Inter-Religious Prejudice in A Multicultural Society

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Abstract
Prejudice between religious believers in a multicultural society is a negative view or stereotype that is formed against a particular religion or individual based on their religion. The writing of this scientific article is to use literature research, researchers examine theories, concepts, definitions, understandings of the variables studied to find their connection. The result of writing this article is Prejudice in the religious context is a behavior that will threaten the integrity of the Indonesian nation as a multicultural nation. This prejudiced behavior is formed in a person due to individual, sociological and cultural psychological factors. Religious prejudice will trigger discrimination and violence in society. If this behavior continues, it does not rule out the spirit of multiculturalism that is expected to evaporate by itself. Prevention of prejudice in religion can be done by increasing the value of the prejudiced group, opening communication, conditioning the environment to internalizing social norms.

| *Keywords* | *prejudice, religion, multicultural, social, society* |

INTRODUCTION

Prejudice between religious believers in a multicultural society is a negative view or stereotype that is formed against a particular religion or individual based on their religion. This kind of prejudice can lead to discrimination, conflict, or tension between religious groups. It is a frequent phenomenon in the context of societies inhabited by different religions and beliefs. One of the causes of prejudice between religious believers is a lack of understanding and intolerance of other religions. When individuals do not have adequate knowledge of other religions, they tend to rely on stereotypes and prejudices that they have heard or seen through the influence of limited media, social environment, or education. The lack of interaction between different religious groups can also reinforce this prejudice, as people do not have the opportunity to know each other and understand the beliefs, practices, and values of other religions. The influence of mass media also plays a role in shaping prejudice between religious believers. Negative or biased representations about a particular religion can affect people's views and attitudes toward that religion. Sensational or disinformation about a particular religion can also reinforce existing prejudices.

Prolonged conflict or identity politics based on religion can also be a contributing factor to prejudice between religious believers. When religion is used as the basis of exclusive identity, differences between religious groups become increasingly emphasized, and this can muddy the atmosphere and increase prejudice. The impact of interfaith prejudice in a multicultural society can be devastating. This prejudice can result in discrimination, intolerance, and unfair treatment of individuals based on their religion. This can create tension, conflict, or even violence between religious groups. Prejudice can also affect the quality of life and well-being of society as a whole, as it hinders cooperation, integration, and sustainable social and economic development. The Indonesian nation is a multicultural nation that has a variety of ethnic, racial, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity. The

existence of diversity has become a challenge in realizing a harmonious society. Multiculturalism can simply be understood as a recognition that society has plurality and is committed to recognizing that plurality as the main characteristic of society itself. Multiculturalism is a concept where a community in the context of a nation can recognize the diversity, differences and plurality of cultures, races, religions and languages. Multiculturalism is a picture of the diversity that occurs in society or a nation. This means that there is a spirit to be able to coexist and respect each other in an atmosphere of peace and harmony (co-existence). Currently Indonesia recognizes the existence of six religions namely Islam, Protestant Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. The State guarantees each religious believer to embrace his own religion and to worship according to his religion and belief as stipulated in the 1945 Constitution in article 29. However, it turns out that the multidimensional crisis faced by the Indonesian nation to date makes the government have to make many improvements to be able to lead to a better movement in all fields without exception in religious matters. The crisis even made some of the nation's children anxious to look at their future.

The increase in violent behavior among the nation's children resulted in a loss of friendliness among fellow citizens (Sudarto, 2014). As a religious nation, it is fitting that the religion believed by each citizen functions in terms of a source of social control that binds its adherents. Religion will also be responsible for the enactment of existing norms in society (Tualeka, 2011). However, in reality there are still social conflicts motivated by differences in the characteristics brought by individuals in interacting such as differences in religion, ethnicity, economic status and so on. Religion has not been able to fully play a role in reducing social conflicts that occur between others. On the contrary, social conflicts are called a form of religious sanctity (Saihu, 2019). Although in reality the conflict that occurred was not necessarily a religious conflict. But still this condition can generate feelings of insecurity, hatred, and anger that can trigger their own legal actions from religious adherents against other religious believers so that religious sentiments arise to divide religious people and destroy harmony.

Brehm and Kassin argue that prejudice is a negative feeling directed at a person or group based solely on their membership in a particular community (Dayakisni, 2012). This prejudice involves a certain subjective judgment to treat the subject of prejudice by attaching prominent community characteristics. This means that a person will have the belief that another person or a different group is wrong. This condition can be included in an abnormality in religion. This indicates that there is an inability of a person to conform to the religious institution he embraces (Saifuddin, 2020). Discrimination is behavior directed at a person based solely on his group membership. This discrimination initially stems from prejudice which at first is only negative emotions that gradually lead a person to acts of discrimination against people belonging to other groups who are different from himself. These discriminatory actions are interpreted into actions that hinder, harm development and even threaten the personal lives of others who happen to be included in the group they are in (Gerungan, 2004). Discrimination includes racist, ethnic, religious and cultural behavior and gender (Bordens, 2008). For example: a person or group judges other groups that differ

from themselves as "heretical" and labels them "infidels". As the phenomenon of takfirism that considers other people who have different ideological views will be seen as infidels, (Amrullah, 2018). To create a multicultural Indonesian society is certainly not easy. At least some supporting concept studies are needed for the realization of a multicultural order that is really based on a strong concept and is not easily swayed by environmental conditions. Through this research, it is expected to identify factors that play a role in the formation of prejudice between religious believers, so that effective measures in overcoming and preventing such prejudice can be implemented. A deep understanding of inter-religious prejudice in a multicultural society will be the foundation for building an inclusive, respectful, and harmonious society amidst religious and cultural diversity.

