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Village Government Strategy in Strengthening Religious Tolerance in the Community in Hoelea I snd Hoelea II Villages

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Abstract

This study aims to understand the village government's strategy in strengthening tolerance values in the community in Hoelea I and Hoelea II Villages. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. The research subjects consisted of village heads, community leaders, religious leaders, and villagers randomly. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data validity testing was carried out by triangulating sources and techniques, while data analysis was carried out using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis techniques. The results of the study indicate that the village government's strategy in strengthening religious tolerance in the Hoelea I and Hoelea II village communities is carried out by fostering religious attitudes, instilling values of mutual respect and respect, harmonious communication, cooperation and religious freedom and implementing the principles of tolerance education. This study underlines the importance of collective commitment from village government authorities, religious leaders and community members to foster mutual respect and maintain peaceful coexistence.

Keywords: Strategy, Village Government, Tolerance, Community

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a multicultural country that has a diversity of tribes, religions, customs, ethnicities, languages, cultures, beliefs and local religions (Pajarianto et al., 2022; Septria Sa'duh & Sasmi Nelwati, 2024). Religious tolerance is very important in a multicultural society, such as Indonesia. This diversity on the one hand is a national wealth, but on the other hand can trigger conflict in the life of society (Kandil, 2023).

According to Kovar (2022), conflict and violence occur because each person's understanding is different (Kovář, 2022). Saeri (2015) added that the cause of the conflict was about the authority of the group that felt that they were being disturbed (Saeri et al., 2015). Religion is often used as self-justification and blaming others and assuming that one is the most right and others are wrong and lost (Kteily & McClanahan, 2020). Therefore, an attitude of tolerance is needed in social interactions in order to create a harmonious life, helping each other, in order to create safe and peaceful conditions (Foqara, 2024).

Tolerance can be defined as an attitude of mutual acceptance, mutual respect for various differences in ethnicity, religion, opinions, allowing different opinions and actions of people, providing freedom of expression and human character, providing freedom for differences in customs and traditions, and being willing to accept and respect others by giving them many opportunities to practice their beliefs and opinions without being hindered (Foqara, 2024; Nurhayati, 2023; Pinto, 2024).

The elements of tolerance are respect, accepting differences, allowing or not forcing the desires of each individual and respecting the beliefs of others (Nurhayati, 2023). Simon stated that there are two perceptions of tolerance, namely the perception that is strengthened by state power and respect for differences and respect for the freedom of others (Simon, 2023). Peripeteias holds that humans are culturally different even though they are the same by nature, so that tolerance can be formed through religion and culture (Peripeteias, 2020).

To avoid friction on the basis of religious issues, it is necessary to maintain social stability (Simon, 2023). However, this is not easy to achieve and often intolerant attitudes emerge (Otto Gusti Madung, 2016).

The problem of intolerance is indeed very diverse. But the main fundamental conflict is about belief in religion. This problem is a trigger for conflict in the midst of religious issues such as the politicization of religion, terrorism, religious fundamentalism,

the practice of identity politics and Islam phobia. Redekop said that religion has two inherent elements, namely as a supporter of unity and causing conflict (Redekop, 2017). Claims of truth regarding a particular religion made by religious adherents trigger religious conflict (Wakhid Udin, 2016).

In reality, religion has a contribution in providing examples and providing a path to salvation (Syamsi, 2014), so that religious adherents need to respect diversity, so as not to get caught up in actions, radicalism, intolerance or extremism (Redekop, 2017). Divisions among diverse religious communities can be ascribed to a series of interrelated factors, including the existence of deliberative institutions, historical circumstances, and leadership dynamics. These components play a significant role in the lack of nuanced understanding of religious doctrine and the enduring nature of sectarian sentimen (Barter, 2016; McDoom & Gisselquist, 2016).

Referring to the problem above, if religious plurality is not understood correctly by religious adherents, it will have a negative impact in the form of conflict between religious communities and national disintegration (Haurkolot, 2024; Muh Aditya Ibrahim et al., 2023). However, if we instill the spirit of accepting existing diversity, it can increase the wealth of spiritual values and human ethics (Haurkolot, 2024). Therefore, what needs to be done is to foster the spirit of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika and raise awareness of the philosophical values of plurality within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

Thahir said that the different faces of Indonesia reflect a high level of tolerance for everyone to always be peaceful, calm and united in every aspect of life. This is where it needs to be applied to all of society in order to foster a spirit of peace and maintain a sense of tolerance (Thahir, 2023). Tolerance is not only something to be studied but needs to be studied and applied in the social environment, because the foundation of democracy is tolerance (Foqara, 2024; Pinto, 2024).

The cultivation of a good attitude of tolerance can be realized, for example, through the realization of social life in the village community so that it can provide benefits to other communities about the values of religiosity, humanity, and the principle of plurality. In this case, the role of the village government is very important. The results of Prayogo et al.'s research show that the role of the government in maintaining harmony

between religious communities can be done through efforts to raise public awareness about the importance of tolerance (Prayogo et al., 2020).

Through this awareness, citizens no longer differentiate between fellow citizens, they live in harmony and side by side with each other and do not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, religion and level of social welfare (Wang & Zhang, 2022). Each member of each religion provides understanding, guidance and teaches the teachings of the faith to each other (Comerford, 2023).

