



# STRENGTHENING RELIGIOUS MODERATION: RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE OF MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES IN KEDUNG REJOSO VILLAGE

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## Abstract:

This study aims to explore how the multicultural community in Kedung Rejoso Village can strengthen religious tolerance. The research employs a qualitative approach with a case study method, involving in-depth interviews with religious leaders and community members, participatory observations, and document analysis. Data was collected to understand the dynamics of social interactions, supporting factors of tolerance, and the challenges faced by the community in maintaining harmony. The findings reveal that religious tolerance in Kedung Rejoso Village is reflected in various social interactions, such as mutual cooperation, collaboration in social activities, and participation in religious celebrations. Community leaders, particularly religious figures, play a key role in maintaining religious moderation by fostering dialogue and bridging differences. However, challenges such as differences in religious interpretations, social prejudice, and the negative influence of social media remain obstacles to strengthening tolerance. The proposed strategies to address these challenges include enhancing education on religious moderation, conducting regular interfaith dialogues, and empowering the community to counter radicalism and extremism. By implementing these measures, Kedung Rejoso Village can serve as a model of harmonious diversity and an inspiration for other regions in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Religious Moderation, Religious Tolerance, Multiculturalism.

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as an archipelago with ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity, has a wealth of noble values that should be preserved. One of these noble values is religious tolerance, which is an important foundation in building harmony and interfaith harmony (Huda, 2023). Kedung Rejoso Village, as part of multicultural Indonesia, has great potential to be an ideal example of religious tolerance.

Kedung Rejoso Village, with its multicultural society, has a diversity of beliefs that coexist. This diversity is both a challenge and an opportunity to strengthen the values of tolerance. History records that the people of Kedung Rejoso have shown a strong tradition of tolerance, reflected in various social interactions and religious activities carried out together. However, the challenges of globalization and modernization can erode these noble values if not properly anticipated (Rizkianto, 2021).

In today's digital era, the flow of information and intercultural interactions are increasingly intense. This can trigger intolerance if not managed wisely. Therefore, it is important to continue to strengthen religious tolerance in Kedung Rejoso Village, especially among the younger generation. Education and awareness of the

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importance of tolerance need to be instilled from an early age, both through formal and non-formal education (Oematan, 2025).

This research aims to examine more deeply how the multicultural community in Kedung Rejoso Village can strengthen religious tolerance. This research will identify factors that influence tolerance, challenges faced, and efforts that can be made to strengthen tolerance values at the local level.

Through this research, it is expected to contribute to the development of a religious tolerance model that can be applied in other regions in Indonesia. In addition, this article is also expected to inspire the people of Kedung Rejoso to continue to maintain and nurture the tradition of tolerance that has been passed down by their ancestors.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. The qualitative approach was chosen because it aims to deeply understand the phenomenon of religious tolerance in the context of a multicultural society in Kedung Rejoso Village. The case study method was used to examine intensively and comprehensively how religious tolerance is practiced, the challenges faced, and the efforts made to strengthen it in the village.

This research was conducted in Kedung Rejoso Village, an area chosen as the location for the UNZAH 2025 Community Service Program (KKN). This village was chosen because it has the characteristics of a multicultural society where there are two religious organizations that are interesting to study, with significant religious diversity. This multicultural context became the main focus of the research, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the dynamics of religious tolerance in people's daily lives. The subjects of this research involved various elements of society that play an important role in the practice of religious tolerance in this village. Religious leaders from existing religious organizations in the village will be a key source of information, providing in-depth insights into their views and experiences regarding tolerance.

