

Culture of Interfaith Tolerance in Multicultural Communities In Mbawa Village, Donggo District, Bima Regency

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Abstract

The people of Mbawa Village, Donggo Subdistrict, Bima Regency, West Nusa Tenggara, consist of various monotheist religions, such as Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism. With a pluralistic background, the people of Mbawa Village are able to maintain a culture of tolerance that has been passed down by their ancestors. This research aims to explore and analyse the culture of interfaith tolerance in Mbawa Village, Bima Regency, West Nusa Tenggara. Mbawa Village is an example of a multicultural society inhabited by various religious groups that live side by side in harmony. The research method used is a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies. The results show that the culture of interfaith tolerance in Mbawa Village is reflected in various aspects of community life, such as religious rituals, customs, and daily interactions. Factors that support interfaith tolerance include the existence of social norms that respect diversity, positive interfaith interactions, and the role of religious leaders and community leaders in promoting peace and harmony. In addition, awareness of the importance of inter-religious harmony and a deep understanding of the teachings of each religion also strengthen the culture of tolerance in Mbawa Village. This research makes an important contribution to understanding the cultural dynamics of interfaith tolerance in multicultural societies, particularly in the West Nusa Tenggara region. The implications of these findings can serve as a reference for policy makers and related parties to develop more effective strategies in promoting peace and inter-religious harmony in Indonesia.

Keywords: *Multicultural, Society, Tolerance, Interfaith, Culture.*

INTRODUCTION

The Donggo community is an ethnic group that inhabits Mbawa Village, Donggo Subdistrict, Bima Regency, West Nusa Tenggara. This ethnicity consists of various monotheist religions such as Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism. With the background of a pluralistic society consisting of various religions, the Donggodi community of Mbawa Village can maintain harmonization between community members (Purna, 2016). Despite adhering to monotheistic religions, the people of Mbawa Village still maintain the values of indigenous beliefs and local culture as a binder and determinant of their identity. Views or understandings of structure, origins, traditional ceremonies, and the identity of one's name are an important part of the community living in Mbawa Village or Donggo ethnicity.

The culture of interfaith tolerance in the Mbawa Village community refers to an attitude of mutual respect, understanding, and acceptance of the diversity of religious beliefs in the community. The people of Mbawa Village appreciate and understand that every individual has the right to choose and practice their own religious beliefs. They respect everyone's religious beliefs and identity, no matter what religion they profess. Although individuals belong to different religions, they still engage in joint activities and ceremonies in the village, which include certain social, cultural, or religious events. This creates a sense of unity and togetherness among the various religious groups. A culture of interfaith tolerance is also strengthened through education and awareness instilled in society, whether through schools, families or religious institutions. This helps build a better understanding of the values of tolerance and the importance of respecting differences..

Tolerance comes from the Latin "Tolerrare" which means to allow, leniency, gentleness, and patience. Tolerance according to Hasanah refers to an attitude of mutual openness, spaciousness, willingness, and gentleness towards the implementation of life. The Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBB) defines tolerance as a tolerant attitude, that appreciates, allows, or accepts opinions, views, beliefs, habits, or behaviors that are contrary to one's own opinion (Sihombing et al., 2022). Tilman describes tolerance as a form of mutual respect through understanding and the goal of peace. Tolerance has various forms, including religious tolerance concerning beliefs and creeds, as well as social tolerance oriented toward community life (Sihombing et al., 2022). Religious tolerance can be defined as awareness and acceptance of the diversity of beliefs held by individuals or groups. However, in reality, religious tolerance is often disrupted by increasing religious intolerance in the school environment, which has the potential to give rise to religious radicalism in universities and public spaces.

