

IMPROVING RELIGIOUS LITERACY IN MUALLAF IN PITURUH SUB- DISTRICT, PURWOREJO DISTRICT

PENINGKATAN LITERASI AGAMA PADA MUALLAF DI KECAMATAN PITURUH KABUPATEN PURWOREJO

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan pemahaman keagamaan para muallaf di Kecamatan Pituruh Kabupaten Purworejo dan menganalisis strategi pelaksanaan penyuluh Islam dalam meningkatkan literasi agama pada muallaf serta mengidentifikasi faktor pendukung dan faktor penghambat penyuluh agama Islam dalam meningkatkan literasi agama pada muallaf di Kecamatan Pituruh Kabupaten Purworejo. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian lapangan yang berbentuk deskriptif kualitatif. Dalam rangka mendapatkan data yang dibutuhkan, penulis menggunakan teknik observasi partisipatif, wawancara dan dokumentasi. Sumber informasinya adalah kepala KUA dan penyuluh Agama Islam Kecamatan Pituruh dan Muallaf di Kecamatan Pituruh. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi pelaksanaan penyuluhan agama Islam dalam meningkatkan literasi agama pada muallaf adalah ceramah dan silaturahmi. Jenis ceramahnya adalah khutbah Jum'at, ceramah ramadhan dan ceramah majlis taklim. Faktor pendukung penyuluh agama dalam meningkatkan literasi agama pada muallaf yaitu banyaknya majlis taklim yang sudah terbentuk di setiap desa, sarana transportasi yang memadai, banyaknya masjid dan musholla, mayoritas masyarakat beragama Islam dan ormas Islam yang sedang gencar dibentuk. Sedangkan faktor penghambat penyuluh agama islam dalam meningkatkan literasi agama pada muallaf adalah kurangnya jumlah penyuluh, status muallaf dan perbedaan pendapat mengenai agama.

Kata Kunci: strategi penyuluh agama; literasi agama; muallaf

Abstract

This study aims to describe several things. First, the converted religious understanding of in Pituruh Subdistrict, Purworejo Regency. Second, the implementation strategy of Islamic instructors in increasing religious literacy in converts. Third, supporting factors and inhibiting factors of Islamic religious instructors in increasing religious literacy in converts in Pituruh Subdistrict, Purworejo Regency. This study uses field research qualitative descriptive forms. In order to obtain the required data, the authors used participatory observation techniques, interviews and documentation. The source of the information was the head of the Religious Affairs Office (KUA) and Islamic Religious Education instructors in the Pituruh and *Muallaf* sub-districts in the Pituruh sub-district. The results of the study show that the strategy for implementing Islamic religious extension in increasing religious literacy in converts are lectures and hospitality. The types of lectures are Friday sermons, Ramadan lectures and *majlis taklim* lectures. Factors

supporting religious instructors in increasing religious literacy among converts are the large number of *majlis ta'lim* that have been formed in each villages, adequate transportation facilities, the large number of mosques and prayer rooms, the majority of Muslim communities and Islamic mass organizations which are being intensively formed. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors for Islamic religious instructors in increasing religious literacy among converts are the lack of number of instructors, the status of converts and differences of opinion regarding religion.

Keywords: strategy of religious extension; religious literacy; *muallaf*

INTRODUCTION

The findings of the 2020 religious data in Pituruh Sub-district, Purworejo Regency, Central Java, showed that there have been a rapid increase in the number of converted Muslim. This was evidenced by a significant increase in Muslims in Pituruh Sub-district from 46,749 in 2019 to 50,802 out of a total population of 51,191 (BPS, 2022). This means that almost 99% of the population of Pituruh Sub-district was Muslim.

Religion is indispensable in human life. Because with religion, human life will be more meaningful. Religion serves as a guide (which regulates the way of life) for individuals and human groups. Through religion, humans are guided to know right or wrong based on a sense of belief in God. There is no surprise then when religion becomes an identity for certain religious people. Science without religion will cause various crises and disasters. Religion as a true guide to life, must be believed and embraced by someone to solve all problems that cannot be overcome only by human reason (Eliyanto, 2017).

Islam is the most widely practiced religion in Indonesia, abroad and around the world. The development of Islamic propagation from day to day increasingly attracts non-Muslims to embrace Islam (become *muallaf*) (Mulyani, 2012). When a *muallaf* has officially embraced Islam, the need for Islamic education is necessary so that they have direction in learning and practicing Islamic religious knowledge properly and correctly. They also need attention and guidance to be more comfortable and do not regret their decision to convert to Islam.

