

## The Role of The Ministry of Religion in Religious Moderation (Study of The Ministry of Religion in Medan City)

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to find out the role of the ministry of religion in religious moderation (study of the Ministry of Religion of Medan City) To find out the factors that support and hinder the role of the ministry of religion in religious moderation (study of the Ministry of Religion of Medan City). This study uses a qualitative approach that examines the role of the ministry of religion in religious moderation (study by the Ministry of Religion of Medan City Qualitative descriptive research is research that describes the object of research based on facts that seem like the case. The results of the research on the role of the Ministry of Religion in religious moderation (a study by the Ministry of Religion of Medan City is, that it implements a number of policies that aim to promote religious moderation. These policies include inclusive religious education, training for religious leaders, and public campaigns on the importance of tolerance and harmony among religious communities. This policy is generally well received by the community and has shown some success in reducing interfaith tensions

Keywords: Ministry Of Religion, Religious Moderation.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country that has a diversity of cultures, ethnicities, ethnicities, races and religions so that Indonesia has a diverse or multicultural society. A multicultural society can also be defined as a society formed by various cultures, values, customs, and customs. Multiculturalism can also be considered as local wisdom that can reflect cultural diversity as wealth in community life. This wisdom will grow well if each individual is willing to open themselves up to live together

Religious moderation is one of the most important approaches in maintaining harmony between religious communities in Indonesia. Religious moderation is defined as attitudes and views that avoid extremism, both religious extremism that tends to be radical and secular extremism that tends to be anti-religious. This moderate stance supports dialogue, tolerance, and respect for differences, and encourages peaceful and inclusive religious practices.

Religious moderation plays a key role in creating and maintaining harmony in a multicultural and multireligious society. With moderate attitudes, individuals and religious groups tend to be more respectful of differences and more tolerant of other religious views and practices. This helps reduce the potential for conflict and tension that often arise from differences of belief.

The term moderation originated from the Latin word *moderatio*, which means modesty. Based on the Great Dictionary of Indonesian (KBBI), the term moderation means minimizing violence, and avoiding extremes. So that a person is moderate means that he is reasonable and not extreme. The word moderation also comes from English which is equivalent to the word average or non-aligned. In general, moderation prioritizes balance in both beliefs, morals, and behavior, both when treating others as individuals and citizens. In the context of religious moderation, we must understand a moderate attitude as an attitude of religious balance with mutual respect for different beliefs. Balance in religious practice is expected to avoid extreme, excessive and fanatical attitudes in religion.

Islamic moderation can answer various problems in religion and global civilization. It is no less important that moderate Muslims are able to answer loudly accompanied by peaceful actions with radical, extremist and puritan-based groups that do everything with acts of violence. (Alam, 2017)

In the reality of real life, humans cannot avoid opposing things. Therefore, *al-Wasathiyah Islamiyyah* appreciates the elements of *rabbaniyyah* (divinity) and *insaniyyah* (humanity), combines *maddiyyah* (materialism) and *ruhiyyah* (spiritualism), combines revelation and reason, between *masalah ammah* (*al-jamāiyyah*) and *masalah individu* (*al-fardiyyah*) (Almu'tasim, 2019).

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia has a strategic role in promoting religious moderation in the country. This ministry is responsible for formulating and implementing policies that support harmony and tolerance between religious communities. Various programs and initiatives initiated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs aim to support the creation of a harmonious and peaceful society through religious education, interfaith dialogue, and supervision of religious activities.

The city of Medan, as one of the major cities in Indonesia that has a fairly high ethnic and religious diversity, is a strategic location to review the implementation of religious moderation policies. The Ministry of Religious Affairs of Medan City has the duty and responsibility to carry out programs that support religious moderation in its

area. This study aims to identify the role, challenges, and success of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Medan City in carrying out religious moderation efforts

## 2. METHODS

The research was conducted on the role of the Ministry of Religion in religious moderation (Study of the Ministry of Religion of Medan City) was carried out for three months from March 2024 to May 2024. This type of research is a case study to investigate and understand an event or problem that has occurred by collecting various kinds of information which is then processed to get a solution so that the problem revealed can be solved. Case studies allow researchers to understand a case in an intensive, in-depth, and detailed way, and can be used with both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Thus, case study research can provide an in-depth understanding of a case being researched and focus on the case under investigation.

