

Population Ageing: A Friend or an Enemy of Da'wah Activity?

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Abstract — Following the increase in the older population in communities around the world, the discussions and writings about older people is not a new endeavor. This article was aimed to: (1) discuss the nature of da'wah activity in Malaysia, and (2) explore whether da'wah activities is a friend or an enemy of population ageing. The writing of this article was originally started from a study conducted using a combination of two research designs, namely a qualitative content analysis, and a single-case study. Secondary materials from books, research report, as well as journal articles that have been collected and kept by the first author before this, are used in this qualitative content analysis. Materials gathered from a content analysis was used to explain a general picture of the population ageing. This study choses one research participant who believes to have an idea about the da'wah activities in an ageing community. For this purpose, an aged early 80s years old, physically and mentally healthy, a former university professor of sociology was chosen as an informant to conduct in-depth interviews. The results of the study show that: (1) da'wah is an effort to invite people towards emphasizing or deifying Allah SWT. This duty is obligatory for all Muslims who are *mukallaf*, but most of the da'wah activities in Malaysia is conducted in mosques. Many who come to the mosque to engage in da'wah activities are older persons, and (2) based on the informant's perspective, the ageing of the population is opposed to da'wah activities through at least three reasons, namely (1) gender, (2) physical ability and health status, as well as (3) social support. All these reasons have been elaborated in this article.

Keywords —Population ageing; Older population; Social support; Da'wah activity

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper presents the results of a single-case study regarding the barriers facing the Muslim preachers in presenting da'wah activities in an ageing population. Across the world including Malaysia, the number of older persons has experienced a dramatic increased [1]; [2]; [3]; [4]. The global population is now in the process of population ageing. In every corner of the world, there has been a significant increase in the number of older persons, those aged 60 and above.

Gerontologists or demographers put the retirement age, which is 60 or 65 years as a measure of older person [5]. The age the world's population as a whole is getting older than in previous centuries [6]; [7], signifies the ageing process of the world's population is underway. In other words, currently, the population of all countries in the world is heading towards ageing [8]. The country is heading towards population ageing could mean that a country is heading in a direction where at some point in time, sooner or later, most of the country's population is filled with older persons. Although there has already been

a wide range of writings on older persons in various fields, such as sociology, gerontology, demographics, including health sciences, the discourse on population ageing has always relevant in the academic milieu.

Following the increased in the number and percentage of the older person around the world, the discussion and writing on the older person is no more a new endeavor. Outside Malaysia, writings and discourses on the older person has long begun. In Malaysia, discussions on this category of population can be traced back to the early 1980s. At that time few scholars focused their research on the older person. Just for a few examples, early scholars who have written about the older person in Malaysia, include [9]; [10]; [11]; as well as [12]. Subsequent scholars, including the first author of this article himself, who, on various occasions have also conducted research related to older persons. Thus far, various findings on older persons have successfully been analyzed and documented. Today, research related to the older person are no longer strange in Malaysia. This article, entitled "Population ageing: a friend or an enemy of da'wah activity is aimed to analyze whether da'wah and the ageing of the population can go hand in hand, or in an opposite direction.

Despite a wide range of writings on the older person has been written, and lots of information has successfully been documented, writings on the relationship between population ageing and da'wah activity is still a new endeavor. Research and writings before this did not describe the connection between the ageing of the population and da'wah activities.

This article is a product of cooperation between sociologist, or particularly gerontologist and scholars in Islamic studies who study population ageing and da'wah activity. These two issues are the core issues of both disciplines. Scholars in Islamic studies, of course, write extensively on da'wah, but none of these writings, empirically, explore the relationship between, or discuss of, the implications of the population ageing on da'wah activity in the community. Sociologists, on the other hand, only discuss trends and the implications of the ageing population, without associating it with da'wah, and consequently, little is known whether population ageing is a friend of da'wah, or its enemy.

Because of the population of Malaysia is heading towards ageing, and there will be a lot of older people in the community in the future, it is felt necessary that we explore whether the process of population ageing is a friend of da'wah activities, or it will become an enemy for da'wah. This article is aimed to focus on two related issues: (1) to discuss the nature of da'wah activity, and (2) to explore whether da'wah activity is a friend or an enemy of the population ageing through the eyes of research participant.

II. RELATED WORK

Population ageing, a term widely used in writing related to the current debates in global population and development, is particularly referring to an increasing in the proportion of the older person in the population structure. Various definitions of the population ageing have been put forward by scholars of demography as well as other scholars related. In general, these definitions revolve around an increase in the proportion of older people in the population structure [13]; [14].