Although many people have embraced Islam there, not all areas in Pituruh Subdistrict have been reached by religious guidance, religious guidance material is still a lot of ritual *amaliyah* such as *dhikr*, routine *mujahadah* and grave pilgrimage which is carried out at a certain time, Islamic guidance in the form of Islamic material studies is still small, the *muallaf* cannot read and write the Alqur'an properly, cannot perform prayers according to Islamic teachings and knowledge about Islam is still minimal. So that *muallaf* really need intensive religious guidance so that their faith is getting stronger and



knowledge about Islam is also getting deeper.

There is a lot of guidance and direction needed by Muslim converts in deepening their knowledge of Islam. To fulfill all these needs, adequate facilities are needed to support the provision of Islamic educational materials. This is still the responsibility of religious leaders and the local government. So that converts feel comfortable and feel cared for as new Muslims / Muslim women so that regrets do not arise and intend to return to their previous religion.

The government has functional Islamic religious instructors (Civil Servants/*PNS*) and contract workers (*non PNS*). Both have the same main tasks and functions as stipulated in the Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs (KMA) Number 516 of 2003 which became the basis for the work of the Functional Religious Counselor Position, namely conducting and developing religious and development guidance or extension activities through religious language to the community.

Islamic religious instructors are agents of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in order to help carry out the guidance of religious people. They are specifically required to have a clear map and direction of the *da'wah* program. In addition, religious instructors must also know and understand the pluralism of the community in the area under their guidance, as in Pituruh District, Purworejo Regency. Islamic religious instructors must understand the plurality of society starting from differences in

backgrounds (family, tradition, culture, social status, economy, education) that are different. So that the converts feel comfortable and do not regret choosing Islam as the religion of choice after the struggle to leave their previous beliefs in order to become a Muslim.

The final result to be achieved from the implementation of religious guidance is the realization of a community life that has an adequate understanding of its religion which is shown through its committed and consistent practice accompanied by multicultural insights, to realize a harmonious life order and mutual respect for one another. Seeing the complexity of the *muallaf* problem in terms of religious literacy, a special strategy is needed in conducting extension for *muallaf*, competent religious instructors (mastering material, methods, and mastering communication media) because nowadays people are increasingly using sophisticated communication tools, so that extension guidance is not only with classical methods (lectures) but can be with modern methods.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. The research location was at the KUA of Pituruh Subdistrict. Field data collection was conducted from May 22, 2022 to August 22, 2022. Data collection techniques were participatory observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis techniques use data display, data



reduction and verification. From a population of 50,080 Muslims, there are 150 converts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strategy is an overall approach related to the implementation of ideas, planning and execution of an activity within a period of time. Good strategy contains coordination of the work team, has a theme, identifies supporting factors in accordance with the principles of implementing ideas rationally, efficiently in funding and has tactics to achieve goals effectively (Ciptono, 2012). The connection between the title of this research and the understanding in accordance with the author's intention, namely to find out what strategies are applied by Islamic religious instructors in guiding the community in increasing religious literacy in *muallaf*.

Islamic religious instructors are guidance partners of the Directorate General of Islamic Public Guidance as well as the spearhead in carrying out the task of guiding Muslims in achieving a quality and prosperous life inside and out (Romli, 2001). The term extension agent in general is often used for activities to provide information to the public both by government and non-government institutions. In addition, *da'wah* management must also be developed and actualized in accordance with the development of society that is undergoing changes as a result of globalization and increasingly sophisticated technological developments, which result in multidimensional shifts or crises.

The strategy of Islamic religious instructors in carrying out their work in the field of Islamic community guidance can reflect and actualize understanding, appreciation and practice of the values of faith and devotion in the context of life in society, nation and state. Religious literacy according to More is the ability to know and find out the intersection between religion and other lives, such as political, social and cultural life from various points of view (Habibah, 2019). Islamic religious literacy is imperative to be given to *muallaf* so that they are able to adjust to new knowledge and procedure for life as a Muslim. In addition, *muallaf* is someone who has converted, meaning that he has given up his previous beliefs to convert to a new religion (Kurniawan, 2018).

Pituruh is one of the sub-districts in Purworejo Regency, Central Java Province, Indonesia. It borders two neighboring districts, Kebumen to the west and Wonosobo to the north. The government center is located in Pituruh Village. The sub-district office is adjacent to the Pituruh police station, the market, the health center, the Koramil and the Pituruh sub-district religious affairs office. The distance from Pituruh Sub-district to the center of Purworejo Regency is approximately 24 kilometers. The Pituruh sub-district area of 71 km is divided into 49 villages. This sub-district has the second largest number of villages in Purworejo Regency after Ngombol sub-district.



The total population in 2020 was 51,091 people (Muridan, 2022).

