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To Cite This Article: Dany Tantowi Prastyo | (2023) Ecological Da’wa as an Alternative for Development Communication, Journal of Islamic Communication and Counseling (JICC), Vol. 2 Number 1, January 2023, Pages 56-66. DOI: https://doi.org/10.18196/jicc.v2i1.26

To link this article: https://jicc.umy.ac.id/index.php/jicc

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Published Online: 31 January 2023

Article Views : 0

View Crossmark Data
Eco logical Da’wa as an Alternative for Development Communication

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Abstract: Environmental issues occurred from the end of the 20th century until the second decade of the 21st century. Environmental issues such as the climate crisis, global warming, and exploitation of natural resources are separate problems in human development. The development required a public participatory process so that the development comes can run effectively and efficiently, especially development based on an ecological perspective. Indonesia, with the largest Muslim population in the world, has the potential to support a development process based on an environmental perspective. Islam, by the Al-Qur’an as the base of guiding, contains ecological values that need to be transformed for Muslims. The process of transforming the values of Islamic guidance, or da’wa, allows for the transformation of Islamic values, especially ecological values, which are then referred to as ecological da’wa. In ecological da’wa, the process and end goal can be an alternative development communication to create a sustainable living environment and make the community achieve sustainable and harmonious prosperity and welfare.

Keywords: Da’wa, environmental, ecology, communication, development.
A. Introduction

Ife (2016) stated that the environmental crisis is due to unsustainable social, economic, and political constructions. The environmental crisis occurs because of the paradigms built at the grassroots of community life. Therefore, looking at environmental problems to be solved not only with a technical solution approach but the need to shape how social, economic and political construction is sustainable for people's lives.

The environmental crisis has started to be widely discussed by the public since the end of the 20th century. This shows that there has been an ecological emergency and a climate crisis caused by the global economic paradigm, which places nature as the main exploitative economic commodity and occurs in various parts of the world (Khalid, 2021). In a note put forward by Walhi (2021), open exploitation of natural resources still occurs massively, leading to actions that damage and destroy ecosystems, sources of life, and the environment, or ecocide. This incident was caused by unsustainable development directions, which did not pay attention to environmental aspects. Phenomena of natural damage caused by human civilization activities such as excessive exploitation of forest land into plantations or agricultural land for certain crops. Uncontrolled use of mineral resources, such as mining materials for profit purposes, or other small behaviors that have long-term impacts, such as uncontrolled industrial or household waste management.

Ife (2016) reveals that development in a comprehensive manner is fundamentally based on an ecological perspective and a perspective of social justice and human rights. The ecological perspective is the basis for development in managing human and diverse natural life so that it is appropriate for development and the environment to run continuously for sustainable community life.

Indonesia has a total population of 273.5 million people, of which 86.88% are Muslim (BPS: 2020). This number places Indonesia as a country with the largest Muslim population in the world. The large population of Muslims in Indonesia provides its own factors, especially in the success of the development of society itself, with large numbers and very influential on development. Thus, there is potential and strength that can be built to form an effective strategy for the success of community development.

Religion, which is the basis of values, morality, and spirituality contained in society or a system of social order, is one of the strategic factors that also influence the community’s paradigm of how to live side by side with nature or, in this case, the environment (Ilyas, 2008). Therefore religious teachings or various paradigm concepts in religion itself, in turn, have an important meaning for development, especially for preserving the environment. Especially Islam, in this case, has a strong influence in shaping a system of social, economic, and political construction in society. Thus, the development process can realize sustainable development based on social justice, human rights, and an ecological perspective.

The success of the development itself does not only depend on technical aspects or costs. However, the success of development also needs to be supported by information and communication factors by conducting dialogue to reach a consensus which is expected to occur in collective action to achieve progress in various parties who actively participate in various development processes (Subejo, 2021). Therefore, communication between various parties is
also very influential in the successful development process, especially development from an ecological perspective.

B. Method

This manuscript was written using the literature study methodology related to various literature related to da’wa communication and development. The literature study relies on publications that have been published in books as a basis for the approach, published journals, and mass media publications whose contents and authors can be accounted for. Therefore, in writing this manuscript, an approach was taken between literature related to da’wa, communication, and development studies.

In the theory of development communication or what is often referred to as Communication for Development (C4D), the author takes many references in the form of publications by Jenatsch, Thomas & Bauer, Richard published in 2016 with the publication title “Communication for Development a Practical Guide” published by Switzerland Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) then as a supporting reference is a publication by Subejo in 2021 entitled "Issues, Trends, and Changes in the Development Communication Paradigm in Indonesia" by InPress, where this publication was previously presented at the National Seminar "Strategy for Community Empowerment in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)” in the context of Lustrum II (2006-2016) Study Program Masters and Doctoral Development Counseling and Communication, Postgraduate School, Gadjah Mada University which was held on 8 October 2016.