A survey conducted by the Setara Institute for Democracy and Peace (SIDP) on 760 high school students in Jakarta and Greater Bandung found several views of religious intolerance. As many as 13.5% of students disagree with the use of school facilities by students of different religions to celebrate religious days, 7.5% of students disagree with the existence of places of worship for each religion in each school, and 69.6% of students see differences in other religions' ways of worship as wrong or deviant. Only 16.7% of students chose to ignore these differences because they believe that each religion has different foundations. These views, which reflect religious intolerance, are considered to have the potential to become behaviors that support radical actions and terrorism. (PRASETYO, 2024). A researcher from the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) in Indonesia in 2021, revealed that around 25% of students and 21% of teachers in Indonesia consider that the values of religious tolerance contained in Pancasila are no longer relevant (Saidi, 2009).

The term "tolerant" implies an attitude of appreciating, allowing, and permitting differences in all aspects of individuals who are different or contrary to our views. "Tolerance" refers to tolerant behavior or traits that become the basis for living together in society. In social, cultural, and religious contexts, tolerance is considered as attitudes and actions that oppose discrimination against minority communities to express their beliefs in a majority environment (Rosyidie, 2004).

The tradition or culture carried out by the Mbawa Village, Donggo District, Bima Regency community is part of a long process and becomes a lesson in tolerance. The ancestors of the people

of Mbawa Village not only established social interactions with humans, but forms of interaction were also carried out with nature for hundreds of years or even thousands of years ago.

The form of tolerance that is carried out is giving names to children from birth by mixing two or three religions. For the people of Mbawa, Bima Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province, this is a common behavior in the community, so it is not surprising that some people's names in the area sound foreign and natural to people outside the area. Giving names that reflect two or three religions as beliefs is not unusual. Although they only adhere to and believe in one religion (Abdullah et al., 2019). However, it is done as a form of respect for religion as God's creation. People often take examples and imitate figures or prophets from two religions. Figures or prophets from two different religions. For example, John Ibrahim, Anderias Ahmad, Bernadus Abu Bakar Wrg Prote, Petrus Herman Fabianus Tabi, Ignatius Ismail, Matinus Tamrin, Markus Jafar, Kristin Siti Hawa, Marta Maemunah, Marta Hadijah, Anastasia Nuraini, and others, are often used by Catholic and Protestant believers as a form of tolerance. These names become one of the social religious adhesives in Mbawa Village. Through the process of tradition and culture carried out by the Mbawa village community, the community found their local wisdom, as well as the right way to manage and utilize nature properly, for example, the cultural practices of 'Hari Raju', and 'Kamusi Sarumbu' which may be for Muslims something sirik or heresy that is not based on religious teachings, or for Christians and Catholics is considered something unnatural (Nurhasanah, 2017; Samad et al., 2022).

Analyzing the two perspectives on the relationship between religion and culture, especially local culture, there are two different views. First, the view that the relationship between religion and local culture is syncretic. Second, the view is that the relationship between religion and local culture is a form of acculturation, with a process of give and take. These two perspectives create a unique religious style, known as 'Javanese Islam' and 'Jawi Wetan Christianity' (Kamaruddin et al., 2020).

METHOD

The constructivism paradigm is the approach in this research by using qualitative data analysis techniques as the research method. The constructivism paradigm is used because it sees social reality as comprehensive, complex, dynamic, full of meaning, and related to interacting phenomena. Researchers should not manipulate research conducted on natural objects and developing according to their circumstances. The presence of the researcher in a study does not affect the dynamics of the object (Sugiyono, 2008).

The Donggo region and Donggo people in this study do not cover the entire Donggo Fund and Donggo Dou. The regional boundaries only focus on the administrative area of Donggo District, Bima Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province. Meanwhile, Dou Donggo who is the object or subject of this research study is aimed at the opposite Donggo people (or called Dou Donggo Ipa) who currently live in the Donggo District area (Aksa et al., 2020). According to Mbawa Village Statistics 2015, 4,774 Donggo people are living in Mbawa Village. They are divided into 3,737 Muslims, 96 Protestants, and 941 Catholics.

Qualitative data analysis techniques are used to obtain an in-depth understanding of the practice of tolerance that occurs in society, especially in the Mbawa Village community, Donggo Sub-district. Researchers conducted in-depth observations of interactions between individuals or groups in the context of a tolerant culture in Mbawa Village.

