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**RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION AND SOCIAL INTERACTION IN
RELIGIOUS MINORITY COMMUNITIES TO SUPPORT RELIGIOUS
IDENTITY
(Hinduism and Buddhism Perspective)**

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Abstract

The application of religious values can support the creation of harmony in social interactions in society. Religious diversity can be a beautiful pluralistic description, but it can also hurt the social interaction of religious people if each religious group tends to prioritize its egocentricity. This study aims to analyze religious orientation and social interaction in minority religious communities to maintain religious identity. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with a literature study approach. The results of the study found that religious orientation in minority religious communities in Indonesia tends to be close to religiosity. There is a dialectical tension between humans (as individuals) who intersect with the overall life in society and the construction of belief (faith). For minority groups, religion is always used as a guide or way of life. The noble values of religion with high tolerance become a benchmark in the process of interaction with a pluralistic society. Efforts to maintain religious identity in minority religious groups are carried out through cultural and religious syncretism which is the social environment and reference group.

Keywords: Religious Orientation, Social Interaction, Religious Minority Communities, Religious Identity

I. INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian nation has norms on social values that are based on religious values. The application of religious values can support the creation of harmony in social interactions in society. The inclusive meaning of religious values encourages its adherents to love peace and build cooperation, tolerance and respect for other religions. These teachings should be the basis for the attitudes and behaviours of religious communities in interacting and relating to others who adhere to different religions.

Apart from being a unifying tool, religion is also often a source of conflict. This can be seen based on cases of intolerance in Indonesia that carry the name of religion, for example the conflict in Poso. Effendi in (Siti Rahma Harahap, 2020) states that social interaction is a relationship between individuals with one another, one individual can influence another individual or vice versa, so there is a reciprocal relationship. The relationship can be between individual to individual, individual to group, or group to group.

The social interaction of multicultural Indonesian society, in general, can show itself as a society that has a high tolerance attitude towards people of other religions. A tolerant attitude can foster mutual respect and respect for each other to create peace and tranquillity. Religious values can be manifested in religious believers practising their religion. The religious orientation of each religious believer has different characteristics. Mukti Ali in (Ainurrofiq, 2018) mentions that there are two characteristics of religious believers in practicing their religion, some emphasize the exoteric dimension (formal), some emphasize the esoteric dimension (the essence of the teachings). The first group places more emphasis on the external aspects of religion and ignores the spirit dimension or the essence of the religion. While the second group always tries to explore their religion to the essence of religion.

Religious orientation can lead individuals to two attitudes, the first is inclusive, moderate and respect for different beliefs, while the second is exclusive and violent or radical

attitudes (Aryani, 2015). Similarly, both attitudes can affect the way individuals behave in daily life, including when interacting with others, both co-religionists and different religions. Religious communities in Indonesia still position themselves as minority and majority groups. The position of the minority group has always been in the shadow of the majority group. In fact, there is a deep impression of hegemony and domination by the majority over the minority. Although, sometimes surprised by the emergence of a statement of the tyranny of the minority over the majority group. In actually justifies the existence of opinions that tend to affirm the existence of counter productive problems in majority-minority relations in Indonesia.

The problem of majority-minority relations clearly harbors such intense social conflicts. Therefore, if the majority-minority problem is not studied and alternative solutions are sought in the future, the majority-minority problem will continue to be a Pandora's box that will explode when there are social problems involving the two groups (Fahmi Arrauf Nasution et al., 2017). In some cases on conflicts in the name of religion, the existence of the majority group has high confidence to show its religious identity. His true identity is the image of a human being in order to gain recognition from other human beings. Identity comes from various categories such as race, ethnicity, religion, ethnicity and so on. Each category shows human identity in social life. Religious identity is acquired by humans since a human represents himself by performing religious ceremonies or rites. Marcia in (Moulin & College, n.d.):

“Studies of religious identity development in the Marcian mould typically assume that there are four basic identity statuses through which adolescents may progress in order to achieve a coherent self-image and healthy psychological unity: foreclosure, that a choice of identity is made but without exploration; diffusion, no identity is formed and there has been no exploration; moratorium, no identity has been formed, but exploration has taken place; and identity achievement, identity has been formed

after exploration has taken place.”