The role of the village government in strengthening religious tolerance can be seen in the social life of the community in the villages of Hoelea I and Hoelea II, Omesuri District, Lembata Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province. The villages of Hoelea I and Hoelea II were initially only one village, namely Hoelea. However, due to increasing population growth supported by a fairly wide geographical location, it was divided into two villages.

In this village there are several houses of worship, 3 (three) mosques and 1 (one) church. This church is named St. Yusuf Hoelea and is also the center of the Holy Cross Parish in the Omesuri sub-district. Every time the Catholic religious celebration, both Christmas and Easter, is always held centrally in this St. Yusuf church. When entering a religious celebration, Christmas or Easter, all stakeholders, both Catholic and Muslim, always together support and participate as the organizing committee for the celebration and vice versa with the Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha holidays. Not only in religious celebrations, if there is a construction of a house of worship, either a mosque or a church, all people are involved in the construction process through a culture of mutual cooperation.

The number of Muslims in Hoelea I village is 644 people and Catholics are 579 people while the number of Muslims in Hoelea II village is 344 people and Catholics are 391 people. Although the population based on religion in these two villages is almost equal, so far there has never been any conflict or problem between fellow Muslims and Catholics. Because Hoelea I and Hoelea II villages have been diverse villages since ancient times. This attitude of diversity is the local wisdom of the community which is reflected in every community activity. This village has also been inaugurated by the Ministry of Religion of East Nusa Tenggara Province and the Ministry of Religion of Lembata Regency in 2021 as a harmony-aware village. It was inaugurated as a harmony-aware village because it has a historical meaning related to local wisdom and community culture. An oath or agreement

has been made in a traditional ceremonial way, by placing a stone (lapaq) which is planted/buried in the middle of a small field (alang) as a symbol of unity and strength for generations to continue to maintain the values of tolerance in the future.

Such conditions are inseparable from the role of the village government in strengthening the attitude of religious tolerance in the two villages because the government is the spearhead in the village as a support for the community from all activities, both in terms of development, coaching, empowerment and development of tolerance values in the village. Therefore, the author is interested in conducting research in these two villages with a focus on How is the Village Government's Strategy in Strengthening Religious Tolerance in the Community in Hoelea I and Hoelea II Villages?

Several studies on strengthening religious tolerance have been conducted. Some researchers focus on strategies for strengthening tolerance values that have been widely carried out by researchers, including Abdul Salam Nasition's research (2022), this study aims to determine the efforts of religious figures and the social conditions of society in forming religious tolerance (Nasition, 2022). As conducted by Jena (2019) in her research aimed to see the tolerance of her multi-religious society. The results of the study showed that tolerance can be formed if religious leaders spread arguments of goodness to their followers, community leaders always set an example for their community (Jena, 2019). The difference between the research conducted by the researcher and previous research lies in the focus and approach used in forming attitudes of religious tolerance in Hoelea I and Hoelea II Villages.

Literature Review

1. Value of Religious Tolerance

Religious tolerance is a vital element in creating a peaceful and harmonious society, especially in the context of a multicultural society like Indonesia. According to Pito (2024), in his article *Tolerance Founding Value World Peace* explains the concept of tolerance is considered as an essential ethical imperative for the establishment and preservation of global harmony, facilitating the peaceful coexistence of various communities without conflict (Pinto, 2024). It serves as an instrument for national progress, facilitating cohesion and progress by fostering mutual respect and understanding among diverse religious traditions (Talabi & Oyetoro, 2023). Thus it can be understood that the principle of tolerance is a fundamental foundation for

harmonious coexistence in a pluralistic society, where diverse religious and cultural groups inhabit the same space.

The idea of value, which originates from interpretations in Latin and Old French, encapsulates its importance in various domains, such as ethics and social (Bodie, 2022), value and price (Elder-Vass, 2019), perspektif manajemen strategis (Ogrean, 2016). Claudia Orgrean further understands that values require recognition of their multifaceted nature, which exerts significant influence on decision-making processes and behavioral patterns in diverse contexts. Although values are often associated with beneficial characteristics, they can also result in different interpretations and difficulties in implementation across domains. Understanding these intricacies is essential for adept decision-making and optimal resource allocation.

The relationship between individual behavior and words is closely related to attitudes, which are innate qualities. An important factor in determining these attitudes and behaviors is personality, which is defined as a specific combination of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. (Pundir & Agarwal, 2016). Values are abstract and ideal, values are not concrete objects, not facts, not just questions of right and wrong that require empirical proof, but are also a social appreciation of what is desired, liked and disliked (Damanik, 2022).

Tolerance allows diverse religious and cultural groups to live together in harmony, which is an important basis for peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic society (Prepotenska et al., 2022). Many academics support this idea, emphasizing its role in preventing conflict and fostering social cohesion (Azka, 2023). Tolerance involves respect and active engagement with different perspectives, which is essential to maintaining stability and peace in diverse communities (Khasanah & Waskito, 2019). The author concludes that tolerance is key to harmonious coexistence in pluralistic societies because it enables diverse religious and cultural groups to coexist peacefully, plays a role in preventing conflict and strengthening social cohesion. Tolerance also includes respect and active engagement with differences of opinion, which is essential for maintaining stability and peace in diverse communities.

