

Implementation of Da'wah Program in Brunei Darussalam: An Overview from Brunei Radio-Television and Islamic Da'wah Center

¹Muhammad Akmal Bin Awang Tarif

²Cecep Soleh Kurniawan

¹Pusat Penyelidikan Mazhab Syafi'i Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali, Brunei Darussalam

²Head of Graduate Program, Pusat Penyelidikan Mazhab Syafi'i, Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali, Brunei Darussalam

Email: 13sm057.akmal@gmail.com

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Abstract

Da'wah is obligatory for every Muslim. Therefore, in Muslim societies, da'wah is conducted by various parties, including the government. In this paper, the researchers focus more on the da'wah program carried out by two government institutions in Brunei Darussalam, namely Radio Television Brunei and the Islamic Da'wah Center. These two institutions work hand in hand to help the success of da'wah programs in Brunei Darussalam. This article uses qualitative methods. It collects data from written resources such as books, newspapers, documents, and others. Data is analyzed based on a historical approach. This article finds that due to the da'wah programs of the Islamic Da'wah Center until 2020, the number of converts is increasing, and the Dusun Tribe is the largest ethnic group that converted to Islam in the last five years. This conversion is a good achievement in da'wah, especially in rural areas. This achievement is in line with Brunei Darussalam government programs to support the development of da'wah continues to live and thrive in the broader community in Brunei Darussalam.

Kata Kunci

Program dakwah,
Radio dan Televisi
Brunei, Pusat
Dakwah Islam.

Abstrak

Dakwah wajib bagi setiap muslim. Oleh karena itu, dalam masyarakat Muslim, dakwah dilakukan oleh berbagai pihak, termasuk pemerintah. Dalam tulisan ini, peneliti lebih fokus pada program dakwah yang dilakukan oleh dua lembaga pemerintah di Brunei Darussalam, yaitu Radio Televisi Brunei dan Islamic Dakwah Center. Kedua lembaga ini bahu-membahu membantu mensukseskan program dakwah di Brunei Darussalam. Artikel ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Metode ini mengumpulkan data dari sumber tertulis seperti buku, surat kabar, dokumen dan lain-lain. Data dianalisis berdasarkan pendekatan historis. Artikel ini menemukan bahwa karena program dakwah Islamic Dakwah Center hingga tahun 2020, jumlah mualaf meningkat, dan Suku Dusun merupakan etnis terbesar yang masuk Islam dalam lima tahun terakhir. Konversi ini merupakan prestasi yang baik dalam dakwah, khususnya di pedesaan. Pencapaian ini sejalan dengan program pemerintah Brunei Darussalam untuk mendukung perkembangan dakwah agar terus hidup dan berkembang di masyarakat luas di Brunei Darussalam.

Introduction

Da'wah is a task related to calling people to goodness and preventing evil. Da'wah is also defined as a mission to change, bring and transfer the ummah from one state to another, namely by making people aware of religious matters. Da'wah also leads to truth, encourages good practices, runs away from evil, comes out of the darkness. Therefore, da'wah, in other words, is a noble work in the sight of Allah Subhanahu waTa'ala and His Messenger (Amin, 2013; Meuleman, 2011; Yussof, 2007).

Da'wah means trying to bring others to the religion of Allah, following His guidance, carrying out His decrees on this earth, specializing and determining all forms of self-slavery, supplication and obedience only to Him, escaping from the clutches of non -Allah (taghut) who have to be obeyed, giving the right of the person whose rights are assigned by Allah, denying the rights of the person whose rights are restricted by Allah, calling to goodness and preventing evil and jihad in the way of Allah (Al-Qaradawi, 1987; Meuleman, 2011).

Brunei Darussalam is an Islamic country that places great emphasis on da'wah. Continuous da'wah has been successfully carried out with the involvement and commitment of all parties, especially the Muslim community in this country. Apart from that, various activities were held in multiple fields, contributing to the establishment of da'wah in Brunei Darussalam (Mansurnoor, 2002; Yousif, 2000).

