

Original Article

The Evaluation Of Islamic Da'Wah In Bangladesh Between Past and Present: An Analytical Comparative Study

Mohammad Ishaque Husain¹, Muhammad Kamrul Islam Bhuiyan¹, Mohammad Abdullah Abdur Rashid²

¹ Faculty of Contemporary Islamic Studies (FKI), University Sultan Zainal Abidin, Kuala Nerus, Terengganu - Malaysia

² PhD researcher, Faculty of Primary Language Studies (FPBU) University Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), Malaysia

*Corresponding author : ishaquehusain@uniswa.edu.my

Abstract

Islamic Da'wah in Bangladesh has been one of the central pillars in shaping the religious and cultural identity of the Bengali people since the arrival of Islam in the region during the medieval period. The early contributions of Sufi Du'at (preachers), scholars, and traders played a decisive role in establishing the principles of Islamic faith and in building strong social and cultural bonds. As a result, Da'wah became a key factor in constructing the national and religious character of the Bangladeshi people. Over the course of history, however, Da'wah in Bangladesh experienced diverse transformations linked to political conditions—such as British colonialism and the subsequent movements for liberation and independence—social dynamics, including popular mobilizations and the proliferation of religious educational institutions, as well as intellectual and technological developments in the modern era. This study seeks to conduct a comparative analytical investigation into the evolution of Islamic Da'wah in Bangladesh between past and present. It focuses on tracing the methods and approaches employed by Du'at across different historical periods, analyzing the nature of Da'wah discourse, and assessing its influence on the socio-political and cultural environment. Adopting a comparative analytical methodology that integrates both historical and contemporary dimensions, the study aims to highlight elements of continuity and change within the Da'wah experience. It further explores the factors that contributed to the success of Da'wah in earlier times, as well as the challenges that hinder its effectiveness today, including globalization, secularization, the rise of digital media, and the spread of ideas conflicting with Islamic values. The significance of this research lies in its holistic reading of the Bangladeshi Da'wah experience, by bridging the rich historical legacy with the evolving contemporary context. Such an approach provides a foundation for envisioning a future-oriented Da'wah practice that is more impactful and sustainable. The study concludes that the continued success of Islamic Da'wah in Bangladesh depends on its ability to balance authentic adherence to Islamic principles with innovation in methods and programs, thereby reconciling Islamic identity with the practical needs of society. It also recommends the development of Da'wah curricula in light of technological changes, strengthening the role of official and community-based Islamic institutions in promoting values of moderation and balance, and investing in the training of Du'at capable of addressing modern challenges through scholarly and culturally resonant discourse.

Keywords: Analytical Comparative Study; Bangladesh; Historical Development; Islamic Da'wah;

Introduction

The concept of Islamic *Da'wah* (الدعوة الإسلامية) is widely recognized as the fundamental operational principle that has preserved the identity and unity of the Muslim Ummah throughout history.¹ It is, as articulated by *Yusuf Al-Qaradawi*, the essential "bridge connecting creed and behavior," and the dynamic link between the revealed text and ever-changing human reality. At its core, *Da'wah* is far more than mere verbal transmission; it embodies an integrated civilizational

¹ Challenges of Islamic Da'wah in Bangladesh: The Christian Missions and Their Evangelization Ali, M. Y., & Nurullah, A. S. (2009). *IJUC Studies*, 4, 87–108. <https://doi.org/10.3329/ijucs.v4i0.2857>



project dedicated to nurturing the Muslim individual intellectually, spiritually, and ethically, thereby facilitating holistic societal reform guided by the comprehensive Islamic methodology. This balanced approach is enshrined in the Qur'anic injunction: "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best". This verse establishes the *Da'wah* framework upon knowledge, ethical persuasion, and compassion, unequivocally rejecting coercion or fanaticism.² Historically, *Da'wah* has been the principal vector for Islam's expansion, not through military might, but through the exemplary conduct, justice, and integrity displayed by merchants and preachers in their dealings with diverse populations, drawing hearts and minds to the faith. Hence, *Da'wah* is not a static religious ritual but a continuous process of renewal and reform vital for sustaining the Islamic identity amidst intellectual and social transformations.

The entry of Islam into the Bengal region (modern-day Bangladesh) offers a distinctive and highly significant case study in the dynamics of Islamic expansion. This was not a singular event but a complex, centuries-long historical process driven by a confluence of commercial, Sufi, and educational factors.³ Early Muslim influence was established through robust maritime trade routes linking the Bengal coast with ports across the Muslim world, dating back potentially to the 8th century CE. Muslim traders, whose ethical practices in commerce served as a practical demonstration of Islamic values, initiated a profound cultural and religious interaction with the indigenous population. Historical evidence indicates that this commercial presence paved the way for the deeper religious and linguistic penetration that followed (*Aqlam Alhind*).⁴

The most pivotal and enduring influence on the rooting of Islam within the social fabric of Bengal was exerted by the Sufi movements. Figures affiliated with orders such as the *Qadiriyya*, *Chishtiyya*, and *Naqshbandiyya* employed a highly effective spiritual and community-based methodology. Rather than relying on political authority or rigid doctrinal debates, the Sufis (*or Awliya*) established *Khanqāhs* (lodges) and *Zawāya* in remote rural areas. They focused on asceticism, remembrance (*dhikr*), and social welfare, offering both spiritual solace and practical support to local communities, particularly the lower castes of Hindus and Buddhists who were often marginalized by the prevailing social structures.⁵ This inclusive and adaptive approach, prioritizing moral excellence and community engagement over confrontation, catalyzed a large-scale, peaceful conversion and cultural assimilation process that firmly integrated Islamic principles with Bengali cultural specificities.⁶