The techniques used by the researcher in collecting data in the field, namely interviews, observations and documentation. The first method that researchers use in collecting data in the field is by in-depth interviews. Devito said that interviews are a special form of interpersonal communication. (Devito, 1997) Surakhmad said that interviews are direct communication techniques, namely researchers collect data by holding direct communication with research subjects either in real situations or artificial situations (Winarno, 1994)

From the definition of interview above, one conclusion of the interview can be taken is communication between two or more people (the interviewer and the interviewee) to get information in order to find a solution to a problem that occurs face-to-face. The conduct of interviews is not only once or twice, but repeated with high intensity. (Sudikan, 2007)

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) of the Republic of Indonesia has various important roles in religious and religious life in Indonesia. Among them are maintaining, conducting socialization and public campaigns to increase public awareness of the importance of religious moderation through various media, seminars, and workshops. Striving for harmony between religious communities can run well with the implementation of religious mutations which can later provide peace and happiness for each individual without getting violence and obstacles from other nature, this is as the results of an interview conducted with the public relations of the Ministry of Religion of the city of Medan, namely Mr. Imam Syair with the following interview results:

The Ministry of Religion has made efforts to carry out activities, including through socialization or public campaigns that can provide community improvement, important things that explain religion through various activities such as seminars and workshops, and we also do it through social media or the use of digital media (Imam Mukhoir, 2024)

From the explanation above, it can be understood that the ministry of religion as one of the extensions of the government in order to be able to compile socialization or campaign how the public understands and knows religious federations so that religious moderation can run well and smoothly, besides that with the implementation or role of the ministry of religion can supervise and as an apparatus that provides social control over various religions and organizations so that providing an understanding of extremism. Apart from the results of the interview, the researcher must also conduct an interview with one of the community leaders, namely the benefits of Hasanuddin as follows:

that the activities carried out by the Ministry of Religion as one of the implementations of the Religious Generation Program include inviting various religious leaders and community leaders who encourage the formation of social harmony and cohesion among various religious communities so that there are no divisions and disputes (Hasanuddin, 2024)

The explanation mentioned above can be understood that the efforts made by the Ministry of Religion in overcoming various forms of extreme or collective activities against other religions are by conducting dialogue and in it contains elements of harmony and togetherness which can later increase brotherhood between fellow countrymen and the same country.

The Indonesian state has religious pluralism, therefore an effort is needed to maintain harmony between religious communities. One of them is through religious moderation. The principle of religious moderation is balanced on two things, namely understanding religious texts (holy books) must be in accordance with the context, and upholding humanity as the core of religion itself. Christians in Indonesia, both individuals and church institutions need to take part in living religious moderation. The purpose of the research is to describe and analyze the understanding and praxis of religious moderation in the church. One of them is at the Evangelical Kalimantan Church (GKE), namely GKE Kasongan, Katingan Regency, Central Kalimantan Province. The method used is a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach. The data source is from the results of interviews and literature reviews on religious moderation. The results of the study show that even though most of the GKE Kasongan congregations do not understand the term religious moderation, the praxis of religious moderation has been realized, so it needs to be socialized and realized in

terms of understanding and praxis starting from each religious community in Indonesia. (Prakosa, 2022)

One of the approaches taken is through educational programs and campaigns to increase public understanding of the values of religious moderation and tolerance. The Ministry of Religious Affairs is also actively involved in providing positive and informative content on official digital platforms and social media, directing a positive view of religious issues.

In addition, close cooperation with religious leaders and religious community leaders is an important pillar in building interfaith dialogue and organizing joint training to achieve a common understanding related to religious moderation. No less important, the Ministry of Religious Affairs is involved in information management and handling sensitive issues, by responding quickly to emerging developments

The use of digital technology is a strategy by creating interactive platforms and utilizing social media to reach a wider audience. Finally, an inclusive approach involves community participation in moderating religious content online, creating a more positive environment. Periodic evaluations of policies that have been implemented and the ability to adapt policies based on the findings of the evaluation are critical steps in ensuring the effectiveness of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' efforts in promoting religious moderation in the midst of the digital era in the city of Medan.

Religious moderation is a very important thing to be applied in the community, moreover taught to the millennial generation. Because of what?, religious moderation is a foundation that will create or create a peace and harmony in the life of society with different understandings and different views.

