

An Appraisal of The Nature, Level And Forms of Da'awah Activities in Taraba State-Nigeria

Abdul Mumini Inda, Dr. Mustapha Isa Qasim

Education Islamic Studies Unit, Arts and Social Science Education Department, Faculty of Education, Taraba State University, Jalingo-Nigeria

Department Of Arts And Social Science Education (Islamic Studies section) Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Abstract: *This paper discusses the nature, Level and Forms of Da'wah activities by Muslim Organizations in Taraba State, Nigeria is meant among others to assess the perception of the sampled respondents on the Level and Forms of Da'wah activities carried out by the selected Muslim Organizations in Taraba State Nigeria. To achieve this, both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were used. Two hundred and forty (240) questionnaires were administered to the sampled population (30 questionnaires to each of the eight local government areas), out of which 197 were retrieved representing 88.21% retrieval rate. The data were analyzed using frequency and percentages for demographic data of the respondents and a bench mark of 33.5% is considered as effective for responding to an item drawn from research questions one and two, Section A examined the level of Da'wah activities, section B examined the forms of Da'wah activities that are prevalent in the State, 240 Questionnaires were differently distributed to all the selected eight (8) local Government areas; the questionnaires were meant to measure the level and forms of Da'wah activities in the areas by Muslim organizations. After the assessment, the results of the findings show that there is a moderate level of the activities of Da'wah in the State. However, the researcher discovered the need for the Muslim organizations in the state to regularly improve on the following areas of Da'wah activities; Marital counseling, Prison visitations, Convert management, door to door Da'wah, interfaith dialogue forum and skill acquisition centers among others.*

I. Introduction

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Absolute praises belong to Allah (SWT) from the time immemorial to infinity, may Allah's peace and mercy be upon the noble Prophet (SAW) his household, companions and those that followed their footsteps, up till the Day of Reckoning. The greatest tool used by the Prophet (SAW) to exert influence which transformed and rescue Jahiliyyah society from darkness of shirk and immoral activities to sanity, morality and Allah's consciousness is Da'wah. Therefore, the basic aim of Da'wah is to disseminate the word of Allah and to promote moral values. In fact, it is the medium through which Man discovers the essence of his life, and mission in the world for the success of the everlasting life. Da'wah is the primary force for social progress, motivating individual to develop spiritual qualities and empowering them to make sacrifices for their fellow human beings and to contribute to the betterment of all and sundry.

The basic mission of the final messenger of Allah in particular is Da'wah- communication of the message of the Creator to Man. The Qur'an in several places describes the Prophet (SAW) as a messenger who delivers the message of his Lord. The following Qur'anic verse buttresses the statement:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (28)

“And We have sent you except as a giver of glad tidings and a warner, so that you may give them good news and warn them... (Q. 34:28).

In another verse, the Qur'an states:

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا (1)

“Blessed be He who have revealed Al-furqan (the criterion) that is,

The Qur'an, to his servant so that he may be a Warner to all Mankind”

The above cited Qur'anic verses indicate that Prophet Muhammad (S.A.w) was sent to the entire humanity from his period to the end of the world. Ibn Katheer in his explanation to the connotation of the Qur'anic verse cited above ‘A giver of glad tidings and a warner’ states that the glad tidings in question is paradise promised to those who obey and submit to the message presented by the Prophet (S.A.W) and likewise the ‘Warner’ means warning and threatening people who deliberately disregard the message that they were promised with hell as their final abode. In his explanation Qatada said the meaning of the verse “And We have sent you except as a giver of glad tidings...” means that Allah (SWT) sent Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to both

the Arabs and non Arabs. Thus the most honourable person among them in the sight of Allah is the one who is the most obedient to Allah” Indeed the Prophet (SAW) has perfectly conveyed his assignment as a Da’i and he urge people to continue with the process after him. He said “Extend the message about me even if is a portion of a verse”. Certainly, it was because of the compliance of the first generation of the Muslims Allah (SWT) commended them in the following Qur’anic instruction:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِنْهُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ (110)

“You are the best of people ever evolve for mankind you enjoy what is good and forbade evil and you believe in Allah had the people of the book believe it could have been better for them, among them are believers but most of them are fasiqun (transgressors)” (Q. 3:110).