According to history, the spread of Islam came to Brunei Darussalam through Arab missionaries who stopped to do business and at the same time spread the message of Islam to the people in this country. This is evidenced by the discovery of tombstones that mention the names of figures from Arab countries, such as the tombstone of Sheikh Adam, which is located in the Kota Batu area near the Brunei Museum. The monument of Syarif Hud found in Kota Batu was recorded in an article written by T.F. Carey, one of the British Residents. When Awang Alak Betatar was converted to Islam by the Sultan of Johor at that time, he chose the name of Sultan Muhammad Shah and, followed by the people of Brunei at that time, also converted to Islam. This became one of the proofs of the people's obedience to the sultan at that time, where the people followed the religion followed by the sultan (Gin, 2015; Najtama, 2018; Suhayib, 2018).

Meanwhile, da'wah in Brunei snowballed when Sharif Ali came to Brunei and subsequently married the daughter of Sultan Ahmad. Since Sultan Ahmad did not have a prince, then Sharif Ali, who came from the state of Taif, was appointed as the 3rd Sultan of Brunei who ruled from 1425-1432 AD. When Sultan Sharif Ali was appointed sultan, he built the first mosque in Kota Batu. The mosque was eventually destroyed due to being burned by the invading Spanish army in 1578 AD, known as the Spanish war.

According to Zain, Brunei's experience in the method of da'wah, particularly the indigenous people, mentions that da'wah by stabbing and debating does not bring

success. The process of da'wah that has been successfully implemented is at-Ta'aruf (getting to know each other), at-Ta'aun (helping each other, that is, helping those who are not sinful), al-Ihtimam (giving attention and caring), ibtisam (smile) so that each person who is preached feels that he is given special attention so that his heart is captivated by smiles, association, morals, and example so that they do not feel tired and bored when associating with the preachers (Zain, 2011). In this paper, the researchers will only focus on the involvement of Brunei Television Radio and the Islamic Da'wah Center as a da'wah medium in Brunei Darussalam.

Method

This article uses qualitative methods. It collects data from written resources such as books, newspapers, documents, and others. Data is analyzed based on historical approach. Brunei Darussalam is one of the ten ASEAN countries that have placed Islam as the official religion based on the Syafi'i School. Since 600 years ago, the monarchical system has been practiced in Brunei and ruled by 29 sultans. His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam is the 29th Sultan of Brunei. His Majesty ascended the throne of Brunei on October 05, 1967, until now. His Majesty celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Silver Jubilee of the Government on October 05, 1992, and also agreed to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Golden Jubilee of the Government on October 05, 2017.

Result and Discussion

A Short History of Brunei Radio Television

In Brunei Darussalam, Radio Television Brunei, or RTB for short, is a Brunei government broadcasting station. Radio Brunei began broadcasting on May 02, 1957, with the Al-Mahrum Hari Raya Message from His Majesty Maulana Al-Sultan Haji Sir Muda Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien.

As for television channels, RTB started the first broadcast service on February 01, 1975, with five main channels as an experiment. Television services officially began on March 01, 1975, in the Districts of Brunei and Muara. For RTB 1, it was inaugurated by His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah on July 09, 1974. Starting in 2010, the (HD) and Islamic channels RTB 5 were added to its network (Adam, 2003).

At the end of the 20th century, four radio networks were established, as shown in Table 5.1 below:

| Radio Station's Name | Establishment |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Pilihan FM | 31 December 1995 |
| 2. Pelangi FM | 01 January 1996 |
| 3. Harmoni FM | 15 July 1996 |
| 4. Nur Islam FM | 02 May 1997 |

Table 5.1: Establishment of Four Radio Stations. (Source: www.rtb.gov.bn)

Brunei Radio-Television and Its Da'wah Activities

According to Badaruddin (2008), religious programs on radio and television are at a reasonable level where the frequency of its use daily can be seen, such as the establishment of the TV Dakwah Unit and Nur Islam radio channel. Although there are differences in the content of the programs and programs provided, the radio networks also provide religious programs continuously (Kumpoh, 2013; Othman, 2008).