METHODS

This research is qualitative research that is a library research using data sources in the form of reference books and scientific journal articles. In this research, the series of activities are related to collecting library data, reading and recording, then processing the appropriate information needed to answer the formulation of the problem to be solved. The procedures carried out in this central study research include: 1) exploring general ideas about research, 2) looking for information that supports the research topic, 3) reinforcing the focus of research and organizing appropriate materials, 4) searching and finding data sources in the form of main library sources, namely books and scientific journal articles, 5) re-organizing materials and notes on conclusions obtained from data sources, 6) reviewing information that has been analyzed and is appropriate to discuss and answer the formulation of research problems, 7) enrich data sources to strengthen data analysis and 8) compile research results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is understood and realized together that no religion teaches prejudice, discrimination, violence, and conflict with one another. But still cannot close your eyes that in fact religion is often "impressed" with rigid things, so that religious involvement as a trigger for conflict will inevitably raise questions for all. Religions revealed to earth carry the same message of divinity and humanity. The message emphasized in each religion is related to the importance of creating peace based on the principle of equality and human unity. This message has not yet become a collective reference for all religious believers, due to the complexity of historical or sociological issues inherent in all religious believers. Conflicts between religions and beliefs were once a dark side and detrimental to the dignity of religion and humanity itself. Religion, which was supposed to be the social glue, turned out to be stuck at the level of conflict. In the micro context, religion can actually be played in a positive constructive way in maintaining and at the same time developing the integrity of the Indonesian nation which is characterized by diversity and plurality.[18]The occurrence of prejudice and discrimination or violence in religion or can be said to be an abnormality in religion is a form of liver disease that can interfere with one's self-realization and actualization. Mujib [19] has classified the causes of religious abnormalities. First, the presence of internal factors. This internal cause can be caused by the presence of qalbu which

is central to the human personality, experiencing pain or intervened by lust and reason. Lust and reason dominate one's thinking and change one's orientation in life without proper spiritual development. The second cause is external factors, namely the temptation of Satan, thus violating the rules outlined by his religion.

Efforts to Prevent and Reduce Religious Prejudice

Examining the context of prejudice in religion through several theoretical approaches, several things will be put forward to prevent or reduce the emergence of prejudice, namely:

1. *Efforts to prevent prejudice.*
   a. Increase the value of the group that is prejudiced One way that can be sought as an effort to prevent prejudice is by increasing the value of groups stigmatized by other groups. The point is that other groups that are different from him actually also have values and things that can be appreciated by others. This serves to realize the awareness of a group that is prejudiced basically has the competence and ability as a blasphemous group. This can be the first step in an effort to appreciate the existence of others. Appreciating the existence of others is a form of tolerance. Tolerance is a behavior that is shown by respecting the basic principles, beliefs and behaviors displayed by others (Sauqi, 2008)
   b. Make comparisons in groups
   In an effort to prevent prejudice and discrimination, it is wise to do a process of comparing values internally within a group. The point is that before prejudice against others, it is better to compare things that are used as comparison material aimed at him first. This is an effort to reduce the intention to prejudice others. Doing the process of sorting out a perception and which values should be done will greatly help someone to make the right perception of their environment. Making changes to the perceptions that are owned will be very useful because these perceptions will direct a behavior and action that is carried out later (Dzikran, 2018)
   c. Conditioning the environment
   Conditioning the environment can be used as an alternative way to reduce and minimize the occurrence of prejudice. This can be done by arranging so that someone does not do something that triggers extreme judgment from other groups. For example, a person is directed to make changes in attitude or life, adjust the way of dressing or adapt quickly to the environment in order to minimize the possibility of prejudice occurring. In a society that interprets religion as a meaning in the value system, cultural symbols will appear borrowed there. Religion will experience adjustments to the culture that prevails in its society. There is a compromise of values or symbols that go into the culture of origin that results in a new and different form to the original form. This adjustment process just happens in every process of meaning in a society that already has a cultural structure.
2. *Efforts to combat prejudice and discrimination.*
   a. Open communication between prejudiced groups