Khan (2001) categories the tasks to be performed by later generations into three categories. This include: preservation, Updating and the propagation of the religion (Da’wah) he noted that the preservation and updating the religion has been performed by the earlier generations in their struggle to compile the Qur’an, authentication and compilation of hadith as well as demonstrating on how the Islamic Law should be applied in ever changing societies. The third requirement for the continuation of Prophetic mission as buttressed by Khan is to embark on the work of Da’wah, which he describes as a divine task and hence defending and propagating the religion. The Qur’an viewed the task of Da’wah as helping the course of religion. This is expressed in its reference to Isa (A.S) when he invites people to join him in Da’wah. He says:

فَلَمَّا أَحَسَّ عِيسَى مِنْهُمُ الْكُفْرَ قَالَ مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ قَالَ الْخَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَأَشْهَدُ بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ (52)

“When Jesus found unbelief on their part He said: “who will be My helpers (to the work of) Allah? Said the disciples we are Allah’s helpers We believe in Allah and bear witness that we are Muslims” (Q.3:52)

Mujahid in his commentary on the above Qur’anic verse he says Isa (A.S) was calling people to assist him in the conveyance of the message of Allah” conveyance of Allah’s message is therefore a duty bound on the Ummah at both individual and organizational levels when such duty is neglected all aspects of Man’s endeavour will be in total crisis and collapse. Moreover, Allah loves and praises those who partake in Da’wah activities in His regard to them as those best in speech among all other speakers. The Qur’an states:

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ (33)

And who is better in speech than he who calls people to Allah, works righteousness and declares, ‘I am one of those who surrender to Allah. Q. 41:33.

II. Objectives of the study

The major aim of this study is to assess Da’wah activities carried out by Muslim organizations and to also determine how those activities relate to the entire life of the people of Taraba State. Specifically, the study sought:

1. To examine the nature of Da’wah activities of Muslim organizations in Taraba State.
2. To assess the forms of Da’wah activities done by Muslim organizations in Taraba State.
3. To present the methodology of Da’wah carried out by Muslim organizations in the State
4. To outline findings and make recommendations.

Brief History and the advent of Islam in of Taraba State.

Located in north-east geopolitical zone of Nigeria, Taraba State was created out of the defunct Gongola State in 1991 and it is divided into sixteen local government areas which include Ardo Kola, Bali, Donga, Gashaka, Gassol, Ibi, Jalingo, Karim Lamido, Kurmi, Lau, Sardauna, Takum, Ussa, Wukari, Yorro, and Zing. Taraba State which comprises the pre 1976 divisions of Muri, Mambilla and Wukari, was created by the military government of General Ibrahim Babangida. The State is named after the Taraba River which transverses the southern part of the state. The State is popularly called ‘Nature’s gift to the Nation’ for its richness in man power and resources.

Manu (2010) traces the historical evolution of Islam in Taraba State and the agents of Islamization. He noted despite the long period Islam in the State, still exist non-Islamic practices that continues to pervade within the Muslim Ummah in Taraba state due to ignorance of the Qur’an and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad among Muslims, the secularist nature of educational curricula, parent neglect of their religious duties towards their children, and the negative influence of the mass media. He finally suggested for multi-dimensional moral reform for freeing the Muslims of the State of its currents predicaments and ills.

It is obvious, therefore, most of the conversion in the early period of people from various communities that constitutes present Taraba State were by observation not due to efforts of an organized da’wah groups, until the later period with formation of various Muslims organizations, there evidences indicating the little effort and also such early conversions has positive impacts on the life of the populace of the area. This can

be established from the rate of conversion the later period, intermarriages, educational attainment (Islamic education) and the social status attained by those who accepted Islam.