Data collection was conducted through a combination of comprehensive techniques to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon of religious tolerance in this village. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with research subjects to explore information about their experiences with religious tolerance, their views on challenges and opportunities in strengthening tolerance, and efforts that have been and can be made to improve inter-religious harmony. Participant observation will also be conducted to directly observe the community's social interactions in various contexts, such as religious activities, social events, and daily interactions. In addition, secondary data such as notes, photos, videos, and other documents relevant to the research topic will be collected and analyzed to complement the information obtained through interviews and observations.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Dynamics of Interfaith Interaction in a Multicultural Context in Kedung Rejoso Village Kedung Rejoso village, with its multicultural society, shows rich and complex dynamics of interfaith interaction. This interaction is not only established

within the scope of personal relationships between individuals, but is also manifested in various social and cultural activities that involve the active participation of various religious groups (Dotutinggi, 2024). This involvement reflects an awareness of the importance of togetherness and tolerance in building harmony and harmony amidst differences.

Through these rich and complex interactions, the people of Kedung Rejoso demonstrate their commitment to peaceful coexistence and mutual respect, despite having different faith backgrounds. Where in Kedung Rejoso Village there are two Islamic organizations namely NU and Muhammadiyah, with the majority being NU. Where NU and Muhammadiyah are two popular da'wah organizations in Indonesia (Sabiruddin, 2018).

One of the important findings of this research is the strong practice of tolerance in the daily life of the Kedung Rejoso community. This tolerance is reflected in various forms of interaction, such as gotong royong, cooperation in social activities, and participation in religious celebrations. This involvement in joint activities is clear evidence that diversity in Kedung Rejoso Village is not only a fact, but also a force that builds harmony and harmony in the midst of different beliefs.

Gotong royong is one of the most prominent forms of interaction in Kedung Rejoso Village. People from various religious backgrounds are actively involved in mutual cooperation activities, such as cleaning public cemeteries. In these activities, religious differences are not a barrier to working together and helping each other.



Gambar 1. Gotong Royong membersihkan Pemakaman Umum

In addition to gotong royong, cooperation in social activities also characterizes inter-religious interaction in Kedung Rejoso Village. The community shows good cooperation in various social activities, such as independence day celebrations, environmental cleaning activities, or other social activities. In these activities, people of different religions work together to achieve a common goal.

Participation in religious celebrations is also a concrete example of harmonious interactions between religious communities in Kedung Rejoso Village. The community shows mutual respect and appreciation for each other's religious celebrations. People from other Islamic organizations not only attend religious celebrations as guests, but are also actively involved in the preparation and implementation of the event.

Factors such as noble values, local leadership and cultural traditions contribute to

harmonious interactions between religious communities in Kedung Rejoso Village. However, challenges such as differences in religious interpretation, intergroup prejudice, and the influence of social media need to be overcome to maintain and strengthen interfaith harmony in the village.

### **The Role of Community Leaders in Promoting Religious Moderation**

Community leaders play an important role in promoting religious moderation in Kedung Rejoso Village. They are actively involved in building dialogue, bridging differences, and providing examples of tolerant behavior. Community leaders, such as religious leaders, traditional leaders, and youth leaders, also play an important role in promoting religious moderation (Sinaga, 2022). They become role models for the community in behaving in a tolerant manner. Community leaders are also active in building dialog and cooperation between religious communities. They become mediators in resolving conflicts or differences of opinion that may arise between religious groups.

In addition, religious institutions and community leaders also play a role in maintaining and preserving local traditions and culture that support religious moderation. Traditions such as consensus deliberation, visiting each other during religious holidays, or artistic activities involving various religious groups, become a forum for building togetherness and strengthening the relationship between religious communities (Saidah, 2020). This was conveyed by Mr. Sugiwardi who is a religious figure.

“In Muhammadiyah, there is no tahlil tradition. But when an NU member dies, they will come.”

Religious institutions and community leaders play a crucial role in efforts to realize harmony and tolerance in society through the promotion of religious moderation. They act as the spearhead in maintaining and preserving the noble values that are the foundation for the creation of interfaith harmony in Kedung Rejoso Village. Their presence is very important in building bridges of understanding between faiths, as well as being a real example in the application of religious moderation values in everyday life. Thus, the synergy between religious institutions and community leaders is the main key in creating a harmonious, tolerant community environment that upholds the values of diversity.

