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Building Social Harmony Through Religious Education and Religious Moderation

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of religious education and religious moderation in building social harmony in Lingsar, West Lombok. Social harmony in multicultural areas is not created spontaneously, but through a process of education, habituation, and internalization of the values of tolerance and mutual respect. Religious education plays a strategic role in shaping community character based on spiritual, moral, and ethical values. Meanwhile, religious moderation is an important foundation for balancing differences in understanding, preventing radicalism, and strengthening inclusive attitudes in community life. The research method used is a qualitative approach using interviews, observation, and documentation studies. The results show that the Lingsar community has long used religious education as a primary means of instilling values of harmony from an early age, both through formal and non-formal educational institutions. Furthermore, the practice of religious moderation is reflected in local traditions, such as the Pujawali celebration at Lingsar Temple, which involves various interfaith community groups, thus creating a space for harmonious social interaction. The values of mutual cooperation, tolerance, and respect for differences continue to be preserved as a cultural heritage. Thus, inclusive religious education and strengthening religious moderation have proven effective tools in maintaining social harmony in Lingsar. These efforts can serve

as a model for other regions in Indonesia in managing diversity, strengthening unity, and creating a peaceful and harmonious society.

Keywords: *Religious education, Religious moderation, Social harmony.*

Introduction

Indonesian society is characterized by religious, ethnic, cultural, and traditional diversity, which is a hallmark of a pluralistic nation. This diversity is both a wealth and a challenge in building a harmonious, just, and peaceful society. Amid these differences, religious education and religious moderation play a crucial role in fostering social harmony, as both can be effective instruments for instilling values of tolerance and mutual respect, as well as building collective awareness of the importance of peaceful coexistence.¹

West Lombok, particularly in Lingsar District, is a region that truly reflects religious and cultural diversity. This region is home to a predominantly Muslim community, alongside a Hindu community with distinct traditions and beliefs. The Lingsar Temple, a symbol of interfaith harmony, is historical evidence of this unique cultural and religious acculturation. The annual "Perang Topat" tradition demonstrates the harmony and tolerance between Muslims and Hindus in Lingsar. This tradition is not merely a ritual, but also a means of social, cultural, and religious education, emphasizing the importance of interfaith brotherhood.

Modern social dynamics present new challenges to this harmony. The influx of globalization, the development of information technology, and the emergence of exclusive transnational ideologies can threaten long-established diversity and harmony. Radicalism, intolerance, and horizontal conflict have the potential to undermine societal harmony if not handled wisely. Therefore, religious education that prioritizes religious

¹Tilaar, H. A. R. (2004). *Multiculturalism: Future Global Challenges in the Transformation of National Education*. Jakarta: Grasindo. Pages 45-50

moderation is highly relevant in protecting society from ideologies that could disrupt unity.

Religious education in a multicultural society like Lingsar should not only serve as a means of transferring religious knowledge, but also as a means of developing moderate character. Religious moderation itself is defined as a perspective, attitude, and religious practice that consistently takes the middle path, not being extreme to the right or left, and upholding the principles of justice, balance, and tolerance.² Thus, religious moderation can encourage religious communities to respect one another, avoid excessive fanaticism, and reject all forms of violence in the name of religion.³

In Lingsar, religious moderation is relevant in maintaining harmonious relations between Muslims and Hindus. For example, in daily practice, Muslims participate in Hindu traditional celebrations, and Hindus respect Islamic traditions. This demonstrates a strong social awareness that religious differences are not a barrier to unity. Therefore, religious education focused on the values of religious moderation can strengthen the culture of social harmony long inherited from the local community's ancestors.

