

Religious Inclusivism: Islam, Christian and Hindu Relations in Besowo Kediri East Jawa

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Abstract

Indonesia has a diversity of ethnicities and religions. The Besowo community is one of the community groups in which it consists of various religions, namely Islam, Christianity and Hinduism. In this diverse life, religious people need to prioritize an inclusive attitude in religion. This study wants to see the extent to which inclusiveness in religion is understood theoretically and practically so that it can be the basis for building harmonious inter-religious relations. By using a qualitative approach, this research will look comprehensively at the relationship between Islam, Christianity and Hinduism in Besowo Kediri. The results showed that religious people in Besowo have an inclusive perspective in religion, this attitude is also manifested in religious and social life, so that a harmonious and tolerant life can be realized. This harmonious life is also strengthened by the Besowo culture which has been rooted for generations.

Keywords: Inclusive, Theoretical, Practical, Relationships between Religions

Introduction

This attitude of trust in God creates an attitude of human responsibility as a creature to worship as gratitude for all the blessings that have been obtained from God. In the belief system of religions, to build interaction with humans, God has sent down the holy book as a guide for rules both in interacting with Him or as a guide in living life either in this world or in the hereafter, in Islam there is the Qur'an (Shihab, 2008) as God's revelation, in Catholicism there is the Bible (Riches, 2000) as a trusted guide, in Hinduism there are Vedas (Titib, 1996), in Buddhism there is the Tripitaka (Buddhist), while in Confucianism the book is the sacredness of SuSi (Lasiyo, 1995).

Christianity teaches that the teachings of Christ which are full of peace must continue to be understood in depth so that they can be applied in a peaceful religious life. Even though Christ taught peaceful teachings to his followers, it cannot be denied that in the church body there is an extreme perspective in religion so that it has no tolerance for different beliefs. In this context, Christian religious institutions, whether in churches or schools, play an important role in nurturing, protecting and maturing people in religious teachings with the principle of religious plurality and society (Widodo, 2019).

The holy book revealed by God with various processes that are believed by each of its adherents, gets various interpretations from the adherents of each religion, in Islam this is usually referred to as an interpretation, the Qur'an as a revelation in it holds religious meaning for adherents. In Islam, there is a common language in the Qur'an that gives rise to various interpretations from Muslims, starting with different interpretations of this revelation, causing the emergence of various religious groups and believed by group members. Although basically there are various reasons for the emergence of various groups in Islam such as politics, and other motives, it cannot be separated from the motives for differences in interpreting the revelation of the Qur'an.

Whereas in Hinduism, the different interpretations of the mantras or slokas contained in the sacred literature of Hindus occur due to different points of view in giving interpretation (Muliana, 2021). According to Mambal (2016) Hinduism is aware, can accept each other and can respect religious differences. While Ngakan Made

Madrasuta (2006) argues that Hinduism provides many choices for its adherents, according to their abilities and inclinations in religion.

In the context of Indonesia, the emergence of various typologies in religion cannot be separated from the influence of the outside world or the trans-national movement. Religious movements in Indonesia are products of imported ideologies from various countries. In Islam, for example, until now the intellectual relationship between Indonesian Muslims and Middle Eastern Muslims is still harmonious, the various styles of religious understanding that exist in Indonesia have great influence from the Middle East region. Until now, Indonesia is still a recipient of religious movements and understandings from abroad (Mufid, 2011). The influx of various influences of religious movements and understandings from abroad has an impact on the pattern of religious movements in Indonesia, including the emergence of inclusive religious practices.

This study will look at the extent of understanding and practice of inclusive understanding in religion for Muslims, Christians and Hindus in Besowo village, Kediri, East Java, so that harmonious and tolerant inter-religious relations are built. This study confirms the view that every religion has inclusive teachings in seeing the reality of religious and social life, with this inclusive attitude can form a tolerant religious life.

Theoretical framework

Inclusive groups distinguish between the saving presence and activity of God in the traditions of other religions (Rahman, 2001). Adherents of the inclusive paradigm prioritize the contextual understanding of religious teachings, by capturing the essence and deepest meaning of text messages, so that the implementation of religious teachings is considered in the context of space and time, socio-cultural situations and conditions that are inseparable from human history. However, even in this paradigm, there is still a point of weakness, namely, although it has a sympathetic view of other religions, it does not place other religions as experienced and embraced by the person concerned. So as a paradigm, inter-religious relations are still less operational and less firm in opening up opportunities to interact with each other with full tolerance.

Alan Race was the first person to introduce the term inclusivism in viewing the theological discourse of religions. According to him, inclusivism is one approach from several approaches in understanding the relationship between religions. Inclusivism sees that while one belief is considered true, there are other beliefs that are also true (Muliana, 2021).