III. Strategic Methods of presenting Islam to Non Muslims

1. Rapport Building:

This stage is where efforts are expected to be made of attainment to honest, trustworthy, and helpful, which becomes known to people just as the Prophet (SAW) was known as Al- Ameen (the trustworthy) before he began his mission as a Prophet. Such efforts must be done sincerely and credibility when entering into discussions about matters of faith and reasons. However, one is not expected to be pretentious in order not to harm the religion as suggested by DIN module 101 page 161 thus: "pretentious display of goodwill should not be made for Da'wah purposes. Hypocrisy is usually detected sooner or later and it will be the name of Islam that is tarnished in the end with no good in it for any one. In Islam the means and the ends both have to be good. Thus everything done in rapport building should be in conformity with Islamic guidelines as it is itself a form of Da'wah through behaviors. Baihaki reported that the Prophet (SAW) said 'this heart has been created in such a way that it loves those who show kindness towards it and dislike who ever hurt it'" (TTC Course Materials, Module 101: nd: 161).

2) Diagnosis (Inquiry and Learning)

Da'wah entails helping others to understand Islam and practice it better, thereby helping others to come closer to Allah...in order to perform Da'wah well, one needs to discover what a person already believes, whether any misconceptions exist, what these are, and whether there may be any stumbling blocks that impede him/her from finding and accepting truth or understanding and applying certain aspects of Islam. Such a process of observation, learning, inquiry analysis and discovery is termed diagnosis. Appropriate diagnosis involves serious examination of all overt and subtle "symptoms" of misunderstanding, ignorance or difficulty. In order to deliver an appropriate "prescription" Da'wah usually fails when an inappropriate has been applied, due to faulty diagnosis or an absence of it all together

3) Prescription:

Da'wah viewed "prescription" as a stage used to identify misconceptions and difficulties in understanding and practicing Islam and once reasons of deficiency of knowledge of the subject matter, or defective reasoning, or other factors have been deduced as the source of misconceptions and effective prescription is used to solve the problem. However, problem can only be solved when the client is willing to accept the prescription at the particular time. It must be noted that Da'wah activities have no guarantee of hundred percent success. This is because nobody possess the perfection of convincing every person. This explains aspect of limitation of a Da'iyah as acknowledged in the following Qur'anic verse:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أُنذِرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ (6)

"as to those who reject faith it is the same to them to whether thou warn them or do not warn them; they will never believe" Q2:6.

Furthermore, the role of a Da'iyah is only to convey the message, not to compel any one to accept it. Allah says:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ (256)

"There is no compulsion in religion; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error; therefore, whoever disbelieves in the Shaitan and believes in Allah he indeed has laid hold on the firmest handle, which shall not break off, and Allah is Hearing, Knowing. (Q.2:256).

And Qur'an further states:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ (125)

"Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and godly exhortation, and have disputation with them in the best manner, surely your Lord best knows those who go astray from his path, and He knows best those who follow the right way" (Q.16:125).

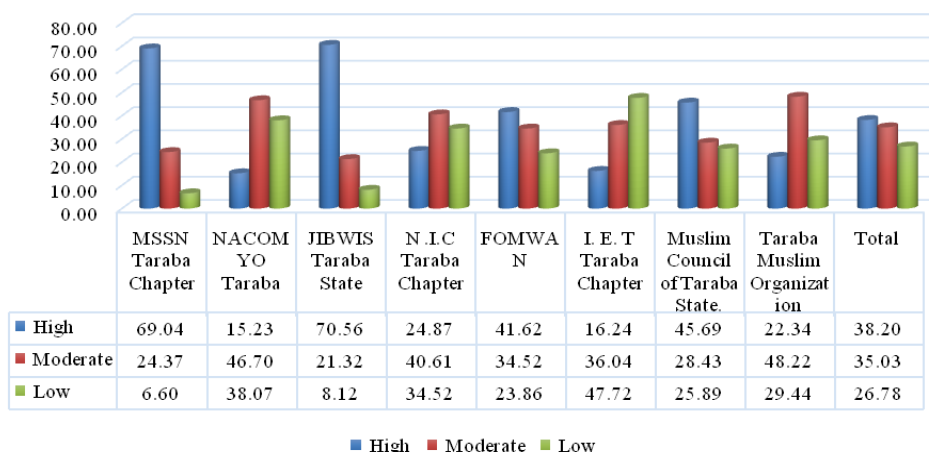
Un-known to one a seed of faith may be planted but which may take many years yet to bear fruit, while a person may continue to appear as unbeliever or reluctant Muslim... an analogy is nice meal if poorly presented or thrown at one may easily be rejected even if the recipient is hungry.