Social harmony in Lingsar is also inseparable from the support of the local government, religious leaders, traditional leaders, and educational institutions. The role of schools, madrasas, and religious institutions in instilling values of tolerance is crucial. Through an inclusive religious education curriculum, students are taught not only religious dogma but also universal human values such as justice, compassion, honesty, and brotherhood. This aligns with the teachings of Islam and

²Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. (2019). Religious Moderation. Jakarta: Research, Development, and Training Agency, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, p. 17

³Tilaar, H. A. R. (2009). Power and Education: National Education Management. Jakarta: PT Rineka Cipta. Pp. 15-20

Hinduism, which fundamentally promote goodness, peace, and togetherness in community life.⁴

The reality on the ground shows that the values of religious moderation are not yet fully understood and implemented. Exclusive attitudes persist in religious practice, both among the general public and among the younger generation. Social media is sometimes exploited to spread hate speech, potentially causing friction between religious communities. This situation emphasizes the need for religious education to be strengthened with a contextual approach so that the values of moderation can be accepted and practiced in everyday life.

From a sociological perspective, social harmony cannot be created instantly, but rather through a long process involving all elements of society. According to Emile Durkheim, religion has a social function as a glue for social solidarity.⁵Therefore, religious education integrated with the principle of religious moderation can function as a social agent that strengthens social cohesion. This way, society not only understands religious teachings normatively but is also able to internalize religious values in social relationships.

The success of building social harmony through religious education and religious moderation in Lingsar can serve as a model for other regions in Indonesia. Lingsar demonstrates that religious and cultural plurality can actually be a source of strength when managed wisely. Local traditions such as the Topat War can be preserved and strengthened through religious education that emphasizes the values of tolerance, cooperation, and mutual assistance. This aligns with the vision of religious

⁴Abdurrahman Wahid. (2009).*My Islam, Your Islam, Our Islam: The Religion of the People of a Democratic State*. Jakarta: The Wahid Institute, p. 56

⁵Emile Durkheim. (1995). *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: Free Press, hlm. 421.

moderation initiated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia as a national strategy to maintain national unity.⁶.

Building social harmony amidst diversity is both a challenge and an urgent need in today's era. If the Lingsar community can internalize the values of moderate religious education, it will create an inclusive, tolerant, and peaceful society. Social harmony not only impacts societal stability but also serves as a crucial foundation for regional development and community well-being.

Based on this description, research on "*Building Social Harmony Through Religious Education and Religious Moderation in Lingsar, West Lombok*" This research is important to conduct. It is hoped that this research will provide theoretical contributions to the study of religious and social education, while also providing practical recommendations for communities, educational institutions, and local governments in strengthening religious moderation as a strategy for building social harmony.

Research Methods

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of deeply understanding the role of religious education and religious moderation in building social harmony in Lingsar, West Lombok. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is able to uncover social phenomena based on meaning, experience, and community interactions.*naturalistic*⁷.

This type of research is a field study focusing on the practice of religious education in schools, religious institutions, and interfaith communities in Lingsar. Primary data was obtained through in-depth

⁶Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia. (2021). *Roadmap for Religious Moderation 2020–2024*. Jakarta: Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, p. 23.

⁷Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. California: Sage Publications. hlm. 20.

interviews with religious leaders, teachers, village officials, and the local community. In addition, the researcher also used participatory observation in religious and social activities that reflect the values of religious moderation carried out by religious leaders, such as Islamic and Hindu religious leaders in Lingsar, who play a role in providing religious education and maintaining harmony between religious communities.

Community and Traditional Leaders
Individuals who understand the social, cultural, and traditional conditions of the local community, including the implementation of joint activities that reflect social harmony.

Teachers or Educators
Religious educators in schools or educational institutions who apply the values of religious moderation in the learning process.

Local Community Residents
who live side by side in religious diversity and are directly involved in daily social interactions.

Village Government or Local Officials
Parties who play a role in supporting harmony programs and maintaining social stability in the Lingsar region.

Youth or Religious Organizations
Young people and socio-religious organizations that are active in activities.