Population structures that have not yet experienced the ageing process generally have a small proportion of older people. It becomes increasing if the population undergoes an ageing process. A simple way to understand the process of population ageing is by looking at the proportion of the older persons in the population structure. We will surely find its proportion in the current population structure has multiplied many times over the past few decades. Nowadays, people in all countries have realized the fact that the world's population is ageing [15]; [16]; [17].

The proportion of older persons, as compared to the younger can be visualized through a graph, called a pyramid. The population pyramid is a tool in demography to display the age and sex composition of a population. A typical pyramid is developed in the shape of a triangle. It is

constructed from the youngest population at the bottom, to the oldest ones at the top, or apex. In populations that have not yet experienced the ageing process, the pyramid located at a base is broad, reflecting the high proportion of the younger age group. The apex of the pyramid is often tapered represents a proportion of the older person is small.

In populations that have undergone an ageing process, the base of the pyramid will be smaller, reflecting the declining portion of the younger age group, and its peaks will no longer taper sharply, reflecting the growing portion of the older age group.

One of the indicators to identify a population that has experienced the ageing process is, by identifying the median age of such a population. The population structure undergoing the ageing process will experience the increase in the median age, the age that divides the age group of the population in the population structure into two parts; the age below this median age, and the age above this median age. So, if society has 10 thousand populations, and the median age of the population in that society is 46 years, for example, then five thousand of its populations are under 46 years old, and another five thousand are over 46 years old.

To date, as stated by Kinsella and Wan He [18], the median age of the world population is rising. In 2008, the median age of 52 countries studied by U. S. Census Bureau [18] ranged from the lowest 15 in Uganda, to the highest 44 in Japan. All developed countries, except New Zealand and the United States, are all above the 37 years, whilst the majority of developing countries stood at 27. In 2020, the median age in Japan is 47, while Uganda still at 15. By 2040 the median age in Japan will be 47 [18].

The implications of the population ageing in developed countries has already been felt as it has already started a long time ago. Many developed countries have been categorized as an aged population since 1950 when they already had 7% population aged 65-year-old in their population structure. In most countries there, the ageing process has already started since 1900.

Countries, like Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, have been heading towards the ageing society since 1900, and in fact, all countries in developed countries have achieved the aged society status as early as 1930 [5].

The National Committee for the Elderly [19] defines a country as a country with an aged society status when the country has a proportion of the population aged 65 and over by 7% (10% for the population aged 60 and over). All these developed countries have now been categorized as super-aged society countries as they have a population proportion of 65 years and over 20% in their population structure. For developing countries, population ageing is a 20th century phenomenon, which is only becoming more vigorous, and awareness is growing in the 21st century.

Because the ageing process has only just begun, developing countries are referred to as ageing societies, because they have a small proportion of the older person, much smaller than the proportion of the older person in developed countries in the early 20th century.

In recognition of the world's population is ageing, the United Nations has undertaken various measures, including intensifying research, collection and analysis of data on trends of the older population in all countries, holding world conventions, including declaring 1999 as the "Year of the Older Person" to create awareness among the public and policy makers that the world's population is facing an important demographic event, called population ageing. Such measures are also seen as steps taken to help all nations prepare for an ageing population.

In fact, the number of the world older population has already been widely featured in various writings. By 2050, more than 20% of the world's population is expected to be 60 years old or older, and eighty percent of this population will be living in a developing country.

By 2050 as well, for the first time in the history, the elderly population exceeding the population of older children 0 to 14 years [20]. In 2015, as depicted in Table 1, there were approximately 900 million people aged 60 and over worldwide. In 2000, this number was only about 600 million. This means that, in 15 years, the population aged 60 and over, has grown by 300 million, an increase of about 20 million a year.

Table 1: Population Aged 60 Years and Over

Area	2000	2015	2030	2050
World	607.1	900.9	1402.4	2092.
More Developed	231.3	298.8	375.2	421.4
Less Developed	375.7	602.1	1027.2	1670.5

Source: World Population Ageing 2015 [19]

III. METHODOLOGY

The writing of this article was originally taken from the study conducted using a combination of two research designs, namely a qualitative content analysis, and a single-case study. Secondary materials from books, research report, as well as journal articles that have been collected and kept by the first author before this, are used in this qualitative content analysis. A qualitative content analysis is an analysis of text data, or secondary materials collected from a series of studies conducted by various scholars previously [21]. Materials gathered from a content analysis was used to explain a general picture of the population ageing.

