



Measuring Religious Moderation At the an Nur Foundation – Dili- Timor Leste

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Abstract: Since the separation of Timor Leste from the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia on May 20 2002, the religious conditions in Timor Leste have become interesting to discuss considering that currently Indonesia, through the Ministry of Religion, is actively promoting religious moderation to maintain the unity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. What about Timor Leste, which used to be part of the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia, with the number of Muslim people in Timor Leste 0.3% of the total population of Timor Leste, the majority of whom are Catholic. For the people of Timor Leste, the existence of the An Nur Foundation, which was founded by Muslim clerics in the city of Dili, is an institution that has long contributed greatly to expelling Portuguese colonialism. The existence of the An Nur Foundation in the field of education is also a symbol of religious moderation in the city of Dili where 95% of students are Catholic and the remaining 5% are Muslim as well as the teaching staff, the majority of whom are Catholic. The aim of this Community Service activity is to see directly and provide an understanding of the An Nur Foundation regarding the concept of religious moderation in maintaining national unity. This method of community service is carried out by means of direct outreach to the An Nur Foundation and the surrounding community. They asked how Indonesia could maintain unity with the various existing religions and cultures and Indonesian society in responding to these differences. An explanation was given to them that freedom of religion is guaranteed in the 45th Constitution. The role of the government is very necessary in implementing the regulations of the 45th Constitution, where one form of implementation is by establishing religious moderation in society in order to maintain national unity .

Keywords: Religious Moderation, An Nur Foundation Dili-Timor Leste, Religious Regulations.

Introduction

The An-Nur Foundation is a foundation that operates in the field of Islamic education located in the An-Nur Mosque Complex area, Kampung Alor, Dili, Timor Leste. The An-Nur Foundation is led by the President of the Foundation, Muhammad Anwar Da Costa. Where the focus of education carried out by the An-Nur Dili Timor Leste Foundation is the struggle for ISLAMIC education for orphans and for people who are always enthusiastic about learning. The An-Nur Mosque, which was the forerunner to the founding of the An Nur foundation, is a mosque in Dili, Timor Leste.

This mosque is located on Rua Campo Alor, Kampung Alor, Dili. An Nur Mosque, as one of the mosques in the city of Dili, is always busy with East Timorese Muslims performing Friday prayers. The An Nur Mosque has two floors, the first floor is for prayer while the second floor is used as a school room. In the middle of the mosque there is a garden which is used as a natural air conditioner. In the right corner there is a place for ablution and a simple library building where Islamic books and several CDs are placed on two wooden shelves.

The An-Nur Mosque was founded in 1955 or 1956 on the initiative of Imam Haji Hasan Bin Abdulah Balatif, Head of Kampung Alor and the Muslim community of Dili. This establishment was approved by the Chief of the Arab Tribe at that time, Hamud bin Awad Al-Katiri.[1] In its development, an Islamic village was formed as it is today. In the early 1980s, this mosque was

renovated by Pangdam XVI/Udayana, Major General TNI Dading Kalbuadi on March 20 1981. Established in 1955, of course this mosque has a long historical record of the presence of Muslims in East Timor, both during the Portuguese era, when it was integrated with Indonesia and when it finally became the independent country of Timor Leste.

When Timor Leste was under the Portuguese, the people in Kampung Alor used the An Nur Mosque as a place of political struggle to expel the Portuguese. East Timorese Muslim figures such as H. Salim Bin Said Al-Katiri, Hedung Bin Abdullah and Sya'ban Joaqim asked for help from the people and the Indonesian government. When East Timor finally became the country of Timor Leste, Muslims, especially those from Indonesia, were mostly deported to leave Timor Leste in 2004 due to different citizenship status and the rest who chose Timor Leste citizenship remained.

It after 20 years after the deportation, life for Muslims in Timor Leste seems to be returning to normal. This can be seen from the busy Friday prayers and the running of the school managed by the An Nur Mosque administrators. Indonesian people living in Kampong Alor are now able to carry out their activities again, such as trading, and some of them have become citizens Timor Leste.

After independence in 2002, the religious conditions of Timor Leste society experienced various dynamics influenced by history, culture and politics. This religious condition can be seen from the development of the dominance of Catholicism, where the majority

of the population of Timor Leste adheres to Catholicism, which is a legacy from the Portuguese colonial period. According to data, around 97% of the population is Catholic and the rest are Muslim, Confucian and ancestral beliefs.

After independence, relations between religious communities in Timor Leste were harmonious. The government promotes religious tolerance, and there is almost no record of discrimination against Muslims, even though they are a minority. This had an impact on the development of the Muslim Community in Timor Leste. After independence, the Muslim community in Timor Leste began to be organized with the formation of the Timor Leste Islamic Institute or Centro da Comunidade Islamica de Timor Leste (CENCISTIL) on December 10 2002. This institution oversees various aspects of Islamic religious development. , including da'wah, education, and communication.

This condition certainly went well after the religious conversion of people with different beliefs. Several studies show the existence of religious conversions among the Timor Leste Muslim community. Causative factors include family influence and the living environment. After conversion, their religious behavior experienced development, such as performing obligatory and sunnah prayers, reading the Koran, and fasting. (Al-Isnad: Journal of Islamic Civilization History and Humanities Vol. 04 No. 02 December 2023 | 68-80, The Ups and Downs of Islam in the Current History of Timor Leste: from Majority to Minority.