Secondary data was obtained from official documents, scientific literature, local government reports, and archives of educational and religious institutions. Data collection techniques included interviews, observation, and documentation. Data were then analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.⁸

To ensure data validity, this study employed source and method triangulation techniques, ensuring academic accountability for the findings. This method is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the contribution of religious education and religious moderation to fostering social harmony in the Lingsar community, West Lombok.

⁸Sugiyono. (2019). *Qualitative Research Methods*. Bandung: Alfabeta. p. 15.

Results and Discussion

Socio-Religious Conditions in Lingsar

Lingsar, a sub-district in West Lombok Regency, is a unique region inhabited by people from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. The majority of the population is Muslim, but there is also a Balinese Hindu community and adherents of the local Wetu Telu belief system. This diversity makes Lingsar a social space rich in interfaith and cultural interactions. This situation also presents potential for social harmony, although it is not without its inherent dynamics and challenges.

One of the most prominent symbols of interfaith harmony in Lingsar is the tradition *Topat War*. This tradition is held annually at the Lingsar Temple complex, a sacred site revered by both Hindus and Muslims. *Topat War* is essentially a ritual of thanksgiving for the fertility of the land and the abundance of the harvest. Hindus perform prayers, while Wetu Telu Muslims pray together, ending with the throwing of *ketupat* (rice cakes) to each other as a symbol of togetherness. This demonstrates that the Lingsar community is able to interpret religious differences as a cultural treasure that unites, not divides.⁹

Social interaction in Lingsar is also characterized by mutual cooperation in various social activities. For example, during public facility construction projects or weddings, people from different faiths help each other regardless of their differences. This aligns with the concept of "gotong royong" (mutual cooperation). *human brotherhood* (human brotherhood) emphasized in Islam, as well as the values of *tat twam asiin* Hindu meaning "I am you," both of which emphasize respect for fellow human beings.¹⁰

9 Azra, A. (2002). *New Paradigm of National Education: Reconstruction and Democratization*. Jakarta: Gramedia. p. 187.

10 Abdullah, M. A. (2006). *Islam as a Science: Epistemology, Methodology, and Ethics*. Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana. p. 45.

Field research shows that social harmony in Lingsar is not something that emerges automatically, but rather the result of a long process of habituation, education, and continuous interaction. In some cases, the potential for conflict remains, for example, regarding differing views on the use of worship spaces or the celebration of religious holidays. However, the Lingsar community has cultural mechanisms for resolving these differences through village deliberations and the role of respected religious leaders. In this way, conflict does not escalate into friction that undermines social cohesion.

The socio-religious conditions in Lingsar demonstrate that a multicultural society can live harmoniously if it shares core values. These values include tolerance, mutual cooperation, and respect for local traditions. This aligns with Clifford Geertz's view, which emphasizes the importance of local wisdom in maintaining social cohesion in multicultural communities.¹¹

Thus, the socio-religious conditions in Lingsar can be understood as a miniature model of harmonious life in Indonesia. Local traditions such as *Topat War* and the values of mutual cooperation practiced by the local community are proof that religious differences do not have to be a barrier, but can be a source of strength in building social harmony.

The Role of Religious Education in Building Harmonious Awareness

Religious education plays a strategic role in fostering public awareness and fostering peaceful coexistence within diverse communities. In Lingsar, religious education takes place not only in formal schools such as madrasas and public schools, but also in non-formal forms such as Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), religious study groups, and social and religious activities at the village level. Through religious education, fundamental values such as tolerance, respect for differences, and mutual assistance are instilled from an early age in both the younger generation and the wider community.

¹¹Geertz, C. (1992). *Culture and Religion*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius. p. 142.