Regarding the da'wah through the RTB, His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam have ordered that from April 01, 1983, the Friday Sermon and Fardhu Prayer must be broadcast live from the Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Mosque by Radio Television Brunei. At first, RTB faced difficulties with implementation because, at that time, RTB still did not have enough equipment. However, thanks to the King's good intentions, this plan has been successfully implemented until now (Juned, 1992; Yussof, 2007).

Researchers made a study that the community's comments at that time were very praiseworthy and expressed admiration, especially for homemakers. They represented a very satisfied attitude because they had the opportunity to follow the live broadcast of the Friday Prayer to hear the sermon and its contents clearly and clear. This is proof of a reasonable effort from RTB in spreading da'wah.

RTB 5 focuses more on religious programs. It is a good move for RTB, but at present, the broadcast cannot be downloaded by all parties so that only those who have certain sets can watch it (Baihaqy, 2017; Jamal, 2015).

According to Mohammad Yusof (2001), Nur Islam station publishes religious programs entirely in talks, discussions, questions and answers, quizzes, guidance programs, etc. The network receives professional support and assistance from KHEU (Ministry of Religion) and PDI (Islamic Da'wah Center) to ensure the quality of broadcasting of this network to meet the needs of listeners and subsequently be able to carry out its primary function in disseminating and implementing the teachings of Islam in Brunei Darussalam (Rahman, 2001).

The Nur Islam Network is the leading network in realizing da'wah because all programs contain aspects of religious education to spread da'wah, such as "Lecture with the Mufti ."This program can be heard every day, starting at 7.30 am and a repeat broadcast in the afternoon, starting at 4.30 pm on the Nur Islam radio network. This brings a good message because when a person does not have time to listen in the morning, it is permissible to listen to the repeat broadcast in the afternoon. While for the show "An-Nur," is a live program that can allow the audience to communicate and ask any questions with the panel members who are invited live. Not only that, we can ask questions and concerns by sending them to the Facebook application that has been provided, and the chairman of the council will read the questions.

Then starting from 2002 to 2020, every Ramadan month, the RTB will work with PDI to publish a particular talk program called: "Ramadhan Karim ."The broadcast is every time before the break delivered by the former Minister of Religious Affairs, Pehin Jawatan Luar Pekerma Raja Dato Seri Utama Dr. Haji Mohd. Zain bin Haji Serudin. As a result of the talk, the PDI has managed to collect the text of the conversation into a book entitled: "Collection of Ramadhan Karim 1-8". This Ramadhan Karim book has been successfully published up to the Ramadhan Karim 11 series, Pehin's talk throughout 2012. For sharing, the Ramadhan Karim 1 to Ramadhan Karim 8 books were initially given free of charge to the attendees who attended the Celebration Ceremony Nuzul Al-Qur'an in the year 1424 Hijrah / 2003 AD until 1431 Hijrah / 2010 AD. Looking at the warm response from the community, the PDI did not miss the opportunity to republish the scholarly book.

And some time ago, around 2010 to 2012, a dakwah program in collaboration with RTB and PDI has also managed to unveil a talk program named: "Siri Rindu Ramadhan" presented by the former Minister of Religious Affairs at that time, the late Pengiran Dato Seri Setia Dr. Haji Mohammad bin Pengiran Haji Abdul Rahman Rahimahullah. The broadcast of this talk can be followed before the news at 5.45 pm during Ramadan. As a result of the speech delivered, the PDI also collected and made it into a scholarly reading book. And it was given for free to attendees who attended the National Level Nuzul Al-Qur'an Celebration in 2011-2013.

Apart from Radio Brunei as a dakwah medium, the same function is also intensified by Brunei Television, in which religious programs are among the basic materials for broadcasting. The programs are broadcast daily, including the Family Guidance program (published every Monday), Teachings from the Qur'an (every Tuesday), al-Hadith (every Wednesday), and the Guidelines of the Faith (every Thursday). Brunei Television also plays its role in glorifying the great days of Islam such as the celebration of Maulid Nabi, Isra 'and Mi'raj celebration, Nuzul al-Qur'an at the National Level, live broadcast of Hari Raya Aidilfitri and Hari Raya Aidiladha Sunnah Prayers, Musabaqah Tilawatil Competition Qur'an and the like (Kumpoh, 2013).

