**From Combating Religious Blasphemy to Promoting Peace: Reflections on the Role of Islamic Da'wah in Indonesia's Pluralistic Society**

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**Abstract:** *This study examines the role of Da'wah in addressing the issue of blasphemy in Indonesia and promoting peace in a pluralistic society. Da'wah, as a form of spreading Islamic teachings, has a significant historical role in dealing with religious conflicts. This study aims to understand how Muslim leaders and communities use Da'wah as a means of addressing blasphemy, reducing conflict, and building social harmony. With a qualitative approach, this study uses a descriptive-analytical method through analysis of historical documents, in-depth interviews with religious figures, and literature studies related to blasphemy cases. Data analysis techniques involve data reduction, data presentation, and inductive drawing of conclusions. The validity of the data is guaranteed through triangulation of data sources, namely comparing the results of interviews, documents, and relevant literature. The results of the study show that Da'wah is used through three main strategies: education to strengthen religious understanding, interfaith dialogue to build cross-faith communication, and a legal approach to formally handle blasphemy allegations. This strategy not only protects Islamic teachings but also strengthens social harmony. Da'wah also plays an important role as a mechanism in strengthening the values ​​of tolerance, mediating conflict, and promoting peaceful life in a pluralistic Indonesian society. Da'wah is not only a tool for affirming Islamic identity but also an effective instrument of social mediation. This finding contributes to the understanding of religious dynamics in Indonesia and its relevance in overcoming the challenges of interfaith relations in the era of globalization.*

Penelitian ini mengkaji peran Dakwah dalam menanggulangi isu penistaan agama di Indonesia dan mendorong perdamaian dalam masyarakat pluralistik. Dakwah, sebagai bentuk penyebaran ajaran Islam, memiliki peran historis yang signifikan dalam menghadapi konflik agama. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami bagaimana para pemimpin dan komunitas Muslim memanfaatkan Dakwah sebagai sarana mengatasi penistaan agama, meredakan konflik, dan membangun harmoni sosial. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif, penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif-analitis melalui analisis dokumen sejarah, wawancara mendalam dengan tokoh agama, dan studi literatur terkait kasus penistaan agama. Teknik analisis data melibatkan reduksi, penyajian data, serta penarikan kesimpulan secara induktif. Keabsahan data dijamin melalui triangulasi sumber data, yaitu membandingkan hasil wawancara, dokumen, dan literatur yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Dakwah digunakan melalui tiga strategi utama: pendidikan untuk memperkuat pemahaman keagamaan, dialog antaragama untuk membangun komunikasi lintas kepercayaan, dan pendekatan hukum untuk menangani tuduhan penistaan agama secara formal. Strategi ini tidak hanya melindungi ajaran Islam tetapi juga memperkuat harmoni sosial. Dakwah juga berperan sebagai mekanisme penting dalam mengokohkan nilai-nilai toleransi, memediasi konflik, dan mendorong kehidupan damai di masyarakat Indonesia yang majemuk. Dakwah tidak hanya menjadi alat penegasan identitas Islam tetapi juga instrumen mediasi sosial yang efektif. Temuan ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pemahaman tentang dinamika keagamaan di Indonesia serta relevansinya dalam mengatasi tantangan hubungan antaragama di era globalisasi.

**Keywords**: Da’wah; Religious Blasphemy; Indonesia; Historical Analysis.

**Introduction**

Da’wah (Islamic proselytization) is commonly encountered in various forms in Muslim-majority countries around the world. Da’wah holds significant importance in spreading the message of Islam and fostering positive changes in society. The term encompasses the act of inviting individuals, groups, or communities to embrace Islamic teachings, values, and practices. Da’wah is not limited to verbal communication but extends to embodying Islamic principles in one’s actions and interactions with others.[[1]](#footnote-1)

In line with the previous statement, in the context of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) as institutions of education and da’wah have innovated remarkably. They not only deliver religious lectures but also engage in more practical domains such as community service and environmental concerns, all grounded in religious interpretations.[[2]](#footnote-2) This demonstrates that the development of da’wah is becoming increasingly contextual.

