

MODERATION IN RELIGIOUS LIFE DYNAMICS: HARMONY AND TOLERANCE IN KUTOROJO VILLAGE, KAJEN DISTRICT, PEKALONGAN REGENCY

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ABSTRAK

Studi ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan konsep moderasi beragama, kehidupan moderasi beragama di Desa Kutorojo, faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi kehidupan moderasi beragama di desa tersebut, serta tantangan masyarakat desa dalam melaksanakan kehidupan beragama yang moderat. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode penelitian lapangan (*field research*), dengan teknik pengumpulan data observasi dan wawancara. Data dianalisis menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kehidupan beragama yang moderat di Desa Kutorojo tercermin dalam harmoni dan toleransi antarumat beragama, meskipun dihadapi oleh beberapa tantangan seperti perbedaan pemahaman agama, tekanan faktor eksternal, aspek ekonomi, konflik antara tradisi lokal dan modernisasi, serta perlunya inklusi terhadap minoritas agama. Faktor-faktor seperti semangat gotong royong, ketergantungan ekonomi bersama, tradisi dan budaya yang kaya, pendidikan, kepemimpinan yang inklusif, serta pengaruh media dan teknologi, memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk dan memelihara kehidupan beragama yang moderat. Kontribusi studi ini adalah memberikan gambaran yang komprehensif tentang kondisi kehidupan beragama di tingkat lokal dan potensi solusi untuk memperkuat kerukunan antarumat beragama.

Kata kunci : Moderasi Beragama, Harmoni, Toleransi, Desa Kutorojo

ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the concept of religious moderation, the life of religious moderation in Kutorojo Village, the factors influencing religious moderation in the village, and the challenges faced by the village community in practicing moderate religious life. The research was conducted using field research methods, employing observation and interview techniques. Data were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative approach. Findings indicate that moderate religious life in Kutorojo Village is reflected in harmony and tolerance among religious communities, despite facing several challenges such as differences in religious understanding, external pressures, economic aspects, conflicts between local traditions and modernization, and the need for inclusion of religious minorities. Factors such as community spirit, shared economic dependence, rich traditions and culture, education, inclusive leadership, and the influence of media and technology play a

significant role in shaping and maintaining moderate religious life. The contribution of this study lies in providing a comprehensive overview of the conditions of religious life at the local level and potential solutions to strengthen interfaith harmony.

Keywords: *Religious Moderation, Harmony, Tolerance, Kutorojo Village*

INTRODUCTION

Moderate religious life plays a significant role in building a harmonious and peaceful society in Indonesia, a country rich in religious and cultural diversity (Akhmadi, 2019). The concept of religious moderation serves as the main foundation in maintaining harmony among religious communities, although its implementation is not always easy, especially at the local level such as in Kutorojo Village, Kajen District, Pekalongan Regency.

The study “Religious Moderation in Indonesia” by (Fahri & Zainuri, 2019) provides an in-depth understanding of the importance of religious moderation as the key to achieving tolerance and harmony among religious communities in Indonesia. Through a descriptive-analytical approach, this research reveals the concept of religious moderation, which encompasses attitudes, perspectives, and behaviors that avoid extremism and adopt a middle position in practicing religious teachings. Furthermore, the study highlights factors influencing religious moderation in Indonesia, such as the spirit of mutual cooperation, shared economic dependency, tradition and culture, as well as education.

The village of Kutorojo, despite being known for its religious diversity, faces several challenges in practicing religious life in a moderate manner. The background of this issue arises from various social, economic, cultural, and political dynamics influencing the daily lives of the village community. One of the main challenges is the differences in understanding and interpretation of religion among the villagers, which sometimes become sources of tension or conflict despite the majority of the village population living together peacefully.

Other challenges stem from external pressures, such as the forces of globalization and advancements in information technology, which bring cultures and values from outside and can alter the mindset of the local community. The younger generation is particularly susceptible to the influence of popular culture and social media, often challenging the preservation of traditional religious values.

Economic factors also play a significant role in the context of religious moderation, where economic pressures may force the community to sacrifice religious values to meet their basic needs. Conflict between local traditions and modernization is also a challenge, as changes in times often confront traditional values with the currents of modernization that tend to alter the mindset and behavior of the community, especially among the younger generation.

Lastly, the importance of understanding and adopting an inclusive approach towards religious minorities and beliefs in Kutorajo Village is part of the background issue. Although the village is known for its tolerance, there may be times when religious minorities or beliefs feel neglected or unrecognized in community life.