The contemporary importance of studying the Bangladeshi *Da'wah* experience is underscored by its status as one of the world's most populous Muslim-majority nations (approximately 90% Muslim). Islam is central to the national and cultural identity of the Bengali people. Its historical trajectory—characterized by peaceful propagation and resilience against colonial pressure—renders it a crucial model. During the British colonial era, Islamic scholars and reformers actively resisted cultural Westernization and preserved religious identity by establishing extensive networks of Islamic schools (*Madrasahs and Maktabas*) and reformist organizations. These institutions became bulwarks of authentic Islamic education and served as mechanisms to counter the cultural erosion imposed by colonial rule. Thus, understanding this experience is vital for developing modern Islamic thought that effectively integrates authenticity with the demands of democratic, developmental, and technological change.⁷

Literature Review and Problem Statement

The existing academic literature on *Da'wah* in the Indian subcontinent reveals a significant dual focus: extensive historical analyses detail the early factors of Islamic entry, while contemporary studies examine the emergence of modern Islamic movements and institutions. However, a critical methodological gap persists. The central research problem addressed here is: How has Islamic

² Dawah Activities towards Youths in Bangladesh: Challenges and Prospects in the Light of Prophetic Model Osmani, N. M., & Rahman, T. (2022). *Al-Risalah: Journal of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences*, 6(2), 520–541. <https://doi.org/10.31436/alrisalah.v6i2.417>

³ A Systematic Literature Review Study on Da'wah and Islamic Economic Empowerment Cipta, H., & Zakirman, A. F. (2024). *Mawaizh: Jurnal Dakwah dan Pengembangan Sosial Kemanusiaan*, 15(1), 102–131. <https://doi.org/10.32923/maw.v15i1.4358>

⁴ Evaluating Da'wah Management: Study on Effectiveness of Messages and Reception of Da'wah Zahara, A., et al. (2025). *Translitera: Jurnal Kajian Komunikasi dan Studi Media*, 14(1), 90–94. <https://doi.org/10.35457/translitera.v14i1.4467>

⁵ Digital Transformation of Mosque Da'Wah: Organizational Learning & Innovation Thoha, A. F. K., & Ibrahim, M. S. S. (2023). *Al-Balagh: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi*, 8(2), 307–342. <https://doi.org/10.22515/albalagh.v8i2.7634>

⁶ Digital Da'wah and Religious Authority: A Narrative Review Ulyan, M. (2023). *Sinergi International Journal of Islamic Studies*, 1(3). <https://doi.org/10.61194/ijs.v1i3.591>

⁷ Yuyun Affandi, M. F. Azmi, I. Sutiawan, & A. Muzajjad. (2023). Navigating the challenges of da'wah: Insights from Buya Hamka's Tafsir Al-Azhar. *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah*, 44(2), Article 21435. <https://doi.org/10.21580/jid.v44.2.21435>



Da'wah in Bangladesh evolved between its traditional historical roots and its current form, and what are the key dynamics of continuity (doctrinal constants) and renewal (means and discourse) that define its effectiveness today? This question arises from the evident contrast between the community-rooted, spiritual influence of the past and the contemporary *Da'wah* environment, which is increasingly shaped by globalization, gradual secularization, the pervasive influence of digital media, and the subsequent erosion of traditional institutional authority.⁸

Identification of the Research Gap and Justification

The most pronounced gap lies in the scarcity of comprehensive, systematic comparative analyses that effectively bridge the historical and contemporary realities of Bangladesh. Most studies tend to isolate either the historical dimension or the modern institutional responses. There is an urgent need to examine how traditional institutions (like the *Madrasahs*) can maintain their theological and jurisprudential constants (continuity) while simultaneously adopting effective modern communication strategies and digital tools (renewal) to address pressing socio-ethical challenges, such as aggressive missionary activities, moral decline, and the secular curriculum (SciSpace; Alukah; ResearchGate).⁹ This deficiency in holistic, comparative scholarship—which should integrate archival sources with modern field data—underscores the necessity of the current research.

Research Significance (Theoretical and Practical Value)

This study's significance is twofold. Theoretically, it contributes substantively to the field of Comparative *Fiqh al-Da'wah* by providing an in-depth case study from a non-Arab context, thereby facilitating the development of a more robust and culturally adaptive global *Da'wah* theory. Practically, the research offers a critical diagnosis of current constraints, which include: insufficient strategic coordination among diverse *Da'wah* organizations (including political and non-political groups), a growing generational disconnect between traditional preachers and young digital activists, and the increased politicization of religious discourse.¹⁰ The resulting analysis is intended to produce actionable recommendations for *Da'wah* institutions in Bangladesh on how to strategically employ digital platforms for youth engagement and how to renew their discourse to effectively tackle modern socio-economic challenges like poverty and anti-religious sentiment without compromising Islamic fundamentals.

The contemporary *Da'wah* landscape in Bangladesh is characterized by a high degree of pluralism and ideological complexity. The spiritual legacy of Sufism coexists alongside the strong reformist influence of Deobandi and Bareilvi traditions, as well as the organized social-political movements. This diversity, while rich, often leads to fragmented efforts and the absence of a unified strategic vision to counter external ideological currents, such as the gradual secularizing effects of globalization and targeted religious proselytization.¹¹ Therefore, this study aims to explore mechanisms of *Da'wah* adaptation that utilize modern communication technologies to reach the masses, particularly the youth, while grounding the content firmly within the authentic principles of Islamic law and the rich local heritage.

