

## The Role of Islamic Movements in Enhancing *Da'wah* Work: The Malaysian Experience

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**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 Langgulong (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 Da'wah 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 *da'wah* work by teaching the fundamentals of *tawhīd*, *fiqh*, prophetic history, *tasawwuf*, al-Qur'an 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 *da'wah* 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 Acheh (from 16th to 18th centuries), an Islamic *da'wah* 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-Āsyiqīn*, *Asrār al-Ārifīn*, *Syarḥ Rubā'ī Ḥamzah Fansūr*, *Bustān al-Salātīn* and *Hujjāj al-Ṣiddīq li daf'i 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 *da'wah* 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 *da'wah* 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 *da'wah* work institutions with the objective of spreading knowledge to the society (Al-Attas 1985). For instance, the development of *da'wah* work-oriented institution, *Madrasah Saydiyyah* by *Tarīqāt Aḥmadiyyah* at Rasah, Negeri Sembilan in 1935 has emphasised the purpose of this institution towards nurturing an Islamic-based *da'wah* work for the people in bearing the meaning of “*amr bi al-ma'rūf*” and “*nahy 'an 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 *da'wah* especially in the southern part of the country. Nonetheless, this example of *da'wah* work development is being voided by the ignorance of most of the *tarīqāt* (*tasawwuf* school) movements that only focus on *tarīqāt* ritual practices such as *zikir* and so on.

Generally, *tarīqāt* 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 *da'wah* work system with Islamic tradition.

For instance, the establishment of Al-Arḡam 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-Arḡam can be assumed as an alternative *sufi* movement especially in relation to *da'wah* work. In short, Al-Arḡam 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-Arḡam* was inspired from the name of a Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) companion, Arḡam bin Abī al-Arḡam 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-Arḡam, 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 Arḡam”. They later emerged as a strong political and ideological community after they first set up the community called “Medina Al-Arḡam” 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<sup>1</sup> 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-Arḡam was based on their struggle to implement their own concept which was the integration concept of *farḡu 'ain* and *farḡu kifāyah* in their *da'wah* work institution. They believed that Islam gave due importance to both individual and collective obligations, known as *farḡu 'ain* and *farḡu 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-Arḡam 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-Arqaṁ *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-Arqaṁ *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 (*maḥmudah*) 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-Arqaṁ. 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-Arqaṁ formed *Shu'bah Tarbiyah wa al-Ta'lim* (*da'wah* work and learning division) that focused on Islamic studies and other sciences. Yayasan Al-Arqaṁ and Pusat Latihan Perguruan Al-Arqaṁ 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-Arqaṁ was design to become a university but failed due to a leadership seize initiated by Ustaz Mokhtar Yaakob. Generally, the Al-Arqaṁ *da'wah* work system was only being practiced by its members without the involvement of the public. Al-Arqaṁ'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-Arqaṁ *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 reappearing of Al-Arqaṁ 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 *da'wah* work point of view, Rifaqah and Mawaddah were seen as more successful compared to Jemaah Tabligh, a *sufi* 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 *da'wah* 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 *da'wah* 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 *da'wah* 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 *sufi* movements, the role of Islamic teaching institutions known as *pondok* which originated from Patani, Thailand and Indonesia facilitated the early development of Islamic *da'wah* 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 *da'wah* work could not be denied although they were not as open as the current *da'wah* work system. In comparison to the current *da'wah* work system, the roles of *pondok* in nurturing Islamic *da'wah* work can be seen as a legacy of the oldest influential Islamic *da'wah* work institution in the country (Mohd Nor Munutty 1984, 46). It is believed that *pondok* had no standardised curriculum of *da'wah* work when it was first established in Malaya. The syllabus of *da'wah* work then tended to be assimilated from the scholars who had returned from their studies from Middle-East countries. Hence, the *da'wah* 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 *da'wah* work and retained the traditional Islamic *da'wah* work legacy. In fact, the current *da'wah* work system evolved from the period of colonisation.



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 *iṣlāḥ* (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 *ummah* 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 *ummah's* thinking skills through *ijtihād* (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 [*naḥw* and *ṣaraf* (grammar), *muhādathah* (communication), *ādāb* (literature), *inshā'* (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 *iṣlāḥ* – 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 successfulness and achievement of Ikhwanul Muslimun (Muslim Brotherhood) in different countries, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS) in Indonesia, AK Party (AKP) in Turkey, Al-Nahdhah 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 be offered by IPII. The scholastic level of IPII was enhanced through twinning programs with other local and overseas universities (Badlihasham 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.<sup>2</sup>

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 (Badlihasham 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 Badlihisam 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.<sup>3</sup>

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

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 Zulkifli 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 Taufikiyyah Khairiyyah 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 (Badlihasham 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 *da'wah* 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,<sup>4</sup> 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 *da'wah* 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 *da'wah* works in parallel based on Al-Azhar University and the national curriculums to enable its students to sit for national examinations. YIK's *da'wah* 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.<sup>5</sup>

The development of YIK especially under the ruling of PAS had proven that this party had been accommodative and pro-active to develop *da'wah* 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 *da'wah* 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 Muhammadiyah 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.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> 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.

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