Through a deep understanding of these background issues, we can explore more effective and sustainable solutions to strengthen religious moderation and promote harmony among religious communities in Kutorajo Village. Thus, this article aims to describe the concept of religious moderation, religiously moderate life in Kutorajo Village, factors influencing religiously moderate life in the village, and the challenges faced by the village community in practicing moderate religious life.

The research conducted by the researchers is a type of field research, utilizing observation and interview data collection techniques. This method allows researchers to gain a deep understanding of the phenomena under study by interacting directly with research subjects in their natural environment. The use of observation techniques enables researchers to observe behavior and situations that occur naturally without external interference. Meanwhile, interviews provide an opportunity for researchers to gain direct insight from informants about their views, experiences, and understanding related to the research topic. After the data is collected, the data analysis technique used is descriptive qualitative analysis, where data is analyzed in-depth to understand and describe the observed phenomena in more detail. With this approach, researchers can present findings comprehensively and reveal the meaning of the data collected in the context of their field study.

DISCUSSION

Concept of Religious Moderation

In the Indonesian context, “Moderasi” refers to distancing oneself from extremism or reducing violence. In Arabic, moderation is known as “tawassuth” (middle), “i’tidal” (just), and “tawazun” (balanced), while in English, moderation refers to a balanced and non-excessive attitude. Meanwhile, the term “beragama” refers to the act of embracing a religion (Nisa et al., 2021). According to the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, religious moderation is defined as an attitude, perspective, and behavior that always takes a middle position, acts justly, and avoids extremism in practicing religious teachings (Hasan, 2021).

Susanti (2022) defines religious moderation as the moral balance, beliefs, and character expressed as the attitude of religious groups and individuals. These balanced values must consistently acknowledge other groups or individuals who are different. From this perspective, religious moderation encompasses perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors that respect differences in religion, race, ethnicity, culture, and customs, with the aim of maintaining unity among religious communities without veering towards extremism on either the right or left, and being able to preserve the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

Religious moderation is considered a key to achieving tolerance and harmony among religious communities, both at the local, national, and global levels. The options available within moderation, which reject religious extremism and liberalism, are seen as the key to balance, aiming to preserve civilization and achieve peace (Abror, 2020). In this way, every religious community can treat others with full respect, accept differences, and live together in peace and harmony.

In the context of multicultural societies like Indonesia, religious moderation is no longer just an option but a necessity. Religious moderation is a process of understanding and practicing religious teachings in a balanced manner to avoid extremist behavior in their implementation. It is important to understand that religious moderation is not only related to the literal understanding of religious texts but also how religious teachings are applied contextually in everyday life.

According to Gamu & Pranyanto (2023), the implementation of religious moderation in Indonesia emphasizes that what is moderated is not the religion itself, but rather the understanding or the way individuals practice religious teachings that need to be moderated. Therefore, religious moderation requires a deep understanding of religious teachings and the ability to apply them in a balanced manner, in accordance with the context and universal human values.

In the context of the journey of religious life, moderation becomes a principle that bridges the gap between understanding true religion and embodying religious teachings in everyday life. By strengthening religious moderation, it is hoped that communities can practice religious teachings wisely and compassionately, maintain peace and harmony among religious communities, and achieve common aspirations in building a just, prosperous, and dignified society.

Religious Moderation Life in Kutorojo Village, Kajen District, Pekalongan Regency

Kutorojo Village, a hidden gem nestled in Kajen District, Pekalongan Regency, offers captivating natural beauty and enchanting cultural diversity. Situated amidst lush green rice fields and beautiful hills, Kutorojo Village boasts a rich history and diverse community. Divided into four distinct hamlets: Kutorojo, Purwadadi, Gunung Telu, and Silawan, each hamlet has its own unique characteristics reflecting the cultural richness and traditions of the village community.

In daily life, the people of Kutorojo Village live together peacefully, despite coming from various religious and belief backgrounds. The majority of its inhabitants are farmers, cultivating fertile fields abundant with agricultural produce. However, some inherit traditional professions such as reyeng makers, while others earn a living as casual laborers, traders, teachers, migrants, and civil servants. The diversity of natural resources in Kutorojo Village presents significant potential for the local economy.

In terms of religion, Kutorojo Village showcases remarkable diversity. In addition to the majority Muslim population, there are also Hindu adherents and Kapribaden followers. Even within Islam itself, there are three main groups: Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, and the Indonesian Islamic Propagation

Institute (LDII). Despite this diversity, it becomes a strength in fostering harmony and tolerance among religious communities.