Philosophically and theologically, da’wah should aim to promote harmony, peace, and prosperity by encouraging adherence to Islamic norms and laws.[[3]](#footnote-3) Thus, the fundamental principle of da’wah is peace. Every Muslim is obliged to participate in da’wah activities to communicate Islamic values to others.[[4]](#footnote-4) In my personal view, da’wah can be conducted through speech and actions, or simply by setting a living example that aligns with religious values, which can also be categorized as da’wah activities.[[5]](#footnote-5) A proactive approach to da’wah allows for the dissemination of religious values across various societal layers.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Leadership plays a crucial role in the propagation of Islamic teachings through da’wah. Leaders are seen as instrumental in spreading the message of Islam and establishing a just and compassionate society.[[7]](#footnote-7) In the Indonesian context, the prominence of an ulama (Islamic scholar) holds a special place within certain communities, such as Gus Baha from Nahdlatul Ulama and Ustadh Adi Hidayat from Muhammadiyah. These figures not only represent the thoughts of the two oldest Islamic organizations in Indonesia but also exemplify the methods of da’wah in NU and Muhammadiyah.

In the current era, the utilization of digital media and technology has transformed the approaches to da’wah. The emergence of platforms like social media and the internet has opened up new channels for spreading Islamic messages on a large scale.[[8]](#footnote-8) Through utilizing these digital tools, Islamic preachers and educators can connect with a wider audience and effectively impact people’s awareness and behavior.[[9]](#footnote-9) The widespread use of digital media now enables da’wah messages to easily reach the general public. Progress in communication technology can speed up the transmission of a religious leader’s perspectives to their followers, addressing modern social and religious concerns.

An issue that consistently attracts attention in digital media is religious blasphemy. Within the Indonesian context, religious blasphemy has been a controversial topic with significant consequences for the nation’s social, legal, and political landscape. The concept of blasphemy, especially in Indonesia, has been closely linked to efforts to preserve religious harmony, prevent social turmoil, and uphold the sanctity of religious beliefs.[[10]](#footnote-10)

One remarkable example demonstrating the effects of blasphemy laws in Indonesia is the case of Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, also known as Ahok, the former governor of Jakarta, who was convicted in 2017. Ahok’s two-year prison sentence for blasphemy marked a significant turning point in Indonesia’s approach to such cases.[[11]](#footnote-11) I have personally delved into the linguistic and legal analysis of this particular case.[[12]](#footnote-12) In this article, I will delve into an anthropological perspective on da’wah activities in Indonesia as a way to tackle issues related to religious blasphemy.

Da’wah has evolved into a strategy to counter discussions on social matters intertwined with religion (specifically those deemed harmful to Islam). Over the course of da’wah history in Indonesia, we have witnessed how da’wah messages are used to combat the spread of certain ideologies like communism and promote unity among various societal groups, including nationalists and religious factions.[[13]](#footnote-13) The legal system has been employed to address situations where individuals are accused of insulting or disrespecting religious beliefs, often resulting in legal actions and, at times, imprisonment.[[14]](#footnote-14)

The implementation of blasphemy regulations in Indonesia has not been free from controversy. Instances of alleged blasphemy, especially during political occasions like presidential and gubernatorial elections, have incited public anger and protests, emphasizing the delicate nature of religious matters in the nation.[[15]](#footnote-15) The utilization of blasphemy allegations for political purposes has worsened tensions and deepened social rifts.[[16]](#footnote-16) Additionally, the discussion on religious blasphemy in Indonesia intersects with wider societal dynamics, encompassing public devotion, social structure, and the advancement of religious principles.[[17]](#footnote-17) The legal framework overseeing blasphemy in Indonesia, in comparison to other nations, mirrors a intricate interplay between legal assurance, constitutional aspects, and historical viewpoints.[[18]](#footnote-18) The endurance of blasphemy statutes and their enforcement in democratic Indonesia highlights the difficulties in upholding freedom of speech, religious liberties, and social concord.[[19]](#footnote-19) Religious multiplicity and the legal consequences of blasphemy have been topics of academic investigation, illuminating the normative proposals, theological configurations, and social deeds of diverse religious factions in Indonesia.[[20]](#footnote-20)

As mentioned earlier, this paper will concentrate on an anthropological reflection on da’wah messages in addressing issues of religious blasphemy. It is essential to delve into a historical survey dating back to around 1900 to comprehend the evolution of responses to blasphemy. Researchers can track the progress of legal frameworks, social norms, and cultural perceptions regarding blasphemy by analyzing historical data, trends, and societal attitudes over time. While not all instances of religious blasphemy in Indonesia have been recorded in academic literature, I will endeavor to detect patterns in da’wah messages pertaining to religious blasphemy. My goal is to establish a historical framework by exploring the intersection between da’wah and anti-blasphemy and assess its significance in present-day Indonesia.