Interviews were conducted with community and religious leaders, as well as individuals or communities who could provide their views, attitudes, and experiences related to a culture of tolerance in religion. Open interviews open up space for researchers to get the views and insights of the community about a tolerant culture and their experience of applying a culture of tolerance in local wisdom. Data collection was also carried out through active participatory observation in the daily activities of the Mbawa Village community, to observe interactions in the form of interfaith tolerance practices that occur in the Mbawa Village community.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Syncretism and Cultural Acculturation in Mbawa Village

The connection between the view of the relationship between religion and local culture and the life of the people of Mbawa Village can be seen from the perspective of syncretism and acculturation. Mbawa Village is a pluralistic village, where religions come into direct contact with local traditions and culture, giving birth to the phenomenon of syncretism. Before these religions entered the village, the people of Mbawa had dynamism and animism beliefs. This tradition still colors the religious style of the Mbawa Village community to this day, with the religions that enter this village experiencing a process of acculturation with pre-existing local traditions and culture.

Syncretism is a practice or phenomenon in religion or belief in which elements from different traditions or beliefs are combined or unified into a new system or belief. In syncretism, elements from several different beliefs or religions may be brought together, adapted, or blended into one, often creating unique and sometimes interesting beliefs or practices from different aspects of a culture, religion, or tradition.

For the people of Mbawa Village, syncretism is not only an obvious phenomenon. The mixing of beliefs and cultures results in the loss of one's religious identity. The phenomenon found in the Mbawa community concludes that syncretism is the mixing of old beliefs or traditions with religious elements, such as giving a person's name using elements of another religion.

Syncretism can occur for a variety of reasons, including cultural interaction between different peoples, the spread of religion, trade, colonization, or cultural convergence. It can result in adaptations or changes in existing religious beliefs or practices, as well as the creation of new traditions that blend elements from different sources.

The dialectic of Islam and local culture produces a synthetic culture that indicates that in ritual expressions the instrumental value is a product of local culture, while the material content is religious. Islam is a form of acculturation that does not eliminate the fundamental values of religious teachings.

If acculturation is defined as the process of exchange or assimilation of cultural elements between two culturally different groups or individuals. This process can occur through social interaction, trade, migration or other cultural contacts. In a broader context, acculturation can also result in new forms of the cultures involved in the process.

As a country that values pluralism consisting of various religions, languages, cultures, and ethnic groups, Indonesia has diversity from Sabang to Merauke that is not shared by other countries. The life of the nation and state in this country is not only considered a great wealth by some people, but also a weakness that needs to be overcome by all.

Sociologically, humans need social interaction because, apart from being individuals, humans are also social creatures who always need interaction with others in their daily lives.

Humans are always involved in social interactions, both between individuals and individuals, individuals and groups, and groups and groups. Social interaction in maintaining inter-religious balance can be seen in the multicultural community of Mbawa Village, Donggo District, Bima Regency, West Nusa Tenggara. This ethnic group that represents various monotheistic religious beliefs, including Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism, is able to maintain balance and harmony among fellow community members.

Individuals who embrace religion are social beings who interact with various other individuals living in their environment. They are influenced by various ideas and ideologies from various sources. This condition causes them to have diverse and even unique behaviors, which are different. Individual differences between religions are reflected in their daily behavior and in their communities. In fact, religious people are basically the same social beings and equal to other social beings, regardless of their religion or beliefs.

Harmony will be realized if all parties strive to be open. An accepting and open attitude towards religious diversity is key. Being open here does not necessarily mean having to believe in the beliefs of other groups, but rather to seek similarities in the concept of teachings rather than differences.