Islamic Da'wah Center in Brunei

Pusat Dakwah Islamiah (PDI or Islamic Da'wah Center) is an institution that plays a role in enhancing the community's knowledge, awareness, and appreciation towards Islam and, at the same time, is responsible for spreading Islam to the non-Muslim community in Brunei Darussalam. The Pusat Dakwah Islamiah building was officially opened by His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam on 01 Muharram 1406 equivalent to September 16, 1985, in conjunction with the Celebration of the Beginning of the Hijrah Year 1406 (Abidin, 2014; Juned, 1992).

It is an institution whose role is to contribute to the development of Islam in the country. PDI has continuously stepped up its efforts to increase knowledge, awareness, and appreciation of religion (D. D. Ho & Yit, 2021; Juned, 1992; Musa, 2015).

The group of Muslims who are the target of da'wah can generally be divided into two: 1) People who have not embraced any religion, especially the local people who live in the ulu-ulu of Brunei. 2) People who already have a religion other than Islam. The latter group is more concentrated in cities.

The da'wah strategy for the two groups is different. For the first group, namely, those who do not have a formal religion, especially those who live in Brunei, the method of da'wah used is more based on the introduction, friendliness, and assistance. They are approached with charity and helped in their lives using "dakwah bil hal." While for those who already have a religion other than Islam, especially those who live in cities, most are educated, used to exchange ideas scientifically and wisdom, not by debating or fighting (Zain, 2011).

The Islamic Da'wah Center has played an essential role in the da'wah movement in the country. Various methods, approaches, and appropriate methods have been used to convey the message to this country's people and residents (Musa, 2015). The mission of the Islamic Da'wah Center is to spread and strengthen the teachings and appreciation of Islam to the people and residents of this country for the well-being of the religion and the country, according to Ahli Sunnah Wal Jama'ah of the Mazhab Syafi'i.

Da'wah Movement in Brunei

Before the establishment of PDI, the da'wah movement in the country was implemented by the Department of Customs, Religion, and Social Welfare, where this department was established in 1954. This department has sought to develop and spread Islam in the country by focusing on providing Islamic understanding, which is true to a society facing a situation of religious confusion. To facilitate this department to carry out the task, a body that focuses on Islamic da'wah was established on January 10, 1958 which was named the Islamic Religious Information Body. This body has carried out da'wah through religious talks and lectures in pulpits and villages and dialogues and film screenings with the theme of da'wah.

To further expand efforts in da'wah, the Islamic Religious Information Body was upgraded to the Information and Tabligh Division in 1964. This change was implemented when the Department of Customs, Religion, and Social Welfare was separated into two independent departments: the Department of Religious Affairs and the Department of Customs and Welfare. Since then, the da'wah movement can be implemented continuously with various strategies and clear visions throughout the country. This can be seen when in 1968, the Information and Tabligh Division spread its wings by opening branches in Temburong, Belait, and Tutong Districts. Thus, the da'wah movement can be carried out more consistently than before, especially in rural

areas. In 1981, changes in the Information and Tabligh Division were upgraded to the Dakwah and Tabligh Division. This division has carried out da'wah activities such as through talks, lectures in pulpits, film screenings, and through print media such as the publication of pamphlets and religious books, and so on. Besides that, Islamic da'wah is also channeled through electronic media in collaboration with Radio Television Brunei. When the PDI was established in 1985, then by itself, the tasks of da'wah have moved to this department with a more guided and directed vision and strategy (Musa, 2015).

