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THE PRACTICE OF DAKWAH COMMUNICATION TOWARDS INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY IN SELANGOR

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Abstract

Penggerak Masyarakat Orang Asli (PMOA) plays an important role towards the Indigenous community including looking after the welfare and and also contributed to the development of da'wah. Therefore, this article aims to identify the communication da'wah used by preachers and the challenges of preaching towards Indigenous community. This qualitative study uses a case study design. The data were obtained through semi -structured interviews involving a total of Nine Penggerak Masyarakat Orang Asli (PMOA) in the State of Selangor as participants. The data were arranged and coded according to themes and categories resulting from the complete transcript. Data were also analyzed descriptively. The results of the study shows that the method most widely used by Penggerak towards Indigenous community is da'wah bil hal. Among them are visiting the homes of Indigenous community, carrying out activities with Indigenous community and others.

Keywords: *Communication, Da'wah, Preacher, Indigenous community*

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INTRODUCTION

Communication is the core element of humanity which cannot exist without a safe channel of communication. Islam is a religion founded on communication, and then, like any religion, faces many difficulties in developing and adjusting to modernity and, in particular, economic and cultural. Therefore, this study aims to identify clearly the effective ways to communicate while preaching to the Indigenous community. They are also impressed by the modern technological advances in both good and bad side. However, not all transformations give the negative impact and many of them also accept the development of country and surprisingly they gain the positive impact from it. For example, many of the Indigenous community (known as Orang Kuala) have succeeded in empowering the economy by changing their lives toward a better person (Amir Zal 2013).

Indigenous community is part of the population that makes up Malaysia. According Ministry of Rural Development (2018) shows the numbers of Indigenous community in Peninsular of Malaysia are 178,197. There are varieties of religion followed by Indigenous community such as Islam, Hindu, Animism, Bahai, Buddha, and Kristian and Atheist. From that, the number of Muslim are 35975, Kristian with 17351, Animism with 58043 and Atheist 42757. With high number of Muslim, it show the potential to attract the others to revert to Islam. However, the process to attract them must use the appropriate method. The Islamization process and approach should be seen as a very important process to help in improving the quality of life of indigenous peoples.

This is supported by Hairunizam Wahid and Radiah Abdul Kader (2010) that said the religious factors are among the crucial factors because they are able to affect mental health, changing individual attitudes and also leading to a positive life that can long-term influence individual changes in lifestyle and economics.

According to Halim Mokhtar (2002) the majority of the Indigenous community still adhere to animism or in other words it called as religious beliefs inherited from their grandparents. He said, only about 8% of those who accept da'wah term and become Muslims. Thus, it clearly shows that only few numbers of the Indigenous community who converted to Islam and might indicate that the development of Islamic preaching still not favorable. Therefore, a preacher must use good communication to achieve his target mission which is to convey the message of da'wah.

In the context of preaching knowledge, it is including Islamic teachings from various aspects of Islam regarding the faith, syariah, morals and history aspects Prophetic biography

(Abd al-Karim Zaydan 1993). In other word, we need to apply these aspects of the process of becoming a perfect Muslim. In addition, the preachers can use appropriate communication as mediums to ensure the Indigenous community will understand, accept and adhere to Islam to achieve happiness in the world and the hereafter (Kustadi 2013). What we can understand from this statement the main purpose of preaching is to make sure our Mad'u accept our content of da'wah and all preacher must know how to use appropriate method.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study uses a case study form as research design. In -depth interview method in the form of semi -structured interviews was used to collect research data. Interviews were conducted with nine activists who are active in preaching to Indigenous community in Lembah Klang and Selangor. They are *Penggerak Masyarakat Orang Asli* (PMOA) who were appointed by JAKIM. In this study, the sample was selected purposefully and marked with the symbol Informant (Informant), namely Informant 1, Informant 2, Informant 3, Informant 4, Informant 5, Informant 6, Informant 7, Informant 8 and Informant 9. Among the selection criteria for the study sample are those who was officially appointed as *Penggerak Masyarakat Orang Asli* (PMOA) under JAKIM in Selangor. The process of data analysis is done by arranging the study that is adapted to the theme and sub -themes that have been built for each question to answer the objectives of the study.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Based on Engku Ahmad Zaki Engku Alwi (2014) the life of the Indigenous community community, which is far behind in all areas, requires them to be helped and given serious attention as well as to improve their living standards and introduce the teachings of Islam among them. This race not only needs direct guidance, but all this time this race which has evolved longer than the Malay race observes and evaluates the Malays with their Islamic image. Coupled with the typical hold of animism that has been inherited from generation to generation makes this society in a dilemma between changing their way of life completely or accepting Islam which is still mixed with the practice of animism.