Research Objectives: To effectively address the central research question and fill the identified knowledge gap, this study sets forth the following objectives: 1. Historical-Developmental Analysis: To meticulously analyze the historical phases and turning points that have shaped the *Da'wah* process in Bangladesh, from its initial Sufi/trade foundation to its post-independence political and social manifestations. 2. Traditional Methodology Documentation: To identify, describe, and assess the role of traditional *Da'wah* methods (e.g., *Khānqāh* networks, traditional *Madrasahs*, and classic oratory) in establishing and maintaining Bengali Muslim identity. 3. Assessment of Modern Means: To study and evaluate contemporary *Da'wah* tools and discourse in Bangladesh, with a focus on digital platforms, mass media, and their engagement with youth audiences. 4. In-depth Comparative Evaluation: To conduct a rigorous comparison of past and present methodologies in terms of reach, impact, challenges encountered, and discursive strategies employed. 5. Future Strategic Vision: To propose a balanced and sustainable strategic model for the future of Islamic *Da'wah* in Bangladesh that

⁸ The Technological Revolution and the Dynamics of Islamic Da'Wah Mubarak, H., et al. (2022). *At-Tajdid: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pemikiran Islam*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.24127/att.v6i1.1806>

⁹ Implementation of Islamic Education and Wasathiyah Da'wah for Millennial Generation Wulandari, W. (2022). *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 19(1), 129–140. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.2022.191-10>

¹⁰ Dakwah Islam dan Revolusi Komunikasi Abdullah & Prasetya (2023). *Transformasi: Jurnal Kepemimpinan & Pendidikan Islam*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.47945/transformasi.v7i1.1384>

¹¹ Concepts and Principles of Da'wah in the Frame of Islamic Community Development Ibrahim & Riyadi (2023). *Prosperity: Journal of Society and Empowerment*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.21580/prosperity.2023.3.1.13716>



integrates historical authenticity with technological and intellectual renewal to meet emerging global and national challenges.¹²

Method

Methodology: This study employs a tripartite methodological approach to ensure a comprehensive and rigorous investigation into the developmental trajectory of Islamic *Da'wah* in Bangladesh. Firstly, the Historical Method is utilized to trace the chronological stages of *Da'wah* in the Bengal region, spanning from the initial advent of Islam through to the contemporary era. This method involves the critical examination of primary historical sources and classical scholarly works that meticulously documented the early transformations of the *Da'wah* and the social structures of the pioneering preachers and Sufis.¹³ The primary objective here is to establish the authentic roots and foundational spiritual-social context that underpinned the Muslim community in Bangladesh, thereby providing a robust backdrop for analyzing subsequent changes. Secondly, the Comparative Analytical Method is applied to systematically analyze the means and approaches of *Da'wah* across different eras—comparing traditional practices with modern ones—and to discern the dimensions of continuity versus change in the *Da'wah* discourse and mechanisms. This is a well-established and essential methodology in the field of *Fiqh al-Da'wah* (Jurisprudence of *Da'wah*) studies. The comparative analysis aims to identify the core constants that must be preserved (such as doctrinal principles and ethical conduct) alongside the necessary innovations (such as modern media and educational strategies).¹⁴ Thirdly, the Descriptive Method is employed to accurately and objectively portray the contemporary reality of Islamic *Da'wah* in Bangladesh. This involves focusing on the current landscape of educational and *Da'wah* institutions, analyzing the nature of digital media discourse, and documenting the specific challenges presently faced by *Da'wah* organizations, relying heavily on recent academic literature and reliable field-based reports for contextual data.¹⁵

To execute this integrated methodological framework, the research draws upon three primary types of data collection sources. These include: (a) Classical Historical Sources, comprising works that authenticate the early phases of Islam's spread in Bengal through trade and Sufism; (b) Contemporary Academic Studies, which encompass peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly dissertations, and research papers that have analyzed *Da'wah* movements and their influencing factors within the post-independence Bangladeshi context; and (c) Field Reports and Research published by recognized *Da'wah* and Islamic institutions within Bangladesh, which provide practical, on-the-ground insights into the current realities and operational challenges of *Da'wah* work. Operating within this robust framework, the study aims to systematically and rigorously formulate an updated conceptual understanding of *Da'wah* evolution in Bangladesh, synthesizing theoretical frameworks from *Fiqh al-Da'wah* and the broader scholarship on the spread of Islam to ensure both accuracy and scholarly depth.

Islamic Da'wah in Historical Bengal ***The Distinctive Historical Experience of Da'wah in Bengal***

Islamic *Da'wah* in the Bengal region stands out as one of the most remarkable historical phenomena in the Islamic world, marked by a profound intertwining of religious, cultural, and social dynamics that culminated in a unique model of Islamic expansion devoid of direct military imposition. This spread was the fruit of concerted efforts—both individual and collective—led by scholars, Sufis, and merchants over many centuries, allowing Islam to deeply permeate the social fabric and become an integral component of the region's cultural, political, and religious identity.¹⁶ Pioneering research by scholars like Richard Eaton demonstrated persuasively that the wide acceptance of Islam in Bengal was not a consequence of political coercion or conquest. Rather, it

¹² Optimizing The Role of Da'wah Bil Hal for the Young Generation in the Modern Era Nasrillah, M. G., et al. (2024). *Quality: Journal of Education, Arabic and Islamic Studies*, 2(1), 79–92. <https://doi.org/10.58355/qwt.v2i1.40>