Tolerance in society can appear in various forms, showing the complexity and different characteristics of human interaction. Moral qualities, cultural respect, and the ability to accept diversity are some examples of qualities that are very important for promoting peaceful coexistence. Various types of tolerance found in various literatures include:

a. Moral tolerance. This tolerance is defined by the British philosopher John Locke as quoted by Pinto (2024) as the courage to accept and appreciate differences of opinion and belief. Locke further claims that a tolerant society does not experience violence or domination of one group over another (Pinto, 2024). Meanwhile, according to Umar Hasyim, tolerance is the granting of freedom to fellow human beings or members of society to adhere to their own beliefs, organize their own lives, and determine their own destiny, as long as these decisions do not violate or conflict with the rules, views, or beliefs of others (Lesmono, 2024); This understanding means accepting everyone, no matter their choices, as long as they do not engage in harmful actions.
b. Cultural tolerance, according to Yohana Nelawati Nababan, is an attitude and action that prohibits discrimination against certain groups or those that are unacceptable to the majority of society (Nelawati, 2021). In contrast to Soerjono, Soekanto explains that cultural tolerance is an attitude shown by understanding the attitudes of others who disagree (Novita, 2024). It is essential to promote harmony and prevent conflict in multicultural societies by respecting different cultural traditions and beliefs (Nurhayati, 2023). Thus, cultural tolerance is an attitude that prohibits discrimination against certain groups, understands the different attitudes of others and is very important for creating harmony and preventing conflict in a multicultural society through respect for various traditions and beliefs.
c. Religious tolerance, according to Umar Hasyim, is the act of giving someone the freedom to practice their own beliefs or way of life, as long as they do not violate general rules (Casram, 2016). Faridah (2018) states that religious tolerance is a social reality in which people respect and honor the religious beliefs of others with universal application (Faridah, 2018). In principle, religious tolerance is a description of giving freedom to someone to adhere to their beliefs, as long as it does not violate general rules. However, according to

Nurcholish Madjid, it is a social reality where people respect each other and their religious beliefs universally. Both perspectives emphasize that respect and freedom are essential to maintaining harmony between religious communities.

d. Inter-ethnic tolerance which according to Allport is a disposition characterized by the recognition and acceptance of variations inherent in culture, traditions, and belief systems among different ethnic groups. He emphasized that the cultivation of tolerance is essential for mitigating prejudice and discrimination (Noor, 2020). While Kanyuk and Ivanichko (20222) recognize and support cultural diversity within national communities, encouraging the growth of cultural (Kanyuk & Ivanichko, 2022). The combination of these two approaches underlines the importance of cooperation between individuals and communities in building tolerance as the foundation of an inclusive and progressive society.

The Qur'an in many verses emphasizes the importance of religious tolerance. Surah Al-Kafirun (109:1-6) according to Ibn Kathir's interpretation contains characteristics and values in Islam (Damanik, 2022), spiritual dimension (Aliahmadi Jeshfaghani, 2017) and ethical and social implications (Damanik, 2022). Verse 256 in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, according to At-Tabari's interpretation, explains that it has quite a great significance for family dynamics, encouraging the recognition of personal beliefs within the framework of the family, this verse promotes constructive dialogue and mutual understanding as opposed to coercion, thus fostering stronger relationships among family constituents (Fitriono, 2024). The interpretation presented in Tafsir Al-Jalalayn regarding Surah Al-Mumtahnah (60:8) emphasizes the Islamic principles of equality and compassion towards non-Muslims who live side by side peacefully with Muslims (Yusuf, 2014). Such an interpretation is in line with the overarching Islamic doctrine that promotes harmonious coexistence and justice regardless of different religions. This verse underlines the importance of upholding ethical behavior and justice, which are the basic principles of Islam. This viewpoint is supported by various scholarly interpretations and historical precedents in the Islamic tradition. In short, tolerance is not only an ethical principle, but also serves as a foundation for a harmonious and inclusive social framework.

2. Strategy to Strengthen Religious Tolerance

The necessity of fostering religious tolerance can be a framework of guidance, acceptance, pedagogical initiative, instillation of the virtue of tolerance, and collaborative paradigm to catalyze the intrinsic discourse of actualizing tolerance in diverse social environmental structures. Fostering religious tolerance requires a comprehensive methodology that combines various strategies (Pradana et al., 2023). The strategy from the perspective of the role of communication is that the influence of social factors on religious tolerance can be mediated through effective communication characterized by openness and empathy (Abadi et al., 2024). Programs that encourage discussion and respect among diverse groups are essential. In another section, Pajarianto et al. (2022) explained that traditional and religious activities serve as a platform for socializing and fostering tolerance; utilizing local wisdom and family institutions to promote moderate religious values can strengthen interfaith relations (Pajarianto et al., 2022).