To address this, the paper will systematically examine the religious life context in Indonesia from around 1900 to the 2000s. The subsequent section will explore da’wah movements during these periods and their focal points. Subsequently, I will delve into how da’wah has been employed to combat religious blasphemy and the development of da’wah in the contemporary period.

**Method**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical method to explore the role of Da'wah in addressing the issue of blasphemy and promoting peace in Indonesia. As a qualitative study, this study focuses on an in-depth understanding of socio-religious phenomena related to Da'wah strategies applied in the context of a pluralistic society. With a descriptive design, this study aims to describe the role of Da'wah in detail in managing religious conflicts from a legal, social, and cultural perspective, covering historical periods from the colonial period to the modern era.

The research approach combines sociological and normative perspectives. The sociological approach is used to analyze Da'wah as a social phenomenon that influences the dynamics of interfaith relations. Meanwhile, the normative approach views Da'wah as a religious activity based on the principles of Islamic law. The combination of these two approaches allows the study to understand the role of Da'wah both as a conflict mediation mechanism and as a means of strengthening religious identity.

The research data were obtained from primary and secondary sources. Primary data include in-depth interviews with religious figures, Da'wah practitioners, and academics who have insight into the issue of blasphemy. Secondary data include legal documents, media reports, and related academic literature. Data collection was conducted through three main techniques: in-depth interviews to explore informants' perspectives and experiences, document studies to understand existing regulations and practices, and literature reviews to obtain theoretical and historical overviews that support the analysis.

Data analysis was conducted through the process of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The data obtained were summarized to identify information relevant to the focus of the research, then arranged in the form of a thematic narrative to describe patterns of the role of Dakwah in easing religious conflict. Conclusions were drawn inductively by identifying thematic relationships that emerged from the data. Data validity was ensured through source triangulation, namely comparing data from interviews, documents, and literature to ensure consistency of findings, and verifying results with key informants to reduce potential interpretation bias.

This comprehensive approach is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Dakwah functions as an important mechanism in building social harmony in the midst of diverse Indonesian society, as well as its relevance in the context of contemporary law and social dynamics.

Result and Discussion

Historical Context Religious Life in Indonesia (c.1900 Onwards)

From 1900 to 1945, Indonesia was known as the Netherlands East Indies. During this period, the country was a melting pot of diverse cultures and traditions. Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and indigenous belief systems coexisted within the fabric of the nation. The religious landscape of Indonesia during the Dutch colonial period was shaped by a complex interplay of colonial policies and indigenous religious practices. The Dutch colonial government implemented a dualistic education model that separated secular public schools from religious teachings, making Islamic Schooling to be the opposition of European schoolings.[[21]](#footnote-21) The Dutch authorities restricted the jurisdiction of religious courts, except in areas concerning family law, such as marriage and inheritance.[[22]](#footnote-22) This restriction reflected the Dutch opposition to the formal imposition of Islamic law beyond specific domains.

Scholars have emphasized the historical origins of secular-religious debates and their influence on the Indonesian national education system during the Dutch colonial period.[[23]](#footnote-23) The dichotomy between science and religion, institutionalized during this era, was a vestige of Dutch colonial politics.[[24]](#footnote-24) The Dutch colonial period also impacted the advancement of medical education in Indonesia, marked by the initiation of medical training for native youth in Jakarta in 1849.[[25]](#footnote-25)

Furthermore, the Dutch colonial legacy extended to inheritance laws, where customary and Islamic inheritance laws coexisted alongside Dutch practices.[[26]](#footnote-26) The Dutch colonial government conducted ecological mapping for the establishment of salt production centers in Indonesia, reflecting their administrative and economic interests during that time.[[27]](#footnote-27) Additionally, representations of nature and landscape in the Dutch East Indies (colonial Indonesia) were influenced by gender, race, and European ideologies.[[28]](#footnote-28)

In the era of independence, the religious life in Indonesia is still characterized by the diversity of religious identities intertwined with other aspects such as political dynamics and the quality of social life. The country’s shift to democracy after the downfall of the authoritarian New Order government in 1998 has led to notable transformations in the religious scenery, impacting the interplay between national and religious identities.[[29]](#footnote-29) The 1998 Reformasi has brought a new atmosphere to the democratic life in Indonesia with reforms in the economic, legal, and political realms.