### **Challenges and Strategies in Strengthening Religious Moderation in the Era of Globalization**

In this era of globalization, efforts to strengthen religious moderation in Kedung Rejoso Village face increasingly complex and diverse challenges. Heavy information flows and intensive intercultural interactions open up opportunities as well as challenges, where polarization of intolerance can arise if not anticipated wisely (Halidin, 2022). Therefore, adaptive and collaborative strategies are needed to respond to global dynamics, so that the values of religious moderation remain relevant and strong in the midst of changing times.

One of the main challenges is differences in religious interpretation. These differences can trigger conflict or tension between religious communities if there is no good dialog and mutual understanding. In addition, prejudice or negative stereotypes against other religious groups can also hinder harmonious interactions.

The influence of social media is also a challenge. Social media can be a means of spreading inaccurate information or hate speech that can trigger polarization and intolerance. Therefore, it is important to improve people's media literacy so that they can distinguish between true and false information.

In addition to these challenges, radicalism and extremism also pose a threat to religious moderation. Radical and extremist groups often use violence to achieve their goals. They spread intolerant ideologies and threaten interfaith harmony (Hilal, 2023).

To overcome these challenges, various strategies can be implemented to strengthen religious moderation in Kedung Rejoso Village. First, education about religious moderation needs to be improved at all levels of society, both through formal and non-formal education. This education aims to instill the values of tolerance, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence.

Second, dialogue between religious groups needs to be continuously conducted on a regular basis to build mutual understanding and reduce prejudice. This dialogue can be realized through various forums, such as seminars, discussions, or social activities involving various religious groups. Through open and constructive dialog, differences in beliefs can be bridged and misunderstandings can be straightened out. In addition, dialog can also be a forum for exchanging experiences.



Gambar 1. Gotong Royong membersihkan Pemakaman Umum

and knowledge of the values of religious moderation. Thus, interfaith dialog becomes an important instrument in building harmony and harmony in the midst of diversity.

Third, communities need to be empowered to counter radicalism and extremism. This empowerment can be done through increasing public knowledge and understanding of the dangers of radicalism and extremism. Communities need to have the ability to identify and counter intolerant ideologies. In addition, cooperation between various parties, such as the government, religious institutions, community leaders, and mass media, is also important in counteracting radicalism and extremism. The synergy between these various elements of society will create a solid force in maintaining the values of religious moderation. Thus, an empowered society will be at the forefront of maintaining security and peace in their neighborhoods.

With these efforts, it is hoped that religious moderation can continue to strengthen in Kedung Rejoso Village. The community can live in harmony and peace in diversity, and respect each other's differences. Religious moderation will be the

foundation for the creation of an inclusive and harmonious society. In addition, religious moderation will also be an attraction for tourists and investors, thereby improving the welfare of the community. Thus, strengthening religious moderation will not only benefit the people of Kedung Rejoso Village, but also the Indonesian nation as a whole.

## **CONCLUSION**

The dynamics of inter-religious interaction in Kedung Rejoso Village show that the community is able to coexist harmoniously despite having different belief backgrounds. This interaction is reflected in various aspects of social life, such as mutual cooperation, cooperation in social activities, and participation in religious celebrations. This strong practice of tolerance shows that diversity is not a barrier, but rather a strength in building harmony and harmony.

Community leaders, including religious and youth leaders, have an important role in promoting religious moderation through dialogue, conflict resolution, and the preservation of traditions that support the values of tolerance. However, challenges such as differences in religious interpretation, prejudice between groups, and the influence of social media that can trigger polarization still need to be overcome.

To strengthen religious moderation, strategies are needed such as increasing education about tolerance, interfaith dialogue, and community empowerment in counteracting radicalism and extremism. With these measures, Kedung Rejoso Village can continue to be an example of an inclusive, harmonious community that upholds the values of diversity, which will not only benefit the village itself, but also the Indonesian nation as a whole.

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