Promotion of religious tolerance by government entities can be achieved through the implementation of inclusive policies in addition to the establishment of multicultural education, which fosters respect and understanding among diverse religious communities. In addition, facilitation of interfaith dialogue, coupled with strict law enforcement against religious discrimination, is essential for maintaining harmony in a multicultural society. To enhance religious tolerance in Hoelea I and Hoelea II Villages, a comprehensive and diverse strategy is essential. This strategy includes fostering religious attitudes, instilling values of mutual respect and appreciation, harmonious communication, cooperation and religious freedom, and implementing the principles of tolerance education. Some things that the government can do to strengthen religious tolerance include:

a. Fostering religious attitudes through religious communities

Governments can create policies that recognize and respect different religious practices, create an accepting environment and educational programs that teach the values of tolerance and respect for different religions can significantly influence public attitudes (Karimullah & Arif Sugitanata, 2023). Periodically the government also encourages dialogue between different religious groups (Karimullah & Arif Sugitanata, 2023; Talabi & Oyetoro, 2023).

In this section, the government plays a very important role in increasing religious tolerance through policies that support acceptance and coaching initiatives. By encouraging conversations among diverse religious groups, the government can significantly influence how society views religion..

b. Instilling the values of mutual respect and appreciation

The government has taken the initiative to organize community events that celebrate religious diversity, foster an environment of respect and cooperation. These activities can strengthen family and community ties that can increase tolerance through shared values and experiences. As seen in local initiatives, community leaders play a vital role in modeling tolerance through their actions and teachings (Samsu, 2022).

Despite these efforts, it is still difficult to ensure that everyone in society actively participates and embraces these principles. This suggests that continued efforts are needed to improve religious tolerance.

c. Strengthening harmonious communication

Open dialogue allows communication characterized by support and empathy has been shown to mediate social prejudice and increase tolerance and provides training on effective ways to communicate to resolve conflicts and misunderstandings peacefully. Good communication behaviors, such as openness and empathy, significantly increase religious tolerance by mediating the impact of social prejudice and identity factors (Abadi et al., 2024). The practice of open dialogue has been associated with improved interpersonal relationships, allowing for the resolution of conflicts and misunderstandings in mental health settings (Jones et al., 2024).

Facilitation of interreligious dialogue Savas (2021) outlines the importance of facilitating interreligious dialogue, as it is crucial to address common problems and develop solutions among different religious communities (Savas, 2021). He further explained that the government can play a significant role in building a framework for such dialogue, which can lead to increased understanding and collaboration. This discourse examines the methodologies through which government entities can promote interfaith dialogue, the benefits of such initiatives, and the potential obstacles that may arise (Malau, 2023; Soffi, 2023).

d. Cooperation and religious freedom

Governments can initiate joint community projects that promote religious freedom and mutual respect, which require cooperation among different religious groups and advocate for policies that protect religious freedom and promote social tolerance. Here, governments play an important role in promoting religious freedom and mutual respect through joint community projects that promote cooperation among different religious groups. By implementing inclusive policies and encouraging interfaith dialogue, governments can create an environment conducive to tolerance and social understanding.

The government can make laws that protect religious freedom and promote equality among people of different religions and allowing people of different religions to talk to each other and increase mutual respect and understanding (Karimullah & Arif Sugitanata, 2023). Cooperation between government agencies and communities can create a culture of acceptance and respect for others.

e. Implementing the principles of tolerance education

Education and socialization serve as highly efficacious mechanisms for instilling the principles of tolerance and interfaith harmony. Sarabdenn (2024) explains that through a comprehensive methodology that includes formal and non-formal educational strategies, alongside public awareness campaigns, societies can be cultivated to reflect greater inclusivity, cohesion, and unity amidst diversity (Sarabdeen, 2024).

For example, the Tolerance Village initiative in Bandung shows how community-led programs can foster interfaith harmony through a variety of social and religious activities (Nurjannah & Bin AB Rahim, 2024). Including the use of social media in South Sulawesi, online platforms have been used to improve communication and interaction between religious communities, promoting mutual understanding (Sulvinajayanti et al., 2024).

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is a research technique that is often used to understand social and cultural phenomena from the

perspective of participants (Chasokela, 2024). Qualitative approaches are also an integral part of the exploration of social phenomena that emphasize the importance of individual or collective experiences and perceptions (Lopes, 2024). The researcher used this approach because he wanted to understand deeply and naturally the phenomenon of strengthening religious tolerance carried out by the village government in Hoelea I and Hoelea II Villages. This research is a case study research type because it reveals specific phenomena that occur in Hoelea I and Hoelea II Villages.

The research location was carried out in Hoelea I and Hoelea II Villages, Omesuri District, Lembata Regency, East Nusa Tenggara. In addition to considering the effectiveness and efficiency of time, this research location is also a harmony-conscious village so that researchers are interested in conducting research in both villages.

The subjects in this study were the Head of Hoelea I and Hoelea II Villages as policy makers and in determining the direction of village development, and 8 Hoelea I Village officials and 7 Hoelea II Village officials as the compilers and supporters of the planned activity programs together. In addition, there were also two religious figures from each village consisting of one Muslim and one Catholic and two community leaders from each village.

The data collection technique used by researchers is observation. Observation is direct observation involving documentation of behavior and interactions in their natural environment, this is very important for understanding complex phenomena (L.J Moleong, 2022). The purpose of observation is to obtain accurate and in-depth information about naturally occurring behavior, interactions, and phenomena.

