



## The Culture of Tolerance From Ende Ethnic in Interfaith Aspect

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Article Info	Abstrak
<b>Kata kunci:</b> <i>Toleransi, suku, antar agama, Ende</i>	Masyarakat Ende yang hidup bertoleransi dengan umat yang berbeda agama dan hidup berdampingan satu sama lain. Toleransi terhadap keberagaman yang dimaksud adalah toleran bukan berarti menganut kepercayaan orang lain, melainkan bagaimana menjalankan kepercayaan agama lain dengan baik tanpa mengganggu agama sendiri. Kenyataannya, masyarakat Indonesia pada umumnya sangat rentan terhadap konflik akibat isu-isu yang beredar di media elektronik. Penelitian ini merupakan kajian sosiologi yang dilakukan oleh Bikhu Parekh yang menemukan tiga hal yaitu budaya, pluralitas, dan solusinya. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian eksplanatori dan deskriptif. Toleransi budaya masyarakat suku Ende terbukti dimana toleransi terhadap keberagaman agama merupakan realitas kehidupan sehari-hari. Sebagaimana agama Islam yang merayakan hari besar keagamaan. Hal tersebut meliputi membersihkan masjid, menata bagian dalam masjid, menjaga keamanan bagi yang berbeda agama. Agama Katolik merayakan hari raya, begitu pula agama Islam melakukan hal yang sebaliknya. Berbeda halnya dengan pembangunan gereja dan masjid, kontribusi masyarakat lintas agama, mulai dari ide, biaya, hingga tenaga pembangunan. Dapat dikatakan bahwa masyarakat Ende terdiri dari berbagai suku dan agama. Masyarakat Ende telah berhasil menerapkan toleransi di masyarakat. Mereka tidak pernah melakukan hal-hal negatif terhadap perbedaan agama dan hidup saling toleransi dan gotong royong.
<b>Keywords:</b> <i>Tolerance, ethnicity, inter-religion, Ende</i>	Ende people live in tolerance with people of different religions and side by side with each other. Tolerance of diversity means being tolerant does not mean joining other people's beliefs, but rather how to practice other religious beliefs well without interfering with one's own religion. The reality is that Indonesian society in general is very vulnerable to conflict due to issues spread in electronic media. This research, a sociological study by Bikhu Parekh, found three things: culture, plurality, and its solution. The study applies Explanatory and descriptive research method. The cultural tolerance of the Ende ethnic community is proven where tolerance for religious diversity is a reality of everyday life. As the Islamic religion celebrates religious holidays. It involves cleaning the mosque, organizing inside the mosque, maintaining security for those of different religions. The Catholic religion celebrates holidays, so the Islamic religion does the opposite. It is also different from the construction of churches and mosques, interfaith communities contribute, from building ideas, costs and energy. It can be deemed that the Ende community consists of various ethnicities and religions. It has succeeded in implementing tolerance in the community. They never do negative things towards religious differences and have a life of mutual tolerance and cooperation.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the largest multicultural countries in the world because socio-cultural and geographical conditions are so diverse and extensive. Indonesia has become a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-racial and multi-religious country. This diversity is a wealth that this nation has. Indonesia, which is faced with religious diversity, is expected to be able to maintain harmony between religious communities. Several religions belonging to the Indonesian state are Islam, Catholicism, Protestant Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Indonesian society is multicultural in terms of culture, religion, ethnicity, race and language. All of this can be a source of strength to build a harmonious and peaceful life if managed well and professionally. Living in harmony and peace is a common desire and need that cannot be avoided despite existing differences.

Religious harmony is a relationship between religious communities. It consists of tolerance, mutual understanding, mutual respect, respect for equality in the practice of religious teachings and cooperation in social, national and state life based on Pancasila and the State Constitution of Republic of Indonesia in 1945 (Muhdina, 2015). Good cooperation will be realized if religious believers feel that they need each other, respect each other's differences, help each other, assist each other, and are able to unite opinions or in other terms have an attitude of tolerance.

Maintaining tolerance is not the job of a group of people. It requires the connection of all elements of society to maintain tolerance for diversity. The existence of an area with tolerance is a reminder of the importance of harmony over diversity as a medium of communication for this diversity. Research conducted by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, Research and Development and Training Agency, Research and Development Center for Religious Life in 2010 regarding the Religious Tolerance of Students (Study of the Influence of Personality, Organizational Involvement, Religious Education Learning Outcomes, and the Educational Environment on the Tolerance of Students of Different Religions at 7 State Public Universities), shows that personality, organizational involvement, religious education learning outcomes, and educational environment have a significant effect on students' religious tolerance. The scope of this research suspects that there is a religious factor in tolerance between social groups in Indonesia (Puslitbang, 2010).

