



Christian Minority Religious Education in Muslim-Majority Cumedak: Ideals, Realities, and Paleran Hall Study

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Abstract

Religious education is an important aspect that acts as the formation of the morals and character of each individual. This is supported by various religions in Indonesia. There are several obstacles to uneven religious education, especially for minorities. So with this, the researcher aims to analyze the application of religious education for Christian students in a Muslim-majority village with a focus on Paleran Hamlet, Cumedak Village, Jember Regency. The application of religious education in Paleran Hamlet is analyzed between ideality and illusion. The researcher wants to study related: One, how is the implementation of religious education for Christian minorities in Paleran Hamlet, Cumedak Village, Sumberjambe District, Jember Regency? Two, What is the effect of the application of religious education for Christian minorities in Paleran Hamlet, Cumedak Village, Sumberjambe District, Jember Regency in the dynamics of ideality and reality? This research uses empirical research methods with a literature study approach based on a descriptive qualitative data approach. The results showed that the application of religious education for Christian students in Paleran Hamlet tends to be influenced by the dynamics of ideality and illusion. The dynamic of ideality contains the hope of Christian students to obtain proper religious education under the life of the majority of Islam in Cumedak Village. While the illusory dynamic means obstacles for students to get religious education due to factors such as lack of educator resources and inadequate quantity of minorities. The state implication of this study is that the government must strengthen equitable religious education policies to ensure minority students receive fair access, adequate educators, and protected religious rights regardless of demographic composition.

Keywords:

Christian Education; Ideality; Illusion; Paleran Hamlet; Cumedak Village; Sumberjambe District

A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has an extraordinary demographic bonus, from Sabang to Merauke there are many islands and natural resources that can be maximized for the development of Indonesia in the future. In addition, another extraordinary bonus is the composition of indigenous communities and cultures as well as different religious diversity, and this is one of the most extraordinary country icons in the world, as expressed on the Kemenag (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia) page, religious and cultural harmony in the archipelago is important, with harmony between culture and religion supporting each other and providing space for comfort and peace in religious adherents in Indonesia. (Kemenag, n.d.) In other words, interfaith relations in a culture of mutual tolerance and tolerance are very important to realize how harmonious religiosity is in the midst of a heterogeneous society in Indonesia.

One of the theses that the author has participated in for doctoral promotion at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta stated that, in the same dimension of worshipping "god" in different forms,

they should be able to help each other, the main point is the interreligious relationship, not the point of which god is worshipped, therefore this thesis has an influence on the author that the relationship between religions socially and in teachings will always meet at the point of humanity and the point of goodness. Many studies support that Indonesia is a country that has a high sense of tolerance and tolerance, especially related to traditional and religious culture in Indonesia, although the opposite also occurs a lot, for example research conducted by Ali Ahmad Yenuri et al entitled *The Paradigm of Islamic Tolerance in Responding to the Diversity of Life in Indonesia (Analysis Study of KH Ahmad Shiddiq's Thoughts)* in this paper explains the concept of the Paradigm of Tolerance of KH Ahmad Shiddiq, namely in the form of the values of Islamic Brotherhood, the value of Ukhuwah Wathaniyah and the value of Ukhuwah Basyariyah, while the basis of the values is Tasamuh, Tawazun, and amar Makruf nahi mungkar, while in the axiological aspect is the tendency of the Universalism style of KH Ahmad Shidiq, namely by explaining the strategy of objectifying the idea of Ukhuwah and society in the reality of the diversity of life in Indonesia, firstly an accommodative attitude, in the form of a willingness to accommodate various opinions (aspirations) from various parties, secondly a selective attitude, namely

sorting out what is beneficial and what is not and the third integrative attitude, namely the willingness to harmonize, harmonize and balance the various interests of oneself, small groups, and larger groups, the instrumental aspect shows the tendency of KH Ahmad Shidiq's religious universalism attitude, more precisely in two shades of universalism, namely prophetic-ideological (solidarity) and humanist-Functional. So it is not surprising that this thought is well linked with Gus Dur's thoughts on the indigenization of Islam in Indonesia which can join hands with non-Muslims in building interfaith and social humanitarian dialogue.