In this study, the researcher plays a passive role when conducting observations, meaning that the researcher comes directly to the place or activity being observed, but is not directly involved in the activity. The researcher also uses interview techniques, namely to collect data through direct interviews between the researcher and respondents (Sugiyono, 2015). The purpose of this interview was to find out more about the respondents' experiences, perspectives, and feelings about the research subjects. The researcher communicated with the research subjects to collect data. About the strategies carried out by the village government in strengthening religious tolerance in Holelea I and Hoelea II Villages.

Data validity testing is carried out using triangulation techniques, namely a methodological approach used to assess data credibility through comparative analysis of information obtained from various sources or data collection methodologies (Michael Nnaemeka Ajemba & Ebube Chinwe Arene, 2022). The underlying reason for using this technique is that triangulation refers to the process of evaluating and comparing various data sources, methods, theories, or researchers to reach deeper conclusions. In this study, the researcher used triangulation of sources (Treur et al., 2024) by checking the data obtained through more than one source. Researchers interviewed several sources to find out for sure about the data submitted. In addition, researchers also used triangulation techniques to check data with the same source and different techniques.

To analyze the data, the researcher used Miles and Huberman's interactive data technique through three stages, namely data condensation, data presentation, drawing conclusions and verification (Miles et al., 2014). In this case, the researcher tries to collect data first and then selects data that is relevant to the focus of the research. After that, it is presented narratively and then interpreted so that it can describe what is desired from this research.

RESULTS

Historically, Hoelea Village represents one of the indigenous settlements with deep-rooted cultural values and timeless traditions. The expansion process began with a communal deliberation involving indigenous leaders, community representatives, and village government authorities, with the aim of ensuring that the demarcation of the territory was carried out fairly and in harmony with the different potentials of each party.

This was conveyed by the head of Hoelea I Village, Gregorius Gawi and Islamic Religious Instructor, Sulaiman Waya Belutowe said:

> "The people of Hoelea village used to often have wars between tribes and villages to seize power for a very long time. Seeing this, several tribal/customary chiefs sat down to deliberate. This event was called sain bayan (customary oath), so that there would be no more war between them. This sain bayan occurred on lapaq leu puhe alang ayaq (a flat stone inscription located in Hoelea village)."

Since then Kedang has been tied to *sain bayan* which is *inga' nute' tau' toye' bayan* (compliance with advice, which forms and strengthens the kinship ties of the Kedang community, including Hoelea I and Hoelea II).

Furthermore, the head of Hoelea II Village, Yoseph Payong said:

> "Hoelea Village residents engage in traditional village ceremonies that emphasize the concept of harmony among individuals of various religious affiliations. *Lapaq* (flat stone inscription) is strategically located at the center of the village, especially in *leu puhe alang ayaq* (a small ventilated area within the village), serves as an important symbol of the communal harmony that existed among the inhabitants of Hoelea, which is today recognized as an illustration of tolerance."

Umar Pati said

> "The symbol of tolerance is flanked by the Chapel building (small church) now St. Yusuf Church and the Nurul Huda mosque facing each other. St. Yusuf Church is now known as the center of the Holy Cross Parish of Hoelea."

These two villages now display their own unique characteristics and strengths in terms of governance, infrastructure development, and preservation of local cultural heritage. However, both communities continue to uphold the principles of solidarity and mutual support in various dimensions of life, including social, cultural, and economic.

On December 18, 2021, Hoelea Village was designated as a Harmony-Conscious Village at the Lembata Regency Level, which was marked by the signing of the Harmony-Conscious Village Launching Inscription by the Head of the Administrative Section of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of East Nusa Tenggara Province, H. Hasan Manuk, M.Pd. With the signing of this inscription, the harmony of the residents is getting stronger. This was conveyed by the Head of Hoelea I Village as follows:

> "The signing of the inscription to launch the harmony-aware village strengthens the agreement that was built by the ancestors, namely: *lapaq* (flat stone inscription) in the middle of the village or to be exact *leu puhe alang ayaq* (small field in the village) Hoelea."

This is reinforced by the statement of the village head of Hoelea II who said:

> "We are proud and grateful, because Hoelea I Village and Hoelea II Village were designated as harmony-aware villages. This provides positive motivation and encouragement, so that Hoelea I Village and Hoelea II Village can be used as exemplary villages in terms of harmony awareness that has been going on since the incident *sayin bayan* in *lapaq leu puhe alang ayaq*."
>
> Manaf, a traditional figure, explained this incident:
>
> "Tolerance in Hoelea has existed since the zero date and the year zero".

Manaf's expression is a hyperbolic statement that suggests that tolerance has existed in the region for a long time, even as if since the beginning of civilization or life. Since in the modern calendar system there is no "zero year" (after I BC directly to I AD), the phrase "zero date and zero year" does not refer to a specific date in the calendar. Instead, it suggests that the tradition of tolerance has been part of the life of the Hoelea people for a long time. If there is a certain historical or cultural context related to Hoelea, this expression may also describe the identity or pride of the Kedang people including the villages of Hoelea I and Hoelea II for the diversity and harmony that have long survived.

