s students pursued their study at Al-Azhar University.

The development of YIK especially under the ruling of PAS had proven that this party had been accommodative and pro-active to develop daʿwah work and institutions. In addition, in the 2000s a few of its students were recognised to be the best SPM students. PAS also made a huge contribution by introducing a new Islamic daʿwah work in Terengganu by establishing Kolej Islam Sains Terengganu (KIST), Kolej Sains dan Teknologi al-Quran (KOSTAQ) and Sekolah Rendah Agama Bersepadu (SRAB). Thus, it was proven that PAS was not only emphasised
the development of traditional *da‘wah* work institutes such as *pondok* but also went beyond by establishing professional *da‘wah* work institutions.

However, PAS as an Islamic movement was less successful in establishing its own brand of higher *da‘wah* work. Both of its colleges, Kolej Profesional Kosis-Kohilal and Institut Teknologi Ibnu Sina failed to be well-known institutes. Due to the lack of experience, funding and community support, PAS has a long way to go in order to compete with well-established Islamic movements like Muhammadiyyah in Indonesia. However, PAS was not discouraged by these facts and continued its effort by strengthening SRIDU and opening Kolej Universiti Darul Quran (KUDQI) in Terengganu. KUDQI was established in 2000 and it is following the curriculum syllabus of Al-Azhar University. It was founded by the former Dewan Ulama’ leader, Harun Taib and offers Islamic studies programs. PAS also established a private university namely Kolej Universiti Islam Zulkifli Muhammad (KUIZM). This *da‘wah* work organisation was established in 2010 and maintained by Majlis Pendidikan PAS Peringkat Kebangsaan (MPPPK-PAS National Education Council). This institution offers academic programs that focussed on Islamic *da‘wah* work such as Sharia and Usuluddin. In addition, PAS also managed to maintain a pre-school *da‘wah* work institute namely PASTI which is still warmly accepted by the society.

**Conclusion**

Based on the above arguments and discussion, it is proven that Islamic movements have a great impact on developing the *da‘wah* work in this country. Generally, a few Islamic movements had influenced the rise of Islamic *da‘wah* work until the modern era. It can be proved by their openness and effort in developing *da‘wah* work institutions that assimilate the national *da‘wah* work. Their preference to make Islam as a foundation for *da‘wah* work has separated them from the current secular-like *da‘wah* work. These Islamic movements have successfully introduced an alternative Islamic *da‘wah* work which came in the form of private institutions or policy-making in the current system. Thus, it proved that political differences and approaches in implementing Islamic *da‘wah* work are not an obstacle to develop the country. A few of positive aspects of Islamic movement-oriented *da‘wah* work which emphasised on *tasawwuf*, welfare and politics can be implemented in the current *da‘wah* work after a thorough research are conducted by scholars. As some of the Islamic movements are also involved in politics, it can be concluded that these movements have also prioritised Islamic *da‘wah* work in their own ways and strategies. Lastly, the role of Islamic movement in nurturing Islamic *da‘wah* work has been proven by every single action taken by each respective entity.
Acknowledgements

This study acknowledges funding provided by Ministry of Education through the Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS), reference code RJ130000.7833.4F982. The authors express their appreciation to the members of the Fiqh Forensics and Judiciary Research Group (CFORSJ), Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia.

Notes


References