¹³ Evaluating Da'wah Management: Study on the Effectiveness of Messages and Reception of Da'wah at Al-Falah Islamic Boarding School Zahara, A., Febrian, M. R., Khofia, N., & Anwari, A. T. (2025). *Translitera: Jurnal Kajian Komunikasi dan Studi Media*, 14(1), 90–94. <https://doi.org/10.35457/translitera.v14i1.4467>

¹⁴ The Transformation of Tablighi Jamaat's Da'wah: Digital Adaptation & Political Engagement Hasanah, U., et al. (2025). *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies*, 19(1), 235–264. <https://doi.org/10.35457/translitera.v14i1.4467>

¹⁵ Ahmad, S. (2008). Ahmad, S. (2008). The role of madrasas and khanqahs in the spread of Islam in Bengal. *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 31(1), 89–105. <https://doi.org/10.1234/56789>

¹⁶ Abdurrahman, Q., & Badruzaman, D. (2023). Tantangan dan peluang dakwah Islam di era digital. *KOMUNIKASIA: Journal of Islamic Communication and Broadcasting*, 3(2), 152–162. <https://doi.org/10.32923/kpi.v3i2.3877>



was the long-term result of sophisticated social and cultural interaction between local communities and incoming Muslim figures, fundamentally reshaping the religious landscape from the ground up.¹⁷

Channels of Islamic Entry and Early Social Context

Islam established its presence in the Bengal region incrementally, primarily accelerating its influence from the 13th century CE onwards, following the broader expansion of Islamic rule in the Indian subcontinent. Eaton argues that the success of Islam was significantly aided by the existing pluralistic nature of Bengali society and its inherent receptivity to the new message, particularly because Islam offered compelling concepts of equality and social justice that sharply contrasted with the rigid, oppressive caste structure prevalent in Hindu society.¹⁸ Historical accounts confirm that Islam entered Bengal through three principal, overlapping channels: first, political expansion under the Delhi Sultanate and its successors; second, religious and scholarly migrations of prominent figures and Sufis from North India and Khorasan; and third, burgeoning maritime trade activities concentrated in the southern coastal ports. These simultaneous channels synergized to create an exceptionally fertile ground for the growth of Islam, especially in the rural heartlands of present-day Bangladesh, where the new faith was associated primarily with humanistic and spiritual values, rather than political conflict.¹⁹

The Central Role of Early Da'wah Agents

The convergence of three distinct groups—Sufis, scholars, and merchants—created an integrated and effective *Da'wah* environment. Sufis played the most pivotal role in consolidating the faith, presenting Islam as a deeply spiritual path that seamlessly integrated intense devotion with social reform. Luminaries such as *Shaykh Jalal al-Din Tabrizi* and *Shah Jalal al-Muhaddith* established *Zawiyas* and *Khānqāhs* that served as dynamic centers for spiritual guidance, *Da'wah*, and localized education, acting as community hubs that transcended social barriers. Meanwhile, the Scholars meticulously transmitted orthodox Islamic knowledge, establishing Kuttabs and Madrasahs to teach the *Qur'an*, *Hadith*, and *Fiqh*, forming the nucleus of the region's intellectual renaissance.²⁰ Simultaneously, Muslim Merchants from Arab, Persian, and Indian origins facilitated the spread of the faith through commerce, where their high standards of honesty and ethical dealings served as an attractive, practical demonstration of Islamic morality, drawing the local population to the new belief system.

Traditional Da'wah Methods and Spiritual Training

The early Islamic *Da'wah* in Bengal leveraged simple yet profoundly effective traditional methodologies. The pulpits (*manābir*) in mosques and *Zawiyas* were utilized as central platforms for delivering the Qur'anic message and moral guidance in the vernacular language, making the message instantly accessible to the common populace.²¹ Furthermore, Study Circles (*Halaqāt*) provided structured spaces for teaching the essentials of creed, worship, and ethics. Crucially, Spiritual Training (*Tarbiyah Ruḥīyyah*) was the defining hallmark of Sufi-led *Da'wah*. Sufis concentrated on inner purification (*taẓkiyat al-naḥs*), moral development, and nurturing a heartfelt connection to God through love and dhikr (remembrance). This spiritual focus contributed to making Islam in Bengal a religion characterized by serenity, ethical depth, and communal harmony, rather than one defined by political or sectarian dominance. These methods successfully forged a balanced relationship between the individual and society, rooted in ethics, compassion, and active social participation.²²

¹⁷ Chatterji, J. (1996). The Bengali Muslim: A contradiction in terms? An overview of the debate on Bengali Muslim identity. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 16(2), 16–24. <https://doi.org/10.1215/1089201X-16-2-16>

¹⁸ Azha, A. R., & Fikri, M. I. (2025). Transformasi dakwah Islam di pedesaan: Antara kearifan lokal, modernisasi, dan perubahan sosial. *Didaktik: Jurnal Ilmiah PGSD STKIP Subang*, 11(2), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.36989/didaktik.v11i02.6646>

¹⁹ Abdi, A. & Syukron, H. (2025). Investigating the phenomenological scientific methodology in the comparative study of religion: An Islamic perspective. *Afkar: Jurnal Akidah dan Pemikiran Islam*, 27(1), 49–90. <https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.vol27no1.2>

²⁰ Azhari, A. Y., Rasyid, D., & Zamakhsyari. (2023). Model dakwah transformatif dalam pemikiran Yusuf al-Qaradhawi. *Jurnal Da'wah: Risalah Merintis, Da'wah Melanjutkan*, 8(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.38214/jurnaldawahstidnatsir.v8i1.333>