In the post-1998 Reform era, Indonesia experienced a shift towards greater openness in communication. This environment fostered a willingness among communities to express their identities. Notably, individuals with religious fundamentalist beliefs have become more vocal in advocating for ideas that challenge the Indonesian constitution through an Islamic social lens.[[30]](#footnote-30) This development ignited a nationwide dialogue on how to balance the freedom to express religious beliefs with the need for national unity.

To confront the surging problems introduced by religious fundamentalist movements, the Indonesian administration is taking steps to enhance religious moderation as a tactic against radicalism. The Ministry of Religious Affairs plays a vital role in this initiative by facilitating peaceful Islamic discourse and integrating the principle of religious moderation into the educational framework.[[31]](#footnote-31) The main focus of this effort is to strengthen the awareness and cooperation among the extensive spectrum of religious groups in Indonesia, comprising Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, alongside numerous traditional beliefs.[[32]](#footnote-32) This initiative seeks to manage diversity while fostering harmonious coexistence among different religious groups, reaffirming a commitment to peaceful living and mutual respect.

Despite efforts to advocate for religious moderation, interfaith tensions persist in post-authoritarian Indonesia, influenced by factors such as multiculturalism, political dynamics, and a history of conflict.[[33]](#footnote-33) The intricacies of religious pluralism in Indonesia are reflected in the difficulties of managing diversity and addressing internal religious factors that ignite discord. Within the sphere of education, integrating religious tolerance into the national syllabus seeks to encourage principles of acceptance, variety, and harmonious living among school students.[[34]](#footnote-34)

The integration of moderate Islam in education exemplifies efforts to cultivate a new generation in Indonesia dedicated to fostering interfaith harmony and understanding. Ultimately, Indonesia’s religious landscape throughout the 2000s exhibited a delicate balance between religious diversity, political evolution, and social cohesion. The emergence of religious extremism, the advocacy for religious temperance, and continuous initiatives to regulate interreligious tensions underscored the evolving dynamics of religion within Indonesian society and the complexities of negotiating religious affiliations in a diverse nation. After examining the historical context and development of religious life in Indonesia, the next subset discusses the emergence of da’wah movements in Indonesia from the early of the 20th century and how it affects the sociopolitical conditions in the archipelago.

The Inception of Da’wah Movements in early 20th Century Indonesia

The rise of da’wah activities in Indonesia can be traced back to the early 20th century. The unfavourable conditions for the indigenous population under Dutch colonial rule, especially since the implementation of the cultuurstelsel system in the 19th century, gradually triggered the emergence of nationalist movements as well as the da’wah movements without exception.

The increasing resistance against the Dutch colonial rule had developed the notion of promoting Islamic values and principles as oppositional towards European values and system.[[35]](#footnote-35) The oppression by the colonial government awakened Muslim social movements as a form of resistance. Organizations like Sarekat Dagang Islam (SDI), which evolved into Sarekat Islam (SI) in 1906, aimed to address the challenges faced by the Muslim community and advocate for greater autonomy and recognition within the colonial framework.[[36]](#footnote-36) Such example provides argument that the rise of these da’wah movements was not solely a religious matter but a social one, grounded in religious values.

At the early 20th century, some Islam organization established, such as Muhammadiyah (1912) and Nahdlatul Ulama (1926). It reflects the merger of the social movements of Muslims, [which] emerged as nationalist movement and so on which endeavoured to take over from the Dutch colonial administration. In his view, the tank and its cannon served only as a shape shifter that morphed into that of the ideology espoused by the various indigenous movements; movements which provided platforms to propagate Islamic teachings, for Muslims to bond in solidarity with one another while attempting to champion social and economic justice.[[37]](#footnote-37) These thoughts mirrored a larger awakening among Muslims in Indonesia with regards to reaffirming their religious and cultural identity in response to the colonial pressures.

The contextualized da’wah, promoting Islamic values in social-practical context, are supported by prominent Islamic scholars, activists, and institutions that played critical roles in promoting Islamic teachings and values during the early 20th century. One of the notable figures in the early Da’wah movement was Haji Agus Salim, a respected Muslim leader and diplomat who advocated for Islamic education and social reform.

