

A CASE STUDY OF TWO MUSLIM NON-GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATIONS(NGOs) ON ISLAMIC *DA`WAH*
IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The propagation of Islam (*da`wah*) by different Muslim organizations in Nigeria and across the globe in helping humanity especially in the area of education is on the rise. The main objective of this study is to explore the contributions of Jama'atu Nasir Islam (JNI) and Nasirul-Lahi Fatih Society of Nigeria (NASFAT) in Islamic *da`wah* in Niger State, Nigeria. This study employed a qualitative approach. The instrument used in this study includes interviews, observation and documents analysis. The respondents are eleven executive members of the two organizations. The qualitative design was utilized and data was compiled from transcriptions of recorded interviews and observations. The narrative and qualitative software known as Nvivo 10 were used in managing and analysing the data. The research findings show the contributions of the two Muslim organizations through *da`wah* in the state which have made significant contributions towards the spread of Islam most especially in the field of education, having more converts from other religions to the fold of Islam. As a result, both organizations do not show much differences in their approach *toda`wah*. The research indicates that Jama'atu Nasir Islam portray a more quality *da`wah* activities than NASFAT. In conclusion, the outcomes of the research showed that both Jama'atu Nasir Islam and NASFAT were able to touch lives of many people in the state through *da`wah* programs. The results of this study might be useful for future study on Muslim organizations in Nigeria and also of help to Islamic Supreme Council of Nigeria (ISCN), for easy assesment of *da`wah* programs by these two Muslim organizations in the state.

KAJIAN KES TERHADAP DUA BADAN ISLAM BUKAN KERAJAAN DALAM MENYEBAR DAKWAH ISLAM DI NIGERIA

ABSTRAK

Penyebaran Islam melalui dakwah oleh pertubuhan-pertubuhan Islam di Nigeria dan seluruh dunia dalam membantu manusia terutamanya dalam bidang pendidikan semakin meningkat. Objektif utama kajian ini adalah untuk meneroka sumbangan Jama'atu Nasir Islam (JNI) dan Persatuan Nasirul-Lahi Fatih, Nigeria (NASFAT) dalam menyebarkan dakwah Islam di negeri Niger, Nigeria. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Instrumen kajian yang digunakan ialah temubual, pemerhatian dan analisis dokumen. Responden kajian terdiri daripada sebelas pegawai eksekutif dari kedua-dua organisasi. Data kajian yang dikumpul dianalisis dengan menggunakan perisian NVivo 10. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa kedua-dua pertubuhan Islam tersebut telah memberikan sumbangan yang signifikan dalam penyebaran dakwah Islam di negeri tersebut. Walau bagaimanapun, kedua-dua organisasi itu tidak menunjukkan perbezaan yang besar dari segi pendekatan dakwah mereka. Hasil Kajian juga menunjukkan kaedah berdakwah kumpulan JNI lebih kualiti berbanding dengan kaedah berdakwah kumpulan NASFAT. Kesimpulan daripada kajian ini menunjukkan kedua-dua organisasi telah berjaya mengubah kehidupan ramai penduduk di negeri itu melalui program dakwah mereka. Implikasinya Majlis Tertinggi Islam Nigeria (ISCN) boleh menilai program dakwah ini untuk organisasi Islam di Nigeria.

SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION

The following system of transliteration has been adopted for Arabic words and names used in this research.

a = ا	z = ز	f = ف
b = ب	s = س	q = ق
t = ت	sh = ش	k = ك
th = ث	Ṣ = ص	l = ل
j = ج	= ض	m = م
h = ح	ẓ = ظ	n = ن
kh = خ	‘= غ	h = ه
d = د		w = و
dh = ذ		y = ي
r = ر		, = ء

Vowels:Ş

Short: a = (*fathah*) ; i = (*kasrah*) ; u = (*dammah*)

Long: ā = اَ ; i = يَ ; ā = اِ ; ū = وَ

Diphthong: a = يا ; aw = وا

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Declaration	ii
Acknowledgement	iii
Abstrak	iv
Abstract	v
Dedication	vi
System of Transliteration	vii