It reveals that society's understanding of religious harmony needs to be reviewed. The large number of conflicts involving religion as the trigger demands serious attention to take anticipatory steps for the peaceful life of religious communities in Indonesia in the future. If this is ignored, it is feared that more serious problems will arise in the context of nation and state development in the fields of religion, politics, economics and education.

Since the 15th century, the Ende people began to come into contact with Arab traders, Majapahit rulers, Catholic missionaries from Portugal, Bugis traders and traders from China. Their encounters with various other cultures and ethnicities have made their characters very open in accepting guests and newcomers. Attitudes of tolerance, mutual understanding, mutual respect, respect for equality in the experience of religious teachings and cooperation in social, national and state life regardless of ethnic, religious, racial and inter-group origins are clearly visible in social life (Nanggo, 2015).

According to Cultural Statistics data in 2021, Indonesia has 391 sub-cultures or ethnicities (Cultural Statistics, 2021). The reality on the ground shows that the Indonesian nation is a multicultural nation which Hasanuddin implemented as a mosaic or flower garden of various colors whose essence of beauty lies in the diversity (Hasanuddin, 2019). Apart from its unique natural heritage, the island of Flores is also inhabited by a very multicultural society, starting from Larantuka in East Flores to Labuan Bajo in west Flores, we cannot find the same, homogeneous society. What we can find is a society with a variety of different cultures, traditions and languages.

In the aspect of multiculturalism, Ende Regency, with a population of 280,328 people (Ende Regency Central Statistics Agency; Ende in Figures), is considered quite special. Ende is a place where diversity meets. The value of Indonesia, along with the attributes of ethnic, racial, cultural and religious plurality, is strongly built. Hence, all ethnic and religious groups can live side by side. Even though the plurality of the Ende region is very high, as can be seen from the ethnic composition of the people who inhabit it. The Ende community consists of 50.17% Ende ethnic, 2.13% Ngao ethnic, 49% Lio ethnic, 1.5% Chinese, 1.39% Padang ethnic, 2% Balinese, 1% Madurese, 4% Arab, 2% ethnic Sabu, 1% ethnic Timorese, 0.5% ethnic Rote, 1.5% ethnic Sikka, 3% ethnic East Flores, 2% Ngada ethnic group, 3% Manggarai ethnic group, and 3% other ethnic groups (Ende Regency Central Statistics Agency; Ende in Figures). Identity as an Ende people can be seen in language, customs and a number of local cultures in

general. One of the Ende-Lio ethnic sub-cultures, tolerance and the spirit of mutual cooperation are the foundations of daily life practices. Even though there are various ethnicities listed above in Ende district, the value of tolerance is very high between religious communities. And never experience conflict.

Based on the expression tolerance between religious communities according to Carlile (2020), it is the ability of individuals or communities to accept differences in religious beliefs or spiritual beliefs held by other people with an open and respectful attitude. Furthermore, according to Khotimah (2013), tolerance between religious communities also includes the ability to treat other people well and not discriminate based on the religion or spiritual beliefs held. Tolerance between religious communities is needed to create a harmonious and mutually respectful society amidst the diversity of religions and beliefs that exist within it. Based on the explanation above, it can be deemed that tolerance between religious communities is the ability of individuals or communities to accept differences in religious beliefs or spiritual beliefs held by other people with an open and respectful attitude. In order to create religious harmony in society, the right approach is needed in resolving differences in religious beliefs and conflicts, one of which is inter-religious dialogue. Tolerance education from an early age is also important in forming tolerant attitudes in children so that a harmonious and peaceful society can be created.

The researchers intend to investigate the tolerance of the Ende people in their daily lives with the aim of finding out more deeply the extent to which the Ende ethnic group lives in tolerance between religious communities. Due to various ethnicities and religions, people's lives are seen to be very harmonious and cooperative in all aspects.

## 2. METHODS

The paper employs explanatory and descriptive approach. It is a type of explanatory research on the implementation of tolerance in the Ende ethnic community, using a descriptive approach. It is a method developed to investigate a phenomenon that has not been researched before or has not been explained well before in a precise way. It aims to provide details about where small amounts of information can be found. Data collection was carried out over a certain period of time by classifying informants, such as religious leaders, community leaders, government and the wider community. Data collection techniques are observation, interviews and documentation. According to (Sugiyono, 2017), explanatory research is a research method that aims to explain the position of the variables being studied and the influence between one variable and other variables. It is applied to test the proposed hypothesis. It is expected that this research can explain the relationship and influence between the independent and dependent variables in the hypothesis.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Multicultural Aspect of Ende

Ende Regency is situated in the province of East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, as stated in the Map below. It is right on Flores Island. The district capital is located in Ende City. It has many tourist attractions, namely natural tourism such as Kelimutu, cultural tourism and historical tourism. At the end of 2023, the population of Ende will be 280,328 people. The area of Ende district is 2,085.24 (BPS Ende, 2022).