The Islamic approach as an ecological paradigm is the author's reference to the two publications presented by Fata with the first title, “Basis Teologis Dakwah Ekologis” in 2017, as well as in the second publication presented by the same author with the title “Teologi lingkungan hidup dalam perspektif Islam” in 2014.

C. Discussion

1. Islam and Environment

   In the Al-Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah verse 164:

   "أَنْذَلَّ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْدَةَ لَيَسَّلَّ الْمُسَخَّرَ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ والأَرْدَةِ لَا يَابِثُ لَقَوْمٌ يَغْفِلُونَ"

   Meaning: “Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, and the [great] ships which sail through the sea with that which benefits people, and what Allah has sent down from the heavens of rain, giving life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness and dispersing therein every [kind of] moving creature, and
[His] directing of the winds and the clouds controlled between the heaven and the earth are signs for a people who use reason.”

Al-Baqarah verse 164 is a text that represents the environment (Ilyas, 2008: 154). The environment itself is a system that is a spatial unit with all objects, power, circumstances, and living things, including humans and their behavior, that affects the continuity of life and the welfare of humans and other living things (Ilyas, 2008: 154).

The wider environment is referred to as a universe that has a full span with various natural laws (these laws of nature) based on Allah's authority and prerogative. Therefore, the wider environment, in this case, the universe, is where life takes place based on God's authority. In the Islamic view, divinity is the concept of God who exists, is active, and is always present at all times and who has the highest authority in the power of the universe (Fata, 2014: 158).

In the Al-Qur'an Surah al-An'am verse 165:

وَهُوَ ال ذِيَّْ جَعَلَكُمَّْ يِفََّ خَل ٰۤ الَْْرْضَِّ وَرَفَعََّ ب َعْضَكُمَّْ ف َوْقََّ ب َعْض َّ ِّْ لِي َب ْ لُوَكُمَّْ فََِّْ مَا َّ اِن كُمْ اِن رَّب كََّ وَاِن هُّ لَغَفُوْر َّ وَاِن هِيْم َّ

Meaning: “And it is He who has made you successors upon the earth and has raised some of you above others in degrees [of rank] that He may try you through what He has given you. Indeed, your Lord is swift in penalty; but indeed, He is Forgiving and Merciful.”

It is explained that humans have power over what they occupy, such as on earth. Human power is in the form of human authority in power to manage various aspects of life on earth.

Because they have authority and power in managing various aspects of life on the vast earth, humans are servants who also have the potential to have a negative impact on the environment, especially on life on earth. This is implied in the translation of the Al-Qur'an surah Ash-Shūraá verse 30 “And whatever strikes you of disaster - it is for what your hands have earned; but He pardons much.”

Therefore, there is also a warning to humans not to do damage on earth. These warnings are contained in the Al-Qur'an surah Al-A'raf verse 56:

وَلَا تَفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِسْلَاحِهَا وَأَذْعَوْنَ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبَ مِنُ ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ

Meaning: “And cause not corruption upon the earth after its reformation. And invoke Him in fear and aspiration. Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to the doers of good.”

Humans, as creatures, have a hanif nature (tend to do the truth) and also have lust (Fata, 2014). If these human actions lead to positive things in the control and management of nature or the environment, this reflects the hanif side of the humans themselves. On the other hand, if the human being tends to exaggerate, especially environmental exploitation, then this action leads to bad actions that follow human desires.
Human interaction with the environment can be described theoretically with various models, such as the *jabariyah* theory related to environmental determinism, in which, in this model, humans are positioned as parties who are affected by environmental conditions. Then there is also the *tahammuliyah* theory related to environmental possibilism, where the environment is considered to play a very important role in describing the relationship between certain cultures and certain environments. The next theory is the *bi’ahal-hudriy* theory, also known as cultural ecology, in which this theory positions culture and the environment as an inseparable unit. As well as the last theory, system or ecosystem theory, views that human relations with the environment occur systemically (Fata, 2017).

2. Ecological Preaching for Development

Da’wa, which is a concept in Islam, is defined by Abdullah (2020: 3) as an effort to move people from negative situations to positive situations. Da’wa has a broad scope in various aspects of life and is presented in various forms, methods, media, messages, subjects, and objects. Therefore, da’wa applies not only to Islamic religious leaders, clerics, scholars, and so on but can also be attached to all Muslims (Aziz, 2019).