Most of the population of Pituruh Sub-district work as farmers, farm laborers, housewives, entrepreneurs and civil servants. Most people of productive age migrate or go to school in big cities such as Jakarta, Bogor, Tangerang, Bekasi (Jabotabek), Bandung, Semarang, Surabaya, Yogyakarta, Surakarta, Purwokerto and a number of big cities outside the island such as Sumatra, Bali and Kalimantan. The majority of the population of Pituruh Sub-district is Muslim. The level of education achieved by the population in this area is up to university although most of them are junior high school graduates.

Based on interviews with community organization leaders, it was explained that the people of Pituruh Subdistrict are almost 100% Muslim, and most of them adhere to the Nahdhatul Ulama school of thought. All NU organizations exist in Pituruh Sub-district, starting from IPNU-IPPNU, Fatayat, Muslimat, GP Ansor, and MWC NU. The NU building was recently inaugurated in Megulunglor village in April 2022. Other faiths such as Muhamadiyah and MTA also exist in Pituruh sub-district.

The results of an interview with the Islamic religious instructor of Pituruh Subdistrict on August 16, 2022 explained that Pituruh Subdistrict in 2021 had 85 mosques, 166 *musholla* 1 protestant church and 1 Catholic church. Each village has an

average of 2 mosques and 3 *mushollas*. It depends on the size of the village. There are also many *majlis taklim* in Pituruh Sub-district, more than two *majlis taklim* that have been formed in each village.

In the implementation of extension guidance by Islamic religious instructors to the people of Pituruh District using several strategies, namely: Lecture and Silatarurahmi Strategies. These types of lecture used are *majlis taklim* lectures, *Friday sermon* lectures and Ramadan lecture, even though often used is the *majlis taklim* lecture. While *Silaturahmi* is one of these strategies that is also considered effective in fostering and developing Muslims. Building relationships is one way to facilitate Islamic religious instructors in conducting religious guidance to the community. This friendship approach make the community feel moved to ask or consult with the instructors about Islamic religious knowledge without shame because there is already a closeness between them. In realizing a close relationship between extension workers and the community, it can also be through social media, making it easier for extension workers in the process of building relationships, where people will be open about their situation and conditions.

It is very important to be grateful for Islamic religious instructors in Pituruh Subdistrict in the implementation of extension guidance to the community. Currently, there are



many supporting factors to facilitate extension guidance activities such as the activities of *majelis taklim*, adequate transportation facilities, many mosques and *mushollas* and the majority of the community is Muslim. To examine in detail the following analysis is related to the supporting factors for increasing religious literacy through extension.

Majelis Taklim

Pituruh sub-district already has many *majlis taklim* formed in each village which are guided by religious leaders in each *majlis taklim*. The extension workers only need to stay in touch and ask permission from the supervisor or head of the *majlis taklim* to ask for time to provide extension to the congregation.

Adequate Transportation Facilities

Transportation facilities in Pituruh Sub-district between one village and another are very good, almost all roads have been paved so that it is not an obstacle for extension workers to carry out extension guidance to the community in the target villages.

Number of Mosques and Prayer Rooms

Mosques and prayer rooms are important religious facilities for religious believers in a place. Apart from being a symbol of the existence of religious adherents, mosques and prayer rooms are also places for religious broadcasting and places of worship. This means that the function of the mosque and *musholla* in addition to being a place of worship are expected to provide a

strong and directed encouragement for the congregation, so that the spiritual life of diversity for religious adherents could be better. Pituruh Sub-district has 85 mosques and 166 *mushollas* located in 49 villages. It is an extraordinary supporting factor for Islamic religious instructors to carry out extension guidance to the community throughout Pituruh Sub-district. It only requires friendly communication with the imam of the mosque and *musholla* to coordinate the schedule for giving guidance to the congregation.

The Majority of the Community is Muslim

According to Statistics Indonesia as BPS (Badan Pusat Statistik, the Central Bureau of Statistics) Purworejo Regency in 2020, a total of 50,082 people in Pituruh embraced Islam from a total of 51,191 people in Pituruh District. It is almost 100 percent of the Pituruh community is a Muslim population, so it is not so difficult for Islamic religious instructors to provide extension guidance because administratively they already believe in Allah SWT (Islam) like a plant that has grown with Islamic stems and stalks. The task of the counselor is to water and fertilize so that the roots of Islam grow stronger in the souls of these converts by increasing religious literacy through the implementation of extension guidance with various methods so that people are more confident and stable in their hearts in Islam.