One of the things that is still not applicable in the community is the bias in minority education. Often the adage of majority and minority is always a "bugbear" in religious interactions in Indonesia. The Muslim majority sometimes gives a more "arbitrary" response even though the Indonesian state was built by the support of the majority. Father in the dimension of respecting every right to life and religious freedom as stipulated in the 1945 Constitution. This Majority Dimension has entered into all aspects of life in the midst of society, starting from social education and so on, the report compiled by Wahid Institute provides an overview related to this matter. The last report in 2015 showed 147 cases related to the abuse of religious freedom in Indonesia. (The WAHID Institute, n.d.) This homework must be immediately resolved at the grassroots in the dimension of strengthening basic education by "getting to know" each other with non-Muslims for a Muslim, and Muslims from non-Muslims. The independent Education Dimension quoting their curriculum ala Nadim Makarim (Beranda | Kurikulum Merdeka, n.d.) in the implementation dimension must touch and mutual dialogue and recognize how beautiful life together is in the wrapping of tolerance and diversity, this is what is meant in Pancasila "bhina eka tunggal Ika" different but still one in one goal, namely prosperity and peace in Indonesia.

The events as noted in the Wahid Institute report above should be a full lesson to carry out recognition in the dimension of Education at the grassroots level, one of the interesting ones is minority Education in regions throughout Indonesia, one of the interesting realities is the cycle of majority and minority in the dimension of basic Education in Jember Regency, especially Schools in Paleran Village, the majority dimension makes some Christian students not receive religious Education as usual because of the minority, which should be with the independent curriculum the minority and majority dimensions must be scorched earth in the educational space of the first encounter between Muslims and non-Muslims in Indonesia. This study uses an empirical research method with a library study approach based on a descriptive qualitative data approach. Data collection techniques through interviews with the community in Paleran Hamlet and teaching staff at SDN Gunung Malang 02, SDN Cumedak 02, SMPN 01 Dumberjambe, SMPN 04 Sumberjambe. Data is also taken from journals, and relevant news. The results of the data obtained are classified and described into statements.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the lived experiences of Christian minority students receiving religious education at the grassroots level within a predominantly Muslim village, positioning religious education not merely as an administrative school issue but as a social

dry fields and plantations. (BPS Kabupaten Jember, n.d.) In Jember there are several islands besides the mainland. There are around 67 small islands and 16 islands that already have names and 51 other islands that do not have names.