**Figure 1. the population of Ende**

Sources: The administration of Ende, accessed in 2024

Ende has been nicknamed "Pancasila City", because it was once the birthplace of Pancasila which was formulated by the First President of the Republic of Indonesia, Ir. Soekarno during his exile in the Dutch colonial era. The Ende region is the largest city/district on Flores Island based on the number of residents in the city. This city consists of 5 sub-districts, namely Ende sub-district, South Ende sub-district, North Ende sub-district, East Ende sub-district and Central Ende sub-district (Kemenparekraf/Baparekraf RI, 2022).

It consists of 21 sub-districts, 23 sub-districts and 255 villages. And specifically, Ende City consists of 5 sub-districts, 16 sub-districts and 41 villages. Ende society has ethnic and religious diversity. In 2023, the population of Ende city will be 106,315 people with a population density of 1,380 people/km<sup>2</sup>. In detail, the majority of the population is Christian, namely 61.84%, of which Catholics are 57.06% and Protestants are 4.78%. The majority are Muslim, namely 37.98%, and a small portion are Hindu, namely 0.14%, Buddhist 0.02%, and Confucian 0.00% (Akbar, 2021).

The researcher's view of the city of Ende is known to have a lot of historical content. Some call it a city of struggle, a city of education, a city of Pancasila (S. & Roe, 2021), and in this article it is also called a city of tolerance. It is called the city of struggle and the city of Pancasila, referring to the historical moment when Sukarno experienced a period of exile and was exiled to Ende, for 4 years, from 14 January 1934 to 18 October 1938. Meanwhile, in the Ende Tengah sub-district, which was the research location, based on data BPS 2022, there are 26,509 people who are Catholic, 18,584 people who are Muslim, 5,436 people who are Protestant, 2,367 people who are Hindu, 111 people who are Buddhist, 10 people and 1 person who is Confucian (BPS Ende, 2022). With the diverse religions of the people of Central Ende, daily life is very harmonious, and is based on mutual respect and mutual respect.

It is recognized by the people of Ende that inter-religious harmony in Ende is the best of all regions in Flores. There are three religions that have large numbers of followers, namely Catholicism, Islam and Christianity. These religions have succeeded in creating such harmony, especially the first two religions, namely Catholicism and Islam. And also Hindus, Buddhists and Confucians in small numbers. The Ende community also consists of several tribes such as the Lio tribe, Ende tribe, Makassar, Chinese, Arab, Madurese, Javanese, Padang (Murtadho, 2015).

Murtadho added that according to a trader from Padang he met in the area, Ende was the safest area in Flores, all parties contributed to creating religious harmony. If there is a slight commotion that has the potential for racial unrest, then all parties will quickly resolve it. Previously, this Padang trader had traded in Ngada, but conflicts often occurred there which made immigrants uncomfortable, so he finally decided to move to Ende Regency. The Ende community, according to (Murtadho, 2015), has succeeded in creating religious harmony in such a way. It is rare to hear of religious conflicts occurring in the area. Even if there is conflict, it is more likely to occur due to competition between existing clans or families. Each clan or fam wants its existence to be recognized. For this reason, each clan competes with each other to gain recognition from other parties. This happens in every religious group, not only Islam, but among Catholics. This also causes local people not to easily accept ideas or leadership from outsiders.

Based on an interview with the community, Mrs. Maria she stated that life in the city of Ende is very peaceful and harmonious even though it coexists with other religions. And on the contrary, what Mrs. Siti Hajar said (January 13 2024) said that living with neighbors of different religions really shows harmony and cooperation in the sense that when there are wedding celebrations, circumcisions and social gatherings, we help each other and work together to make the event a success.

The researchers concluded that based on opinions from the community, the real life of the Ende community has a very high tolerance value. And this has been further reinforced by many media (such as Tribun news, Media Indonesia, Flores Pos, Seword.com, Victory news) in recent years Ende city has often been called an example of a tolerant city. However, Ende's title as a city of tolerance is less popular than Kupang City, which is also part of NTT. However, the reality on the ground is not as described in the media. Hence, the researchers attempt to examine the attitude of tolerance adopted by the people in the city of Ende between religious communities.