Established in 1912 by Ahmad Dahlan, Muhammadiyah was a space for da’wah and social activities with more emphasis on educational as well as societal changes founded upon Islamic principles. The group sought to improve the status of Muslims through education and social welfare. Muhammadiyah during the Dutch colonial era were crucial in advancing da’wah and social change by their belief that Islam runs not only vis-s-à-vis worship but also through realization of education, modernization, and social welfare according to Islamic principles.[[38]](#footnote-38) It was designed as a counter to Dutch colonial influences by encouraging Islamic values, education, and charitable enterprise among the Indonesian Muslim population.

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) that was established by Hadratusy Shaikh KH. Hashim Asy’ari in 1926 had emerged as one of the most significant and impactful Islamic organizations in Indonesia. The primary emphasis of NU lies in education, alongside the preservation of community traditions and culture. During the era of Dutch colonization, NU, in conjunction with Muhammadiyah, played a vital role in the da’wah movement.[[39]](#footnote-39) Both groups have made substantial contributions to disseminating Islamic teachings, enhancing social welfare, and promoting educational initiatives across Indonesia.

By advocating for Islamic education, social justice, and civic involvement, NU and Muhammadiyah work to ensure that the awareness of Indonesian Muslims remains intact and untainted by colonization. Their commitment to safeguarding Muslim cultural and religious heritage has been successful in upholding Islamic identity and reinforcing social cohesion despite the adversities encountered during the Dutch colonial period.

Da’wah in Indonesia evolved through the pre- and post-independence eras involving several socio-political transitions and reactions to stances of prominent individuals and organizations. Duplex models were the conerstones of pre-independence Nationalism movements to mobilize Muslim masses against colonial oppression calling for social justice and empowerment through some da’i on activities. Via organizations such as Sarekat Islam (SI) and Muhammadiyah, they sought after way to spread Islamic teachings and also help meet the material needs of Indonesian Muslims. Prominent figures such as Haji Agus Salim and Kiai Haji Mas Mansur played important roles in connecting Islamic principles with nationalist demands, supporting the interests of Muslims, and fostering inter-religious concord. They must be seen as major participants in the early development of Islamic activism in Indonesia.

In the post-independence era, Da’wah movements would persist in developing and Islamic parties and organizations would look to grant their actualization within the wider social landscape. Islamic parties emphasized Islamic values and endeavored to interact with post-independence socio-cultural conditions and developed Da’wah strategies to respond to contemporary challenges. The figures and Ulama that had influence on the post-independence period of Indonesia were crucial in setting the direction of Da’wah movements and fulfil the needs of a new republic for Muslims.[[40]](#footnote-40) Similarly, the post-independence period witnessed the establishment of modern Da’wah-oriented academic and promotional institutions to rebuilding religious symbols, including liberty, justice, and cooperation. This had implications for the Islamic teachings that the schools espoused, as well as efforts to nurture social cohesion among Muslims in Indonesia and empower them through educational and community projects.[[41]](#footnote-41) As such, Da’wah movements during Indonesia’s transition from pre- to post-independence eras were a continuation of efforts to propagate Islamic teachings, strengthen Muslim communal life as well as respond to socio-political challenges in the country. There were key figures and organizations that took this trajectory of Da’wah movements into pertinence, adjusted their strategies according to the social needs of the Indonesian community, hence fostering flourishing debates in Islamic paradigm within the society.

Da’wah and Its Role Against Religious Blasphemy

The term ‘religious blasphemy’ used to refer to actions or expressions, whether written or spoken, that insult or insulting; and causing a direction of hatred and hatred for an abuse towards religion in Indonesia. Religious blasphemy concerns are inherent to the perception of the protection and preservation of religious values, the continuation on social stability as well as, precisely in this case, identity. Religious blasphemy in Indonesia is regulated predominantly through criminal law, with the crime of Blasphemy (Law No. 1/PNPS/1965) in force since 1965 punishing acts deemed blasphemous against a small number of officially recognized religions. Designed to protect religious harmony, the law punishes insulting or offensive acts relating to religious beliefs as tools of incitement of religious hatred or violence.[[42]](#footnote-42)