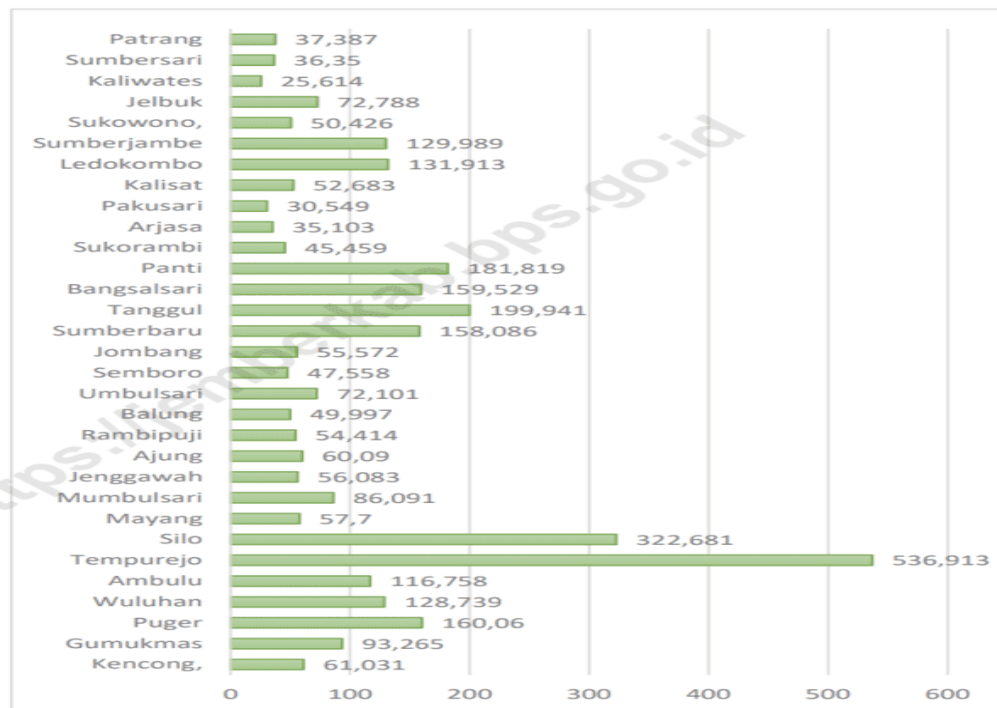


Figure 2: Area by District (Km) 2022 area of subdistrict (Km) 2022.(BPS Kabupaten Jember, n.d.)

The northern boundary borders Probolinggo and Bondowoso regencies, the eastern boundary borders Banyuwangi regency, and the southern boundary borders the Indian Ocean. The western boundary borders Lumajang regency. Jember Regency's population is spread across 31 sub-districts. According to the 2020 census, the population was 2,536,968 men, with 1,271,761 women. The largest male population is found in Summersari sub-district, while the smallest population is found in Jelbuk sub-district, with 33,283. This distribution data can be seen in the diagram below:

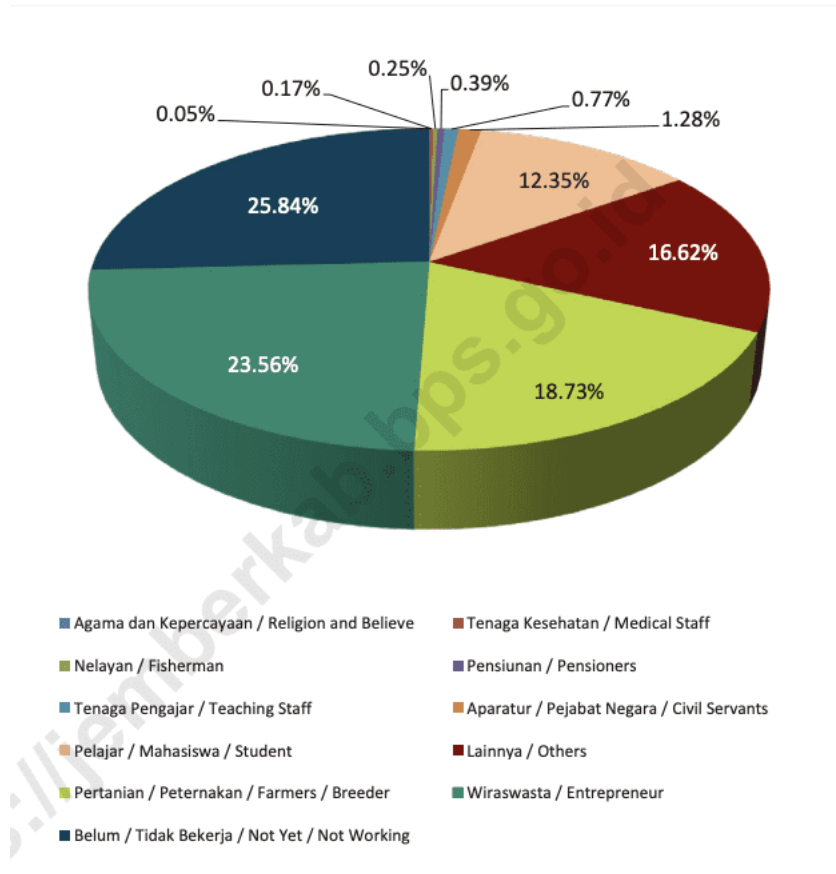


Figure 3: Population by occupation in Jember Regency 2022.