A person's level of religiosity cannot be determined by how strongly they adhere to the norms or beliefs they profess, but rather how they apply the social practices of the religion in their daily lives. Social practices reflect religious beliefs in the public sphere. However, individual or group behavior cannot be used as justification for religious teachings. Religious teachings are at one point, while religious behavior is at another point. Although in some cases, religious behavior can accurately reflect religious beliefs, there are also cases where religious behavior does not reflect religious beliefs in the society.

2. Mbawa Community's Culture of Tolerance

The inter-religious tolerance that occurs in the Mbawa Village community has occurred several centuries ago. This is attributed to the historical roots and characteristics of a community that is always open to differences. The influence of Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam entered in the 20th century, which changed the community in Donggo Sub-district to be more open to the world and outside communities who quickly accepted all forms of reform.

Religion or belief is often used as a boundary in social interaction. However, this does not apply to the community in Mbawa Village, Donggo Sub-district, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara (NTB). In this village, harmony between followers of different religions, namely Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism, does not only occur within the scope of family and social life, but is also reflected in naming. The Mbawa community often gives names that reflect two or three religions as their beliefs. Although they actually only adhere to one religion, to honor religion as God's creation, they often take examples of figures and prophets from two different religions.

In general, religious tolerance is a state in which all people can have beliefs and practice their respective religions without hindrance. Individuals who have religious tolerance will show respect for the religious rights of others. Religious tolerance can also be seen as an intellectual and relational concept. Intellectually, religious tolerance includes the understanding that every individual has the fundamental right to choose or practice their own religion. Relationally, religious tolerance involves engagement with other people, families, and communities that have different religions or levels of religiosity. Tolerance, often referred to as mutual respect, is more

than just accepting differences. It involves acknowledging, opening up, and understanding the existence of differences, without criticizing those differences despite disagreements. Inter-religious tolerance is a social mechanism by which humans respond to religious diversity and plurality.

Inter-religious intolerance seems to be the main focus in the context of education in Indonesia. This is reflected in learning practices and social interactions inside and outside the classroom. However, the crisis in religious and inter-ethnic tolerance, tradition and globalization cannot be separated from the fact that the character and culture of tolerance is actually still lacking in Indonesian schools. Ironically, studies on intolerance in Indonesia tend to focus too much on religion and pay less attention to the experiences of some schools that successfully practice tolerance as a culture in dealing with the diversity of Indonesian society.

Some primary education institutions, for example, have made mapping and sustained efforts in shaping the character and culture of tolerance in their environment. The hope is to strengthen harmony by developing religion as a unifying factor, which is expected to provide stability and progress for the country.

Inter-religious harmony is a social condition in which all religious groups can live together without reducing the basic rights of each to carry out their religious obligations. Therefore, inter-religious harmony cannot be born from blind fanaticism and indifference to the rights, diversity and feelings of others. In Mbawa Mbawa Village, the main beliefs of the community are Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism. Although the majority of the population is Muslim, they still maintain local beliefs and culture as an important part of their identity, despite having embraced monotheistic religions.

The Donggo people believe that the spirits of their ancestors are present in various cultural monuments, traditional houses, traditional ceremonies, and the giving of one's name and identity. In 1969 there was an inter-religious conflict that led to the burning of several houses due to the issue of the theft of sandals belonging to Muslims. The incident had already led to Sara's issues, namely the destruction of the church building and the priest was expelled from Mbawa Village.

The people of Mbawa Village are proud to live in harmony between Islam, Protestant Christianity, and Catholicism. Meanwhile, there is nothing that disturbs or disrupts this harmony, each of them looks after and respects each other. The Donggo ethnic group in Mbawa Village does not see majority and minority.

3. Tolerance and Social Dynamics of the Mbawa Community

Intolerant behavior that hinders peace between religious communities in principle hinders the creation of a prosperous and safe society. Such intolerance is often associated with the teachings of certain religions, especially Islam as the majority in Indonesia, often occurs lately.