Head of the Ende Regency Ministry of Religion Office, Nikolaus Nama Payong, appealed to the religious community in Ende Regency to become pioneers of religious tolerance and harmony. This was conveyed by Nicko Payong to Radio Republik Indonesia, Sunday (24/12/2023). According to Nicko Payong, Ende, the city of the birth of Pancasila, has provided a lot of inspiration for religious tolerance and harmony. He explained that during Christmas and New Year, it was hoped that all religious

communities would contribute to realizing tolerance in their environment. The religious community in Ende district is a society that in my opinion is very open to various differences, and is the basic capital for how to practice Pancasila in everyday life, so that at moments like Christmas and New Year like now, we will discover how tolerance and harmony are realized in Ende city environment.

On the other hand, what was conveyed by the Head of Ministry of Religion for Ende Regency appealed to all religious communities to continue to be pioneers of tolerance. both in the smallest environment in the family, community and then Ende became one of the laboratories of religious harmony in Indonesia. "Hopefully with the momentum of Christmas and other religious holidays we will show how tolerance is a sacred form of our culture in Ende, and that religious communities in Ende do not need to learn to interpret differences because our ancestors have long set an extraordinary example for that. He then invited all religious communities to maintain security and harmony between religious communities on Christmas Day and at the turn of the year, so that the example of tolerance continues to be a reference for living a good national life (Akbar, 2021).

### **Application of Tolerance from Ende's Society**

The life of the people of the city of Ende is very tolerant, respectful of each other, and maintains a sense of diversity which is reflected in the symbol of the Garuda bird. Various religious communities live in harmony and peace with each other, without any sense of disturbing or ridiculing each other because the community realizes that this is the attitude expected by the founders of the Indonesian nation and state. People may have different religions, faiths and beliefs, but are one in humanity. We continue to maintain true brotherhood as the spirit and basis of harmony and maintain tolerance and maintain harmony in Ende Regency. The identity and identity of the Ende Regency religious community, which has long lived a social life that is tolerant and harmonious in diversity. This character of the social and cultural interactions and relations of the Ende people inspired Bung Karno to discover and combine the values that he lives, as beautiful pearls of the nation's philosophy that we know as Pancasila.

According to the Head of the Ende Ministry of Religion, Nikolaus Nuka, there are 4 building commitments in religious life in Ende district, namely: First, the Ministry of Religion for all religions. The state exists to serve all religions. Second, make your religion an inspiration in your work, not an aspiration. Third, building true brotherhood as the basis for religious harmony. Fourth, religious moderation as a style, a characteristic of religious life that chooses the middle path, not extreme left and right.

For instance, on Ende Island, which has a population of around 8,000 people, all of them are Muslims, but they can live in harmony with followers of other religions. Based on an interview with Mr. Antonius, he is a resident of Bajawa, Ngada Regency, Flores, who is Catholic, who cultivated a garden on Ende Island, then married a local resident, then converted to Islam. However, my family is Muslim, but many of my relatives are Catholic. I also have the surname Bajawa which adheres to Catholicism. Harmony between religious communities in Ende is very good. There have never been riots because of SARA, or inflammatory leaflets. Hence, the statement from the informant above is very convincing that the attitude of the people in Ende is that they live in harmony, harmony and mutual respect

In the daily lives of the people in Central Ende, Mrs. Sovia said that their lives do not differentiate between ethnicity, tribe, race, class and the religion that the community adheres to. However, behind that, residents of the area often eat together, do community service, carry out social gathering activities, come together for wedding celebrations and circumcisions. This situation is inversely proportional to some people or groups who react to differences and consider these differences as obstacles to building cooperation, neighbors, and even living together at home. So, what causes the Ende people to have a collective awareness of being able to live side by side and peacefully even though there are many differences between them? This cannot be separated from primordial awareness, that even though they now appear to have differences, in the past, they came from the same blood. So, tolerance in Ende can be said to be as old as the civilization of its people (Usman, 2024).

The practice of tolerance in Ende, to quote Djafar H. Ahmad (Usman, 2024), no longer needs to be discussed, but what needs to be thought about is how to develop it in the future. Djafar realized that the tolerant attitude of the Ende people was an attitude born from the primordial consciousness of one blood. Based on a statement from Mr. Djafar, the researcher explained that the Ende community is connected to a natural attitude of tolerance, a character or attitude of the community that has been

inherent from generation to generation and has developed an attitude of tolerance for the millennial generation.

Based on sociological theory by Bikhu Parekh, it discusses multiculturalism in its most basic elements such as difference and diversity. The differences that are the topic of problems in multiculturalism are differences that are obtained culturally, so that these differences have a structured system of meaning and historicity. In other words, the material of multiculturalism is differences or diversity that are embedded culturally. Parekh describes several forms of cultural diversity in modern society, namely subcultural diversity, perspective diversity and communal diversity (Parekh & C.B., 2008).