Blasphemy laws in Indonesia regulates the prejudicial treatment and hate speech between religions that surrounds hateful defamatory opinions. The acts of blasphemy can be directed towards the religious symbols, leaders, scriptures, or practices and is commonly perceived as a violation against the norms and values of religion that exist in Indonesian society.[[43]](#footnote-43) The use of blasphemy laws in Indonesia has been criticized, with some alleged that they are used to oppress freedom of expression, persecute religious minorities and restrict religious pluralism. The implementation of blasphemy laws has faced stiff criticism over their infringement on religious liberty, harm towards societal cohesion, and defense for minority religious bodies.[[44]](#footnote-44)

In the Indonesian case, religious blasphemy is an explosive issue and is deeply rooted in wider debates around freedom of religion, tolerance and the rights of individuals to practice their faith while maintaining social harmony. The ways in which the interpretation and enforcement of blasphemy laws have been carried out as a reflection of Indonesia’s complicated relationship between religion, law, and politics, thus pointing to the difficulty it faces when it comes to accommodating religious diversity while still respecting basic human rights within its multi-religious society. Religious blasphemy as a whole is a rich tapestry of different action and memory, rooted in the efforts of Indonesia to protect religious values while also renewing social harmony in a multiplicity in various group. The interpretation and enforcement of the blasphemy laws in Indonesia is still in process, but this phenomenon will give impact to how religious freedom is addressed in discourse, by illustrating where the limits are between acts that can be permitted or when public tolerance not applicable anymore, or even where under what circumstances does the protection of identity become a right that must be respected.

Da’wah strategies in Indonesia have experienced a development from traditional methods that relied on peaceful educational approach to an increasingly assertive one which is more compatible with societal changes and technological developments. In the beginning, the issue of da’wah strategies is prioritized for educational activities, peaceful opening presentation and the habit of moderation preaching through media tools and discussions with community leaders.[[45]](#footnote-45)

As societal dynamics changed, Da’wah strategies in Indonesia also changed adopting more assertive approaches to meet contemporary challenges. In this conversion spread of faith through preventive action in order to apostasy, thrust some social media in communication, and directing measure in the activity favors Da’wah.[[46]](#footnote-46) Digital channels and social media has indeed shaped Da’wah strategies in the dissemination of religious messages geared towards reaching diverse audiences.[[47]](#footnote-47) Contemporary Da’wah practices today deployed search engine optimization, multimedia applications and digital communication to ensure the continuality of wider outreach and engagement.

In addition, the development of Da’wah strategies that are more assertive can be seen from the use of persuasion techniques, stories and multimedia that are interesting as a form of delivery or socialization of religious messages and the solution to today’s problems.[[48]](#footnote-48) These strategies look to coalition-stakeholder engagement, navigate contemporary social complexity and disseminate religious imperatives in innovative ways. This transformation has been channeled into the forms of da’wah strategies in Indonesia that are marked by a more assertive character believes because of several factors such as the shifts in societal; demands, technological advances and the space for religious communication. The growing awareness of the benefits of adopting innovative ways and means in carrying out da’wah to transmit the message of Islam, engage diverse groups, and maintain Islamic teachings and values.

The exposure of da’wah against blasphemy case in Indonesia has contributed to the history of demographic change in terms of religious thoughts and social dynamics. A pertinent example of this is the rejection of non-Muslim leaders, such as in the case of Basuki Tjahya Purnama (better known as Ahok), the former Jakarta Governor that was on trial for blasphemy against Quran. These arrests were followed by protests and further allegations of blasphemy against Islam, which sparked resistance among Muslim youth.[[49]](#footnote-49) The next case study of the victimization of Ahmadiyyah in Indonesia, again heavily discriminated against with various violence charges (mostly of heresy) against its member. Putra et al. discuss the implementation of these above challenges by referring on how difficult for Ahmadiyyah community to be an interpart in religious pluralism, and what kind of tolerance in Indonesia needs a further investigation.[[50]](#footnote-50) On the other hand, discussion of blasphemy in Indonesia has come under both legal and social examinations. This legal analysis compares blasphemy law in Indonesia with other countries, including Ireland and Canada, to understand the legal framework of criminalizing blasphemy and its impact on freedom of religion or belief and social harmony.[[51]](#footnote-51) Also, the use of digital platforms and social media in Da’wah activities has been a progressive step towards solving blasphemy problems. Taken together, these case studies shed light on the intertwined character of Da’wah against blasphemy in Indonesia, echoing how religious discourse, legal system, and social context played out in dealing with questions of religious tolerance, freedom of expression and societal harmony.