To maintain the tolerance that has been formed in society, the village government continues to make efforts to strengthen tolerance in them. The role of the village government is very important in fostering a spirit of togetherness in diversity in order to create a harmonious and harmonious life in the midst of social life. Through the village government's strategy, the problems of intolerance, radicalism and religious fanaticism can be avoided properly. Because the village government is the highest leader in the village who can unite various perceptions or differences of opinion that conflict with the values of local wisdom that have been inherited by parents or ancestors. These legacies need to be preserved, maintained and maintained in accordance with the culture of the community so that human relations with each other are maintained.

Among the strategies implemented by the village government to strengthen tolerance in Hoelea I and Hoelea II Villages are:

1. Fostering religious attitudes

   Building religious attitudes in Hoelea I and Hoelea II Villages is an important step in strengthening the moral and spiritual values of the

community. In fostering religious attitudes. Researchers found that both village governments routinely hold religious activities such as religious studies, lectures, and religious discussions to strengthen the understanding and practice of religious teachings. The Head of Hoelea I Village explained that:

"In the village, the Ta'lim Assembly Contact Body (BKMT) has been formed, whose members are mothers and the Mosque Youth (Remas) whose members are school-age teenagers between junior high and high school. Meanwhile, the Catholic Youth (OMK) whose members are young Catholics, Santa Ana whose members are mothers, Sekami whose members are missionary children, and Sekar whose members are teenagers and in Hoelea I Village there is a Station that is responsible for all Catholic activities in the village."

The Head of Hoelea II Village explained something similar, he said that:

"Religious assemblies existed before we were entrusted to become Village Heads."

This was reinforced by Mrs. Hamida as the general chair of BKMT Hoelea I Village, who said that:

"BKMT in our village was formed in 2000."

Meanwhile, Mrs. Rogaya, Chair of the BKMT Hoelea II Village, said that:

"BKMBT Hoelea II Village was formed in 2000."

Rogaya further said that:

"all villages in the Omesuri District area in the same year were confirmed by the Omesuri District Head."

The Imam of the Nurul Islam Leulea Hoelea II Mosque, Yusof Ishak, said that:

"The mosque youth were formed in 1995 when I had not yet been appointed as the Imam of this mosque."

Meanwhile, the Imam of the Nurul Huda Hoelea II mosque, Muslimin Luth said that:

"When I became the Imam of the mosque, there were already teenagers in the mosque."

Hoelea Station Chief Simon Suka Belutowe said that:

> "Catholic organizations have existed since the founding of the church. We are only responsible at the village level, both Hoelea I and Hoelea II Villages. While the person responsible in the sub-district area is the Pastor of the Holy Cross Parish Church of Hoelea."

In addition, the government of Hoelea I and Hoelea II Villages also coordinate in every religious activity. This is as stated by Sudirman, the secretary of Hoelea I Village, that:

> "All religious activities, both Islamic and Catholic, are budgeted in the village budget, the amount of activity costs is discussed in the General Allocation Fund (DAU) plan every year."

Likewise, the Head of Social Affairs of Hoelea II Village explained that:

> "All religious activities in this village are budgeted in the General Allocation Fund (DAU) every year, this budget allocation is very important for the sustainability of all religious activities in the village."

In the context of societal progress, the cultivation of religious character has emerged as an important element that continues to be upheld and developed. This is evidenced through various religious initiatives, including systematic education sessions, the establishment of designated prayer rooms in each village, and the proactive involvement of religious and traditional leaders in all deliberation and communal efforts. This is as conveyed by the Head of Hoelea I Village that;

> "The Hoelea I village government provides financial support to the Qur'an Education Park and Sekami Sekar, finances religious activities carried out in the village and coordinates with all parties in maintaining harmony between religious communities."

In Hoelea I and Hoelea II villages, the enhancement of religious dispositions is further enhanced through educational programs aimed at children and youth, facilitated through formal educational institutions and

community-centered religious engagement. In addition, the village government actively advocates interfaith tolerance by organizing community events that encourage collaboration, such as joint efforts in building public facilities, commemorating significant religious events, and training youth to cultivate values of brotherhood. As a result, the manifestation of religiosity in these two villages goes beyond individual practices, evolving into a collective social identity that symbolizes harmony and cohesion in communal existence.

2. Cultivating an attitude of mutual respect and appreciation

Researchers observed activities in Hoelea I and Hoelea II Villages in several activities as a form of instilling values of mutual respect and appreciation, namely mohing danung and pohing ling holo wali, taneng maten. Abdullah, a traditional figure of Hoelea I, explained that:

> "*Mohing Danung* and *Pohing Ling Holo Wali* are forms of social concern in the Kedang community. For example, if there are relatives in the village who experience a disaster, then the whole village must provide assistance, in addition, in social interactions there is mutual sharing of affection, the old respect the young and the old love the young. *Mohing Danung* and *Pohing Ling Holo Wali* can be interpreted as cooperation and working together to build the village."