There are various negative perceptions that arise regarding to islamic teaching which is the issue of how the unsuitable or inappropriate method way of preaching toward Indigenous community that make them difficult to understand the teachings of Islam. In addition, minimal knowledge of Islamic teachings in the context of worship, such as prayer and recitation of the Quran, has left the Indigenous community feeling isolated even though embraced Islam

(Abdullah, 2015). As a result, they consider the status of Islam only as an official "label" of religious in the context of relations with outsiders (Abdullah, 2015). In other word they just regard Islam as a religion without practice.

Based on the previous research, the researcher found there are three main issues in preaching toward Indigenous community which are 1) Preacher; 2) Negative mindset; 3) Influence Missionary. In delivering da'wah preacher (da'ei) plays a main crucial to make da'wah more effective. Without preacher da'wah process unable to successful. Research by Abdullah Muhammad Zin and Padzal Hj. Mokhtar (2009), their study focuses on the methodology of da'wah used by preachers when preaching to the Indigenous community in Sungai Berua Hulu Langat. That research is concerned with the acceptance factors of the Indigenous community toward the Islamic religion that has been delivered by the preachers. In that research they found that this community were attracted to Islam when they saw the good behavior of the preachers like helping each other, respect and affection to each other. They found the good values were portrayed by the preachers during they communicated with them besides the Indigenous community were treated as equal partners, they were not underestimated and be treated as a brother who needs to understand his mind .In fact, they feel be appreciated by outsiders with the existence of Indigenous community in Malaysia.

However, according to Syed Abdurahman (2008), there are three main issues that cause the Indigenous community difficult to receive da'wah delivered to them which are (1) the obstacles are from the preachers themselves; (2) the lack of preachers' capability to deliver the da'wah and (3) the less ability to work and less ability to do da'wah efforts. It also has been suggested by Hood Salleh (1991) that there have four aspects which contribute to the failure of preaching among the Indigenous community and unfortunately the failures are came from the preachers themselves. Firstly, the preachers who lack of basic information about their careers, secondly, the preachers who have low motivation to recognize their targets that cause them not have persistence to carry out da'wah activities, next is unsupervised missionary efforts and assisted by neighborhood community activities primarily from Malaysians who are largely concerned with what can be categorized as anti-social toward target communities and prejudiced preachers from aspects of personality management that often exhibit images arrogant.

Meanwhile, for the negative mindset perception, it is related with behavior and attribute of Indigenous community. Saleh et. Al. (2009) found the characteristic of the Indigenous community during learning process include low self-esteem such as shyness and self-esteem

that are often tricked by Malay people and Malay people begin to take advantage to the Indigenous community. According to Abdul Ghafar Hj Don (2009), one of challenges is the bad character that showed by the Malay community who are seen to take advantage such as stealing buffaloes, cheating and insult the Indigenous community and cause them hate the Malay people.

Zulkefli and Halim (2016) also point out that the Indigenous community were so disappointed with the Malay people who were dishonest when dealing with them especially in terms of buying and selling. This situation can lead to the challenge that has to face by the preachers because this attitude wears away the perception that Islam is a good religion. This is because they assume that the Muslims are the Malay people. In other words, they postulate embracing Islam must be the Malay. For Example, from A'dawiyah Ismail, Salasiah Hanin Hamjah and Fairuz Hafizh (2014), Malay people who not keep their promise with Indigenous community means that they deceive the Indigenous community. It happens when they rent or buy fruits on a debt and they promise to pay the debt but unfortunately they do not pay the debt even time has been completely depleted. Furthermore, there are the Malay people who remain as the Indigenous community neighbors but do not take care, do not help and worst part is despise them. Therefore, the preacher need proper techniques to engage and attract Indigenous community is necessary to be focused and appropriate for this research.

In addition, it is about Christianization among Indigenous community, many agencies that responsible to do the preaching activities among the Indigenous community are Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM), Jabatan/Majlis Agama Islam Negeri and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as PERKIM and others. They run various programs through the religion classes, Islamic welfare programs, provide scholarship assistance and development projects but yet still contribute only small impact in improving the quality of religious life among them.