Contemporary Perspectives of Da’wah in Indonesia

Social media and the internet have revolutionized Da’wah movements across Indonesia, transforming the flow of religious messages and audience interaction. Islamic outreach is no doubt more easily obtained and global in the digital age. Taking example from Bandung of West Java, social media has initiated the formation of digital Islamic social networks, which are marked by the presence of Muslim intellectuals who are influential in establishing da’wah activities at universities.[[52]](#footnote-52) Similarly, the convergent digital media era has also had its impacts on Da’wah by manifesting cyber Da’wah activism as a manifestation of political and ideological motives in online religious messages.[[53]](#footnote-53) This practice of utilizing social media and live streaming has been especially important for Da’wah during the pandemic period, giving students an opportunity to engage with wider audiences and carry on their work despite limitations.[[54]](#footnote-54) Specifically, digital media role as a Da’wah tool is very much visible and important as it acts spreading messages of religion to the public at large with thematically interactive and remotely engaging.[[55]](#footnote-55) By way of example, the Tastafi Da’wah movement during the pandemic shows how social media and live streaming enabled practitioners to scale up and respond at speed.[[56]](#footnote-56) This is an advancement in Da’wah strategies in the country by embracing social media and internet to improve communication, involve the audience and increase influence.

Da’wah practices in Indonesia are also partially defined by state regulations, and laws on blasphemy. Respecting religious freedom, appreciating differences and focusing on positive goals in Da’wah efforts could be a good way to create tolerance, harmony and peace among religious communities.[[57]](#footnote-57) Such informing depicts one of the key techniques to advance comprehension and concordance as Indonesia traverses its differing strict scene: teaching Muslim minority gatherings, excepting insights with feelings of dread for security or hawks promoting moderate convention.[[58]](#footnote-58) The integration between religion and state by fostering the values of anti-radicalism, religious moderation, nationalism, tolerance and encouragement for local cultures to reduce conflicts in with other beliefs.[[59]](#footnote-59)

The state regulations and laws of blasphemy affect the Da’wah by encouraging religious tolerance, education, in terms of faith and as well moderation. It is through the dynamics of legal systems, social norms and religious doctrines that guides Da’wah practitioners to manage the narrative of religion and maintain its balance within Indonesian society.

Promoting Peace through Da’wah

Da’wah, which translates to the act of inviting individuals to understand and embrace Islam, in Indonesia has taken a new turn specifically in relation to the question of blasphemy. Some of the approaches and strategies have changed over the years in Da’wah efforts and for some, remained unchanged. In Indonesia, however, Da’wah has been one of the most effective ways to deal with social problems and at the same time maintain peace in a plural society.[[60]](#footnote-60) It has been stressed the urgency of Da’wah in creating harmony and understanding among different people in a plural society where it would play its role to create a cohabiting peacefully and harmoniously.[[61]](#footnote-61) Moreover, Da’wah has been an instrument of social justice, educating people about social ills and striving for a better society but viewing it through the lens of religion.[[62]](#footnote-62)

Highlighting that the use of digital media for Da’wah communication is not only relevant but even more desired for communicating religious messages.[[63]](#footnote-63) In addition to that, Da’wah has penetrated the entertainment and education spheres. Music has become one of Da’wah integration into pop culture, for example through the music of Maher Zain, blending the Islamic activism and engaging.

On the other hand, Da’wah institutions in campus have contributed to the formation of ideological movements at public universities.[[64]](#footnote-64) Many of these processes have gone through huge transformation processes throughout time, however the principles of Da’wah continue to be tying traditional practices. To conclude, the evolution of Da’wah in Indonesia demonstrates a fusion between traditional and modern methods to square with day-and-day challenges. The theory and medium of Da’wah has changed with the times, but the ultimate goal to present Islamic values is still seen as an important agenda in Indonesia.