Kristina, a female traditional figure from Kedang, said:

> "In addition to *mohing danung* and *pohing ling holo wali*, there is the tradition of *taneng maten*. This tradition has existed since ancient times, namely if a relative dies, then all the villagers in the village will make a book dese' to ease the burden of the deceased family. The assistance provided is in the form of local food, namely corn, corn rice, rice. However, currently there are additional ones such as granulated sugar, wheat flour, and all kinds of kitchen spices and a little money."

Apart from that, the village government also provides assistance taken from the *ebang leu* (village/village granary). As stated by the two village heads.

This was confirmed by Abdullah, the traditional leader of Hoelea I and Gabriel, the traditional leader of Hoelea II.

3. Improve harmonious communication

Improving harmonious communication to increase tolerance in the Hoelea I and Hoelea II communities can be achieved through various activities involving all elements of society. Some of the activities observed by researchers include the celebration of religious holidays. The holding of interfaith events to commemorate significant religious events, such as the joint committee for Christmas and Easter or the joint committee for Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. This joint committee involves the Mosque Youth, Catholic Youth and Sekar.

This was conveyed by the chairman of the Nurul Islam Leulea Mosque Youth, he said that:

> "This joint committee is temporary for each activity."

Meanwhile, the chairman of the Catholic Youth said that:

> "In a year there are three major activities, namely two Islamic holidays and one Christmas and New Year. This joint committee was formed with a joint decree issued by the sub-district.

This was confirmed by the head of Hoelea Station, Simon Suka Belutowe, who said that:

> "This joint committee is a form of harmonious relationship that has existed for a long time."

Apart from that, the two traditional figures Abdullah and Gabriel said that:

> "Kedang traditional tradition is a teaching *Wela. Wela* is a belief in the existence of Almighty God that teaches the importance of building vertical and horizontal communication, establishing family ties, helping each other, respecting and appreciating and showing affection for each other."

Apart from that, the village government also fully supports cultural heritage activities, such as *bineng ma'ing*. The Head of Hoelea I Village, said:

> "This activity aims to maintain communication in social strata and harmony of relationships between one family and another family before the wedding. Usually this activity starts from *tada wau lalang mato* (introduction between the man's family and the woman's family). Here it is important to build harmonious communication, so that the meeting of the two large families can be realized well. Tradition *bineng ma'in*g This is to preserve Kedang culture while introducing the values of cultural harmony that apply in Kedang society to the whole world, especially the younger generation."

4. Cooperation and religious freedom

Collaboration and the principle of religious freedom represent two important constructs in the formation of a cohesive, inclusive, and tolerant social framework. As the researcher stated earlier, the joint committee for the activities of two Islamic holidays and Christmas and New Year for Catholics is a form of cooperation within the framework of religious pluralism which is a collective effort originating from various religious traditions that aims to achieve goals that are beneficial for all stakeholders involved. The researcher found that this cooperation is not only in religious activities, but also in community activities such as *mohing danung dan pohing ling holo wali* interpreted as cooperation and working together to build harmony together.

This is as conveyed by Gabriel, he said that:

> "the basic principles of *mohing danung dan pohing ling holo wali* not only cooperation in religious matters, but also matters of the benefit of the people.

In line with that, Abdullah added that:

> *"mohing danung* and *pohing ling holo* guardian is the elaboration of ancestral teachings, namely *Wela*. In the teachings *Wela* everyone is given the freedom to choose their beliefs and practice their religion without any interference."

Basic principles of teaching *Wela* does not conflict with Islamic and Catholic religious beliefs. Abdullah explains:

> "the main principles include cooperation in diversity that is mutually beneficial, such as respecting differences, collaboration in social activities that lead to conflict prevention in a multicultural and pluralistic atmosphere."

Gabriel further said:

> "in the teachings *Wela* Freedom of religion is a fundamental human right that also guarantees every individual the autonomy to choose, practice, and adhere to a particular religion or philosophical belief. Every individual has the freedom to change one's religious affiliation or belief without external pressure."

In addition, the village government provides periodic assistance and coaching in collaboration with Islamic religious instructors, Catholic religious instructors and Community Social Institutions. This was agreed upon by both village heads. The goal is to create an environment where each religious tradition occupies a fair status without oppression or discrimination.

5. Implementing the principles of tolerance education

Researchers observed that in Hoelea I and Hoelea II Villages, the community has implemented the principles of tolerance in social interactions. These principles are cooperation in community life, such as building public facilities, building private homes, social assistance and solidarity, such as providing assistance to victims of natural disasters, helping students from poor parents; freedom of religion.

Kristina, the female traditional leader of Kedang, said:

> "The implementation of the principles of tolerance education in Hoelea I and Hoelea II Villages needs to be improved and empowered again. Involving the Majelis Ta'lim Contact Body (BKMT), Young Catholics (OMK), Sekami and Sekar in workshop activities that discuss harmony and tolerance education. This is important, because the development of technology is very fast and unstoppable."

Abdullah and Gabriel said something similar:

> "We hope that all elements of society will be involved, so that they can understand and ultimately implement it in community life."

