

Strategies for Implementing Religious Moderation in the Social Life of the Bengabing Village Community

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze strategies for implementing religious moderation in the social life of the Bengabing Village community. Religious moderation is an essential concept in fostering social harmony, preventing conflict, and building an inclusive and tolerant society. This research employs a qualitative approach using field studies through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings reveal that the main strategies for implementing religious moderation include strengthening the role of religious leaders, promoting collaboration between educational institutions and village authorities, and internalizing moderation values through religious and community-based activities. Additionally, local wisdom and cooperative cultural practices significantly contribute to creating a harmonious social environment. The study recommends developing sustainable religious moderation programs to maintain social stability and enhance intercommunity tolerance.

Keywords: Religious Moderation; Implementation Strategies; Social Life; Tolerance; Bengabing Village.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi penerapan moderasi beragama dalam kehidupan sosial masyarakat Desa Bengabing. Moderasi beragama menjadi konsep penting dalam menciptakan harmoni sosial, mencegah konflik, serta membangun tatanan masyarakat yang inklusif dan toleran. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi lapangan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi utama penerapan moderasi beragama meliputi penguatan peran tokoh agama, kolaborasi antara lembaga pendidikan dan pemerintah desa, serta internalisasi nilai moderasi melalui kegiatan keagamaan dan sosial kemasyarakatan. Selain itu, peran kearifan lokal dan budaya gotong royong turut memperkuat terciptanya kehidupan sosial yang harmonis. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan pengembangan program penguatan moderasi beragama secara berkelanjutan guna

Artikel Info

Received:

17 September 2025

Revised:

20 October 2025

Accepted:

17 December 2025

Published:

29 January 2025

menjaga stabilitas sosial dan memperkuat toleransi antarwarga.

Kata kunci: Moderasi Beragama; Strategi Penerapan; Kehidupan Sosial; Toleransi; Desa Bengabing.

A. Introduction

Religious moderation has increasingly become a major concern in Indonesia's religious and social discourse. As a nation characterized by rich cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity, Indonesia requires an approach to religious understanding that emphasizes balance, tolerance, and mutual respect. Religious moderation serves as a framework to reject extremism—both ultra-conservative and ultra-liberal—and encourages society to stand on the middle path, a principle emphasized in many Islamic teachings (Alwi Shihab, 2019). This concept is especially relevant as social interactions grow more complex and diverse across regions in the country.

In the social context, religious moderation is essential for building a harmonious and peaceful community. Extremist religious attitudes often trigger social conflict, polarization, and disharmony within society. As noted by Amin Abdullah (2020), moderation is a preventive mechanism against radicalism and intolerance in grassroots communities. Hence, the application of religious moderation is not merely a national-level agenda but must be realized at the village level where social interaction takes place daily.

Bengabing Village, as one of the regions with social and cultural diversity, exemplifies the importance of religious moderation in local community life. Residents of this village live within a dynamic social environment where interactions occur frequently through religious, cultural, and social activities. Such conditions require appropriate strategies to maintain social stability through the implementation of moderation values (Latif, 2018). The local context, therefore, becomes crucial in ensuring that religious moderation is interpreted based on community needs.

However, applying religious moderation cannot occur automatically. It requires a structured and systematic strategy to instill moderation values in everyday life. This involves the active roles of community leaders, religious leaders, village authorities, and

educational institutions. According to Anwar (2021), strengthening the role of local leadership is a key factor in internalizing moderate values within society.

The rapid development of information technology also influences how communities interpret religious teachings. Without proper literacy and guidance, intolerant or radical interpretations can easily spread and be accepted as truth. Thus, strategies must ensure that villagers understand religion wisely and proportionally, an idea reinforced by Hidayat and Harahap (2020), who argue that digital literacy is essential in preventing the spread of radical ideologies.

Religious moderation is deeply rooted in Islamic teachings, particularly the concept of *ummatan wasathan*, which emphasizes justice, balance, and tolerance. This aligns with the character of Bengabing Village, where mutual cooperation and social cohesion are integral to daily life. Promoting moderate Islamic teachings can guide residents in shaping courteous interaction and communal unity (Quraish Shihab, 2019).

Furthermore, religious moderation aligns with universal human values such as justice, equality, brotherhood, and respect for differences. These values serve as the foundation for developing peaceful and cohesive social relations. As highlighted by Madjid (2000), the spirit of humanity within religious teaching is inseparable from efforts to cultivate social harmony.

Practically, religious moderation can be implemented through social and religious activities such as communal gatherings, religious study groups, village deliberations, and collective cooperation. However, its success depends heavily on the strategies adopted by both formal and informal leaders within the village. Collaboration among these figures has been shown to strengthen social solidarity and prevent conflict (Wahid Foundation, 2019).