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	Background of the Study	5
1.2	Statement of the Problem	8
1.3	Objectives of the Study	12
1.4	Research Questions	12
1.5	Significance of the Study	13
1.6	Limitation of the Study	14
1.7	Review of the Related Literatures	15
1.8	Definitions of Major Terms	21
	1.8.1 Contribution	21
	1.8.2 <i>Da`wah</i>	21
	1.8.3 JNI	22
	1.8.4 NASFAT	22
	1.8.5 Niger State Nigeria	23
1.9	Theoretical Framework	24

	1.9.1 Quranic Commandments on Da'wah	25
	1.9.2 Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) on Da'wah	26
1.10	Conclusion	29

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0	Introduction	31
2.1	The Concept of <i>Da'wah</i> in Islam	32
2.2	Importance of <i>Da'wah</i>	33
2.3	<i>Da'wah</i> Methodology of the Prophet	36
2.4	<i>Da'wah</i> in the Prophetic Era	46
	2.4.1 Direct Preaching	50
	2.4.2 Sending Emissaries	51
	2.4.3 Education	52
	2.4.4 <i>Da'wah</i> Through Humanitarian and Welfare	53
	2.4.5 <i>Da'wah</i> at the Battle Field	54
2.5	<i>Da'wah</i> During the Periods of the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs	56
	2.5.1 Conclusion	60
2.6	Islamic <i>Da'wah</i> in Africa	61
2.7	Islamic <i>Da'wah</i> in Nigeria	63
	2.7.1 <i>Da'wah</i> Under Sokoto Caliphate of Nigeria	64
	2.7.2 Preaching Tours	66
	2.7.3 Education of the Masses	67
	2.7.4 The Jihad Campaigns (the use of arms)	69

2.8	Jama'atu Nasir Islam (JNI)	74
2.9	Nasirul-Lahi Fatih Society of Nigeria (NASFAT)	76
2.10	Conclusion	78

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

3.0	Introduction	80
3.1	Design of the Study	81
3.2	Case Study Approach	82
3.3	Criteria of Participants	83
	3.3.1 Participants Background	84
3.4	Pilot Study	92
3.5	Data Collection	93
	3.5.1 Interview	94
	3.5.2 Observation	95
3.6	Data Analysis	96
3.7	Conclusion	99

CHAPTER 4 CONTRIBUTIONS OF JNI AND NASFAT IN DA'WAH

4.0	Introduction	100
4.1	Scope of <i>Da`wah</i> Activities by JNI and NASFAT to Muslims and non Muslims in Niger State as <i>da`wah</i> organizations	101
	4.1.1 Propagation of Islam	101
	4.1.2 Having more converts from other religions to Islam	108
	4.1.3 Catering for the Poor and the Needy in the Society	114

4.2	The Contributions of JNI and NASFAT especially in the Field of Education through <i>Da`wah</i>	122
4.2.1	Improving Infrastructure in the Communities	122
4.2.1.1	Building of Schools in the Communities	122
4.2.1.2	Building of Mosques across the Communities	127
4.2.1.3	Provision of Quality and Free Education in the Society	129
4.2.1.4	Giving Out Scholarship to Assist the Poor Students	130
4.2.1.5	Acces to Free and Quality Education	132
4.3	Other <i>Da`wah</i> Activities by Jama'atu Nasir Islam	133
4.3.1	Adult Education Classes for Women	133
4.3.2	Training the Intending Pilgrims to the Holy Land	134
4.3.3	Fencing of Grave-Yards & Eid-El Praying Ground	135
4.4	Quality <i>Da`wah</i> Programs By JNI And NASFAT	139
4.4.1	Financial Assistance to the New Converts to the Religion of Islam	139
4.4.2	Preaching from Place to Place	142
4.4.3	Employment of Teachers to Teach the New Converts	146
4.5	Challenges Faced on <i>da`wah</i> programs by JNI and NASFAT	149
4.6	Conclusion	158

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.0	Introduction	161
5.1	Propagation of Islam	162
5.2	<i>Da`wah</i> to Non-Muslims	164
5.3	Welfare	167
5.4	Education and Training	169
5.5	Humanitarian Services	174
5.6	Challenges Faced on <i>da`wah</i> Activities by JNI & NASFAT	175
5.7	Suggestions and Recommendations	177
5.8	Suggestions for Future Research	181
5.9	Conclusion	182
REFERENCES		184