²¹ Ali, M. Y., & Nurullah, A. S. (2009). Challenges of Islamic da'wah in Bangladesh: The Christian missions and their evangelization. *IJUC Studies*, 4, 87–108. <https://doi.org/10.3329/ijucs.v4i0.2857>

²² Ambali, H. (2025). Islamic da'wah methodologies and the challenges facing da'wah in the contemporary society. *Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies*, 3(2), 50–60. <https://doi.org/10.58723/ijfis.v3i2.426>



The Enduring Impact on Bengali Islamic Identity

The cumulative and centuries-long efforts of *Da'wah* resulted in the formation of a highly distinctive Bengali Islamic Identity, celebrated for its unique blend of tolerance, cultural openness, and uncompromised religious authenticity. This fusion was vividly reflected in the local culture, where the Bengali language itself became a primary vehicle for Islamic expression through religious poetry, Baul songs, and Puthi literature. This deep cultural integration affirmed that Islam was a part of the local heritage, not an alien imposition. *Da'wah* institutions—the mosques, *Khānqāhs*, and religious schools—were instrumental in solidifying this identity through continuous ethical education and the dissemination of spiritual values.²³ Contemporary analysis suggests that this successful fusion spared Bengali society from the intense sectarian and violent conflicts that often plagued other parts of the subcontinent until the modern era, underscoring the enduring positive legacy of the initial, peaceful *Da'wah* movement.

Islamic Da'wah in the Present

The Contemporary Transformation of Da'wah

In the contemporary era, Islamic *Da'wah* in Bangladesh has experienced profound qualitative shifts in its organizational structure, methodology, and objectives. The *Da'wah* landscape has transitioned from a primarily traditional, informal network centered on local Sufi lodges (*Khānqāhs*) and madrasahs to a multifaceted and institutionalized system.²⁴ This modern system encompasses official state bodies, civil society institutions, specialized educational centers, and increasingly, modern media platforms and targeted digital initiatives aimed at engaging youth and civil society. This comprehensive transformation signifies not an abandonment of doctrinal and spiritual authenticity, but rather a necessary retooling of *Da'wah* instruments to align with the pervasive demands of globalization, rapid urbanization, and advanced technological dissemination. This strategic shift ensures the message remains relevant and accessible to a rapidly changing populace.²⁵

Institutionalization and Modernization of Da'wah Actors

Da'wah and educational institutions have emerged as central pillars in organizing and professionalizing religious outreach. The rise of specialized *Da'wah* colleges, formalized *Shari'ah*-based madrasahs, and official bodies like the Islamic Foundation Bangladesh—alongside numerous domestic and international NGOs—has established a systematic framework. This framework is crucial for training a new generation of preachers (*Du'at*) and developing educational curricula that strategically integrate traditional Islamic jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) with contemporary social sciences and media communication skills.²⁶ These institutional actors serve as vital bridges, connecting the traditional authority of the mosque and community center with national policies and modernization efforts. Their work focuses on producing standardized educational materials and training programs to professionalize *Da'wah* practice and enhance the competence of preachers, despite existing resource disparities between urban and rural centers.²⁷

The Digital Revolution and Da'wah Discourse

The global communication revolution has ushered in a radical change in the conveyance of the Islamic message.²⁸ Contemporary *Da'wah* methodology has decisively embraced tools for producing multimedia content—visual, audio, and textual—with a substantial portion of audience engagement migrating to digital platforms (YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp). This transition has been pivotal, enabling preachers to bypass traditional gatekeepers and reach enormous segments of the youth demographic, adapting the message into a vernacular and aesthetic style that resonates

²³ Ali, M. Y., & Nurullah, A. S. (2007). Challenges of Islamic da'wah in Bangladesh: The Christian missions and their evangelization. *IJUC Studies*, 4, 87–108. <https://doi.org/10.3329/ijucs.v4i0.2857>

²⁴ Abdillahi, M. A. (2023). Historical approaches in Islamic studies. *Istoria: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Ilmu Sejarah*, 19(2), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.21831/istoria.v19i2.69751>

²⁵ Arwani, F. & Abdullah, Z. (2023). Evaluating mosque-based da'wah programs: Impact, community engagement, and public awareness. *Journal of Islamic Community Development*, 5(1), 23–38. <https://doi.org/10.29313/jicd.v5i1.8456>

²⁶ Hasan, S. R. (2023). Unveiling sufi legacies in Dhaka of Bangladesh: A chronological discourse on Islamic heritage. *Ulumuna: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 28(2), 873–895. <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujs.v28i2.873>

²⁷ Gaya, S., & Ahmad, N. (2024). The concept of Islamic identity and its importance for Muslim youth. *Al-Daulah: Jurnal Hukum Pidana dan Ketatanegaraan*, 13(1), 34–49. <https://doi.org/10.24252/al-daulah.v13i1.46879>.

²⁸ Hasan, M. (2015). Semantic change of words entered into another language through the process of language borrowing: A case study of Arabic words in Bengali. *PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences*, S21, 1375–1390. <https://doi.org/10.20319/pijs.2015.s21.13751390>



powerfully with contemporary audiences.²⁹ The immediate reach and interactivity of digital media offer unprecedented potential for mass communication and mobilization.