4) Follow up:

This is the final stage in the strategic steps in Da'wah. Where a da'iyah is expected to continue building up the rapport established previously, and if the previous encounter was not positive there is need to follow up to re-establish some rapport.

Da'wah methodology depends on many factors in this procedure is only a guide among many others. An important principle is that the order of these steps should be appreciated. However, sustaining the three steps simultaneously and on ongoing bases is usually necessary for best result, in other words “diagnoses” “prescription” “and “follow up” should always be done in a way that does not threaten but actually enhances continued rapport building.

Level of Da'wah activities by muslim organizations in Taraba state



The summary on the assessment of the level of Da'wah activities in Taraba State are high with the total percentage of 38.20% total respondents rate that scored the activities as high. 35.03% of the total respondents rated the general level of Da'wah activities carry out by muslim organizations as moderate and 26.78% of the respondent rated the general performance of the Da'wah activities in Taraba State as Low.

Muslim Organizations with Significantly high Performance rate in their Da'wah Activities in Taraba State.

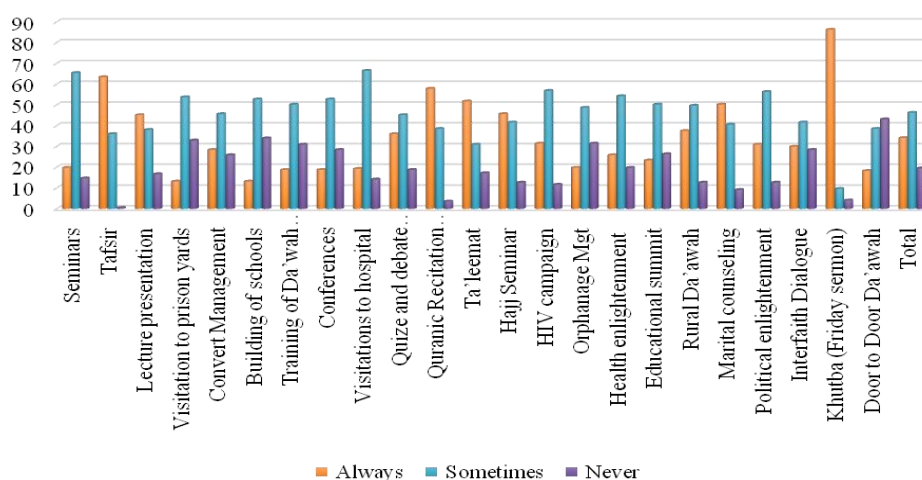
1. Jama'atu Izalatil Bid'ah Wa iqamatis Sunnah (JIBWIS)
2. Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria (MSSN)
3. Federation of Muslim Women of Nigeria (FOMWAN)
4. Muslim Council of Taraba State

Muslim Organizations with Significantly Moderate Performance rate in their Da'wah Activities in Taraba State.

1. National Council of Muslim Youth Organizations (NACOMYO)
2. The fourth is the National Islamic Centre (N.I.C)
3. Taraba Muslim Organization (TMO)

Muslim Organizations with Significantly Low Performance rate in their Da'wah Activities in Taraba State.

Forms of Da'wah activities in Taraba state



IV. Discussion Of The Findings

As the study aimed to assess the concept, Level and forms Da'wah activities by Muslim Organizations in Taraba State, Nigeria. The researcher intends to discuss the findings of the research in the following paragraphs to clearly see the level and Forms of Da'wah activities on the Religious, Social, economic and political lives of the people of Taraba State. Also areas where the Muslim organizations need to improve in respect to Da'wah activities as perceived by the respondents. The discussion would be made using the following sub headings:

Level Of Da'wah Activities Carried Out By Muslim Organisations In Taraba State.

