

Lasem “The City Of Tolerance”: A Role Model Of Harmonious Multicultural Life To Develop Tolerance In Indonesia

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Abstract—The current phenomenon of intolerant issues become an obstacles for the human beings’ relationship in Indonesia. We must notice that it has hurt the diversity. There are many events which express people’s egoism then result in intolerance. It seems really obvious to see the separation of choice between “here and “there”, between “me” and “you”, all of which have marginalized the nature of diversity. The tendency of those intolerances must be seen as a serious problem. In addition, Indonesia has a strong foundation of tolerance through historical experience in acculturation and the nature of diversity. In a number of regions, diversity is supported by the atmosphere of tolerance between national elements that is clearly exposed, and that is a reality that diversity plays a role as natural interaction dynamics and attitude. One of the areas which can be a model is Lasem, Rembang, an area which is located in north coast of Central Java. With the condition of its diversity especially in religion, Lasem is able to maintain the diversity of life which prioritises Pancasila values; therefore, it ends up with harmonious, safe, and peace life, and also can perform the values of cooperation and tolerance. This research aims to know how the diversity of life based on cultures values in multiculturalism society in Lasem, Rembang is, and what the model of harmony of multicultural in Lasem is. In this research was found that Lasem is the region which is able to manage the diversity to be a harmonious life. Lasem societies always prioritise *ukhuwah basyariah* and *ukhuwah wathoniyah* to create the dynamic and harmonious life. Lasem is proper to be role model of diversity in Indonesia and to be *baladun thayyibatun warabbun ghafur* based on the spirit of Pancasila. Some strategies in developing the harmony in multiculturalism which can be taken from Lasem are: (1) Strengthen the religious studies of every society, (2) Improving the role of community figures and leaders, (3) improving the role of government, (4) Developing the open minded and good relationship among societies, (5) improving the solidarity in facing external threats (6) Affiliating the residence without any insulation and grouping, (7) Improving the cooperation among multicultural elements of society in their everyday life, (8) Improving the acculturation among people.

Keywords :Multiculturalism, Harmony, Lasem, Tolerance

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia which has *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* always prides on being a tolerant nation to do interaction with each other. The diversity of tribes, races, religions, and ideologies can be harmoniously integrated by the spirit of "unity in diversity" This pride is proved by the existence of diversity that goes naturally and does not harm each other. Every time there is friction, it can always be resolved with the spirit of its diversity, even though in the development of post-reform national interactions in 1998, we frequently felt and saw many conflicts which were triggered by egoism.

Virtually, we have already experienced to live a life in diversity. However, The current phenomenon of intolerance issues become an obstacles for the human beings’ relationship in Indonesia. We must notice that it has hurt the diversity. There are many events which express people’s egoism then result in intolerance. It seems really obvious to see the separation of choice between “here and “there”, between “me” and “you”, all of which have marginalized the nature of diversity.

The condition of various societies causes positive and negative impact. The examples of negative impact are there frequently happens a fight in ethnics, the riot in religions, and other social events which are caused by diversity or multiculturalism. During 2005, there were riots in 1.655 villages or about 2,37 percent of the total villages in the administrative region in Indonesia. Those incidents went up to 2.283 villages (3,03 percent) in 2008. Along with the increase of crimes in many areas of Indonesia, in 2011 the riots happened again in 2.562 villages (3,26 percent) [1] Those incidents occurred in that time included fights between groups of citizens, fights between villagers / villages, fights between society and officers, fights between students and fights between Inter-ethnic group. The high number of fights between groups shows that there has not been an awareness of multiculturalism either in Indonesia or in the world.

The problem is not only triggered by internal friction between elements of the nation, but also is a part

of the reflection of this globalisation era as if no longer geographically isolated because of the ease of information access through technology. There are ideological networks to develop various ideologies in the world.

The tendency of those intolerances must be seen as a serious problem. In addition, Indonesia has a strong foundation of tolerance through historical experience in acculturation and the nature of diversity. In a number of regions, diversity is supported by the atmosphere of tolerance between national elements that is clearly exposed, and that is a reality that diversity plays a role as natural interaction dynamics and attitude. One of the areas which can be a model is Lasem, Rembang, an area which is located in north coast of Central Java where the religion of most residents is Islam. The people live peacefully and get along with each other. Sociologically, it is difficult to determine who the natives of Lasem are, whether they are Javanese ethnic or chinese ethnic, or both of those ethnics, it is due to the chinese ethnic has merged as a part of the natives. In trading activities, the popular one is batik lasem which is the main source of economy. The relation between entrepreneurs, traders, artisans, and all elements of batik business in Lasem such as workers who do various types of tasks in batik shops illustrates the power of tolerance of society without discrimination.

Besides the dynamics of daily life in Lasem, Tolerance concretely has the track records which are from the history of archipelago in that city through heritage inheritance, such as mosques, temples, churches, settlements of ancient Chinese houses, completed with all the dynamics of their daily lives. Heritages reflect the answer. When in some places, The beauty of diversity is hurt by intolerances, in contrast; that tendency does not happen in Lasem. The diversity goes well and is maintained in that way, and it becomes the part of life.