The development of da'wah among the Indigenous community has been rivalled by other religions, especially from Christianity. However, it be seen as a healthy competition as the views expressed by Nizam Sahad and Che Zarrina Saari (2005) whereby the rivals are between preachers and Christian missionaries. The missionaries of Christianity claim that they are willingly to endure and face the hardships to carry out the task of Christianizing the Indigenous community despite has to face the various risks and forced to live in the wilderness (Syed Abdurahman bin Syed Hussin, 2010). Moreover, for the sake of their mission to Christianize the Indigenous community, they also cope to marry with the Indigenous

community women. It was proven when a Dutch resident was married to the Indigenous community Jakun and lived in a remote village near Tasik Chini, Pahang (Abdulllah Muhamad Zin 1993).

According to Julie Edo (2011), the Muslim preachers work hard to invite the Indigenous community to embrace Islam. But different approach used by the Christian Missionaries, they practiced their religion through good interaction with the Indigenous community and this is their methodology to introduce Christianity.

Based on the discussion, generally the efforts on preaching activities to the Indigenous community give the impression that the techniques of preaching performed by preachers should be given attention. So, researcher want to focus on the practice of communication da'wah by preachers and when it comes to communication, good advice can be divided by two, verbal and non-verbal. Through past research, researchers have found that there is less research about da'wah through communication by preaching can be best conveyed by the preacher. And this study also wanted to identify the preaching of the preaching used by the preacher when interacting with Indigenous community. For the preaching purpose, the Indigenous community need proper approach given by the preacher in order to ensure they can build their trust to the preacher. By having the correct approach, it can help Indigenous community to give their responses, impressions, perceptions and perceptions of their beliefs, understanding and appreciation the Islam as a way of life.

FINDING OF RESEARCH

This research shows that the preachers who are Penggerak Masyarakat Orang Asli (PMOA) have used verbal and non-verbal forms of communication when preaching to the Indigenous community in Selangor. In the use of dakwah communication towards Indigenous community, the results of the study showed that Penggerak used dakwah bil hal more than dakwah bil Lisan and dakwah bil Qalam. Dakwah bil hal is dakwah communication in the form of non-verbal.

And in forming the correct da'wah communication towards Indigenous community. Penggerak have also received various threats either from internal threats from Indigenous community or external threats from the outside community. There are also dangerous threats that can threaten the life of penggerak between being bewitched, being threatened with death and so on.

DAKWAH BIL HAL

This research shows that Informants 1 to Informant 9 agreed that *dakwah bil hal* is a method of dakwah that is suitable for Indigenous community because the acceptance of dakwah bil hal is accepted in various forms by Indigenous community. according to Samsul Munir Amin (2009) *da'wah bil hal* as a missionary by developing infrastructure as an example of the construction of hospitals for the needs of the surrounding community in need of hospitalization. And from the results of the study by Informants 1 to 9 many facilities have been built to build good relationships with Indigenous community. For example, informant 8 helped to build a surau for the use of religious classes and solat fardhu for Indigenous community who are Muslims.

Among the dakwah activities used by Informants 1 to 9 is to visit Indigenous community houses. According to Informant 6, it has become a habit for every *penggerak* to carry out visit activities to Indigenous community houses in their villages. With the activity of visiting, we can get closer to the target of *da'wah*. This is because Indigenous community has the nature of always remembering what others have done to them. (Informants 6 and 9)

In addition, with this visit activity, able to make Indigenous community more friendly with us. We can also start by saying hello and telling a long story about Islam in order to build human relationships. Indigenous community always think that outsiders will be disgusted if they sit near them, so the opportunity is there for us to be close by having contact with indigenous people. As stated by informant 4:-

“When visiting Orang Asli, first we have to be friendly, then we can go in slowly with them. That is the method that ustazah usually use. For example, if you go to meet them to chat for the first time, they will ignore, so the ustazah has to start the friendship first by saying hello to them. It is necessary to hold on, if you do not hold them, we will feel that they are disgusted, so they do not want to be close to us. The reason is that the ustazah started with a reprimand only but he answered only one word. Then, the next day when the ustazah asked if he was healthy and he was friendly. Then if we meet again, he will reprimand us. So that's where the feedback comes from”.