Table	Page
3.1 Bio-data of the Executive Members of Jama'atu Nasir Islam and NASFAT who were involved in the research study.	85
4.1 Outcome of responses to question asked on scope of <i>da'wah</i> in Islam by JNI and NASFAT in Niger State, Nigeria.	120
4.2 Response by participants based on the scope of <i>da'wah</i> in table 4.1	121
4.3 Outcome of question asked on the contributions of JNI& NASFAT in the field of Education as <i>da'wah</i> organizations.	137
4.4 Response by participants based on the contributions in the field of Education in table 4.3.	138
4.5 Outcome of the Question asked on the quality <i>da'wah</i> programs by JNI and NASFAT as <i>da'wah</i> organizations.	154
4.6 Response by participants based on quality <i>da'wah</i> programs in table no. 4.5.	155
4.7 Comparison on quality <i>da'wah</i> activities programs between JNI and NASFAT.	157

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1.1 Map of Nigeria	24
1.2 Theoritical Framework	29
3.1 Nvivo Model represents the respondents	84
4.1 Nvivo Model of the three Research questions	156
5.1 Findings and the characteristicsof the two Muslim organizations	192

CHAPTER 1

1.0 Introduction

In the Name of Allah the Most Beneficent the Most Merciful.

Da`wah* (propagation) is a duty on every Muslim both male and female, so long he/she is matured and sane. There are several Muslim organizations in Nigeria that embarked on *da`wah activities, most a times in groups with the sole aim of reminding the Muslim *ummah* (community) of Allah (SWT) laws and equally inviting the non-Muslims to the fold of Islam with wisdom and nice preaching. The *da`wah* programs started with the Prophet (May the peace and Blessing of Allah be upon him) himself delivering the message of Islam to his people as ordained by Allah (SWT). The next stage of *da`wah* was by the rightly guided Caliphs after the demise of the Holy Prophet. In fact, generations after generation people are reminded about the teachings of Islam by the *dā'i* (callers) of their time inviting them to the fold of Islam. In the Holy Qur`an Allah (SWT) has placed the responsibility on the Muslim *ummah* to convey the message of Islam to mankind in general. Allah (SWT) says in

Surah al-Baqarah:

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“Thus, we have appointed you a model community (ummah) that you may be witness against mankind, and the Messenger may be a witness against you” (Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 143)

Allah (SWT) says in Surah Fuṣṣilat:

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“And, who is better in saying than he who invites to Allah, does what is right, and says: Surely, I am of those who surrender” (Surah Fuṣṣilat, 41: 33).

Allah (SWT) did not allow the Muslims to wait until they have perfected Islamic society before they begin to convey the message of Islam. The Holy Prophet (May the peace and Blessing of Allah be upon him) did not wait until many converts grew up to develop on Islamic society before delivery. The Prophet is reported to have said “convey concerning me even if a single *ayah* (verse)” (Sahih al-Bukhari, vol.4, no. 667).

Akhlaque (2012) viewed Islam as a universal religion which allows domination of truth to all people or race. Islam is not a new religion, it is as old as man; in other words, it has been the only religion before human-being appeared on the face of the earth. And it continues to be the religion of the people with the same

message been convey to all generations. From this wider and general meaning of the word Islam, it is then limited to those who submitted to God Almighty on their own free will. A Muslim is he or she who accepts to obey the laws of God, with the logical conclusion to the evolution of religious history is a non-sectarian, non-racial, but universal religion which Islam claims to be. The God which Islam preaches is not an exclusive God. He is the Lord of the worlds; the Lord of all persons of whatever faith.