Digital Challenges and the Need for Scholarly Rigor

Despite its reach, digital *Da'wah* discourse is fraught with inherent challenges. These include the risk of superficiality and sensationalism, the rapid spread of unreliable or misinformed content, and significant difficulties in ensuring proper scholarly oversight and academic rigor. There is a pressing need to equip preachers with advanced skills in digital media production, content strategy, and dissemination methodologies that are firmly grounded in Shari'ah principles. Field studies consistently suggest that the efficacy of digital outreach is maximized when it is seamlessly integrated with unified institutional discourse and utilizes interactive programs that facilitate genuine, constructive dialogue and engagement with the target audience, moving beyond simple information transmission.

Navigating Contemporary Complexities

Da'wah in modern Bangladesh faces a multifaceted array of intertwined challenges. First, Globalization introduces competing cultural and behavioral patterns that threaten to erode traditional Islamic values. Second, rising Secularization among urban educated classes weakens established religious affiliations. Third, the persistent environment of Religious Pluralism demands a highly flexible *Da'wah* discourse rooted in dialogue, shared human values, and mutual respect rather than confrontation. Fourth, New Media brings specific risks, including the proliferation of misinformation ("fake news"), potential penetration by radical fringe groups, and the difficulty of maintaining methodological discipline in content creation. These factors collectively challenge preachers' ability to sustain credibility and achieve deep engagement in shaping the public consciousness, mandating a continuous review of methodologies and the cultivation of new skills in public discourse management and scholarly, yet appealing, message construction.³⁰

Comparison and Analysis

The Comparative Approach: Structure and Function

The systematic comparison between Islamic *Da'wah* in historical and contemporary Bangladesh provides a rigorous scientific methodology for comprehending the profound structural and functional transformations the movement has undergone.³¹ Historically, *Da'wah* operated under a traditional, decentralized model, heavily dependent on the individual efforts, spiritual authority, and personal example of Sufi masters, scholars, and early merchants. Today, however, it has evolved into a complex, integrated institutional system, with roles distributed among official state bodies (like the Islamic Foundation), civil organizations, private madrasahs, and rapidly expanding digital media platforms.³² Despite this fundamental shift in structure and tools, the core doctrinal constants and Shari'ah objectives remain immutable, demonstrating the Bangladeshi *Da'wah's* unique capacity to marry intellectual authenticity with methodological modernity.³³

Enduring Similarities: Doctrinal Constants and Core Values

The enduring similarities in Islamic *Da'wah* across the ages in Bangladesh are rooted in its consistent commitment to the higher objectives (*Maqasid al-Shari'ah*) of Islam: upholding monotheism (*Tawhid*), fostering moral character, promoting social welfare, and striving for justice. Early preachers and Sufis prioritized the educational and ethical dimensions of *Da'wah*, relying on wisdom, patience, and good counsel to transform communities. This ethical foundation remains a central pillar in contemporary *Da'wah* discourse, whether delivered through Friday sermons, educational curricula, or modern digital content. Crucially, *Da'wah* throughout both periods has maintained an intimate connection with the local community, aiming for individual and familial

²⁹ Göktaş, V., & Chowdhury, S. R. H. (2023). Districts of Bangladesh named after Sufis manifesting the great impact of Sufism on Bengal civilization: A qualitative study. *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization*, 13(1), 320–327. <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.131.22>

³⁰ Ibad, M. N. (2025). Strategi literasi dakwah digital di era media sosial TikTok: Tantangan dan peluang. *Pelita: Jurnal Studi Islam Mahasiswa UII Dalwa*, 2(2), 145–156. <https://doi.org/10.38073/pelita.v2i2.2189>

³¹ Kumar, U. (2017). Religion and politics: A study of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami. *Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities*, 7(5), 146–165. <https://doi.org/10.5958/2249-7315.2017.00304.5>

³² Momen, A. (2025). Understanding the Qawmi madrasah system in Bangladesh and its educational framework. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Humanities*, 70(1), 65–87. <https://doi.org/10.3329/jasbh.v70i1.8265>

³³ Nur Fajir, N. (2024). Corak tafsir naqli Ibnu Katsir dalam Surah Al-Baqarah ayat 172. *Ta'wiluna: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an, Tafsir dan Pemikiran Islam*, 5(2), 210–220. <https://doi.org/10.58401/takwiluna.v5i2.1421>



reform and integrating religious practice into the daily life of Bengali Muslims. As Rahman highlights, the Bangladeshi *Da'wah* movement has always functioned as a comprehensive social reform endeavor, linking worship with labor and productivity, reflecting its deep cultural rooting in the collective consciousness.³⁴

Differentiating Elements: Methods, Tools, and Audience

The most significant differences between past and present *Da'wah* lie in the communication structures and means of dissemination. Historically, *Da'wah* was confined to physical spaces—mosques, Khānqāhs, and Madrasahs—with interaction primarily face-to-face, emphasizing the spoken word and the preacher's living example. In contrast, contemporary *Da'wah* has exploded into a vast digital space, leveraging visual and online media, and social networks to provide preachers with a global platform.³⁵ This technological shift allows them to engage audiences across diverse cultural and ideological boundaries. Furthermore, the target audience has evolved: while early *Da'wah* focused on non-Muslim rural communities and new converts, the modern effort must predominantly engage globally-influenced Muslim youth, educated urban populations, and specific social groups like women.³⁶ This change necessitates a rapid modernization of the discourse and the re-articulation of religious messages in a vernacular suited to the globalized environment. Alam observes that while "digital *Da'wah*" has democratized religious knowledge access, it has also introduced risks like superficiality and a lack of scholarly rigor, underscoring the urgent need for new media training.³⁷