In the activity of visiting Indigenous community, *Penggerak* also makes every effort to help them in their daily affairs. For example, *Penggerak* assists Indigenous community in matters of documentation of Indigenous community such as making identity cards, court matters including marriage matters. According to Zikmal Fuad (2014) *dakwah bil hal* focuses on various forms of dakwah activities through education, politics, leadership and community relations. And according to Samsul Munir Amin (2009) *dakwah bil hal* as a preacher by

developing infrastructure as an example of building a hospital for the needs of the surrounding community who need treatment in the hospital. According to Informants 2 and 9 they will try to help Indigenous community to lighten their burden. Most of Indigenous community do not have a high level of education and as a result many of them are illiterate and cannot read well. Therefore, Penggerak will try to help by taking them to Jabatan Pendaftaran Negara (JPN) in the matter of Identity Card and will help them to manage their documentation.

Gotong royong activities are also a suitable approach for Indigenous community. It can also involve non -Muslims to participate in gotong royong activities. According to informant 4, when gotong royong activities are carried out then there will also be cooking activities suitable for women among Indigenous community. And gotong royong activities are not only carried out to clean the village but there are also gotong royong activities to cook on certain occasions such as cooking at festivals and so on. In this way, it is easy for Penggerak to approach the target of dakwah which consists of Indigenous community women. This was also agreed by informant 3 because cooking is an important activity in the Indigenous community village. However, the boundary between Muslims and non -Muslims must also be taken seriously because there are also foods that are not halal served for non -Muslim villagers. If something like this happens informant 3 will try to stay away from it to prevent unwanted things from happening.

Apart from the activities that need to involve two parties between Penggerak and Indigenous community, the spiritual aspect in the formation of Islamic teachings in Indigenous community must also be emphasized. Therefore, to ensure that the teachings of Islam continue to grow in Indigenous community village, Informant 8 has helped Indigenous community under his supervision by building a surau. With the construction of the surau, it is hoped that the appreciation of Islam in them will continue to increase and be able to produce a generation of Indigenous community who understand the Islamic lifestyle.

DAKWAH BIL QALAM

In the growing development of social media there are many platforms that provide suitable applications to be used as a medium to communicate. And among the very popular applications in Malaysia are Whatapps, Facebook, Instagram and many more. Most of Indigenous community are also accept technological advances today.

According to Noradilah Abdul Wahab (2019), the explosion of communication technology especially in social media today has become a new phenomenon among the world community. In fact, the use of social media has become a very popular activity with the use of modern technological tools. Therefore, the preachers also need to keep pace with the changes that have taken place so that they will not left behind. *Wasilah da'wah* in Islam is also not only focused on one specific way only. Therefore, focus of this study is to see the role of social media as a medium of preaching in accordance with the needs of the time.

On the advancement of technology and the increasing user of gadgets, informants 1 to 9 have used the whatsapp application as a medium to spread da'wah to Indigenous community. For example, in the whatsapp, people use the application to communicate with each other. This matter has been used by informants 5, 2,8,4,9 and 3 to share information that is good for the them. In the whatsapp group, they are able to share information of the activities that will be carried out in the village. However, the response was less encouraging and was criticized by Indigenous community for stopping sending religious messages.

According Informant 8, not all Indigenous community can master today's technology well. Parts of the them between the ages of 60 and 70 are unskilled in using gadgets and consider gadgets to be new and difficult things to use in their daily lives. The use of these gadgets is more popular among teenagers because when they leave the village most of them are already exposed to the importance and use of gadgets for themselves.

DAKWAH BIL LISAN

This study shows that *dakwah bil lisan* will affect their acceptance of Islam. Therefore, according to informants 5 and 9, the use of language that is soft and easy to understand by the target of da'wah is very important. We are aware that Indigenous community has their own language and some of them do not speak Malay well. To carry out da'wah communication a gentle language is very necessary to use because Indigenous community have a sensitive nature. Language is also very important because when preachers communicate to Indigenous community by using the language of Indigenous community, they assume that we appreciate their culture and language. Preachers only need to use a few Indigenous community languages to attract their attention as used by informant 2:

"First we use the Malay language and if I don't understand, I will use Indigenous community language such as "do you understand?" I will use "understand yap". If I don't understand Malay, I will teach in the native language. (Informant 2)

The use of language is important to attract Indigenous community with the teachings of Islam. For example, informant 4 has invited speakers among Indigenous community. The matter has attracted the interest of Indigenous community to attend the event and they can accept the speaker only for using Indigenous community language when delivering his talk.