The research result found that the level of Da'wah activities carried out by Muslim organizations in the State is significantly high. The aggregate total of 38.20% of the respondents attests to the above fact. Moreover, Jama'atu Izalatil Bid'ah Wa iqamatis Sunnah (JIBWIS) has the highest performance of Da'wah in the state this was followed by the Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria, Taraba State Chapter. The former has 70% and the later has 69.04% of the respondents that rated their activities as high. The rest of the organizations mostly their performance was assessed as moderate. As can be seen from the above graph.

Forms of Da'wah activities carried out by Muslim Organizations in Taraba state.

This entails the types of Da'wah activities that are actively conducted in the State, the researcher categorized the result in 3 main categories; those activities that are carried out always (that is regularly) and those that are only performed sometimes then those that are never done.

Activities that are Performed always by the Muslim Organizations in Taraba State: Tafsir (given explanations about the verses of the Qur'an during the month of Ramadan and beyond), Lecture presentations, Qur'anic recitation competition, Ta'leemat-Given admonitions, Hajj Seminar, Marital counseling and the highest Da'wah activity in the state is Khutbah (Friday Sermon) this has 86.29% of the respondents.

Activities that are Performed Sometimes by the Muslim Organizations in Taraba state: Seminars, Visitation to prison, Convert management, Building of Schools, Training of Da'wah workers, Conferences, Visitation to hospitals, Quize and debate competitions, H.I.V campaign, Orphanage management, Health enlightenment, Educational Summit, Rural Da'wah, Political enlightenment. **Da'wah activities that are not performed by the Muslim Organizations in Taraba State:** Door to Door Da'wah

V. Conclusion/Findings

1. Generally there is a high level of Da'wah activities in Taraba State it represents the total percentage of 38.20% which is above the bench mark ear marked (33.5%).
2. JIBWIS and MSSN Taraba have the highest percentage of respondents that perceived their Da'wah activities as high.
3. Other organizations; NACOMYO, NIC, Muslim Council of Taraba State and Taraba Muslim organizations perform moderately.
4. Islamic Education Trust (I.E.T) has low performance in their activities in the State.
5. Only Seven (7) out of the 23 forms of Da'wah activities are rated as the activities that are always conducted by the Muslim organizations the rest of the activities are either sometimes carried out or not at all.
6. Training of Da'wah workers, Seminars, Educational submit, Rural Da'wah, door to door Da'wah are some of the activities that are not always carried by the Muslim organizations in Taraba State.

VI. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this Study the following recommendations were made:

1. There is need for special annual training on skills to be employed in Da'wah by the Da'wah workers; Da'wah Institute of Nigeria (DIN) Islamic Education Trust (IET) Minna, Niger State and Muslim Professionals in Da'wah are highly recommended to be invited for this task. Also there is the dare need for Da'wah workers to partake in the work of Da'wah consistently.
2. Media programme be sponsored by Da'wah organizations for wider benefit of the people of Taraba State.
3. Stereotype and self-centeredness be avoided among scholars. Regular and effective analysis of the activities of Da'wah be improved among Da'wah organizations.
4. Frequent Rural Da'wah be constant.
5. The researcher recommends the creation of special Forum meant for intellectual discourse that can improve both intra and interfaith harmony this would greatly facilitate appreciative understanding and enhance peaceful coexistence among various religious groups in the State.

6. Inter Marriages be improved between religious and ethnic groups. Centre for reverts management be created and skillful staff be employed for proper handling of the reverts.
7. Tolerance to non Muslims be improved to avoid enmity.
8. Regular training on Islamic financial literacy be put in place to enable
9. It is highly recommended that the rich class in the State should be encouraged to support Da'wah workers so as to be partners in championing the cause of Allah.
10. Skill acquisition centers be implemented by Da'wah organizations this would help in developing both human and material resources.
11. All praises are due to Allah in whose favour and blessings this study is accomplished May His peace and blessings be upon the noble prophet. Alhamdulillah.

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