In the formal system, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is a crucial tool in fostering a harmonious consciousness. The PAI curriculum in schools in Lingsar is based on the National Curriculum, which emphasizes the importance of integrating faith values with social morals. Religious teachers serve not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as role models in implementing the values of religious moderation. According to Muhaimin, Islamic religious education encompasses not only the ritual aspects of worship but also the internalization of social moral values, enabling students to interact peacefully with others.¹²

In addition to formal education, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) and religious study institutions in Lingsar also make a significant contribution. Pesantren not only teach Islamic knowledge but also foster a culture of peace, simplicity, and respect for differences. Religious leaders in pesantren act as social mediators when potential friction arises between residents. In this regard, religious education in pesantren is not only normative but also contextualized according to the needs of the surrounding community.¹³

Field research shows that teachers and religious figures in Lingsar often link religious teachings to the multicultural social realities of the region. For example, they emphasize that Islam *ismercy for all the world* teaching love to all people, including those of different faiths. This is in line with the principle in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 13, regarding the importance of knowing one another (*definition*) between people of different ethnicities and religions. With this approach, religious education not only forms a strong religious identity, but also a harmonious social awareness.¹⁴

¹²Muhaimin. (2009). *Development of Islamic Religious Education Curriculum in Schools, Madrasas, and Universities*. Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada. p. 56.

¹³Dhofier, Z. (2011). *Pesantren Tradition: A Study of the Kiai's View of Life*. Jakarta: LP3ES. p. 92.

¹⁴Al-Qur'an, Surat Al-Hujurat ayat 13.

The role of religious education also faces several challenges. One is the tendency of some to understand religion exclusively and literally, without considering the social context. This understanding can foster intolerant attitudes that have the potential to disrupt social harmony. Therefore, religious education in Lingsar strives to balance normative aspects (texts) with contextual aspects (social reality) to prevent extremism.

Thus, it can be concluded that religious education in Lingsar serves as a strategic instrument in building harmonious awareness. It serves as a space for learning and value transformation, where individuals not only understand religious teachings textually but also practice them in a pluralistic social life. The roles of teachers, religious leaders, and educational institutions are key factors in achieving this goal.

Religious Moderation as a Pillar of Harmony

Religious moderation is a concept that emphasizes balance in understanding and practicing religious teachings. It prevents followers from adopting extreme attitudes, whether overly liberal or overly conservative. In Lingsar, West Lombok, religious moderation has become an important foundation for building a harmonious social life. The religious and cultural diversity in this region requires mutual respect and openness to maintain social cohesion.

The practice of religious moderation in Lingsar can be seen in the daily interactions of people of different faiths. For example, Muslims, Hindus, and Wetu Telu adherents attend certain social and religious activities, albeit in ways that align with their respective beliefs. *Topat War* is a concrete symbol of the practice of religious moderation that has been passed down through generations. This ritual demonstrates that religious

differences are not a barrier, but rather a meeting point in strengthening togetherness.¹⁵

Religious moderation in Lingsar is manifested in the community's inclusive attitude. The Muslim majority, for example, does not dominate social spaces exclusively, but instead creates space for dialogue and cooperation with minority groups. This aligns with the Ministry of Religious Affairs' view that religious moderation is a middle path in understanding religion and the key to creating harmony in a multicultural society.¹⁶

The implementation of religious moderation in Lingsar is also inseparable from the role of religious and traditional leaders. They act as bridges in resolving potential conflicts and mediate when disagreements arise. For example, in a dispute over land for religious activities, Muslim and Hindu religious leaders sat together to find a fair solution without compromising either party. This effort demonstrates that religious moderation is not merely a theory, but a concrete practice rooted in local culture.

Religious moderation-based education in schools and Islamic boarding schools strengthens the younger generation's awareness of respect for differences. Religious teachers in Lingsar teach that Islam forbids attitudes *ghoul* (excessive in religion) as emphasized in the Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa, verse 171. This value is then practiced in everyday social life, so that students not only become religious individuals, but also tolerant and open.

It's worth noting that the practice of religious moderation in Lingsar also faces challenges. The influx of transnational ideologies with intolerant tendencies can erode the community's tradition of moderation.