Kutorojo Village also has religious facilities including mosques for Muslims and temples for Hindus. This reflects the village government's commitment to accommodating the spiritual needs of the diverse community. With these facilities in place, people can practice their religious rituals according to their beliefs without hindrance.

Furthermore, religious life in Kutorojo Village is reflected in various religious practices and traditions carried out by the local residents. Practices such as nyadran (commemoration of ancestors), sedekah bumi (earth offering ceremony), selikuran (group recitation of prayers), mauludan (celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday), and the routine yasin tahlil recitation held every Friday night are integral parts of the daily lives of Muslims. Similarly, religious traditions of the Hindu community such as Galungan, Kuningan, and Nyepi are observed with utmost solemnity. All these traditions enrich the village's cultural heritage and serve as tangible evidence of tolerance and respect for differences (Rohman et al., 2024).

Table 1. Population Data of Kutorojo Village in 2024

Hamlet	Population	Number of households	Gender		Number of Religious Followers		
			Male	Female	Islam	Hindu	Penghayat Kapribaden
Kutorojo	404	120	208	196	380	24	-
Purwodadi	441	127	225	217	432	6	3
Gunung telu	414	125	217	197	410	2	2
Silawan	284	60	135	149	284	-	-
Total	1.543	432	785	759	1.506	32	5

Table 1. Population Data of Kutorojo Village shows that while Islam is the majority, there are also a number of Hindu and Kapribaden adherents who remain part of the community's life. These figures reflect the religious diversity in the

village. However, what is more important is how this diversity is managed and respected by the local community.

In addition to religious activities, the people of Kutorojo Village are also active in social and cultural activities that enrich their lives. They often hold collective work events to clean the environment and improve village infrastructure. Moreover, they also celebrate various local festivals and cultural events, such as harvest festivals and folk fairs, which serve as important moments to strengthen relationships among residents and preserve local traditions.

Overall, the religious moderation life in Kutorojo Village is a reflection of harmony and tolerance among religious communities. Despite differences in beliefs and religious practices, the village community continues to live together peacefully, respecting each other, and maintaining diversity as a valuable asset for their lives. Thus, Kutorojo Village can serve as an example for other communities on the importance of maintaining tolerance and harmony among religious communities in building a harmonious and prosperous society.

Factors Influencing Religious Moderation Life in Kutorojo Village, Kajen District, Pekalongan Regency

The life of religious moderation in Kutorojo Village, Kajen District, Pekalongan Regency, is reflected in the preserved harmony among religious communities. There are several factors that influence the dynamics of this moderate religious life, both socially, economically, and culturally.

Firstly, social factors play a key role in shaping religious harmony among the residents of Kutorojo Village. This community has a strong tradition of mutual cooperation, where they often work together in various activities, whether religious, social, or economic in nature. This spirit of cooperation has helped strengthen social bonds among residents, regardless of religious or belief differences. When it comes to religious celebrations or activities, for example, the entire village community participates in the preparation and implementation, without any religious boundaries.

Secondly, economic factors also play an important role in shaping tolerance and harmonious religious life in Kutorojo Village. The majority of the village's inhabitants are farmers who rely on agricultural produce for their livelihoods. The

shared dependence on natural resources and agricultural yields helps strengthen interdependence among village residents. This interconnected economic life prioritizes cooperation and solidarity over religious or belief differences.

The third factor influencing religious life in Kutorojo Village is cultural. The village is rich in diverse traditions and cultures that have been passed down from generation to generation. Traditions such as nyadran, sedekah bumi, selikuran, mauludan, galungan, kuningan, and nyepi are significant moments in the village community's life. All these traditions are carried out collectively by village residents regardless of religious differences, thus strengthening social relationships and solidarity among them.

Moreover, education also plays a significant role in shaping moderate religious life in Kutorojo Village. Although the village is located in a rural area that may have limited access to education, awareness of the importance of education in understanding and respecting differences has been instilled in the community. Schools in this village also teach values of tolerance and harmony among religious communities to their students, so that the younger generation grows up with a good understanding of the importance of peaceful coexistence despite religious diversity.

Undoubtedly, inclusive and wise leadership at the village level also plays an important role in maintaining harmony among religious communities. The village head and other local leaders play a role in managing conflicts, facilitating dialogue among residents, and encouraging the participation of the entire community in activities that strengthen social and religious ties.