In *surah An-Nahl* verse 125 Allah SWT has reminded in a word that means: "Call (all people) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good teaching (wise) and argue with them in a good way". In the effort of da'wah, it is very necessary for us to speak wisely to ensure that our target of da'wah can accept what we want to convey. Informant 7 reminds us to always organize every word that comes out of our mouths to avoid Indigenous community feeling offended with us. This is because, when they are offended, it will cause them not to talk to us again.

BARRIER AND CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENT DA'WAH COMMUNICATION

According to Halim Mokhtar (2002) the majority of the Indigenous community still adhere to animism or in other words it called as religious beliefs inherited from their grandparents. He said, only about 8% of those who accept da'wah term and become Muslims. Thus, it clearly shows that only few numbers of the Indigenous community who converted to Islam and might indicate that the development of Islamic preaching still not favorable. Therefore, a preacher must use good communication to achieve his target mission which is to convey the message of da'wah.

The factors that cause Indigenous community are not ready to accept Islam is due to the development of Christianity in Indigenous community villages. There are so many activities of the Christian movement that it is able to obscure the eyes of Penggerak. Among them, the Christians will spread their teachings by using the houses of Indigenous community as "churches". According to Informants 4,5,6,8 and 9 they informed that Indigenous community who are Christians will use their house as a gathering place for Indigenous community who profess Christianity. Their purpose is to use the Indigenous community house instead of building their own house of worship because to prevent their movement from being inhaled by Penggerak Masyarakat Orang Asli (PMOA). And Penggerak are not allowed to prevent their movements as they do on Indigenous community land. And according to Informant 6:-

"there were Christians once with a church and the church was connected to the house. When the religious office wanted to go and take action, he said this is my house. When he says so, we have no right to demolish. The council also has no right to demolish the

house unless the church is segregated from the house. But he declared the church in front of his house". (Informant 6)

Besides receiving threats from the Christians, Penggerak also got problems posed by the outsider community. Among them is the negative attitude shown by the Malays. When a bad attitude is shown by the Malays to the aborigines, it gives a bad perception of Islam because we already know that in Malaysia all Malays are Muslims. According to informants 2 and 5, some Malays (men) are married to Indigenous community (women) but do not encourage their wives to study Islam, even the husband does not work and is supported by his wife. This gives a bad perception to Malay community and Islam. As those who are Malays and married to Indigenous community, they should set a good example and lead their spouses towards a perfect Islamic life instead of taking advantage of the advantages that Indigenous community have.

According to informant 8, the difficulties of Indigenous community to accept Islam because they describe their lives before and after Islam are the same. It is only because the Malays enter Indigenous community villages to spoil Indigenous community girls, join the dance ceremonies. Some even drank alcohol and got drunk with the children of Indigenous community. This actually gives a bad perception to Penggerak because most of Penggerak in Selangor are Malays.

Besides, a difficult problem to solve is the problem of cohabitation among Indigenous community. Cohabitation means both unmarried male and female couples. This matter becomes difficult if it involves non -Muslim Indigenous community because penggerak cannot interfere because all decisions will be determined by the Tok Batin in each village. However, if one of the couples is a Muslim, usually Penggerak will ask the non -Muslim to embrace Islam and marry each other. According to informant 6 the problem of cohabitation stems from the low level of knowledge about Islam. If they understand the concept of sin and reward, they may be caught in such a disgusting act.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the result of the study show that the form of da'wah communication to Indigenous community is divided into two, namely verbal and non -verbal. And non -verbal approaches such as da'wah bil hal into da'wah communication can be conveyed well. However, dakwah bil kalam and dakwah bil lisan are still relevant for use to Indigenous community. Each element has a role and influence that brings the effect of Penggerak Masyarakat Orang Asli

(PMOA) dakwah to the Indigenous community in Selangor. For proactive preachers who like to use a variety of skills then they need to ensure the appropriate use of communication for their dakwah targets. However, preachers need to be prepared physically and mentally because to preach to Indigenous community is not an easy thing because from the geographical point of view their villages are located in the interior and the attitude of Indigenous community does not accept Islam with their hearts. However, we need to be confident that with the various forms of da'wah methodology, we are able to approach the target of da'wah with the appropriate da'wah methodology. This is because Indigenous community settlement area has certain differences in their daily lives. Therefore. This situation requires the efforts and skills of the preachers to know specifically the background and lifestyle of the local community.

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