There are three main interrelated ideas of inclusivism, namely; (1) the substance of faith and worship is more important than literal religious formality and symbolism; (2) religious messages which are eternal in their essence and universal in their meaning, must always be reinterpreted by each generation of people according to the context of the times they are facing, and (3) absolute truth belongs only to God, so no one can be sure that his understanding of God's message is the most correct, truer or better than the understanding of others. This group emphasizes the importance of tolerance towards people of the same religion as well as between religious communities because religious differences are seen as universal human nature (Khalikin, 2013).

Being inclusive means believing that truth is not a monopoly of any particular religion, but is also found in other religions. Furthermore, it is said that there is also a Parallelism view which is then elaborated into a supporter of pluralism theology, holding that every religion in parallel is the same (Jura, 2018). For Wahyuninto, the view of inclusivism is a view that is contrary to the view of exclusivism. If in exclusivism there is a rejection and even acknowledgment of the truth in other religions, in the understanding of inclusivism they actually see good things in other religions, so that in general they can accept these good things.

According to Alwi Shihab, this inclusive theology is related to the views of Karl

Rehner, a Catholic theologian, which essentially rejects the assumption that God curses those who do not have the opportunity to believe in the Bible (Lukito, 2012). Those who get the gift of divine light even though not through Jesus, will still get salvation (Shihab, 1999).

In line with this, Nurcholis Madjid he interprets Islamic inclusivism in two ways. First, the view of other religions as an implicit form of a particular religion. Second, an open and tolerant attitude towards adherents of non-Islamic religions (Madjid, 1992).

Furthermore, Nurcholis Madjid in his book "Three Religions, One God", he wrote, "As a religious view, Islam is basically inclusive and stretches its interpretation in a more pluralist direction. For example, the perennial philosophy which has recently been widely discussed in interreligious dialogue in Indonesia stretches a pluralist view. By saying that every religion is actually an expression of faith in the same God. Like a wheel, the center of the wheel is God, and the spokes are the paths of various religions. Perennial philosophy also divides religion at the esoteric (inner) and exoteric (outer) levels. One religion differs from another in the exoteric level, but is relatively the same in the esoteric level. There is the term "One God, Many Ways" (Madjid, 1999).

Abdurrahman Wahid in his view regarding Islam, an inclusive attitude encourages tolerance and cooperation as pillars of moderate Islam. From the beginning, Islam advocated working with non-Muslims to build society together. Thus, Islam naturally promotes peace, not violence (Wahid, 2007). Meanwhile, according to Komaruddin Hidayat, inclusiveness is meant here, namely seeing other religions as having truth even though they are not as perfect as their religion (Sumartana, 2010).

Among the experts who rolled out the discourse of Islamic inclusivism is Ismail Raji al-Faruqi. In his presentation, he explained that the origin of all religions is one, because they originate from one, God. The religion that became the origin of all these religions is called

Ur-Religion or "religion of nature" (din al-fitrah) which is meta-religion (Nurhadi, 2013).

Meanwhile, Ainul Yaqin argues that inclusiveness is an open-minded attitude and respect for differences, whether these differences are in the form of opinions, thoughts, ethnicities, cultural traditions to religious differences (Yaqin, 2005). An inclusive attitude (al-infitah) will give birth to an attitude to respect and appreciate the existence of other religious people. Because the teachings of their own religion demand respect for the existence of other religions that are recognized by their adherents as truth, this is a manifestation of an attitude of inclusiveness.

This attitude is always followed by providing opportunities and freedom for religious adherents to carry out their rituals and worship according to what they believe. In acknowledging other people's claims to the truth of their religion, whatever the form of recognition, an inclusive person never loses his character and identity as someone who obeys and defends the truth of his religion. Instead, he shows his religious identity as the implementation of the noble values of his own religion on the recognition of others for his own religion, and with his religious spirit he can associate and communicate elegantly with adherents of other religions while still holding the principle of universal truth of his religion.

Results and Discussion

The religious life of a community group that has its own characteristics always attracts attention to be studied more deeply. Seeing an environment where the people get along well with each other even though they have different cultural and religious backgrounds, raises many questions about the special way or recipe for their relationship to work well and harmoniously. In this case, the different religious backgrounds that exist in the Besowo village community have never made them have their own lives or close

themselves to other different groups, instead they are united with Javanese culture, customs or traditions that have been attached to each individual in Besowo Village.

Emil Durkheim's functional theory views society as a unit consisting of parts and elements that are interrelated and when they are united, they will lead to balance. In order to remain in balance, society will always preserve the entire culture that exists in its environment (Ritzer, 2007, Wandu 2021). From this theory, it can be concluded that the traditions carried out by the community are to balance relations between religious believers to avoid anything that can lead to conflict or conflict.

In several studies related to the theme of the relationship between religion and culture, it is explained that culture plays a strong role in building inter-religious relations. Several studies that support this argument include those conducted by Tamburian (2018), Lubis (2017), Basyir (2016), and Haryanto (2014).

There are various traditions in the Besowo community that are closely related to the process of strengthening relations between religious communities, namely the *anjangsana* tradition. *Anjangsana* is a tradition of friendship that is carried out by the people of Besowo Village when commemorating religious holidays. Usually, this tradition is carried out by people from the Islamic religion during the celebration of Eid al-Fitr. Besowo.