Religious leaders, in particular, hold a crucial role in disseminating moderate religious guidance. Through sermons, teachings, and exemplary attitudes, they become influential agents who shape community understanding. Research by Nurcholish Madjid (1995) stresses that religious leaders play a central role in cultivating a peaceful religious culture and countering extremist narratives within society.

Educational institutions in Bengabing Village also contribute significantly to instilling moderation values among the younger generation. Education—both formal and informal—helps students develop tolerance, respect for differences, and skills in constructive dialogue. As stated by Abdullah (2014), religious moderation must be integrated early in education to prevent radical ideological penetration.

The village government likewise plays an essential role in supporting religious moderation. Village policies and programs that promote interreligious dialogue, community training, and social awareness contribute to a harmonious social environment. According to Suryadinata (2018), local governments serve as strategic actors in strengthening pluralism and preventing social fragmentation.

Beyond formal structures, the community itself is the most vital component in ensuring successful implementation of religious moderation. Individual awareness to maintain harmony and honor diversity is a key factor in shaping a peaceful environment. Community participation, therefore, must become the foundation of all moderation strategies (Zakiyah Daradjat, 2010).

Local wisdom, such as *gotong royong*, mutual consultation, and communal traditions, contributes greatly to reinforcing religious moderation. The integration of religious and cultural values produces a model of harmonious social interaction that does not diminish religious identity. This interplay of culture and religion has long been recognized as a key element in sustaining social integration (Koentjaraningrat, 2009).

Nonetheless, several challenges impede the implementation of religious moderation in Bengabing Village. These include the influence of social media, limited religious literacy among some residents, and potential misunderstandings between community groups. Therefore, strategies must be comprehensive and adaptive to ensure that moderation values become embedded in the local social structure (Wahid Foundation, 2020).

Given these considerations, this study seeks to explore strategies for implementing religious moderation within the social life of Bengabing Village. The research aims to contribute to academic discourse on religious moderation and offer insights for village leaders, religious authorities, and community members in designing

socially grounded policies for strengthening harmony and peaceful coexistence. Ultimately, the findings are expected to support sustainable development of moderation values at the grassroots level.

B. Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach with a field research design. The qualitative method was selected because it allows the researcher to understand the phenomenon of religious moderation implementation more deeply through direct interaction with the research subjects. This approach also provides flexibility in exploring the meanings, experiences, and perceptions of the Bengabing Village community regarding the strategies used to apply religious moderation in their social life.

The research was conducted in Bengabing Village, a location chosen due to its relevant religious and social dynamics. The research subjects included religious leaders, community leaders, village officials, educators, and residents who have adequate understanding of religious moderation practices in daily life. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, in which participants were chosen intentionally based on specific criteria relevant to the objectives of the study.

Data collection techniques consisted of three main methods: in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation study. In-depth interviews were used to gather information concerning community perspectives, experiences, and strategies in implementing religious moderation. Direct observation was conducted to witness firsthand the patterns of social interaction, religious activities, and forms of moderation practiced in the village. Meanwhile, documentation study involved reviewing village documents, religious activity records, and other archives that support the research.

To ensure data validity, triangulation techniques were applied by combining various sources, methods, and theoretical perspectives. Source triangulation was performed by comparing information obtained from different informants, while method triangulation was achieved by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and

documentation. These efforts helped reduce bias and strengthen the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

All collected data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction stage, relevant information was selected, categorized, and focused on themes related to strategies for implementing religious moderation. In the data display stage, the information was presented in descriptive narrative form to clearly show patterns and relationships among the data. The final stage involved drawing conclusions to formulate the core findings that address the primary focus of the study.

C. Results and Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of religious moderation in Bengabing Village is carried out through the central role of religious leaders as the primary agents in promoting moderate values. Religious figures in the village actively deliver sermons that emphasize balance and tolerance in community life. This aligns with Quraish Shihab's (2019) assertion that religious leaders hold significant moral authority capable of shaping society's understanding of religious practices.

The strategies used by religious leaders go beyond delivering sermons; they also demonstrate moderation through exemplary attitudes and behaviors. They consistently model respect for differences, deliberation, and openness to diverse perspectives. According to Amin Abdullah (2020), the moderate attitude of religious leaders serves as a concrete example that strongly influences the development of a peaceful and inclusive religious culture. These findings affirm that role-modeling is an effective strategy for internalizing moderation values.

In addition to religious leaders, the village government contributes significantly to the promotion of religious moderation. The local government of Bengabing encourages various social activities such as communal work, community dialogues, and routine meetings as platforms for strengthening social relationships. Suryadinata (2018) emphasizes that local governments play a strategic role in maintaining social cohesion

through policies and programs that facilitate positive interaction among community members.