In addition, the Hoelea I and Hoelea II Village governments have carried out various activities to strengthen tolerance. Both village heads said that some of the activities that have been carried out are cultural heritage aimed at preserving Kedang culture, such as activities *buku dese, mohing danung and pohing ling holo wali.*

DISCUSSION

From the above explanation, it is known that the Hoelea I and Holea II Village governments use various strategies to strengthen religious tolerance, such as fostering religious attitudes. Good cooperation between the village government, religious organizations, and the community in strengthening spiritual life. This is in accordance with the multifaceted method can improve spiritual life and increase religious understanding (Ahmad Zaky et al., 2024). In addition, Hennessy (2015) stated that a multidimensional approach to religion acknowledges that the phenomenon of religion has many complex aspects, including beliefs, feelings, and relationships with the community (Hennessy, 2015). This perspective allows for a more detailed understanding of spirituality, allows for various forms of faith expression to be accepted, and enhances overall understanding of religion. The Village Governments of Hoelea I and Hoelea II have taken various approaches to foster religious attitudes.

Local traditions in Hoelea I and Hoelea II Villages encourage cooperation, solidarity, and social awareness to instill values of mutual respect and appreciation. Local traditions *mohing danung* and *pohing ling holo wali* and *taneng maten* is a traditional activity that emphasizes the principles of mutual respect and appreciation. Samsu explained that this activity can strengthen family and community ties that can increase tolerance through shared values and experiences. As seen in local initiatives, community leaders play a vital role in modeling tolerance through their actions and teachings (Samsu, 2022). Local traditions *mohing danung* and *pohing ling holo wali* and *taneng maten* by the government, the two villages continue to be empowered and promoted as cultural assets that can provide positive value for local and foreign tourists.

To increase tolerance in the Hoelea I and Hoelea II communities, various activities can be carried out involving every member of the community. Researchers observed the celebration of religious holidays, such as Christmas and New Year or Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. Mosque Youth, Catholic Youth, and Sekar are included in this joint committee. This is in line with the results of Kulshrestha et al.'s research which explains that involving various religious groups in celebrations increases mutual respect and understanding, as shown by community outreach programs that encourage people to participate in local ceremonies and traditions (Kulshrestha et al., 2023). The Hoelea I and Hoelea II Village Governments continue to provide assistance and guidance, so that harmonious communication can take place peacefully and maintain cultural traditions based on religion that do not become extinct due to the progress of the times.

In the formation of a cohesive, inclusive and tolerant social framework, two important constructs are collaboration and the principle of religious freedom. The formation of a joint committee for the activities of two Islamic holidays and Christmas and New Year for Catholics is a form of cooperation within the framework of religious pluralism. This is a collective effort that comes from various religious traditions and aims to achieve goals that are beneficial to all parties involved. Mubarok and Bata explained that the formation of a committee for an event such as Eid al-Adha ensures organized participation and a better experience for everyone (Mubarok & Bata, 2022). Other researchers have suggested that celebrations foster cultural exchange and reduce stereotypes by allowing members to share and learn about different religious practices (Ngarawula & Wahyudi, 2024). Therefore, the village governments of Hoelea I and Hoelea II consider it important to establish a joint committee which needs to be stipulated in a decree issued by the sub-district.

The principles of cooperation in community life, such as building public facilities, building private homes; social assistance and solidarity, such as providing assistance to victims of natural disasters, helping students from poor parents; religious freedom have been implemented well. Forms of collective action, such as landscaping and mutual assistance, are identified in this paper, but he shows low general trust and limited external assistance. Reutov et al. found in their study that despite micro-solidarity actions, major problems still exist when incorporating broader principles of cooperation into community life (Reutov et al., 2016). Other researchers highlight that trust and cooperation within communities increase social capital, which is important for collective action and support

systems (Marek-Zborowska, 2024). In addition, the Hoelea I and Hoelea II Village governments carry out various activities to strengthen tolerance. One of them is a cultural heritage that aims to preserve Kedang culture, such as activities ***buku dese,*** *mohing danung and pohing ling holo wali.*

CONCLUSION

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the village governments of Hoelea I and Hoelea II use various strategies to strengthen religious tolerance. These strategies are 1) Improving harmonious communication. This is done by forming a joint committee to commemorate religious holidays whose funds are supported by the village government. 2) Instilling an attitude of mutual respect and appreciation. The existence of cultural practices such as *mohing danung* and *pohing ling holo wali* show an attitude of mutual respect and appreciation. *Taneng maten* also symbolizes social solidarity, especially when families face disasters, especially when grieving. 3) Improving harmonious communication. To increase tolerance in the Hoelea I and Hoelea II communities can be achieved through various activities including celebrating religious holidays such as joint committees for Christmas and Easter or joint committees for Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. This joint committee involves Mosque Youth, Catholic Youth and Sekar. 4) Cooperation and freedom of religion. In this case, the village government provides regular assistance and coaching in collaboration with Islamic religious instructors, Catholic religious instructors and Community Social Institutions. The goal is to create an environment where each religious tradition has a fair status without oppression or discrimination. 5) Implementing the principle of tolerance education. Implementing the principle of education as reflected in the basic principles of mohing danung and pohing ling holo wali, which are not only in a spiritual context. This principle also includes the social context of society, such as building public facilities, building private homes, providing social assistance, helping victims of natural disasters, providing support to students or students from underprivileged families, and upholding religious freedom. The results of this study emphasize the importance of the role of village government in strengthening religious tolerance for its citizens.

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