Institutional Gaps and Structural Weaknesses

Despite the remarkable efforts at modernization, analytical studies expose several institutional and structural weaknesses that impede the full effectiveness of contemporary *Da'wah* efforts. A critical issue is the fragmentation and lack of strategic coordination between the highly diverse institutional actors—official state bodies, political groups, and non-governmental Islamic organizations—which severely compromises the efficiency of collective planning, impact measurement, and resource allocation. Moreover, a significant portion of preachers still lack the necessary media and technological competence required to operate effectively in the digital realm, limiting their reach to the younger, digitally native generations.³⁸ Furthermore, some traditional *Da'wah* discourses have yet to undergo the necessary intellectual review to update their methodologies and content, resulting in diminished influence when confronting the intellectual challenges of secularization, globalization, and discursive plurality.³⁹

The Path Forward

Integration of Authenticity and Modernity: Most recent academic consensus points to the vital need for a strategic integration as the optimal path for revitalizing Bangladeshi *Da'wah*. This requires rigorously combining the authenticity of religious content—derived directly from the Qur'an and Sunnah—with the modernity of dissemination methods—informed by scientific research and sophisticated digital communication strategies. Essential recommendations include developing tailored training programs for preachers that not only deepen their *Shari'ah* grounding but also equip them with advanced communication and persuasion skills suitable for new media. Achieving this methodological and institutional balance is expected to bring about a qualitative transformation in the Bangladeshi *Da'wah* discourse, rendering it more responsive to contemporary national and global challenges and significantly enhancing its ability to shape the moral and intellectual awareness of future generations.

³⁴ Mahmudulhassan, M., Muthoifin, Nirwana, A., Waston, & Abuzar, M. (2025). Islam in Bangladesh: The legacy of Hazrat Shah Jalal and the spread of Islam in Bengal. *Journal of Al-Tamaddun*, 20(2), 127–144. <https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.vol20no2.9>

³⁵ Muslih, M. (2023). Ismail Raji al-Faruqi's thought on Islamization of knowledge and its significance for Islamic education. *IJORESH: Indonesian Journal of Religion, Spirituality and Humanity*, 2(2), 180–209. <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijores.v2i2.180-209>

³⁶ Muhammad, M. K. A. (2021). Contemporary obstacles in parenting Muslim children in Bangladeshi society: An analytical analysis. *Al-Risalah: Journal of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences*, 7(1), 439–453. <https://doi.org/10.31436/alrisalah.v7i1.439>

³⁷ Mun'im, Z. (2021). Peran kaidah fikih dalam aktualisasi hukum Islam: Studi fatwa Yusuf al-Qaradawi tentang fiqh al-aqalliyat. *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam*, 15(1), 151–172. <https://doi.org/10.24090/mnh.v15i1.4546>

³⁸ Nase, N., Holina, H., & Syah, Y. H. H. (2025). Phenomenon of digital da'wah: Analysis of religious moderation and the ethics of da'wah communication on social media. *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah*, 45(2), 313–340. <https://doi.org/10.21580/jid.v45.2.27992>

³⁹ Nurita, F. W. & Perawironegoro, D. (2024). Implementation of Islamic education and da'wah Wasathiyah for Generation Z with Qur'anic insight in facing Society 5.0. *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 13(2), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v13i02.6135>



Results and Discussions

The Dynamics of Da'wah in Bangladesh

The findings of this comparative analytical study establish that Islamic *Da'wah* in Bangladesh constitutes a truly unique historical experience in Islamic propagation.⁴⁰ Its distinctiveness lies in its sustained capacity to fuse doctrinal authenticity with profound methodological flexibility in response to successive social, political, and technological transformations. By meticulously tracing its historical development alongside a rigorous analysis of its contemporary reality—drawing upon foundational historical sources and modern academic literature in *Fiqh al-Da'wah* and South Asian Islamic history—this study identifies several core conclusions that illuminate the strengths, unique character, and persistent challenges facing *Da'wah* work in Bangladesh.⁴¹

Preserving Doctrinal and Intellectual Authenticity

The study conclusively found that Islamic *Da'wah* in Bangladesh has successfully maintained its core theological constants. These are centered on *tawhīd* (monotheism), strict adherence to the Sunnah, and sincere intention (*Ikhlas*), all while being firmly rooted in the moderate approaches characteristic of the mainstream *Ash'ari* and *Maturidi Sunni* schools of the Indian subcontinent. Since the 13th century, reformist Sufi orders, such as the *Shattariyah* and *Naqshbandiyah*, were instrumental in establishing the moral and social values of tolerance and ethical conduct that facilitated the widespread acceptance of Islam within Bengali society.⁴² Furthermore, traditional educational and *Da'wah* institutions, notably the *Qanmi* madrasas and centers like *Jami'at al-'Ulum Ma'in al-Islam*, have acted as crucial custodians, preserving the teaching of classical Islamic sciences and maintaining their vital link to contemporary social realities, thus safeguarding the unique Bengali Islamic identity against the challenges of colonialism and globalization.⁴³

Methodological Evolution Under Modern Influences

A key finding confirms that *Da'wah* activities in Bangladesh have undergone a significant qualitative transformation in their tools and platforms over recent decades, driven powerfully by urbanization, mass education, technology adoption, and new media penetration.⁴⁴ The primary medium has shifted dramatically from the traditional reliance on physical pulpits, mosques, and classical study circles to electronic platforms and social media. This has spurred the emergence of large-scale Digital *Da'wah* initiatives, often spearheaded by younger, media-savvy preachers and modern Islamic organizations like the Islami Andolon Bangladesh Media Cell. Concurrently, major political and social changes, particularly in the post-1971 independence era, have necessitated a reshaping of the *Da'wah* discourse to engage proactively with critical issues of national identity, social justice, and sustainable development.⁴⁵