Sulaiman (2004) stated that, no one as an individual or as a community can delay doing *da`wah* until perfection is achieved; as soon as one is blessed with some knowledge of Islam. It is a duty on the believers to convey the message of Islam to the people around them. In *da`wah* towards the non-Muslims there should not be compulsion or forced on the non-Muslims to embrace the religion of Islam. Instead it should be done through freedom and willingness to the submission of Allah and Him alone. Allah (SWT) says in (Surah: al-Baqarah)

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“There is no compulsion in religion. Righteousness is now distinct from error. He who disbelieves in the idols and believes in Allah has grasped the firmest tie that will never break. Allah is Hearing, Knowing” (al-Baraqaah, 2: 256)

Da'wah has great reward, because the Holy Prophet is reported to have said:

“Whoever guides someone towards good, will receive the reward of the one who acts upon it”. (Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, no. 6470). The best *da'wah* is to show good examples for people to see through actions and not necessarily talking to them. Action sometimes speak louder, the exemplary life sometimes is enough for people to emulate. Allah (SWT) says in Surah al-Ahzab

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“In the messenger of Allah you have good examples for he who hopes for Allah and the Last Day and remember Allah abundantly”. (al-Ahzab, 33: 21). Also in Surah

Ali-‘Imran Allah (SWT) says:

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“You are the best nation ever to be brought forth for people. You order honor and forbid dishonor, and you believed in Allah. Had the people of the Book believed, it would have surely been better for them. Some of them are believers, but most of them are evildoers” (Ali-‘Imran, 3: 110).

Al-Iluri (1985) argued that Jama`atu Ansar-u-deen was established in 1900

although only present in the South-western region of Nigeria with the main aim of

building schools for the Muslim youth which was a difficult task and not achieved.

While another organization named Ansar-ul-Islam was able to established schools in the year 1927 and opened branches in many places before the arrival of the colonial masters. The Jama`atu Ahlu Sunnah that was founded in the year 1802 by Uthman Dan Fodio and his (*Jama'ah*) followers, this group uphold the Sufi orders of Qadiriyyah and Tijaniyyah. These Sufi movement in the northern region of the country continue *da`wah* throughout the period of pre-colonial till the independence period of Nigeria, although mainly in the northern part of the country.

Abdul Ganiy (2012) asserts that just before independence in 1960, the first unified Islamic organization for all Muslims in Nigeria called Jama'atul Nasir Islam (JNI) was formed by Ahmadu Bello¹ the grandson of Uthman Dan Fodio² who founded Jama`atu Ahlu Sunnah. The formation of this organization (JNI) was the first with the support of some clerics, judges and emirs having the main goal as propagation of the religion of Islam throughout the northern region and the country at large. The organization was able to stand in for mankind and since the government was for both the Muslims and non Muslims, Jama`atu Nasir Islam (JNI) became the first Islamic organization recognized by the government. Though this research is purely focuses on the contributions of Jama'atu Nasir Islam (JNI) and Nasirul-Lahi Fatih Society of Nigeria (NASFAT) in Islamic *da`wah* especially in the field of education and humanitarian services in Niger State, Nigeria.

¹ Ahmadu Bello was one of the grandsons of Uthman Dan Fodio; he was the first Premier of the whole northern Nigeria. He was the initiator and founder of Jama'atu Nasir Islam (JNI) in Nigeria.

² Uthman Dan Fodio was a reformist, who spread the religion of Islam in the then northern Nigeria; he was the founder of Jama'atu Ahlu Sunnah. He was also the founder of Sokoto Caliphate in Nigeria.

1.1 Background of the Study

Prior to Nigeria political independence in 1960, there was no single uniform Muslim organization in Nigeria to unite them. In other words there were different Muslim organizations but at regional levels.

In essence, Islam was in practice long before Nigeria as a nation got her independence, but there was no single uniform organization that stood in as an umbrella body in times of Muslims needs.

One year after the country gain her independence from the British colonial masters, the Nigeria Muslims deem it fit to come together to form a religious body to cater for the needs of entire Muslims and non Muslims in the country at humanitarian ground. The Muslims under the chairmanship of the Premier of Northern region Ahmadu Bello (Sardauna of Sokoto) met in Kaduna to discuss the state of the nation and Muslims affairs and came out with the formation of the Muslims organization, named Jama'atu Nasir Islam (JNI) (Abdus-Sami'i, 2006).

Kawu (2009) in a paper entitled "Formation of Jama'atu Nasir Islam and its Activities", elucidated that in Nigeria Jama'atul Nasir Islam (JNI) is the biggest Muslims organizational umbrella, which was founded on the 5th Jan, 1961 in Kaduna, the northern Nigeria regional headquarters, by prominent government officials, politicians, and renowned Islamic scholars which includes Ahmadu Bello; (Sultan of Sokoto Caliphate). Abu Bakar iii, Abu Bakar Mahmud Gumi, Ribadu Yola; Sheikh Nasiru Kabara Kano; and many others. With the sole aim of da`wah throughout the country and equally defend the interest of the Muslim *Ummah* in general.