Mbawa Village is unique in its social dynamics, which includes inter-religious tolerance as one of the key aspects. Amid religious diversity, the majority of the population adheres to Islam, but they still maintain inter-religious harmony. This tolerance is reflected in daily interactions between religious communities, where they respect each other and appreciate differences in beliefs. Despite embracing monotheistic religions, Mbawa villagers also maintain local beliefs and culture as part of their identity. When a community prioritizes tolerance, peace becomes the ultimate goal. The values of tolerance that are emphasized, along with good norms that pay attention to diversity and prioritize unity, will create global peace and national stability. By paying

attention to diversity and respecting each other in society, without feeling superior or inferior, everyone can prevent conflicts and disputes among members of society.

Tolerance and social dynamics in Mbawa Village reflect harmony between different religions and efforts to maintain traditional values in a modern context. The inter-religious tolerance that occurs in the community in Mbawa Village is certainly a representation for other communities about the importance of respecting differences and maintaining cultural identity in building an inclusive and harmonious society.

Discussion

Mbawa Village Statistical Data 2015 states that the population of Mbawa Village currently reaches 4,774 people consisting of 3,737 Muslims, 96 Protestants, and 941 Catholics. Places of worship for each religion include Jabal Nur Mosque, St. Paul Mbawa Catholic Church and a Protestant church called GKII (Kemah Injil). The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs in its book "religious moderation" in 2019, explains that religious moderation is the key to creating tolerance and harmony, both at the local, national and global levels. Choosing moderation by rejecting extremism and liberalism in religion is considered the key to maintaining balance, maintaining civilization, and creating peace (Halim, 2011).

Adaptation is the process of adjusting individuals, groups, or social entities to existing norms, process changes, or conditions. Success in adapting depends on the ability of individuals or groups to adjust to their environment so that they can integrate well into their social groups. Conversely, the inability to adapt can lead to feelings of isolation, rejection, and exclusion from their social environment (Asmirah et al., 2021).

BPS data states that Islam is the majority religion embraced by the Indonesian people in general, reaching 87.2% spread across the archipelago. Christianity, Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism make up the other 12.8%. In the larger international landscape, Christians, Catholics and Protestants are in the first position. While Muslims are in the second position, the adherents of these two religions reach 51% in the international unit. The other 49% are adhered to by other religions and faiths. The narrative of peace in the strengthening of intolerant practices that not a few lead to an extremist act such as terror must at least have been seen and noticed by all circles to always develop a great world discourse as a shared consensus towards a civilized world society (Masdar et al., 2014, 2023)

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In the dynamics of Indonesian society, tolerance does not stem from primordialism or ethnocentrism, which emphasizes pride in one's own identity or culture, but rather comes from mutual understanding and understanding of differences. The values of tolerance should be instilled in daily life by Indonesian society, including respect for differences, brotherhood, freedom,

cooperation, cooperation, avoidance of discrimination, and the spirit of sharing (Fajar Sodik, 2021). Methodologically in Islamic law, religion gives spirit to culture, while culture gives richness to religion (Arlinta Prasetian Dewi, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Mbawa Village in Bima Regency, West Nusa Tenggara, is an interesting manifestation of a multicultural society that upholds the values of tolerance between religions. Although the majority of the population in Mbawa Village is Muslim, mutual respect is maintained. This culture of tolerance is reflected in daily interactions between religious communities, where they respect and understand each other's different beliefs, down to the naming of a person to a different religion. The people of Mbawa Village have also succeeded in combining local beliefs and culture with the teachings of their religion, maintaining harmony between tradition and religion.

The key to the success of this culture of tolerance lies in mutual understanding and respect for differences. Values such as brotherhood, freedom, cooperation, and mutual aid are also integral to the daily lives of the Mbawa villagers. This results in a peaceful, harmonious and inclusive environment, where inter-religious conflict is avoided and diversity is valued as a shared wealth. Thus, Mbawa Village provides an inspiring example for other communities about the importance of building a culture of tolerance between religions in a multicultural society. The success of the community in Mbawa Village in maintaining inter-religious harmony shows that with mutual understanding, peace and harmony can be realized in the midst of religious and cultural diversity..

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