In terms of a single-case study, this study chooses one research participant who believes to have an idea about the da'wah activities in an ageing community. For this purpose, the aged early 80s years old, physically and mentally healthy, a former university professor of

sociology was chosen as an informant. In-depth interviews were conducted on this research informant. The in-depth interviews focused on the issues of whether the ageing population is a friend or an enemy of da'wah activity, that is to explore the implications of the population ageing on da'wah activity in the community.

Such a combination was chosen because this paper seeks to explain general issues that require secondary information related to the global population ageing. This paper is also written to answer a specific question that can be obtained by interviewing the appropriate research participant.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The discussion in this section is focused on (1): the nature of da'wah activity in Malaysia, and (2): whether da'wah activity is a friend or an enemy of population ageing.

Nature of Da'wah Activity in Malaysia

Islam is a religion of da'wah. Allah obligates every individual who is a Muslim to convey da'wah, which is to convey this monotheistic religion to other people so that everyone accepts Islam as their religion. Although there is no compulsion on all human beings to accept Islam, Allah only accepts Islam as a human religion. This needs to be given an understanding for all human beings so that they can make the right choice of which religion to follow.

Da'wah in general is an effort to invite individuals to understand the religion and invite others to accept Islam as the religion of Allah SWT [22]; [23]. It is the responsibility of all Muslims to teach others about the beliefs and practices of the Islamic faith and the teaching of Islam.

Da'wah is not necessarily an activity of inviting non-Muslim to accept Islam. Da'wah activity can be categorized into two broad categories; namely da'wah from within, that is da'wah to fellow Muslims, and da'wah to outside, that is da'wah to non-Muslims. Da'wah from within can be meant as an effort to give advice and invite other fellow Muslims to return to the Islamic way of life, while da'wah to outside means an effort to share information about Islam and explaining the trueness of the Islamic faith to non-Muslims. It is important to note that, da'wah to non-Muslims does not at all mean an effort to convert any non-Muslim individuals to Islam.

The research participant has outlined some interesting facts regarding the reality of da'wah in Malaysia, namely (1) preachers only conducted da'wah to those who are already interested and accustomed to religious activities, (2) community members who are loyal to da'wah activities are those categorized as older persons, (3) not many young people are interested in da'wah activities, (4) da'wah activities are mostly implemented in mosques, (5) because da'wah activities are implemented in mosques, not all elderly women are involved in such activities.

Population Ageing: A Friend or An Enemy of Da'wah?

To get a detailed picture about the relationship between population ageing and da'wah activities, the research participant was asked whether, according to his opinions, the population ageing, particularly the increasing of older person in the community, is a friend, or an enemy of da'wah activities. Such an issue is relevant to be highlighted because, based on our experience in Malaysia, da'wah activities are generally conducted in mosques, and the majority of participants involved in da'wah is older person, and thus, the successful of da'wah activity is very much related to the age of the people in the community who will become the target of da'wah.

According to our research participant, in an ageing society, the successful of da'wah may be dependent on several factors, include: (1) gender issue; (2) physical ability and health status; and (3) social support.

Gender Issue

We may want to ask why gender will become an issue in da'wah activities in the future? Gender is considered to be a problem with da'wah activities because, in population experiencing an ageing process, the population in the community will be full with women. In an aged society, the majority of the residents will be female elderly [24]. This is because the age of women is longer, and one day, the majority of the population of the community will be the women older person. Today, of the world's total older population aged 60 and over in 2015, the female population made up 54% [20], and as depicted in Table 2, the life expectancy of women is higher.

As such, in the future, in a community like this, the number of female older persons will far exceed the number of male older persons. Da'wah activities are mostly conducted in mosques, and mosque visitors are generally male older persons. The community with the majority of female older persons is somewhat problematic to the da'wah activity because we find not many women older persons who come to pray at the mosque.

Most women generally pray at homes. This situation, of course makes the da'wah activity difficult because most of the da'wah activities are carried out in mosques. According to informant, someday, we can imagine, if the community is filled with older persons, the mosque will be deserted, and the da'wah activities will be gloomy.

Physical Ability and Health Status

The age of the human population is now getting longer than in the past. People are now having the possibility to live beyond the age of 60. Demographers use the term "longevity revolution" to refer to the remarkable increase in the age of the human population. People in the developed countries today, such as Sweden, have a 90% of chances of living beyond the age of 65 after birth.