The basic status of religious identity described by Marcia rests on the origin of the formation of that identity. Religious identity as a personal level of identity becomes sensitive for groups of people who adhere to a stream of beliefs. According to Marcia, the religious identity of community groups that adhere to aliran kepercayaan can be formed from four basic identity statuses, namely: foreclosure, diffusion, moratorium and identity achievement. The Indonesian government, both through ministries and through other state institutions, has always maintained that Indonesia is the most tolerant country in the world. However, several cases of violence and discrimination against religious minorities still occur in Indonesia. This has proven the opposite condition. Inter-religious tolerance in Indonesia is still not at an ideal point. Violence and discrimination against religious minorities remain a common sight in many parts of Indonesia.

II. METHOD

This research uses qualitative methods with a descriptive approach, meaning that this research is carried out by analyzing and describing the data obtained through the data collection process, then synthesizing data through the process of sorting and selecting various data. The disaggregated data determined which opinions supported and which opinions were irrelevant to be synthesized according to the idea in an effort to strengthen the research results. The data in this study were obtained using literature study techniques. Phrase Nyoman Kutha Ratna, Literature method is a research method whose data collection is carried out through places where research results are stored, namely libraries (Prastowo, 2016). Literature techniques provide the widest possible opportunity for authors to conduct critical and in-depth analysis of various literature sources, to get relevant and supportive answers to problems in research.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1.1 Religious Orientation Among Minority Religious Communities

Religious orientation is understood as a

person's meaning of his religion. In the context of relationships between religious people, it can encourage a religious person in two tendencies, namely to be a peaceful and friendly person or to be a person who holds prejudice and hostility. In social psychology, the term religious orientation is in order to determine differences in religious styles in human life. Orientation in religion is divided into two, namely intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic is his orientation to make religion a way of life, a view of life or a guide in his life. While extrinsic is a person who uses religion. It can be called that people who are religious but actually use religion in all interests, or commonly called hypocrites for several reasons, can be political and economic influences. While intrinsic are people who are religious devoutly and live religion in their lives (Paloutzian, 1996).

Religious orientation is the meaning of religion in his life. The urgency of religion in one's life and life leads him to how to implement it in life or what is also called the way of religion. Broadly speaking, a person's religion is based on tradition. It is believed to be a connection of beliefs with ancestors, ancestors and previous predecessors. A person who is traditionally religious generally finds it difficult to accept renewal in religion (Narulita, 2019).

Religious orientation in minority religious communities in Indonesia has a tendency to make religion a way of life, outlook on life or guidance in life. This concept can be seen in the religious life of Hindus in Bali who prioritize ritual practice in daily life as a form of devotion to Sanghyang Widi. (Heriyanti, 2020) conveyed one of the first rules of behavior that needs to be applied in the implementation of Hindu rituals so that it runs in accordance with religious ethics, namely clan chess, through four paths to perfection in life by connecting with God. The parts of this clan chess are:

1. *Bhakti marga*, is a way of achieving perfection of outer and mental life by prioritizing surrender and outpouring of devotion, love by purifying the mind and celebrating the greatness of God with all good behavior.
2. *Karma marga*, is a way of getting closer to God through selfless work, working without

expecting results for self-interest, working without selfish gains and losses and working with full of charity and sacrifice. Devotion is the key to this teaching.

3. *Jnana Marga*, is the path to achieve perfection of life outwardly and mentally through science and philosophy of truth and liberation from worldly bonds. To be able to carry out jnana marga, people must obey and obey the teachings of their religion, so as to have a handle on life and avoid confusion.

4. *Raja Marga*, is the way to achieve perfection in life through self-control or discipline of mind by practicing brata, tapa, yoga and samadi. This stage is the most important to be applied in a ritual, because with good mind control, the heart and actions contained will be good. A controlled mind will affect the smooth procession of a ritual. So that positive vibrations will spread and spread peace (Hartaka, 2021).

Religious orientation on Buddhists is included in the practice of ethics through the application of basic moral principles in all areas of life that are always experienced in everyday life. This application can be manifested that in making decisions and acting in the field of life and activities carried out, based on methods, theories and basic moral principles. In Buddhist thought, following the path of the Eightfold Aryans (*Hasta Ariya Magga*) is the best path to ensure happiness. The Noble Eightfold Path is the fourth Noble Truth. This road is the only direct road to Nibbana. The middle way avoids self-torture that weakens one's intelligence and the gratification of passions that slow one's inner progress. The Buddha said: "The correct understanding is like the sun rising on the eastern horizon emitting good karmas". This means that correct understanding is one of the motivators for the creation of good karmas. Right understanding is the most important factor and is a condition for entry into the Noble Eightfold Path. True understanding is gained by listening to the Dhamma and having careful and careful attention. A person with the right understanding is already an Ariya (Ismoyo et al., 2021).

In addition to emphasizing more on ritual behavior, followers of minority religions in Indonesia appear to be less involved in politics.