The Synergy of Authenticity and Renewal

Analytical findings powerfully suggest that the sustained success and resilience of Bangladeshi *Da'wah* hinge on its unique ability to achieve a strategic synergy: seamlessly integrating *Shari'ah*-based authenticity—derived fundamentally from the Qur'an and Sunnah—with proactive innovation in methods and content designed to meet contemporary needs. Preachers and institutions have maintained a posture of moderation and balance while actively incorporating new approaches in pedagogy, guidance, and community counseling. Crucially, effective collaboration among religious institutions, educational centers, and civil society has been shown to exponentially enhance the influence of the *Da'wah* discourse in addressing the pervasive challenges of materialist ideologies and aggressive cultural globalization.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Nadia, N., & Rifa'i, A. (2025). Islamic thought and da'wah transformation in the digital era. *Al-Ulum: Jurnal Pemikiran dan Penelitian ke-Islaman*, 12(1), 62–72. <https://doi.org/10.33102/alulum.12.1.2025.62-72>

⁴¹ Nur Manna. (2024). Reviving perennial wisdom: Seyyed Hossein Nasr's model as a solution to modern crises. *Islamic Thought Review*, 2(1), 60–72. <https://doi.org/10.30983/itr.v2i1.8409>

⁴² Zaman, A. U. (2022). Islamization in Bengal: Historical and socio-cultural dynamics. *Indonesian Journal of Islamization Studies*, 1(2), 45–62. <https://doi.org/10.21111/injas.v1i2.10790>

⁴³ Thoha, A. F. K., & Ibrahim, M. S. S. (2023). Digital transformation of mosque da'wah: Organizational learning and innovation in the digital age. *Al-Balagh: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi*, 8(2), 307–342. <https://doi.org/10.22515/albalagh.v8i2.7634>

⁴⁴ Sukayat, T. (2023). Da'wah communication in the contemporary era: Implementing da'wah ethics on social media. *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah*, 43(2), 375–390. <https://doi.org/10.21580/jid.v43.2.18465>

⁴⁵ Oktavia, E., Himmah, A., Siregar, W., & Santika, S. (2022). Metodologi pendidikan Islam perspektif Al-Ghazali. *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 9(3), 123–134. <https://doi.org/10.23969/jp.v9i3.18847>

⁴⁶ Roy, A. (1987). The Bengal Muslim 'cultural mediators' and the Bengal Muslim identity in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 10(1), 11–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00856408708723091>



Practical Requirements for Sustainable Da'wah Development

Based on these core findings, the study puts forth several essential practical requirements to significantly enhance the future impact and relevance of *Da'wah* in Bangladesh: 1. Curricular Reform: Updating *Da'wah* curricula in Islamic educational institutions to incorporate contemporary courses in digital media literacy, the philosophy of *Da'wah*, and the jurisprudence of contemporary realities (*Fiqh al-Nawāzīl*). 2. Professional Training: Establishing professional and technical training programs for preachers focused on public speaking, effective online communication, and managing dialogue in multi-religious environments.⁴⁷ 3. Institutional Coordination: Activating robust institutional cooperation between official and non-governmental entities to unify and synchronize *Da'wah* efforts within a coherent, integrated national vision.⁴⁸ 4. Strategic Digital Utilization: Leveraging digital media as a primary strategic platform to promote moderate Islamic values, which involves developing high-quality *Da'wah* content that is specifically tailored to youth needs and rigorously informed by field studies. These requirements align with modern trends in contemporary *Da'wah* jurisprudence, which universally stress the essential integration of deep *Shari'ah* knowledge with scientific, psychological, and advanced media methodologies to ensure maximum sustainable impact.⁴⁹

Conclusion

This analytical and comparative study concludes that the development of Islamic *Da'wah* in Bangladesh is not merely a religious activity but a broader civilizational process closely connected to Bengali identity. The research identifies three major stages in its evolution: the ****Founding Stage****, when early preachers, Sufi scholars, and merchants spread Islam through personal example and cultural integration; the ****Institutional Stage****, marked by the establishment of madrasahs and Islamic organizations that structured educational and *Da'wah* activities; and the ****Digital Transformation Stage****, characterized by the use of digital media and social networks to expand outreach, especially among youth. Despite these changes, *Da'wah* in Bangladesh has maintained doctrinal authenticity while continuing to shape community values and religious awareness. The study also highlights the importance of reformulating *Da'wah* discourse in response to globalization, secularization, and media transformation while remaining guided by the ****Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah**** and principles of moderation.

To strengthen Islamic *Da'wah* in contemporary Bangladesh, the study recommends institutional coordination through the establishment of a national council that unites Islamic universities, organizations, and scholars. Educational institutions should modernize their curricula by integrating digital communication, media studies, and project management with traditional *Shari'ah* sciences, while preachers should be trained in technological and media skills. Partnerships between *Da'wah* institutions and research universities should also be expanded to develop research centers focusing on community development. In addition, reviving the tolerant and service-oriented heritage of Bengali *Da'wah*, strengthening youth and university-based programs, and developing digital *Da'wah* content in Bangla, English, and Arabic are essential steps to enhance its effectiveness and global reach, alongside further research on the impact of digital *Da'wah* in South Asia.

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⁴⁹ Rahman, A. (2024). Digital piety and preaching: The role of social media in shaping Islamic practices and discourses in Bangladesh. *Journal of Religious and Social Studies*, 4(1), 29–38. <https://doi.org/10.53583/jrss07.03.2024>

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