The Official Purpose of Da'wah in Brunei

Suppose the dakwah / tabligh movement to non-Muslims, especially non-Muslims, is also said to be an effort to convert them to Islam. In that case, the residents or the people concerned should understand two things: First: Islam became the official religion of the state which is the religion of Allah who calls and commands others to embrace it so that they can both receive forgiveness and blessings and the pleasure of Allah Subhanahu waTa'ala in this world and the hereafter. Second: It is in the interest of the state, in the long run, to require the people and its inhabitants to believe in the truth of Islam, which is the official religion, so that they are easier to unite and easier to be mobilized to obey the king who rules according to religious reasons (Othman, 1980).

Da'wah to Non-Muslims in Brunei

Dakwah is the hinterland that initially received various reactions; some accept and some oppose in multiple ways. However, due to earnestness and perseverance without recognizing the meaning of boredom, da'wah has slowly been accepted and even attracted targets to Islam. Table 7.4.1 below states the statistics of the number of new converts to Islam by tribe /race from 2015 to 2020:

| Race/ Year | IBAN | DUSUN | MURUT | CHINESE | BISAYA | PHILIPINES | EUROPE | OTHERS |
|---------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| 2015 | 134 | 143 | 12 | 68 | 9 | 112 | 14 | 24 |
| 2016 | 115 | 122 | 12 | 75 | 5 | 107 | 9 | 27 |
| 2017 | 109 | 108 | 4 | 60 | 7 | 97 | 5 | 19 |
| 2018 | 99 | 110 | 13 | 70 | 4 | 74 | 5 | 29 |
| 2019 | 111 | 102 | 4 | 47 | 6 | 50 | 4 | 25 |
| 2020 | 118 | 122 | 13 | 74 | 6 | 77 | 2 | 24 |
| TOTAL | 686 | 707 | 58 | 394 | 37 | 517 | 39 | 148 |

Table 7.4.1: Statistics of New Converts to Islam by Tribe/Race.

(Source: Islamization and Preservation of Muallaf Division, Islamic Da'wah Center).

From table 7.4.1, the statistics above show that the Dusun tribe is the most ethnic tribe to embrace Islam when compared to other ethnic tribes with a total of 707 people. While the Iban tribe is the second most tribe converted to Islam, with 686 people. And the third is the Filipino tribe who embraced Islam with a total of 517 people. This shows

that Islamic da'wah in this country is very prominent and accepted by the community, especially to non-Muslims and those who live upstream and inland.

In a study by Asiyah az-Zahra (2013), she reinforces why the Dusun tribe is a tribe that many embrace Islam. Her research shows that the Dusun community is constantly exposed to religious programs broadcast by RTB. Its programs have become a platform for them to build knowledge about Islam (Kumpoh, 2013). This is clear from the results of the interviews she conducted, as shown in table 7.4.2:

Table 7.4.2: Confessions of informants from the Dusun tribe interviewed about religious programs on Brunei Television.

"Mula-mula ku pencen dulu, sudah nada kan dibuat pagi-pagi, duduk-duduk tah ku meliat tv. Kalau pagi-pagi atu, macam pukul enam setengah pagi, memang rancangan yang ada di tv Brunei rancangan agama tu ah, macam ceramah agama, macam mana bunyi do'a lapas sembahyang..."

(Pesara Jabatan Kerja Raya).

"First I retired first, the tone was made in the morning, I sat and watched TV. If it's early in the morning, like, at half-past six, it's a religious show on Brunei TV. As a spiritual talk, what does the prayer sound like after prayers? "

(Public Works Department Retiree).

"Macam sudah biasa kitani mendengar ceramah agama ani di radio, mahupun ceramah yang ada di tv... Kalau pasal sembahyang, puasa dan hal-hal biasa ani, memang tau dan bulih faham..."

(Guru).

"It's like we're used to listening to religious talks on the radio, as well as talks on TV... If it's about prayer, fasting, and usual things, you know and can understand...."

(Teacher).

"Susah masani kan berjumpa urang di Brunei ani yang inda 'expose' arah agama Islam. Contoh terdekat, diriku sendiri. Aku tau Islam bukannya dari membaca buku agama tapi dari radio, dari tv, dari pergaulanku sama kawan-kawan di sekolah dulu, di pejabat..."