The role of proselytizing the life of society, especially Muslims, plays an important role as the process of da’wa communication is a process of transferring positive values to various audiences, both specifically and broadly. As stated by Aziz (2019), the da’wa process can be said to be a compass that directs humans so that they cannot be separated from the values that have been transformed. Because of that, da’wa is directive and is the guardian of those values. The truth conveyed and maintained is a process of da’wa that runs continuously.

In the Al-Qur’an, there is a concept of communication in the form of a model of using language as a channel of information, both done intrapersonally and using the media. Broadly speaking, there are six models of using language for communication in the Qur’an, such as *Qoulan Ma’rufa* (good/appropriate words), *Qoulan Maisura* (easy words), *Qoulan Sadida* (clear words), *Qoulan Baligha* (effective words), *Qoulan Layyina* (smooth words) and *Qoulan Karima* (noble words) (Junaidi, 2017).

The Islamic concept of the environment can be categorized as a da’wa topic where these ecological values need to be conveyed, directed, and maintained based on what has been contained in the Qur’an. Ecological values in the Qur’an, the core guidelines for Muslims, are teachings that cannot be separated from the obligatory teachings or other *sunna* that Muslims have practiced so far, such as prayer, zakat, fasting, and pilgrimage. Although not familiar, ecological values like this are very important to be built and maintained.

Ecology preaching that is unfamiliar has a strong basis in Islamic teachings. How God created the universe and placed humans as caliphs on earth is a manifestation that humans need to be directed in maintaining their desires to manage the nature they inhabit. Thus, the existence of ecological preaching itself is an effort to maintain the arbitrariness of human passions in their control over all life on earth (Fata, 2017). Ecological da’wa cannot be said to be contemporary da’wa when referring to the definition and value of the da’wa itself. However,
ecological da’wa is preaching with special topics in an effort to make it easier for values to be conveyed effectively.

If it is formulated, then ecological da’wa is the transfer of ecological values to mankind, safeguarding human life and other life on this earth from the threat of damage to destruction by humans themselves and as an alignment between humans who coexist with natural life itself. In the end, the goals of da’wa are none other than achieving the life of rahmatan lil alamin (grace to all nature), as well as ecological da’wa, which is also an effort to protect nature so that life in it is maintained and survives sustainably.

In general, da’wa is closely related to the communication process that occurs. The da’wa process that occurs cannot be separated from how a value as a da’wa message is from the da’i, in this case, as a communicator and mad’u or object of da’wa as a communicant. The da’wa process itself cannot be separated from various kinds of communication theory. The values carried as da’wa messages are in the form of various information that has been packaged efficiently and effectively, making it easier for communicators to convey and communicants to receive these da’wa messages (Pirol, 2017).

The communication theory by Junaedi (2019) expresses that communication has a function as an essence, a process of exchanging meaning through messages when interactions between humans occur. Then communication is a process for mutual understanding of each individual to himself and to other individuals. Not only that but communication is also used to influence other individuals or groups so that other individuals or groups can also embrace messages or values that have been adopted.

Likewise, da’wa, especially ecological da’wa, has the same function in communication, such as ecological da’wa, where one requires exchanging conservation or ecological meanings between humans. Ecological da’wa is also inseparable from the mutual understanding of ecological needs, especially the need for environmental sustainability. Also, ecological preaching is a process of influencing a wide audience to understand the meaning of ecological values so as to apply these values to the lives of individuals or a large group of people.

As stated in the introduction, ecological problems are development problems. It is a pattern of human life that is not in line with ecological principles, such as a group of people who eliminate the natural forest and then use it improperly, such as burning it for profit activities only. Even worse, ignorant people who do not understand how nature works do stupid activities that have a long-term impact on the environment, such as uncontrolled and even destructive waste disposal or the use of hazardous materials that exceed reasonable limits. Development not based on an ecological perspective is a mistake born from unsustainable social, economic, and political construction (Ife, 2016). This thought is a perspective put forward by the green response group to address environmental problems. The green group revealed that environmental problems are solved not only by solving technical problems and separating them from one another.

The concept of sustainable development, which is based on the perspective of social justice and human rights and an ecological perspective in the process of its journey, needs support from various parties and various aspects. One of the supports for realizing the development
process is increasing the participation of various elements in the development process (Subejo, 2019).

The development is often interpreted only as physical development, even though this is not entirely wrong. The meaning of development itself is broadly defined as efforts to improve the quality of life by increasing wealth and prosperity (Subejo, 2019). As stated by Ife (2016), wealth and prosperity return to the foundation of development and need to be based on the perspective of justice, human rights, and an ecological perspective.