Lateef (2012) on the other hand sees, Nasirul-Lahi-Fatih society of Nigeria (NASFAT) as the fastest growing Muslim organization in Nigeria, which was formerly with Yasrullah Society of Nigeria Asalatu Group. This association was founded by group of bankers who came together on Saturday 28th July 1984, to form a corporate prayer group that will cater for the spiritual needs of Muslims in urban areas and equally give them the confidence that could also attain their goal in life. The main mission was to propagate Islam to entire mankind in all areas devoid of any religious affiliations but more particular on the believing Muslims in the society before extension to the non Muslims in the community.

Due to some development, this prayer group later metamorphosed to a new society named and called Nasirul-Lahi-Fatih Society of Nigeria (NASFAT). NASFAT as the new name came into being on 5th March, 1995 and since then the Society has been growing widely across the country and beyond with their *da`wah* activities (NASFAT Constitution 2007).

NASFAT which started from South-western part of the country (Yoruba land) but gradually today every State of the Federation including Abuja (Federal Capital Territory) has its headquarters and some local governments also have its branch headquarter. It also has international branch in Benin Republic, Ghana, Togo, France, United States of America and United Kingdom in order to ease its *da`wah* activities to both Muslims and the non Muslims across the globe especially in rendering humanitarian services (Habeeb, 2011).

Kawu (2009) argued that, it was unanimously agreed in the first meeting of Jama'atu Nasir Islam to urged the clergies and Muslim philanthropic to embark on preaching, building of mosques and *madarassa*³ (Qur'anic Traditional schools), helping the poor and the needy in the society in addition to other *da`wah* activities throughout the nation as form of invitation to Islam.

It is on this background that this research intends to undertake an examination of the *da`wah* activities by JNl and NASFAT in Niger State, Nigeria. An assessment of *da`wah* activities of Jama'atu Nasir Islam and NASFAT as well as the challenges and effects of *da`wah* on the lives of the people of the area is carried out in a view to proffer solutions to some of the challenges hindering *da`wah* program in the State

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Due to lack of coordination between some Muslim Non Governmental organizations on Islamic *da`wah* in Nigeria, the Muslim *ummah* has failed to achieve the desire goals of having much converts to the religion of Islam (Kani 2005). According to Abdul Rahman (2006) the fundamental problem facing Islamic *da`wah* in Nigeria lie in the weak relationship between the Muslim NGOs without the clear scope of *da`wah*, in addition he argued that Islamic *da`wah* in Nigeria has no clear policy and scenario which has made a lot of problem in the field of *da`wah*. Modibbo and Kiwanuka (2012) asserted that the nature of the country paved the way for multi-

³ Madarassah is a Qur'anic traditional school where the learners are taught the recitation of the Holy Qur'an, some ahadith and *fiqh* (jurisprudence) above all the ethics of the religion of Islam in all ramifications.

religious organizations because Nigeria is a heterogeneous nation with diverse socio-cultural differences. It is a country where different religions are practiced because the constitution allows freedom of religion.

According to Rufai and Sheshi (2011 & 2012), the major problem faced by Muslim organizations in Nigeria is lack of coordination especially in executing the numerous projects related to *da`wah*. For example Wahabis and the Sufis, each challenging and equally condemning themselves openly. The non Muslims in Nigeria, also embarked on evangelism as long as the Muslim organizations are on *da`wah* activities. For instance, the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA), the Redeem Church of Christ (RCC), the Jehovah Witness Church, Deeper Life Church, Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), United Missionary Church of Africa (UMCA) and many others made it a point of duty to visit Muslims homes on Thursdays and Sundays in order to win the heart of the Muslims especially the young ones for Christ, presenting some kind of gifts to the Muslims to accept Christ as their Lord and savior on daily basis.