(Pesara Pegawai Kerajaan).

"It's hard to meet people in Brunei who are 'exposing' the Islamic religion. The closest example is me. I know Islam not from reading religious books but from the radio, from TV, from my association with friends at school before, in the office...."

(Retired Government Officer).

The conclusion drawn from the interview made by Asiyah az-Zahra is that television programs that focus on religious matters such as spiritual talks can give them extensive exposure to Islam. Another example of a religious program broadcast during Ramadan that makes them more aware of the obligation of fasting for Muslims and Hari Raya Aidilfitri is celebrated after the end of the month of Ramadan.

While the statistics of the number of new converts to Islam according to their original religion from 2015-2020 are as shown in table 7.4.3 below:

Table 7.4.3: Statistics of the New Converts to Islam According to Their Original Religion

| YEAR | CHRISTIANITY | BUDDHA | HINDU | NON-RELIGION | OTHER S |
|--------------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 2015 | 177 | 45 | 5 | 289 | 0 |
| 2016 | 177 | 38 | 1 | 255 | 1 |
| 2017 | 156 | 29 | 4 | 220 | 0 |
| 2018 | 133 | 41 | 2 | 226 | 2 |
| 2019 | 100 | 25 | 5 | 219 | 0 |
| 2020 | 136 | 47 | 3 | 249 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 879 | 225 | 20 | 1,458 | 4 |

(Source: Islamization and Preservation of Muallaf Division, Islamic Da'wah Center)

Table 7.4.3 above shows that the most people to embrace Islam in the past five years from 2015 to 2020 is composed of those who do not have a religious belief that is 1,458 people. Meanwhile, the original religion of Christianity is in second place, embracing Islam with a total of 879 people and followed by Buddhism is in third place with a total of 225 people.

The statistics for the number of new converts by nationality are as shown in table 7.4.4 below:

Table 7.4.4: Statistics of the Number of New Muslims by Citizenship

| YEAR | BRUNEI | PERMANENT RESIDENTS | NON-PERMANENT RESIDENTS |
|--------------|---------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2015 | 239 | 98 | 179 |
| 2016 | 234 | 57 | 179 |
| 2017 | 208 | 51 | 150 |
| 2018 | 223 | 47 | 134 |
| 2019 | 191 | 48 | 110 |
| 2020 | 242 | 57 | 136 |
| TOTAL | 1,337 | 358 | 888 |

(Source: Islamization and Preservation of Muallaf Division, Islamic Da'wah Center)

Table 7.4.4 above shows that the highest number of new Muslims according to their nationality to embrace Islam is from the population of Brunei with a total of 1,337 people. While the temporary population is in the second place most converted to Islam

with a total of 888 people and for the permanent population is in the third place with a total of 358 people.

Privileges Given to New Muslims (Muallaf) in Brunei

The Islamic Religious Councils and Kadi Courts Act (also known as the Religious Laws and Kadi Courts 1955) in part as article 164 provides regarding the responsibility of the Majlis to register converts. Article 167 (3) has provided that converts shall be in the care of the Council for teaching and guiding him within three months, and all his expenses shall be borne by the Council (Othman, 2008).

After attending guidance classes and having specific criteria, those who have just converted to Islam will be considered to receive a special gift from His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan Negara Brunei Darussalam (Zain, 2011). This is one of the characteristics of the Sultan of Brunei's care, which is to generously provide a special fare gift to the converts. This becomes why many converts want to embrace Islam. In addition, they also get guidance from Allah Subhanahu waTa'ala.

Conclusion

This article shows the development of da'wah through Brunei Television Radio and the Islamic Da'wah Center. The two functions of this department are indeed inseparable. At the same time, the community must be aware and understand that the task of preaching is not only focused on these two departments alone, even preaching is a duty for each member, especially to family members, and each individual must contribute to continuing the steps, namely calling man to goodness and preventing evil. However, da'wah in Brunei Darussalam is supported formally by the government. This makes the da'wah more visible and accessible in the public sphere in this country.

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