Meanwhile, in the religious development in Jember Regency based on BPS data of Jember Regency is as follows first Islam occupies the first place 2,553,018. while Catholicism occupies the second place, namely with 8,309 while those in the third place are Protestants 19,744 while the fourth place is Hinduism with 1,636 and the fifth place is Buddhism with 1,324 which with this data shows that the majority in Jember Regency is Islam, and because here it is supported by many descendants and immigrants from Madura and Java or called the Pandalungan community .(BPS Kabupaten Jember, n.d.; Sholeh, 2014; Timur, 2021).

Banyaknya Penduduk Menurut Agama, 2022 The Number of People According to Religion, 2022	
Islam/Islam	2.553.018
Katolik/Catholic	8.309
Protestan/Protestant	19.744
Hindu/Hindu	1.636
Budha/Buddha	1.324

Figure 4: data on population distribution based on religion.

Thus it can be concluded that the existence of Islam, which is predominantly Muslim, also has an effect in the dimensions within society, as stated in the background that states that an elementary school (SD) and a junior high school (SMP) which are government schools and should uphold the National Education System Law by providing educational rights for all people in Paleran Village regardless of the religion embraced by students in Paleran Village . In Islam , humans were created by Allah in a state of tribes and nations so that they can know each other

and help each other in social life. Humans are called social creatures because they need each other and cannot live alone. Social life occurs in the realm of human relationships .(*Surat Al-Hujurat Ayat 13 / Tafsirq.Com*, n.d.)

In the relationship between the majority and minority communities, several things occur, including the majority wanting power by doing arbitrary things such as imposing their will through violent actions. With the support of the majority who have full members and the power they have, such a relationship pattern does not occur in the majority Muslim community in Cumedak and the minority Christian community in Paleran hamlet . ¹Therefore, the researcher focuses on socio-religious, economic, and educational relations . *First*, socio-religious relations in Paleran hamlet are well-established and never conflict occurs. The Christian minority has the freedom to practice their religion without any interference. Among them, one of the residents of Paleran hamlet , which is only one hamlet, is Christian . The number of Christians living in Paleran is very small, namely only 35 people who live in RT 04 RW 02. These Christians are of Madurese descent . Christians are free to practice their religion at GKJW Pepantan. Paleran is located in the heart of Paleran hamlet . Daily worship is held on Wednesday afternoons, specifically the Youth Service, and every Saturday and Sunday evening. The Wednesday service is sometimes only held twice a month. However, Saturday and Sunday services are held regularly. These services are led by the Sumberpakem Religious Priest .

"From my experience of worshipping at GKJW Pepaten Paleran does not hinder the process of our worship, even though it is close to a complex of diverse Islamic areas .²

However, there is a lack of kinship within the Christian community , with Muslims rarely interacting with the Christian community in Paleran . Consequently , communication and relationships are not very close. "When there is an event from the Muslim community itself, they rarely share with us. For example, during Eid al-Fitr Adha . However, our relationship remains good, where When we get basic necessities or there is a big event, we often share it with them"³

Second, social relations in the educational sector are also well-established and they receive equal access to education as the Muslim majority. Students from the Christian minority also attend public schools, namely elementary schools (SD) and junior high schools (SMP). These schools require Muslim students to wear Muslim uniforms . Male students wear long pants and female students wear long-sleeved uniforms and skirts. Students from the Christian minority are given freedom and are permitted to opt out of wearing the hijab (headscarf).⁴

In Islamic religious studies for the majority, minority students are given the freedom to study outside of class or to go home early. Public schools in Paleran do not have Christian religious teachers; only Islamic religious education teachers are available . Student interaction within the classroom and within the school environment is well-established. Minority Christian students receive equal treatment and rights without discrimination. For the assessment system , students are given questions taken from the pastor by curriculum staff. During the assessment stage, the pastor corrects them according to the religious curriculum at Paleran Church . Therefore, the school only accepts the grades given.⁵