This can be seen from the level of involvement of minority religious communities in the political arena and occupying strategic positions in the government. It is argued that ethnic, religious and linguistic groups that have limited numbers in a sphere of society that tends to be homogeneous, in this position, minority groups are often located in peripheral areas, so they are often not accommodated in the frame of social, economic and cultural life. Most of them have limited political access, experience discrimination, human rights violations, limited access to public services and are below the line of social welfare standards (M. A. M. A. Legowo, 2020). The consequences of a political system that does not give space to minority groups can have an effect on their political participation.

Until recently, there has not been a single universally accepted definition of "minority". Based on legal aspects, the term minority is commonly intended for groups of individuals who are not dominant with certain characteristics of nation, ethnicity, religion, or language which is different from the majority of the population (Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia dan The British Council, 2000). According to the legal approach, religious minorities are equal to ethnicities, nations and races whose rights must be protected and equalized with majority group. These rights include freedom of religion and the establishment of facilities of worship.

While the relationship between majority and minority in a plural society according to Ted R. Gurr consists of 4 things, namely: containment, assimilation, pluralism and power sharing. Containment is a strategy of the majority group to keep the minority group separate and in an unequal position with the majority group. Assimilation is a strategy aimed at the group Minorities to abandon their group identity and adopt the culture of the majority group. Pluralism, on the other hand, gives greater place to the common rights and interests of minorities. Power sharing is the most balanced level of relationship because all groups and cultural identities are recognized as elements the foundation of society and given equal public space among these groups

(Pamungkas, 2014).

1.2 Social Interaction Among Religious Minorities

Social interaction can be interpreted as dynamic social relationships. The social relationship in question can be in the form of relationships between individuals with one another, between one group and another, or between groups and individuals. The process of social interaction according to Herbert Blumer is when humans act on something on the basis of the meaning that something has for humans.

Social interaction is the main requirement for the occurrence of social activities (Soekanto, 2013). Social interaction is dynamic social relations that involve relationships between individual people, between human groups, and between individual people and human groups. If there is a meeting between two or more, then social interaction occurs. The process of reprimanding each other, shaking hands, talking to each other, or fighting these things are forms of social interaction.

It should also be understood that in the form of social interaction is not only done directly there is a handshake, talking, hugging or so on as mentioned in the forms of social interaction, but the existence of a response and gesture is also included in social interaction. Because the requirements of social interaction are the existence of social contact and communication (Soekanto, 2013). As empowered beings, humans with all their expressions have their own level of independence to express themselves without the need for any bond by structure (Syam, 2005). The theory of social construction states that religion which is part of culture is the fruit of human construction itself. This means that there is dialectical tension between humans (as individuals) that intersects with the whole life in society and the construction of faith.

Religion is an objective entity, because it is outside of man and will undergo a process of objectivation as well as when religion is in a textual narrative and norm. The text is then internalized into the individual, after going through a process of interpretation and then used as guidance or way of life. Religion also

undergoes a process of externalization, because it becomes something shared in society. In the discussion of interaction, there is another theory, namely the theory of symbolic interaction or symbolic interaction initiated by George Harbert Mead (1863-1931). This theory relies on three basic ideas: mind, self and society Richard West in (Ardianto, 2007) Mind means meaning that comes from the human mind. Self related to self alone and their relationships in the midst of social interaction. Society means interpretation to the meaning that exists in the midst of society. Mind is defined as an individual's ability to develop his mind when interacting with other individuals by using symbols which has the same social meaning. Self is identified with individual abilities in reflecting on others from the point of view of others. While society emphasizes on social networks that are created and constructed by each individual in society, which in the end is each individuals are able to take their respective roles in society

Based on the theory of social construction, social interaction in minority religious communities can be described that there is dialectical tension between humans (as individuals) that intersect with the whole life in society and the construction of beliefs (faith). For minority groups, religion is always used as a guidance or way of life. Based on this view, it is certain that the noble values of religion will become a benchmark in the process of interaction for followers of minority religions with a plural society. Behavior as an interpretation of the social interaction of minority religious groups can be seen from the behavior of high tolerance to the majority group.

Tolerance is built through understanding local wisdom in each region. In Bali local wisdom that is revived and redeveloped is a culture that upholds the values of balance and harmonization between humans and God (*perhyangan*), with others (*pawongan*) and with the environment (*palemahan*). This concept called *Tri Hita Karana*. In relation theory, *Tri Hita Karana* contains the concept of interconnection that reflects the internal interaction and interdependence among various

parts or components of the system and between the system and its environment. In the concept of *Tri Hita Karana* as a relationship, it will be clearly seen that there is an interconnection and can usually be distinguished into vertical and horizontal relationships. Vertically, the conception of *Tri Hita Karana* will see a harmonious relationship between man with God as creator. While horizontally it can be seen human relations with nature and fellow humans (Cory et al., 2020).