The effectiveness of Da’wah in Indonesia in maintaining religious harmony without leading to the potential escalation of conflict is a complex matter that appears to be conditioned on several variables. The whole enterprise of da’wah, that is to say, the delivery of Islamic teachings to others (as well as vice versa) through whatever mechanism, has major accounts in feeding into the nature of inter-religious relations in any country. A number of studies have recognized the importance of Da’wah to enhance mutual understanding, empathy and coexistence among the communities with different religions in order to strengthen religious harmony.[[65]](#footnote-65)

Promoting religious harmony through Da’wah has been highlighted as an effort to counter radicalism and promoting religious moderation in the practice of Islamic teachings.[[66]](#footnote-66) It could lead to a more harmonious and tolerant society if the Da’wah calling for tolerance, peaceful interactions and mutual respect.[[67]](#footnote-67)

The effectiveness of Da’wah in fostering religious harmony can also be influenced by many factors. People need to take into account the way Islamic preachers (da’i) spread Islam in Indonesia, where their communication style may affect the success of Da’wah effort both verbally and non-verbally.[[68]](#footnote-68) The utilization of Islamic counselling and art performances in Da’wah activities has also proven effective in raising religious awareness and delivering religious messages as intended.[[69]](#footnote-69)

Da’wah activities must be closely monitored so as not to inflame hostilities further or, in the extreme, incite violence. A key point in fostering religious harmony is avoiding claiming shared social identity with other believers, while at the same time minimizing denigration of other religions.[[70]](#footnote-70) Keeping an equilibrium of Da’wah and tolerance will tries not to be causing division or creating conflict. Thus, the Da’wah community in Indonesia can work to become a tool that will be very helpful in advancing harmony and comprehension between religious communities that are so diverse. If Da’wah is emphasized on empathy, tolerance and peaceful co-existence, it will definitely help building a transparent, more loving society. Yet, it is necessary to carry out Da’wah in a way that respects the beliefs of others and cultivates mutual respect so as not to agitate the situation which ultimately results in tensions or conflict.

Education is essential to Da’wah in the way it molds one’s perception of Islam and how one engages with the progressive multicultural society. Religious education versus fostering a tolerant, multicultural society: The dilemma between the two ideas is one of the most critical issues in educational practice in Indonesia. Some have argued that education plays a key role in fostering tolerance, understanding, and inter-religious harmony between difference religious communities.[[71]](#footnote-71)

In Indonesia, the implementation of religious education in schools, especially Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is important to build up values of peace, tolerance and multiculturalism among students. PAI teachers play a role in guiding students to be respectful of diversity, been moderate in understanding religion, and have the importance of living side by side. Other than that, the Islamic curricular could also serve as one medium to build society tolerant and inclusive by emphasizing the significant issues and sparking critical consciousness.

Universities can contribute to create a harmonious and inclusive society by establishing an environment conducive to religious diversity and encouraging respectful interactions.[[72]](#footnote-72) As important as the above, certainly they contribute a lot about promoting peace and tolerance, to the part of the Islamic boarding schools/pesantren. Pesantren have helped to promote a peaceful relationship and understanding between followers of different faiths.[[73]](#footnote-73) Pesantren also build on interfaith cooperation and respect to draw pathways through building community synergy and enhancing peaceful life. It is imperative that the Islamic education curriculum include multicultural values and adhere to them in order to establish a tolerant and accepting culture. So, by incorporating the values of multicultural Islamic Religious Education, educational institutions can form students who are expected to have skills and positive attitudes towards a heterogeneous society.[[74]](#footnote-74) By embracing multicultural-based Islamic education, it can return the spirit of togetherness and trust between diverse religious communities. So, in a nutshell, education is an integral part of the Da’wah to not only learn about the religion, but also to instil values of tolerance, respect and understanding in a multicultural society. There are many steps educational institution in Indonesia can take to build a harmonious and inclusive society where different backgrounds can exist, among other is by bringing religious moderation into the education system, promote interfaith dialogue as well as embrace multicultural values.

Conclusion

The historical evolution of da’wah in addressing blasphemy in Indonesia demonstrates its adaptability in reinforcing religious principles while fostering social harmony. Through education, interfaith dialogue, and legal measures, da’wah has contributed to conflict resolution and promoted peaceful coexistence among diverse religious communities. This approach highlights the importance of integrating religious teachings with multicultural values and interfaith dialogue to nurture mutual respect and understanding. Practically, these findings imply that da’wah should continue evolving to address contemporary challenges by leveraging digital platforms, fostering constructive discussions, and prioritizing empathy and tolerance. Future research should explore innovative da’wah strategies that engage younger, tech-savvy audiences and assess their impact on interreligious relations and social cohesion. By advancing these efforts, da’wah can remain a pivotal tool in building inclusive and peaceful societies.

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