Third, socioeconomic relations also involve mutual assistance and good relations. The Christian minority in Paleran Hamlet works as traders, farmers, construction workers, and teachers. These minority jobs continue to thrive despite being in a predominantly Muslim environment. High levels of social support between the Muslim and Christian majorities facilitate

¹ Hasan Basri M. Nur, Syed Sultan Bee Packeer Mohamed, and Nor Azlah Sham Rambely, "Social Relations Between the Muslim Majority and Minorities of Other Religions in Banda Aceh City, Indonesia," *Jurnal Al-Ijtima'iyyah* 7, no. 2 (2021): pages 213–36.

² Interview with Mrs. Misyati as inhabitant hamlet Paleran , Saturday , August 5 , 2023.

³ Interview with Mrs. Misyati as inhabitant hamlet Paleran , Saturday August 5, 2023

⁴ Interview with Sindi as an alumnus of SMPN 01 Sumberjambe , Saturday , August 5 , 2023

⁵ Interview with Mrs. Elis as an English teacher at SMPN 4 Sumberjambe , Saturday , August 5 , 2023

collaboration in joint work. This solidarity prevents economic conflict in Paleran . ⁶The lives of the minority communities themselves are interconnected through their work with the Muslim majority. Farmers collaborate with the predominantly Muslim community of Gunung Malang for work. Furthermore , street vendors are also Muslim. They interact well without discrimination. When Muslims work for the Christian minority , they maintain a normal life, and they are given time for worship. For general needs, such as fashion and basic necessities, they shop in other villages where the majority of traders are Muslim. This relationship is well-established without any differences.⁷

Implementation of Religious Education for Christian Minorities in Paleran Hamlet, Cumedak Village, Sumberjambe District , Jember Regency: Efforts made by the Community to Strengthen the Jawi Christian Religious Minority in Paleran Hamlet

Field results of interviews and observations in Cumedak village Paleran , it turns out, has several educational institutions where Christian minority students choose to attend, including SDN Gunung 2 Malang, SDN Cumedak 1, SDN Cumedak 2, SMPN 4 Sumber Jambe, and SMPN 1 Sumberjambe . And the closest to Paleran hamlet are SDN Gunungmalang 2 and SMPN 4 Sumberjambe . The two schools are combined under one roof, as for the results of the Christian minority education research that became the subject of the interview research, namely: The number of Christian students in several elementary schools includes : SDN Gunung Malang 02 has 2 Christian students in grades 3 and 5, SDN Cumedak 01 has 2 students, SDN Cumedak 02 has 2 students in grade 2. SMPN 04 Sumberjambe has 1 student in grade 9 and SMPN 01 Sumberjambe has 3 students. From the implementation of Christian religious education for minority students, there is a similarity that the Christian curriculum facilities have not been fulfilled and there is no special Christian teacher. In the process of learning Islam, minority students are given the freedom to participate in learning or study outside the classroom and may go home early. To input the grades of Christian students, SDN Gunungmalang 2 attempts to submit a letter to the Pastor at Paleran Church . With this, the pastor provides questions for the Christian student's exam , as well as the pastor's assessment process. So the school only inputs the grades that have been given.

Because the schools near Paleran hamlet are inadequate in providing Christian religious education, Christian religious strengthening for students is carried out at the Papanthan East Javanese Christian Church. Paleran . Religious study time is divided among various groups. Wednesdays are used for prayers to repent for sins committed at home . Fridays are for household studies, given to married mothers and fathers. Saturday nights are for religious studies for youth on the topic of Christianity.



Figure 1: Educational Interview at SMP 4 SumberJambe

⁶ Interview with Mrs. Lilah Sarimah as trader Muslims in Paleran , Saturday , 5 August 2023 .

⁷ Interview with Mr. Dur as Muslim residents of Paleran Hamlet , Saturday , August 5 , 2023 .

Regarding the implementation of minority education for Christian students . And its location Not far from the church.



Figure 2: The atmosphere in the classroom of SMP 4 Sumberjambe in the implementation of Education of Minority Christian Students.