Besides the above factors, external influences such as mass media and technology also play a role in shaping the community's perceptions and attitudes towards religious differences. Easy access to information and culture from various parts of the world can broaden perspectives and enrich understanding of religious pluralism. Therefore, efforts to use social media and information technology wisely can be an effective means to strengthen tolerance and religious harmony in Kutorojo Village.

Overall, the above factors contribute to shaping and maintaining moderate and harmonious religious life in Kutorojo Village. The spirit of mutual cooperation, shared economic dependence, rich traditions and cultures, education, inclusive

leadership, as well as media and technology influence, complement and strengthen each other in creating a conducive environment for religious harmony. By understanding and managing these factors wisely, Kutorojo Village can continue to serve as an example to other communities on the importance of maintaining tolerance and religious harmony in building a harmonious and prosperous society.

Challenges Faced by the Community of Kutorojo Village in Implementing Religious Moderation Life

Although Kutorojo Village is known for its harmony and tolerance in practicing religious life, it cannot be denied that there are several challenges faced by the villagers in implementing moderate religious life.

One of the main challenges is the differences in understanding and interpretation of religion among the community. Although the majority of the village's population lives peacefully together, differences in religious understanding can sometimes become a source of tension or conflict. This particularly occurs on sensitive issues such as religious rituals, worship practices, or specific religious laws. Although community traditions of mutual cooperation and dialogue have been important means to resolve these differences, this challenge remains a focus for the villagers to continually strengthen tolerance and understanding among religious communities.

Additionally, external pressures can also pose challenges to the villagers of Kutorojo Village in practicing moderate religious life. Globalization and advancements in information technology have brought about flows of information and culture from outside, which can influence the mindset and values of the local community. Especially, the younger generation, more exposed to popular culture and social media, often faces challenges in maintaining traditional religious values and resisting the temptations of consumerist and secular culture. Therefore, good religious education and a strong understanding of religious values are crucial in overcoming this challenge.

Besides internal challenges, economic factors can also be obstacles for the villagers of Kutorojo Village in practicing moderate religious life. In some cases, economic pressures such as poverty or economic instability may force individuals to sacrifice religious values to meet their basic needs. For example, in efforts to

increase family income, some individuals may be compelled to neglect religious practices such as attending worship or contributing to charity, which in turn can disrupt the balance of religious life in the village.

Another challenge is the potential conflict between local traditions and modernization. With the passage of time, local values and traditions are often confronted with the tide of modernization, which tends to change the mindset and behavior of the community. This particularly occurs in areas such as clothing, lifestyle, and social norms. Conflict between traditional values and modern trends can cause tension in the community, especially among the younger generation who are more open to change and external influences.

Finally, another significant challenge is the need for a more inclusive understanding and approach towards religious minorities and beliefs in Kutorajo Village. Although the village is known for its tolerance, religious minorities or beliefs may sometimes feel ignored or unrecognized in community life. It is important for the villagers to pay more attention to the needs and rights of religious minorities, and to ensure that all village residents feel valued and accepted, regardless of religious differences.

With a deep awareness of these challenges, the community of Kutorajo Village has the opportunity to weave synergies and create solutions aimed at strengthening moderate and harmonious religious life. Through open and ongoing dialogue, inclusive education that fosters a deep understanding of the values of tolerance and mutual respect, as well as a strong spirit of mutual cooperation, the community can strengthen the foundation of harmony among religious communities. By leveraging the diversity of resources and knowledge, they can create a supportive environment for every individual, regardless of religious background or belief.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion above, it can be concluded that the moderate religious life in Kutorajo Village, Kajen District, Pekalongan Regency, reflects the preserved harmony and tolerance among religious communities. Despite facing several challenges, such as differences in religious understanding,

external pressures, economic aspects, conflicts between local traditions and modernization, and the need for inclusion of religious minorities, the village community continues to practice religious life peacefully and with mutual respect. Factors such as the spirit of mutual cooperation, shared economic dependence, rich traditions and culture, education, inclusive leadership, as well as the influence of media and technology, play a crucial role in shaping and maintaining moderate religious life. By understanding these challenges deeply, the community of Kutorojo Village has the potential to create sustainable solutions that support interfaith harmony. Additionally, this article also provides an overview of the background issues, research methods, and findings that can serve as a basis for further research in strengthening religious moderation and promoting interfaith harmony at the local level.

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