¹⁵ Wahid, A. (2006). *My Islam, Your Islam, Our Islam: The Religion of the People of a Democratic State*. Jakarta: The Wahid Institute. p. 119.

¹⁶ Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia. (2019). *Religious Moderation*. Jakarta: Research and Development and Training Agency, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. p. 14.

Social media is sometimes exploited to spread religiously motivated hate speech that has the potential to be divisive. Therefore, strengthening religious moderation must continue, both through formal education, cultural outreach, and the role of the village government in upholding the values of togetherness.¹⁷

Thus, religious moderation can be seen as a key pillar of social harmony in Lingsar. It exists not merely as a normative idea but has become a concrete cultural practice. The community's collective awareness of managing differences wisely demonstrates that religious moderation is an effective strategy for maintaining unity in a multicultural society.

Challenges in Achieving Social Harmony

Although the Lingsar community has long been known for its traditions of tolerance and harmony, this does not mean that socio-religious life in this region is free from challenges. Social harmony has been historically built through local wisdom, such as *Topat War* and the practice of mutual cooperation, continue to face various dynamics that have the potential to disrupt social cohesion. These challenges are both internal and external, and must be managed wisely to maintain harmony.

One of the main challenges is the influx of transnational religious ideologies that tend to be exclusive. Some groups bring rigid religious understandings and reject diversity, thus fueling intolerance in society. According to Syamsuddin, the current of globalization brings various ideologies that are not always aligned with local culture, including religious practices that have historically been relatively moderate. If left unaddressed, this situation could erode the values of tolerance that are deeply rooted in Lingsar.¹⁸

The development of information technology presents its own challenges. Social media, which should be a means of education, is often misused to spread hoaxes, hate speech, and religious-based provocation.

¹⁷ Al-Qur'an, Surat An-Nisa ayat 171.

¹⁸ Syamsuddin, D. (2017). *Moderate Islam: Strengthening National Values*. Jakarta: Kompas. p. 78.

Research by the Setara Institute shows that hate speech in the digital space is a factor in the rise in cases of intolerance in various regions in Indonesia. This phenomenon is also felt by the Lingsar community, especially the younger generation, who are vulnerable to exposure to intolerant narratives.¹⁹

The next challenge is the uneven distribution of moderation-based religious education. Some schools and educational institutions still emphasize ritual aspects over socio-religious ones. As a result, students are poorly equipped with the social skills to deal with differences. Yet, as Tilaar (2004, p. 102) emphasizes, multicultural education is key to preparing a generation capable of living in a pluralistic society.²⁰

Local economic and political factors also pose challenges. Competition for resources, whether in the form of land, positions, or access to government assistance, sometimes creates friction that impacts relations between religious groups. If not managed fairly, economic issues can easily be exploited to exacerbate issues of identity differences.

Obstacles arise from the weakening role of religious and traditional leaders amidst the tide of modernization. Younger generations tend to be more influenced by digital figures on social media than by local figures. As a result, the values of local wisdom that have long been a glue for harmony are increasingly marginalized.

These challenges are not insurmountable obstacles. The Lingsar community possesses social capital in the form of a culture of deliberation, the value of mutual cooperation, and cultural traditions that can serve as a bulwark against these dynamics. Strengthening moderation-based

¹⁹ Setara Institute. (2019). *Report on the Condition of Freedom of Religion and Belief in Indonesia*. Jakarta: Setara Institute. p. 44.

²⁰ Tilar, H. A. R. (2004). *Multiculturalism: Future Global Challenges in the Transformation of National Education*. Jakarta: Grasindo. p. 102.

religious education, digital literacy, and the active role of religious leaders in responding to current issues are crucial steps to maintaining harmony.

Thus, although the challenges to achieving social harmony are quite complex, the Lingsar community has great potential to overcome them. Collective efforts from the community, educational institutions, village government, and religious leaders are necessary to maintain social harmony amidst the rapid flow of change.