The existence of the *Anjangsana* tradition has made the people of Besowo Village have ideas about growing and preserving an attitude of tolerance among religious believers. Thus, this tradition which was originally carried out by Muslims, has also been applied by people of other religions when it comes to their big day celebrations. For example, when Christians are celebrating Christmas, Hindus and Muslims will come to visit relatives or neighbors who are celebrating Christmas. Likewise, when Hindus are on *Nyepi*, afterward Christians and Muslims will visit Hindu homes.

Inclusive Attitude in Religion

In several theological frameworks, religion has a theological reference model in realizing an inclusive understanding of religion. Especially in seeing the reality of religious differences in society. In Islam, for example, the theological framework regarding the issue of religious harmony is QS Yunus: 99.

The above verse of the Qur'an has been implemented by the Prophet Muhammad SAW in delivering *da'wah*. He was a man who was known for his gentleness and never forced anyone to convert to Islam, because his task was only to convey the message of Allah. For this reason, he advises us to always be tolerant. Therefore, not long after the Apostle lived in the city of Medina, he proclaimed a charter that regulates the life and relations between communities in Medina, which are components of a pluralistic society. The conclusions from the points of the Medina Charter include:

- a. All Muslims, even though they come from different tribes, they are one group.
- b. Relations between fellow Islamic groups and other groups are based on: good neighbor relations, helping each other in dealing with common enemies, defending those who are persecuted, advising each other, and respecting religious freedom (Bakar, 2016, Fajriah, 2019).

In the history of Hindu culture, *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, which is now the motto or philosophical basis for the unity and integrity of the nation, originally reads "*Bhineka Ika Tunggal Ika, Tan hana dharma mengrwa*". By Mpu Tantular, which means *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, was born as a concept or view of divinity. When translated into Indonesian, it reads He is Different, but One is, there is no teaching that denies him.

Some local religions and beliefs also have an inclusive understanding of religion, see the reality of religious life with a moderate attitude and perspective, so that they always see everything in a balanced way, including the pattern of building relationships

between religious communities, this is always emphasized by religious leaders in the village. Besowo to religious people in the region.

Mr. Sunarto (2021), a Hindu religious leader in Besowo village, Kediri, said that the Hindu community here is approximately 177 families, and has 4 temples/or places of worship. Christians, Hindus, even adherents of the Sapta Darma belief, all live side by side from generation to generation, sometimes even in one big family who embraces different religions, and this has existed for a long time, indicating that religious differences are not a problem that must be brought up to the table. In public, religion has teachings that must be internalized within oneself, understood comprehensively, and implemented peacefully in social life. Therefore, seeing the reality of a pluralistic religion, every religious community, especially in Hinduism, we always remind to look at everything with an inclusive attitude, this is an effort to keep people away from extreme prejudice against adherents of other religions.

Strengthening inclusive insight in religion is the beginning of building a tolerant attitude in religion and society, this practice is implemented with an attitude of being able to respect the differences that exist in society, not imposing religious will, and continuing to foster brotherhood in the social sphere even though they differ in beliefs.

While the Pastor of the Jawi Wetan Christian Church, Mr. Susanto (2021) said that the number of GKJW congregations in Besowo village was 88 families, the message of living in harmony and being able to live side by side with people of other religions has always been the pastor's message to his congregation. In addition, the practice of tolerance and mutual assistance to communities in need is demonstrated by the Jawi Wetan Church, namely by providing free refills of water for the community every Friday, this is an effort to help each other for residents in need. The position of the Church facing the Besowo village mosque shows that harmonious relations between religious communities have existed for a long time, therefore the content of religious tolerance that has been instilled by the predecessors must continue to be fostered by the next generation.

The facts above show that in theory and practice religious leaders have set an example in inculcating a moderate attitude in religion, even though we are always aware that every religion has its own truth claim which is continuously held fast. However, in the social life of the Besowo people, they still show a moderate attitude in religion, uphold tolerance between religious communities and respect each other's differences in their territory.

Conclusion

The inclusive attitude in religion gives birth to the practice of religious life that is tolerant, harmonious and can respect one another. The people of Besowo Kediri, East Java, have practiced a harmonious religious life based on the inclusive attitude of each of its citizens. The community realizes that the reality of pluralistic social and religious life must be based on an inclusive attitude.

The results of the study show that the attitude of religious inclusivism is not only understood theoretically, but also implemented in social life. The practice of inclusive religious life is strengthened by a cultural base that is rooted in society, culture is one of the pillars in strengthening an inclusive religious climate so that it is manifested in the practice of religious life that is tolerant, harmonious and respectful of each other.

The results of the study indicate that an inclusive attitude in religion can be a capital in building a harmonious and harmonious religious life. In addition, this research can be a reference for policy makers to continue to preserve community culture in strengthening horizontal relations between community groups. While theoretically, these results can strengthen the theory of religion as an instrument in strengthening the relationship of religious harmony in society.

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