Social interaction in the Buddhist view refers to creating harmony and avoiding conflict. To maintain harmony, Buddha gave instructions in the form of six factors that bring harmony (*saraniya-dhamma*), namely:

1. Love is manifested in deeds.
2. Love is manifested in speech.
3. Love is manifested in thoughts and thoughts, by having good faith towards others.
4. Provide opportunities for others to participate in enjoying what is obtained lawfully.
5. In public or privately he leads a moral life, not doing anything that hurts the feelings of others.
6. In public or private, have the same view, which is liberating from suffering and leads him to act with that view, live harmoniously, not quarrel because of differences in views (A.III.288-289) in (Mukti, 2020)

1.3 Efforts to Maintain Religious Identity in Minority Religious Communities

Religious identity has a close meaning to self-identity in shaping religious attitudes. Literally, the word identity is a loanword derived from the English "Identity" which is interpreted as self or a sign or identity attached to a person or group that distinguishes it from others. According to Erickson as quoted (Saleh et al., 2019) what is meant by self-identity is a self-portrait composed of various types of identities, including career identity, political identity, religious identity, relationship identity with others, intellectual identity, sexual identity, ethnic identity, interest identity, personality identity, and physical identity. If it is associated with religious identity, the identity in question is a portrait or characteristic of religious

attitudes inherent in a person that distinguishes him from others.

Erickson, as a figure who is considered the founder of the theory of self-identity formation, proposed several things that can affect the formation of identity in a person, including:

1. Social environment, in which a person grows and develops such as family, neighbors and peer groups.
2. Reference group, which is a group formed in a person, such as a religious group or group that has the same interests through which adolescents can obtain values and roles that can be a reference for themselves.
3. An idol figure, that is, someone who means a lot such as a friend, teacher, brother, or person they admire.

These three things will later play a role in shaping a person's identity. What is the social environment, how are the groups both religious and community and idol figures is how will a person's self-identity be formed.

Efforts to maintain minority identity in the midst of the majority has been widely studied such as Giorgi and Annicchino (2017: 284-296), studying the survival of religious minorities in Italy. Meanwhile, Anshari in Napsiah examines the survival of Muslim minority communities in Papua, which is predominantly Christian. The importance of the role Religious figures make them able to live harmoniously side by side with Muslims (Napsiah, 2019)

The synthesis of various studies shows that the majority group has the power to survive because it has capital not only economic but social and political which then the capital is claimed, recognized, and run without knowing even religious differences. The strength of such dominance has consequences on life activities that will eventually obliterate the identity of minority groups. But if the identity of the majority adopted by minority groups without having to lose the identity of minority groups, this becomes interesting. Minority groups continue to maintain their identity even though efforts to adapt themselves to the majority group are the main efforts that carried out by minority groups. That way, the majority group

does not lose its identity nor does the minority group lose its identity, although minority groups are asked to adopt the culture and values of the majority without changing fundamental things such as religious social practices so that the identity of the so-called minority group will be lost.

The effort to maintain religious identity is very evident in the lives of Hindus in Bali. Hindu identity is not only demonstrated by administrative ownership of identity, but has been reflected in the culture of daily life. The customary rules contained in the traditional village *Awig-awig* are a form of cultural and religious syncretism in Bali. One example can be seen in the rules for the use of traditional clothing in every Hindu ritual event in Bali. The religious identity of Hindus in Bali is getting stronger with the support of the Bali provincial government. Although the quantity of Hindus is a minority group in Indonesia, with various efforts to maintain the culture of local wisdom and publications in the field of tourism, the image of a weak minority can be broken. In the context of theory, the religious identity of Hindus in Bali as a minority religious group in Indonesia can be maintained through cultural and religious syncretism which is the social environment and reference group.

IV. CONCLUSION

Religious orientation in minority religious communities in Indonesia has a tendency to make religion a way of life, outlook on life or guidance in life. They give priority to ritual practice and the implementation of the noble values of their religion, so they are very low in involvement in politics and positions in government. Social interaction that occurs in adherents of minority religions has a tendency to a high sense of tolerance to create harmony and avoid conflict. As an effort to maintain religious identity, it is carried out by maintaining the culture of local wisdom reflected in religious traditions so that cultural and religious syncretism is formed.

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