The Nigerian educational sector has been in shambles over the years. This phenomenon paves the way for private partnership. Due to failure by the Federal Government to give the citizenry the value education, made some organizations to established schools, ranging from primary to tertiary levels to supplement government effort educationally. The failure of Nigeria's education system to meet thriving demand by the entire citizens' couple with the poor quality of infrastructures across the public schools in the country pave the way for partnership especially the Private School owners (Ogunle, 2007).

Most of Muslim organizational Schools established in the Country to assist in providing Islamic and western education lack proper funding to cater for the needs especially the teachers. Schools like Ansar-u-deen Society of Nigeria School, Ansar-u-Islam Islamic School, Anawawi-ur-deen Islamic School, Al-murshid Islamic School, Madarassatul Adabiyyah School, Ahmadiyyah Muslim School, Muslim Association of Nigeria (MAN) School and many others. The take home salaries of these Schools teachers are meager compared to Government own Schools and this is due to lack of enough fund by these organizations to cater for this vacuum (Adelani, 2014).

Jamilu (2001) argued that some of the major challenges facing most of Muslim NGOs embarking on Islamic propagation in Nigeria is competition in quality *da`wah* programs and lack of enough fund to establish many schools which are equally perceived by the non Muslims as alternative to western education. And as such their offspring must not go there to acquire or seek for knowledge. Coupled with the poor infrastructure and lack of modern educational facilities in most of these schools creates negative impression in the midst of non Muslims in the country. Hence, there are alternatives private and missionary schools in the country rendering the same services. Some Muslim brethren skip most of these Islamic schools because of inadequate provision for western education in their curriculum.

Ibrahim (2005) argued that the period between the Islamic reforms of Sheikh Uthman Dan Fodio and the colonial period marked a new epoch in the Islamization process in Nigeria. In Yorubaland, the proliferation of Qur'anic schools was

witnessed. Many towns like Abeokuta, Ilorin and Ibadan became important Islamic centers. The introduction of the Western type of education, which followed the coming of Christian missionaries to Nigeria, spurred the Muslims to be up and doing in their educational program, especially when they sensed that this new education program was a threat to their religion and that it was meant to promote and propagate the rival religion - Christianity. He further states that it was impossible to carry out some religious rituals without reading in Arabic language; it became expedient for the Islamic teachers spreading the religion to teach the new converts some portions of the Qur'an in Arabic. That culminated in the establishment of Qur'anic schools in the area. Mosques were majorly used for this purpose, while in some cases the residences of the Islamic teacher as well as tree shades were used as schools. The venues suggested why educational facilities that could aid teaching and learning were totally inadequate. Mats and ram or cow skins were the common furniture in such schools.

NASFAT is one of the Muslim organizations in Nigeria and the fastest growing. According to the organization's record book (2011) the State chapter witnessed new members; one thousand to two thousand monthly. NASFAT has good infrastructural development and network to ease *da`wah* activities in both Muslims and non Muslims community in Nigeria (Salahdeen, 2000). Many young and old Nigerians all over the federation freely join this group due to their numerous Islamic activities in the society especially assisting the humanity in general.

This study analyzed some of the activities of *da`wah* movement in Niger State, by these two Muslim NGOs; Jama'atu Nasir Islam (JNI) and Nasirul-Lahi

Fatih Society of Nigeria (NASFAT). And equally weigh their programs especially in educational sector, the preaching of Oneness of Allah and harmonious living with the co-Muslims and non Muslims alike. In a nation like Nigeria there is bound to be doubtful and suspicious of one another hence the citizens are not of the same faith and beliefs. With their *da`wah* committees all over implementing quality *da`wah* programs in the society for instance, helping the poor and the needy, building of Schools across the board were analyzed.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to conduct an exploration into the *da`wah* activities by Jama'atu Nasir Islam (JNI) and Nasirul-Lahi Fatih Society of Nigeria (NASFAT) in Niger State. The purpose of this study includes;

1. To examine the scope of *da`wah* activities by the Jama'atu Nasir Islam and NASFAT in Niger State.
2. To analyze the contributions of Jama'atu Nasir Islam and NASFAT in the field of education through *da`wah* in Niger State, Nigeria.
3. To analyze the comparison between Jama'atu Nasir Islam and NASFAT in Niger State regarding *da`wah* contributions.

1.4 Research Questions