Islamic Organizations

Islamic community organizations in Pituruh Sub-district, especially women's organizations, are currently being intensively formed in various branches. Fatayat NU under the Pituruh Branch has now formed 33 branches from 49 villages. The same applies to the *Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)*, Anzor Youth Movement (*Gerakan Pemuda Anzor*), *Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)* branches and Multipurpose Anzor Front (*Barisan Anzor Serbaguna*) organizations. Under the leadership of the Muslimat Pituruh Branch and the Pituruh Sub-District Vice Branch Council of Nahdhatul Ulama. There are many routine meetings held by branch and sub-branch administrators from the five organizations. That is where the Islamic religious instructors can enter to carry out extension guidance from one branch to another. Moreover, some of the instructors include being administrators of the mass organization. It must be easier access for extension workers to members of mass organizations so that the reach of extension is wider and more people are touched by Islamic religious extension.

All activities in any form, apart from supporting factors, must have inhibiting factors. But inhibiting factors should not be a barrier that thwarts the activity. All must be overcome so that activities can be carried out as intended. Likewise, the extension guidance activities in improving religious literacy to the community or converts for religious instructors there also found several included inhibiting factors.

Lack of Extension Workers

The number of religious instructors, which is only 9 people in a sub-district that has 49 villages with a Muslim population of around 50,802 people, certainly requires energy, time and guidance materials that are really prepared. One counselor must guide 5-6 villages. This means that in a week they must provide extension guidance to the community in one assisted village to another assisted village. The solution that can be done for this analysis is to increase the number of instructors so that the instructors are not too overwhelmed to face the community gathered at *majlis taklim*. Extension workers can work with local religious leaders. Moreover, there is a WhatsApp group with Quran teachers in Pituruh sub-district whose members are mostly religious leaders, so it is very easy for both to coordinate and share tasks in the implementation of religious guidance to the community.

Muallaf Status

As explained earlier, *muallaf* is someone who has just embraced Islam, of course they still lack knowledge about Islam, both laws and procedures for worship according to Islamic law. Moreover, in this day and age there are many radical sects and ideas that have sprung up. This is one of the challenges for *muallaf* and Islamic religious instructors in Pituruh sub-district in strengthening their faith so that they are not easily carried away by the current which will make *muallaf* enter the hardline Islamic group and deviate from the true teachings of Islam.



The solution that can be done for the above problem is that the community is given special guidance, especially about the basics of Islam, through special channels from Islamic religious instructors, so that people can distinguish which sects are appropriate to follow and which are not appropriate to follow. Given the number of posts or content in the name of religion, the public should be informed of the differences between true and false content according to Islamic law according to the source. So that people do not easily believe and be influenced by something that has no clear source.

Differences of Opinion on Religion

Linguistically, dissent in English studies can be translated into a variety of ways, namely, *difference of opinion*, *distinction* or *controversy*. Differences of opinion (*ikhtilaf*) is something that is common, even being sunatullah or human nature. However differences of opinion about Islam must be dealt with wisely and prudently, not to be a priori by immediately blaming one opinion and justifying another opinion. A priori attitude can lead to divisions among the people.

To reduce the consequences of differences of opinion, individual or group fanaticism about understanding or religious sects should be considered in order to create harmony in society. The solution is that people should be able to respond to differences by promoting tolerance and understanding each other without first judging others. Invite people who have different opinions with

religious instructors to dialogue and discussion, do not let just because of different opinions we mislead and disbelieve others. Make differences as a unifying diversity to realize a society that upholds tolerance in religion.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the understanding of the *muallaf* in Pituruh Subdistrict about Islam is still minimal, they cannot read and write the Qur'an properly and correctly, cannot perform prayers according to Islamic teachings. So it is necessary to increase religious literacy for *muallaf* through strategies implemented by Islamic religious instructors, such as lectures in *majelis taklim*, *Friday sermons*, Ramadan lectures and *silaturrahmi*. These strategies are quite effective because of the supportive things such as the many *majelis taklim* that have been formed, adequate transportation facilities, many mosques and *mushollas*, the majority of the community is Muslim and many Islamic community organizations have been formed at the village level. However, there are inhibiting factors in carrying out the strategy of increasing religious literacy in converts, namely the lack of instructors, the status of converts and differences of opinion regarding religion.

Therefore, researchers provide suggestions and recommendations to Islamic religious instructors, especially in Pituruh Subdistrict, Purworejo



Regency, to be more active in approaching the community, cooperating with religious leaders and Koranic teachers so that religious activities carried out run smoothly and more people receive religious guidance and immediately create a special extension program for converts. Meanwhile, the recommendation for the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs is to increase the number of Islamic religious instructors in every sub-district throughout Indonesia in order to manage the religious literacy gap that exists in the lower community, especially the converts. This can be adjusted to the number of villages and *muallaf* data in the sub-district.

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