Overall, after independence, Timor Leste society showed strong religious diversity with the dominance of Catholicism, accompanied by good inter-religious tolerance. However, challenges in the educational and economic sectors still need to be overcome to improve religious harmony and the welfare of society as a whole.

## Implementation Method

The method for writing this report is a descriptive method, namely carrying out several reviews of various literature and the results of discussions or exchanging ideas with partners. The location of the activity is directly in Timor Leste. This activity was carried out through discussions with several community figures. The aim of this activity is to increase understanding of the role of religious moderation in maintaining religious harmony Of East Timor. This method of community service is carried out by means of direct outreach to partners And It is hoped that the discussions held will provide increased understanding regarding the importance of religious moderation for the progress of the country of Timor Lestand.

### Field Activities

#### 1. Identify Targets

The main targets of this program are religious leaders, teachers, students and community leaders who have influence in their communities. It is hoped that they can become parties who are able to provide an understanding of the importance of religious moderation for the progress of the nation. Apart from that, the selection of targets is carried out by considering the sustainable impact they can produce through their role in the community. specifically in this activity in collaboration with the An Nur Foundation led by Mr. Anwar De Costa.

#### 2. Material preparation

The material prepared focuses on three main pillars of religious

moderation:

- National Commitment: Maintaining national unity amidst differences.
- Tolerance: Respect for differences in religious beliefs and practices.
- Rejection of Violence: Avoiding all forms of extremism and radicalism.

#### 3. Implementation of Activities

This activity is carried out in the form of:

- Seminars and Workshops: Provides theoretical insights into religious moderation.
- Group Discussion: Encourages active participation of participants in sharing experiences and challenges.
- Case Study: Presents real situations to be analyzed and sought solutions collectively.

## Discussion

Community service through the promotion of religious moderation is one of the strategic efforts to promote the values of diversity, tolerance and social harmony amidst cultural and religious diversity in Timor Leste. Timor Leste, as a newly developing country, has challenges in maintaining harmony in its society, especially regarding religious differences which often become a source of conflict.

This activity aims to strengthen society's understanding of religious moderation, which includes tolerance, recognition of plurality, and rejection of extremism. In this activity, the methods used include lectures, group discussions, and case study simulations to ensure in-depth understanding for participants.

### Results and Impact of Activities

#### 1. Participants' understanding of religious moderation

The evaluation results showed a significant increase in participants' understanding regarding religious moderation. Before the activity, only around 45% of participants had a basic understanding of religious moderation. After the activity, this percentage increased to 85%, with participants able to identify the basic principles of religious moderation, such as tolerance and rejection of extremism.

#### 2. Changes in Attitudes and Perceptions

Participants demonstrated positive changes in attitudes towards other religious groups. For example, before the activity, some participants still had negative stereotypes towards certain religions and there were even people who thought that after Timor Leste became independent, all Muslims would return to Indonesia. However, through open and interactive dialogue, participants become more respectful of differences and see diversity as a wealth, not a threat. where the emphasis of religious moderation is on the implementation of internal and external beliefs.

#### 3. Establishment of an Interfaith Dialogue Forum

As a follow-up, several participants took the initiative to form interfaith dialogue forums in their communities. This is based on the information provided that in Indonesia there is a Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB). This forum functions as a forum for discussion, resolving conflicts, and promoting inter-religious cooperation.

#### 4. Impact on Local Communities

Local communities involved report increased social harmony. For example, in one of the mutual cooperation activities to build a Catholic church, the Muslim community was also involved. at the student level which involves students from across religions in discussing academically the development plans for the country of Timor Leste

### 5. Local Policy Recommendations

The results of this activity also produced several local policy recommendations, such as:

- Insertion of religious moderation values in the school curriculum.
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- Increasing interfaith cooperation through joint social activities.

## Challenges in Implementation

### 1. Language Barrier

Timor Leste has quite high linguistic diversity, with Tetum and Portuguese as official languages. However, most people use regional languages, so a translator is needed for some sessions.

### 2. Initial Resistance from Participants

Some participants initially showed resistance to the concept of religious moderation because they considered it to be contrary to their beliefs. However, a persuasive and dialogue-based approach succeeded in gradually reducing this resistance.

### 3. Logistics and Infrastructure

Limited access to several locations, especially in rural areas, is a challenge in itself. The team had to face damaged roads and minimal facilities during the implementation of the activity.

## Recommendations for Program Development

### 1. Strengthening Collaboration with the Government and Local NGOs

To increase program effectiveness, closer collaboration with local governments and civil society organizations is needed. They can assist in resource mobilization, dissemination of information, and strengthening program impact.

### 2. Continuous Training

Religious moderation is not a concept that can be understood instantly. Therefore, ongoing training is needed that involves the community directly so that the values of moderation can be firmly embedded in everyday life.

### 3. Local Culture Based Approach

Integrating the values of religious moderation with local traditions and culture can accelerate public acceptance of this concept. For example, through relevant traditional art or folklore.

### 4. Documentation and Publication of Results

The promotion of religious moderation in Timor Leste has had a significant impact in strengthening the values of tolerance and social harmony in society. Despite facing several challenges, the success of this program shows the importance of a dialogical, inclusive and local culture-based approach. The sustainability of this program will depend heavily on collaboration between various parties, including the government, religious leaders and the general public.

With this program, it is hoped that Timor Leste can become a model for other countries in building social harmony amidst religious and cultural diversity.

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