Analysis and Discussion

Research in Lingsar shows that social harmony within a multicultural society results from the interaction between religious education and the practice of religious moderation. The two are inseparable, as religious education provides a normative foundation, while religious moderation provides a practical framework for managing differences. This analysis demonstrates that the synergy between the two can foster an inclusive, tolerant, and harmonious society.

First, Religious education plays a role in shaping the character of society. Teachers, religious leaders, and educational institutions in Lingsar consistently emphasize the importance of friendly and peaceful religious teachings. Islamic values *mercy for all the worlds* and Hindus who uphold the principle *tat twam asi* It serves as a normative basis for creating a harmonious life. This aligns with Nurcholish Madjid's view that religion serves as an ethical guideline that encourages its followers to build harmonious relationships with other human beings.²¹

Second, Religious moderation has proven to be a social strategy for maintaining harmony. The Lingsar community not only understands religion in private but also actualizes its values in the public sphere. *Topat War* For example, it is a concrete symbol of moderation that affirms collective identity across religions. This phenomenon supports Berger and Luckmann's theory of social construction, which states that social reality is

²¹Madjid, N. (2000). *Islam, Modernity, and Indonesianness*. Bandung: Mizan. p. 112

formed through a process of interaction and mutually agreed-upon symbols.²².

Third, The Lingsar community's success in maintaining harmony is inseparable from the role of religious and traditional leaders as mediators. They serve to guide the community to avoid intolerant attitudes and act as mediators when differences arise. This model aligns with the concept of *civil religion* Bellah, where religious values become a moral force that supports public life.²³.

The discussion also revealed dynamics that require vigilance. Challenges such as the penetration of intolerant ideologies, disinformation on social media, and the weakening authority of local figures have the potential to erode existing harmony. Therefore, moderation-based religious education must be continuously strengthened, particularly with a contextual approach that is relevant to current developments. According to Azra, moderation in religious education is the answer to the contemporary problems of Indonesia's pluralistic society.²⁴.

This analysis demonstrates that social harmony in Lingsar is the result of a collaboration between religious education, which instills moral values, and religious moderation, which teaches social skills for managing differences. This synergy between the two serves as a concrete example of how local communities can build harmony amidst global challenges.

Thus, this discussion emphasizes that social harmony is not something that occurs automatically, but rather the result of a long process of education, habituation, and internalization of values. Lingsar can serve as an important model for other regions in Indonesia in developing social relations patterns based on religious education and religious moderation.

²² Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1990). *Social Interpretation of Reality*. Jakarta: LP3ES. p. 59

²³ Bellah, R. (1970). *Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditionalist World*. New York: Harper & Row. hlm. 234

²⁴ Azra, A. (2010). *Substantive Islam: So that the Ummah does not become a scum*. Bandung: Mizan. p. 67

Conclusion

The development of social harmony in Lingsar, West Lombok, demonstrates the crucial role of religious education and religious moderation in maintaining a peaceful, tolerant, and respectful society. The diversity of religions, cultures, and traditions within the Lingsar community becomes a social force when managed through moderate values, such as tolerance, respect for differences, and upholding unity. Religious education serves not only as a means of fostering spiritual understanding but also as a medium for instilling the values of humanity, togetherness, and social responsibility.

Through inclusive and moderate religious education, people are taught to understand their religion's teachings without fostering excessive fanaticism. This is evident in the Lingsar community, which maintains harmonious relations between religious communities through various social, cultural, and traditional activities. Religious moderation is an effective approach to preventing social conflict and strengthening community solidarity amidst differences in belief.

Furthermore, the role of religious leaders, educational institutions, and local governments is crucial in building collective awareness of the importance of harmony. The synergy between religious education and religious moderation can create a safe, peaceful, and conducive social environment for community life. Therefore, social harmony in Lingsar serves as a concrete example that diversity is not a source of division, but rather a social asset for building unity and a more harmonious, just, and sustainable community life.

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