Figure 3: Place of worship of a Christian community church located not Far from the School of Education.



Figure 4: SDN Cumudeka 2, Regarding the implementation of minority education Christian students also share the same concern that there is a lack of curriculum facilities and special religious teachers. Christian.(Interview with Mother Yuyun as a PAI Teacher at SDN Cumedak 02, Today Saturday , August 5, 2023, personal communication, n.d.)

Religious differences are a personal choice. Separation between religious adherents fosters a sense of responsibility for one's beliefs. Religion provides the basis for free choice based on one's convictions, without coercion. This serves as a guideline for taking responsibility for

one's choices. Then, everyone will understand the implications of all actions and expressed beliefs. All aspects of society, including traditions passed down through generations, will no longer present difficulties, so everyone is obligated to make decisions or adopt views that align with their desired beliefs. With this understanding, society will refrain from interfering in the religious affairs of others.

The community in Paleran Hamlet strives to maintain strong relationships within the hamlet and support each other. In addition to strong community solidarity, the role of religious pastors is also crucial. The pastor in Paleran Hamlet is a pastor from the GKJW (Indonesian Christian Church) in Sumberpakem. Sumberjambe which helps unite a small number of religious communities Christians in various villages. One of them is Slateng Village , where only two Christian families live. These villages, combined, worship together at the Pepaten GKJW. Paleran . This strengthens the religious community Christians in Sumberjambe District . GLJW Pepaten Paleran is a place that is often used, because it has many members and is still strongly connected to this day.(*Interview with Mrs. Misyati as Inhabitant Hamlet Paleran , Saturday 5 August 2023, personal communication, n.d.*)

The religious dynamics in Paleran Hamlet illustrate how minority communities develop adaptive strategies to preserve their faith identity while maintaining social harmony in a predominantly Muslim environment. The collective religious practice centered at GKJW Pepaten Paleran demonstrates a model of inter-village solidarity in which dispersed Christian families can still experience communal worship and pastoral care. This shared religious space not only strengthens their spiritual resilience but also reinforces a sense of belonging that counters the potential isolation of living as a minority. From an analytical perspective, this situation reflects a functional form of religious pluralism in which minority groups navigate their identity through community networks rather than relying solely on formal institutional support. It also shows that harmonious interfaith relations are sustained not only by the majority's acceptance but also through the minority's ability to organize, maintain social cohesion, and negotiate their presence in the broader social landscape.

C. CONCLUSION

Research on social relations (religion, education, and economics) conducted by researchers in Paleran Hamlet revealed that the social life of people of different faiths is safe and peaceful. The presence of Muslims as the absolute majority and the implementation of Islamic law in Cumedak do not hinder the socio-religious, educational, and economic activities of the Christian minority. Muslims, as the majority, appear capable of playing the role of the majority as brothers and sisters who do not interfere in the affairs of others. Conversely, members of minority religions are able to adapt and respect the existence of Islam as the majority. This is evident, among other things, in some minority behaviors, such as their children wearing modest clothing to school even though they do not wear headscarves.

The harmonious social conditions between the Muslim majority and the Christian minority in Cumedak must be maintained. Likewise, the Muslim majority must maintain good relations through frequent interaction and mutual assistance. The community in Paleran Hamlet strives to maintain strong relationships within the hamlet and provide mutual assistance. In addition to a strong sense of community solidarity, the role of the religious pastor is also crucial. The pastor in Paleran Hamlet is a pastor from the GKJW (Indonesian Christian Church) in Sumberpakem. Sumberjambe which helps unite a small number of religious communities Christians in various villages. One of them is Slateng Village , where only two Christian families live. These villages, combined, worship together at the Pepaten GKJW. Paleran . This strengthens the religious community Christians in Sumberjambe District . GLJW Pepaten Paleran is a frequently used location, due to its large membership and continued strong ties. Furthermore, the efforts of the pastor and administrators of the Pepaten GKJW Paleran which provides Christian religious education outside school.

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