With the existence of various moderations, we can understand the difference without having to vilify the views of others, it is possible that in one family there are sometimes two understandings that they believe. So, when there is no such thing as religious moderation, it may be difficult for families with different understandings to accept other understandings.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) in Indonesia has a very important role in regulating and managing various aspects of religious life in this country. The Ministry of Religious Affairs is responsible for formulating national policies related to religious life. This includes regulations and guidelines governing various aspects of religion such as religious education, marriage, and worship.

Religious Education and Religious Education need to be managed properly

so that the results achieved are also in line with common expectations. Educators are expected to be able to develop learning methods in accordance with Core Competencies (KI) and Basic Competencies (KD). The achievement of all basic competencies of commendable behavior can be done in an orderly manner. The role of all elements starting from schools, principals, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, Islamic Religious Education Supervisors (PPAI), parents of students and the community is very important in supporting the success of achieving the goals of Islamic Religious Education at all levels, from elementary to high school levels. The pillars of improving the quality of education consist of 3, namely supervisors, teachers and principals (Manalu, Kadir, & Siregar, 2020)

Good and quality education does not only educate students from the intellectual side, but combines the three intelligences, namely: intellectual, emotional and spiritual intelligence. In the formation of students in order to have intellectual, emotional and spiritual intelligence, of course, it must be accommodated by educational institutions. There are three educational institutions in Indonesia, namely, schools, madrasas and pasantren. Only pasantren is rooted in the original tradition (indigenous) of the archipelago. Meanwhile, schools and madrasas emerged and were born from the results of external interactions. The school is known after the interaction of the Indonesian nation with the colonizers. Meanwhile, madrasas were born as a response of Muslims in Indonesia, to the Islamic renewal movement in the Middle East. At the same time, it is a counter institution to schools established by the colonizers. (Rahim, 2001)

The development of education is always changing in line with the changing times. Human beings as resources must always be in line with developments that continue to move forward. The birth of Law Number 2 of 1989 concerning the National Education System (UUSPN) provides a fundamental difference for religious education in Indonesia. This law mentions matters related to religious education, including the goals of national education and the type of education in the path of educational institutions. With the enactment of UUSPN Number 2 of 1989 and this government regulation, it means that Islamic educational institutions that organize Islamic religious education learning have become an inseparable part of national educational institutions. Islamic Religious Education in Islamic educational institutions is a subsystem of the national education system. This law also contains provisions for the right of every student to obtain religious education in accordance with the religion of the student. (Haningsih, 2008).

In addition to education, the ministry of religion promotes interreligious harmony by developing interreligious dialogue, managing interreligious relations, and preventing and handling religious conflicts. The Ministry of Religion as a subsystem of government of the Republic of Indonesia has the task of carrying out some of the government's duties in the field of religion. In carrying out its duties, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Medan City focuses more on serving the community in the field of religion. Along with the development of service guidance in the increasingly complex community, it is necessary to continue to improve the quality of community service performance.

Efforts to improve the quality of understanding and practice of religious teachings in order to improve the quality of religious life is an important and strategic agenda in national development so that all people can carry out the religion they are linked to (Sinaga et al., 2022)

Religious Moderation is also intended to prevent understanding, attitudes and actions of religious extremities such as hate speech, violence and terrorism. Terrorism in the name of religion is an example of extreme behavior in religion. Related to terrorism, in Indonesia there was another bombing incident on Sunday, March 28, 2021 in Makassar. The bomb incident that exploded at the Makassar Cathedral Catholic Church shows the existence of a terrorism network that continues to try to undermine peace in Indonesia. The perpetrator of the bombing was still young as confirmed by the Head of the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) Komjen Pol Boy Rafli Amar that the perpetrator of the suicide bombing at the Makassar Cathedral Church, whose initials L was a young man born in 1995 which means he was around 25 years old and his wife who was also young. They tried to enter the church but first exploded in the outer courtyard after being stopped by church security officers who previously injured 20 people in the church area (Wijaya, 2021).

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

With the right policies, inclusive education, fostering religious leaders, facilitating dialogue, conflict management, halal product supervision, and cross-institutional cooperation, the Ministry of Religion can create an environment conducive to the creation of a peaceful, tolerant, and harmonious society. This role is essential in maintaining social stability and strengthening national unity in the midst of religious diversity in Indonesia.

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