According to Parekh, a society that is said to be multicultural is a society that has a diversity of communal and communal perspectives, a diversity of subcultures and communals, all three or just communal diversity (Parekh & C.B., 2008). This is because communities with communal diversity have higher diversity complexity, related to the stability and historicity of each culture within it. Furthermore, a multicultural society is a society that has at least two or more communal diversities.

Parekh's sociological theory is very synchronized with the conditions of multicultural society in Ende. The discussion regarding tolerance between religious communities of various ethnicities is an important part of this study. In a pluralistic society, each cultural community interacts with each other, communicates and builds its own system. The very important thing here is that in the interaction process there is a dialogical process of meaning, messages that are contradicted, combined, or exchanged in position, between the subject and the object of communication in a reciprocal manner.

Based on observation and interview techniques, the researcher drew conclusions that there were several things put forward regarding the application of the character of societal tolerance in the inter-religious sphere, namely: First, we look at other areas, there are also places of worship for every religion. What is unique about the people of Ende city is that the establishment of places of worship is not only carried out by adherents of their religion, but all interfaith communities contribute, in terms of opinions, ideas, construction costs and energy. For example, the Paupire sub-district built a mosque, so the residents, pastoral staff, village officials and the local sub-district were fully assisted by residents who were Catholics, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists and Confucians.

Second, the construction of the church was based on the initiative and contribution of residents who were Muslims, Protestant Christians, Hindus, Buddhists and Confucians, and vice versa. In fact, according to Mr. Yosef Tomi Roe, almost all Muslim and Catholic houses of worship are part of an attitude of tolerance. When building a house of worship there is a term for drinking *ae petu* (hot water) which involves all religious and ethnic groups inviting all figures to contribute and cooperation. This is a form of active tolerance that occurs in Ende. Togetherness and cooperation between residents are very strong. During the construction of places of worship, such as churches, many of the people who prepared food were Muslims.

Third, this event also applies to other events, such as building people's houses and wedding parties. The culture in Ende is that whenever there is a celebration, they always do "drink hot water" (voluntary financial donations). This procession is carried out before a wedding celebration is held, for example, with the aim of gathering the family to help with wedding costs from the man requested by the woman. Likewise, when the residents' houses were built on the first day, the community carried out traditional rituals by the Mosalaki (tribal leader) involving all residents from various elements. And the community's attitude of tolerance is also very visible in the activeness of its citizens working together and helping each other to welcome religious holidays such as Christmas, Eid al-Fitr, Easter and Eid al-Adha.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

It can be deemed that the multicultural Ende ethnic community, consisting of various ethnicities, religions, races and groups. It shows a level of success in implementing an attitude of tolerance because society has never had horizontal conflicts based on differences, whether ethnic, religious or racial. The society is tolerant, harmonious and lives in harmony. Social communication which does not discriminate between religious or ethnic backgrounds such as working in places of worship, every community of other religions cooperates and helps each other among religious adherents, especially from Catholics and Muslims. And also, the construction of residents' houses where on the first day traditional rituals were

carried out by the Mosalaki (tribal leader) involving all residents from various elements. Celebrations of religious holidays, such as Christmas and Eid al-Fitr, which involve mutual respect, appreciation and friendship. Meanwhile, maintaining security is a priority for other religions. And togetherness in the hot water drinking procession (minu ae petu) which is carried out before the wedding is held with the aim of gathering the family to help voluntarily from the men who are requested by the women which is followed by all the residents who are enthusiastic to make the wedding event a success. Conversely, voluntary donations to education, if children experience problems for their final thesis assignment, then they can contribute to each other to make education a success.

The attitude of tolerance carried out by the community is the result of internalization and actualization because every community adheres to a sense of brotherhood even though they have different beliefs. The Ende community's expressions in social interactions in the environment are always heard in local language or mother tongue with the expression *ma'e for wi'a ne ;e tebo kita* (inseparable blood relationship) and also cooperation with the government, religious leaders and traditional leaders.

## 5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

All the aspirations of religious communities and listen to opinions, ideas can be beneficial for the Ende Regency Government in improving the welfare of people from various religions. Strengthening communication attitudes and holding activities related to harmony can be used by the community to strengthen relations between existing religions. Maintaining the existing attitude of tolerance and maintain harmony in social life can be applied by religious leaders and the people of Ende City. Meanwhile, future researchers are expected to study in more depth the aspects of tolerance that exist in the Ende community to develop their beloved region.

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