The existence of communication between prejudiced groups through third-party mediation is expected to resolve prejudice conflicts that have occurred. It's just that emotional roles are also involved so that the results of mediation that have been carried out are not just a mere formality. In the context of prejudice in religion, the existence of communication or dialogue between religions can be an alternative chosen. This is because interfaith communication is important to avoid theological debates between religious believers. Religious messages that have been interpreted in universal harmony will be the capital for the creation of harmonious dialogue. Through interfaith dialogue will give everyone the right to practice their beliefs and convey them to others (Kahmad, 2011)Accepting the existence of others not by using the perception of the religion they adhere to will strengthen harmony and minimize conflict (Tualeka, 2011)

b. Personalization of out group members

Carrying out the humanization process in groups that are considered out group is important to overcome prejudice. "Humanizing" members who are considered out group does not mean having to understand all the needs of the members of the group but as a form of respect, upholding humanity and showing empathy. Basically, the presence of religion aims to humanize humans, in order to optimize all their potential. This means that in social interaction, a person will be asked to fulfill his rights and obligations towards others and in the end all of them will be accountable to Allah SWT. Humans must be able to live together in interaction and interdependence with each other, because basically humans need the existence of others (Jalaludin, 2014).

c. Strengthening of social norms

In the process of minimizing prejudice, enforcement of social norms becomes important to do. Social norms that exist in society will prevent discriminatory behavior because these social norms are an agreement of many parties who want a peaceful community. Social norms are basically the same as group norms. Social norms are the result of various group interactions which include social values, customs, traditions, customs, conventions and so on. These social norms will be a benchmark related to the behavior and attitudes of individuals desired by the group. This means that social norms must be obeyed considering that social norms are made based on interrelationships between individuals who are members of social groups (Gerungan, 2004).

Towards a multicultural Indonesian society, free of prejudice.

A historical fact that Indonesia is a nation that lives in diversity (plurality), including the diversity of inter-religious understanding. Recognition of religious plurality was further strengthened through the era of reform which encouraged more democratic and open religious attitudes. The reform era gave a breath of fresh air to religious social life in Indonesia, where every adherent of a recognized religion in Indonesia was given the opportunity to express himself. It is known that the problem of the Indonesian nation is that its people are very easily ignited by social conflicts with nuances of SARA (ethnicity, religion, race and between groups) as previous experiences. Indonesian society has diverse

cultural, social and geographical conditions, so it takes effort from each element of the nation to maintain the integrity of the nation and state. Moreover, prejudice and discrimination are very easily ignited when there is competition for resources in each region (Nashori, 2008). Referring to the condition of Indonesian society, a value related to multicultural society is formed. The formation of a multicultural society in Indonesia is based on the principle of Bhineka Tunggal Ika, which has implications for the common desire to realize a national culture that unifies Indonesian society. A multipolar society can be understood as an acknowledgment that religion in society is a necessity. The existence of differences in a culture or community life that is different from one another is a reality that must be accepted (Hasan, 2016). These differences are left naturally as they are and will become characteristic markers that will make an advantage in a country (Januar, 2017). Indonesian society will create a multicultural society that is actually when every citizen lives side by side, tolerant, respectful and respectful of each other. Living side by side in a peaceful atmosphere is important because problems will arise when people deny and want to destroy the differences that exist so that it will disrupt the future of Indonesian multiculturalism. Especially if the conflict caused by diversity widens in a struggle for the political stage, ideology and self-esteem will actually weaken the tolerance that already exists. Therefore, constructive conflict resolution is needed to resolve problems that occur through proper planning (Noor, 2020). The ease with which diversity is brought to a conflict or multiculturalism that has been echoed so far underestimated by some people is understandable, especially when looking at the bitter experience of religious life in Indonesia during the New Order era. Multiculturalism in Indonesia is considered by some as a selfish attitude or weak faith in God Maha Esa by each religious adherent. Therefore, efforts to realize multiculturalism in Indonesia require efforts from all parties. Multiculturalism must be formed and built based on the common goals of all its citizens, so that there is no more prejudice, hatred, discrimination and feeling themselves most right (Mahfud, 2016). Therefore, individuals in a society are expected to foster mutual understanding and respect for existing differences so that there is no communication deadlock that results in disputes, conflicts, and destruction (Ali, 2016). The ultimate goal is the growth of the spirit of nationalism and deradicalizing radical ideas as a form of Islamic preservation rahmatan lil alamin in strengthening the unity of the Indonesian nation.

CONCLUSION

Prejudice in the religious context is behavior that will threaten the integrity of the Indonesian nation as a multicultural nation. This prejudiced behavior is formed in a person due to individual, sociological and cultural psychological factors. Religious prejudice will trigger discrimination and violence in society. If this behavior continues, it does not rule out the spirit of multiculturalism that is expected to evaporate by itself. Prevention of prejudice and discriminatory behavior in religion can be done by increasing the value of the prejudiced group, opening communication, conditioning the environment to internalizing social norms. The hope is to realize mutual respect, mutual respect, mutual help, tolerance and the spirit of coexistence. Therefore, basically multiculturalism is not only a concept that exists in the

sky but must be grounded as a solution to social problems that occur in Indonesian society. The application of multiculturalism must also involve the commitment of each element in addressing the dynamics of diversity, change and conflict in order to lead to a more peaceful, prosperous and just future national life.

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