Over the past five decades, the United Nations [6] shows that the life expectancy of the world's population has

increased tremendously by 20 years, from 46.5 (1950-1955) to 66.0 years (2000-2005). For the period 2015-2020, it was estimated that it has increased again to 72.3 years (Table 2). In the next 50 years, it is projected that the average age of the world's population continues to increase to 76 years in 2045-2050 [6]. From Table 2 what we can see is that, life expectancy of the world population for both sexes (2015-2020) is reaching 70 or older.

Australia and New Zealand are among the countries that have a highest life expectancy of their populations, over that 80 years old, which means that the populations of those two countries have a possibility to live beyond the age of 80 years old after the birth. Sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the lowest life expectancy of its population.

Table 2: Life Expectancy at Birth (Years): 2015-2020

Area	Both Sexes	Female	Male
World	72.3	74.7	69.9
Sub-Saharan Africa	60.5	62.3	58.8
Northern Africa and Western Asia	73.5	75.7	71.3
Central and Southern Asia	69.5	70.9	68.2
Eastern and South-Eastern Asia	76.3	79.0	73.7
Latin America and the Caribbean	75.2	78.5	72.0
Australia and New Zealand	83.0	85.0	81.1
Oceania, excluding Australia and New Zealand	66.3	67.8	64.9
Europe and North America	78.5	81.6	75.4

Source: The United Nations, 2019 [25].

There is an issue related to this longevity, which is; as the age of the population continues to increase, will this the ageing population continue to be healthy as well? Much debate and research has been done to answer this question. Globally, the increase in longevity is generally not necessarily accompanied by the increase in health status of the population. Although the level of deteriorating health is not necessarily related to age, with increasing age, the level of physical ability of a person will decrease tremendously.

The decline in the health status of the people who are the target of da'wah, will certainly make it difficult for da'wah activities to be able to meet their objectives because the movement of older people to attend the da'wah programs will be hindered. The movement of older people is limited. In this context, the ageing of the population is seen as opposed to da'wah activities.

Social Support

Although social support can be defined in various form, such as financial, instrumental, or emotional [26], in this context is social support is a support of the physical care of the older people. Due to the declining physical capabilities, older people need support for their movement to attend any

da'wah programs. There are cases where older people wish to participate in da'wah activities, such as listening to *tazkirah*, or other da'wah activities held in the mosque, but because they do not have the ability to come to the mosque on their own, they are forced to cancel their intentions. The ability to drive a vehicle for example, becomes somewhat limited to older people. They need others who can help them drive the vehicle, which can eventually make it difficult for them to attend or engage in da'wah activities.

The main source of social support for the older persons in developing countries is from the family [27]. The reality today is, the majority of adult children are no longer living with their elderly parents. These children, due to having a better level of education, and successful in their respective careers, migrated to cities far from their own elderly parents has weakening the familial support [28]; [29]. Because of this, the report from an Expert Committee on the Family in Turkey, found a significant number of elderly people in Turkey were in acute need of care [30].

These children, due to geographical distance and formal employment barriers, rarely return home to visit their parents [31]; [32]. Even if they go home, these children do not stay long with their elderly parents, all of which pose a problem for the movement of older persons to participate in da'wah activities at the mosque. Research in rural Malaysia shows that because of the increasing age and no one is able to accompany the elderly parents to mosques, although their religious commitment is quite high [33]; [34]; [35]; [36], only a small number of older people attending a group prayer and participate in da'wah activity in mosques [37].

V. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE SCOPE

Overall, this paper seeks to discuss two main issues, namely the nature of da'wah activities in Malaysia, and whether the ageing population is a friend or an enemy of da'wah activity. Based on the views of the research participant, due to the fact that in Malaysia, da'wah activities are mainly done in mosques, the ageing of the population is not a friend to da'wah activities.

The ageing of the population has created many barriers in da'wah activities. The older persons will be facing problems to participate actively in da'wah activities in the future. Among the barriers, as told by the research's participant, is related to three main issues, namely (1) gender, (2) physical ability and health status, and (3) social support. In the future, in an aged, or super-aged society, sooner or later, the majority of residents will be women, that will be difficult for them to participate in da'wah activities because women are normally pray at home. Another reason is that the longevity is not always accompanied with good health. All these barriers have been elaborated in this article.

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