Observations reveal that regular village deliberation meetings serve as effective dialogue forums for resolving differences. The people of Bengabing are accustomed to expressing their opinions openly and seeking solutions collectively without imposing their personal interests. This reflects practices of *tasamuh* (tolerance) and *syura* (consultation), which Alwi Shihab (2019) identifies as essential pillars in building a moderate society.

Educational institutions within the village also play a vital role in strengthening religious moderation. Islamic education teachers incorporate lessons on tolerance, anti-violence, and respect for diversity into classroom activities. Abdullah (2014) argues that education is the most effective instrument for shaping moderate character among young generations. This is evident in students who exhibit openness and the ability to collaborate with peers of different backgrounds.

Local wisdom emerges as another major supporting factor in the application of moderation in Bengabing. Traditions such as *gotong royong* and *marsiadapari* (mutual assistance) serve as social glue that reduces conflict potential. Koentjaraningrat (2009) explains that local customs function as strong social capital in maintaining harmony. These findings highlight that local culture forms the foundation of religious moderation, rather than merely complementing it.

Moderate practices are also visible during religious activities within the village. Community members participate in religious events, Islamic celebrations, and social charity without highlighting sectarian differences. This supports the findings of the Wahid Foundation (2019), which states that community-based religious activities can serve as social spaces for strengthening tolerance and preventing radicalism.

However, the emergence of social media presents challenges to the implementation of religious moderation. Some residents remain vulnerable to consuming information containing intolerance or provocation. Hidayat and Harahap (2020) similarly argue that digital information often becomes a gateway for extremist ideas when not accompanied by adequate digital literacy.

To address this issue, village leaders and religious figures have begun providing simple digital literacy education to residents. They encourage the community to verify information before sharing or believing it. This effort demonstrates that religious moderation is not only related to religious understanding but also involves adapting to technological developments.

In daily social interactions, findings show that mutual respect among residents remains strong. Despite differences in political views, religious interpretations, or social status, Bengabing villagers continue to uphold brotherhood. This reinforces Madjid's (2000) view that universal human values are at the core of religious moderation.

The analysis further reveals that religious events often become opportunities to foster intergroup interaction. Community leaders use these moments to convey messages of tolerance, unity, and cooperation. This approach is effective because religious gatherings provide a receptive environment for moral and social messages.

From a policy perspective, the village government has begun formulating regulations that promote social harmony, such as guidelines for conflict resolution and the organization of community religious events. This aligns with the Wahid Foundation's (2020) assertion that village-level policies can reinforce social structures supporting moderation and preventing horizontal conflicts.

Most informants stated that social conflicts in Bengabing rarely occur because the community is accustomed to resolving issues peacefully. Dialogue and family-based approaches are prioritized in conflict resolution. This reflects the implementation of *tawazun* (balance) and *i'tidal* (justice), values emphasized in Islamic moderation literature by Shihab (2019).

Nevertheless, the study also notes the need for continuous strengthening of religious moderation programs. Current activities remain spontaneous and are not yet structured within a systematic program. Abdullah (2020) reminds us that religious moderation must be managed systematically to create long-term impacts on social life.

Overall, the findings show that strategies for implementing religious moderation in Bengabing Village have been effective through the synergy of religious leaders, village government, educational institutions, and community participation. Local

wisdom and the culture of mutual cooperation amplify social harmony, although modern challenges such as social media influence must be continuously anticipated. These findings confirm that the implementation of religious moderation requires multi-actor collaboration and local cultural support to function optimally in preserving community cohesion.

D. Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of religious moderation in Bengabing Village is carried out through various socio-religious strategies involving religious leaders, village institutions, and the broader community. Core values of moderation—such as tolerance, national commitment, non-violence, and balance—are practiced in daily life through religious activities, village deliberations, social traditions, and the role of families in cultivating moderate attitudes from an early age. These efforts have contributed to shaping a more harmonious community life in which mutual respect and dialogue are prioritized in resolving conflicts.

The study also reveals that cultural factors, religious education, and the influence of community leaders significantly contribute to strengthening religious moderation. Challenges remain, particularly regarding differences in religious understanding, exposure to digital information, and external social influences that may trigger intolerant behavior. Nevertheless, the people of Bengabing Village have managed to maintain social stability by promoting deliberation, strengthening moderate religious literacy, and fostering cooperation among community elements that prioritize balance and solidarity.

Overall, the strategies implemented to promote religious moderation in Bengabing Village have had a positive impact on the community's social life. Religious moderation has become not only a theoretical concept but also a lived practice embedded in the daily behavior of residents. This research recommends enhancing religious moderation education programs, increasing the role of religious leaders in community guidance, and strengthening institutional collaboration to sustain long-term social harmony. In this

way, religious moderation can continue to serve as a vital foundation for building a peaceful, tolerant, and respectful society in Bengabing Village.

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