As a succession of development, communication in the development process is a process to support the participation of various parties to realize this development. Therefore Qubral (2006) put forward the concept of development communication in the form of the art and science of individual communication related to a planned message channel to the public from a poor state to a dynamic socio-economic development condition and can produce equity (development) and raise the potential of each individual the greater one.

In a publication entitled "Communication for Development a Practical Guide" published by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) (Jenatsch & Bauer, 2016), there is a slightly different term, communication for development (C4D) or communication for development. What is meant by communication for development is the means or tools used for social and political transformation.

Ecological da’wa can be an alternative to development communication, especially in environmental issues. The process of transformation of ecological values is contained in the teachings of Islam. In development, especially in Indonesia, it is expected to run effectively and efficiently to involve the wider community. Seeing the large population of Muslims in Indonesia has its own potential to transform the ecological values contained in Islamic religious teachings as a support for this development process. The broad scope of da’wa allows participation with various models, which can be implemented as programs that can be implemented by Islamic communities, Islamic educational institutions, or non-profit organizations engaged in da’wa to be able to contribute to the implementation of ecological da’wa as a process of sustainable development.

The concept of ecological da’wa, if also interpreted in the notion of environmental communication put forward by Littlejohn and Foss (2009) in the form of a theory that focuses on forms of communication and human relations with the environment, then the process of forming human character as a caliph and person in charge of life in it is an inseparable part of ecological da’wa. Environmental communication and ecological preaching are processes carried out to increase public or community awareness of environmental management in a dialogical nature (qoulan baligha) which occurs more frequently in interpersonal communication and group communication (Ulfa & Fathiya, 2018).

The process of ecological da’wa, in its application as an alternative to development communication, is not much different from development communication. Suppose the C4D concept put forward by SDC is in the form of participation and social change by interpersonally applying communication methods and instruments, using community media and modern information technology (Jenatsch & Bauer, 2016). C4D aims to strengthen dialogue between beneficiaries, partners, and authorities to increase the sense of ownership of
the program and produce a sustainable impact. Ecological da’wa is a participatory process to make social changes from negative to positive changes based on Islamic teachings, whose content is a representation of ecological values contained in the Qur’an. This da’wa ultimately brings about improvement and sustainability as well as the balance of human nature and desires for a life that is prosperous and pleasing to Allah.

D. Conclusions

The environmental crisis is an event where ecological emergencies and climate crises are caused by the global economic paradigm, which places nature as the main exploitative economic commodity and occurs in various parts of the world (Khalid, 2021). The problems of the environmental crisis are based on unsustainable social, economic, and political constructions. The environmental crisis occurs because of the paradigms built at the grassroots of community life. Comprehensive development is fundamentally based on an ecological perspective and social justice and human rights perspective. The ecological perspective is the basis for development in managing human and diverse natural life.

The wider environment is referred to as a universe with a full span of various natural laws (these laws of nature) based on Allah’s authority and prerogative. Therefore, the wider environment, in this case, the universe, is where life takes place based on God’s authority. Humans, as creatures, have a hanif nature (preferring the truth) and desire. If these human actions lead to positive things in the control and management of nature or the environment, this reflects the hanif side of humans. On the other hand, if a human tends to exaggerate, especially environmental exploitation, it may lead to bad consequences following human desires.

The concept of sustainable development, which is based on social justice and human rights and an ecological perspective in its journey, requires support from various parties and aspects. One of the supports for realizing the development process is how to increase the participation of various elements in the development process.

Ecological da’wa can be placed as an alternative to development communication, especially in environmental issues in the transformation of ecological values contained in the teachings of Islam. In development, especially in Indonesia, it is expected to run effectively and efficiently to involve the wider community. Seeing the large population of Muslims in Indonesia has its own potential to transform the ecological values contained in Islamic religious teachings as a support for this development process. The broad scope of da’wa allows participation with various models, which can be implemented as programs that can be implemented by Islamic communities, Islamic educational institutions, or non-profit organizations engaged in da’wa to be able to contribute to the implementation of ecological da’wa as a process of sustainable development.

The participatory process in ecological da’wa is carried out to make social changes from negative to positive, based on Islamic teachings, whose content represents ecological values contained in the Qur’an. This da’wa ultimately brings about improvement and sustainability as well as a balance of human nature and desires for a prosperous and pleasing life to Allah.
Bibliography


Acknowledgments
We would like to thank all participants for providing opportunities for data collection.

Funding
The authors received no direct funding for this research.

Supplementary Material
Supplemental data for this article can be accessed here https://jicc.umy.ac.id/index.php/jicc

Citation Information
Cite this article as Journal of Islamic Communication and Counseling, Dany Tantowi Prastyo, JICC Vol.2 Number 1 January 2023.

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