The government of Rembang and also groups of historical and cultural activists in Lasem make that potential of diversity as a pride which is oriented to be a role model of tolerance for other areas in Indonesia. They release the slogan of Lasem "The City of Tolerance" which will make Lasem as a role model for multicultural life based on the ideology of unity in diversity for other regions.

Basically, What has really existed in Lasem is the small part of Indonesia. Lesem as the city of tolerance tries to give the representation about small part of Indonesia. It represents the real condition of life in Indonesia with its multiculturalism. Moreover, it represents life which maintains the values of tolerance and cooperation among societies with different ethnics, religions, or races, based on the spirit of Pancasila and Bhineka Tunggal Ika.

The problems which emerge in multiculture society which has the various understandings are:

1. How is the life of diversity based on cultural values in a multicultural society in Rembang?
2. What is the model of harmony of multiculturalism life in Lasem, Rembang?

II. RESEARCH METHOD

The location of this research is Rembang, Central Java. Rembang regency becomes the city of tolerance and it is centered in Lasem. Lasem was chosen because of the characteristic of its location. In Lasem, there are practices of tolerance which end up with the harmony of chinese ethnic, Arab descendants, and javanese muslim students. That harmony and tolerance is shown in form of culture which becomes the role model for society to develop tolerance in their lives. The character of diversity in that location is reflected from daily life which becomes an attractive role model.

The subjects in this research were individual or group or community which become the target of the research. The subject of the research was divided into 3 groups, they are explained as follows;

- (a) The residents of Lasem
- (b) Lasem's culture guard community
- (c) Islam figures and Khong Hu Cu figures
- (d) Javanese, Chinese, and Arab leaders

The subjects of the research were heterogenous and they had their own characteristic and also they had the adequate knowledge about diversity and tolerance, so that the information could be easily taken from those subject categories. Written references; Written data could be in the form of books, scientific magazines, sources from archives, personal documents, and legal documents, such as documents, announcements, letters, banners, photographs, statistical data, historical documents of ethnic's arrival, and popular journals that had already published in mass media.

The data obtained was analyzed by using three processes [2], namely the process of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The interpretation was then carried out, namely by explaining the signs and looking for the correlation between those signs that have been found in the field. The analysis technique in the research is the interactive analysis of the three components above to produce data on the superiority of distinguishing factors, the role of mass media in developing the trace of history in Lasem, and also the arrangement of life of diversity to be the role model for societies.

III. DISCUSSION

1. Potrait of Diversity in Lasem

a. The Harmony of Multicultural Life in Lasem

Based on the history, Lasem is well known as Bandar city since majapahit era until japanese colonization. During majapahit era, Lasem became a small kingdom which was under Bhre Lasem government, that also appointed Syahbandar to be the one who had the

authority towards the economy of ports in this city (Khamzah, 1920; Uniya, 2008 cited in Aziz, 2014). In addition, Lasem is also known as small china. It is because of the similarity of chinese architecture and the number of chineses who have lived in this city. A small china is the name which indicates Lasem's identity as chinatown where chinese people grow up and live there. Eventhough they grow up in the area of chinatown, they do not only communicate with their internal group, but also they get along with javanese ethnic, Arab community, and muslim students. Lasem which is as a chinatown, where the miniatur is located in Karangturi. It is because of many heritages of ancient houses and most chinese people live in that village. In Karangturi, there is settlement of chinese which is known as "Mahbong", there is also islamic boarding school named "Pesantren Kauman". Karangturi's chinatown is one of the chinatowns in Lasem besides in Babagan and Dasun villages. These three villages become the popularity of chinese and interaction between chineses in Lasem. On the other hand, Kauman islamic boarding school is an islamic boarding school which is located in the chinese's settlement in Karangturi, it becomes one of the places to interact and communicate between chineses and muslim students (santri).

In the 1950s, many chineses lived in Karangturi. However, most of them moved to other cities to get into university, marry, and run business. The population density per kilometer in Lasem is 1,095. Lasem is a very multicultural area. Lasem which consists of twenty villages with a total area of 4,503 hectares consists of 49,320 inhabitants. From that population, 46,671 are Muslims, 1,299 are Christians, 1,092 are Catholics, 15 are Hindus, 188 are Buddhists, and 55 are Confucian [3] In Lasem's social structure, there is a typology that indicates cultural differences, namely Chinese and Moslem students. The Chinese in Lasem are descendants of their ancestors who have been in Lasem since the XV century. Chinese immigrants from China in the XV century were mostly Muslims, among them are the people from Cheng Ho's group named Bi Nang Un with his wife whose name is Na Li Ni in 1413 (Uniya, 2008). The strong generation of Chinese Muslims can be seen in Oei Ing Kiat era, who is Duke of Lasem who is a Muslim Chinese. Oei Ing Kiat is a Muslim Chinese who get along with nobles in Lasem. He made firend with Raden Panji Margono, who later mobilized the power in the yellow war against the VOC regime.

Lasem keeps track of a long history of Javanese, Arabic, and China, it was pioneered by Bi Nang Un and his wife Na Li Ni. They built the settlement of chinese in lasem. On the other hand, Lasem's residents believed that Bi Nang Un was one of the subordinates of Cheng Ho admiral. After that, the arrival of chineses was dominated by Hokkian people which were confucian. Lasem then became port city, It became the attractive place for chineses who were keen on trading. In Sumanto Al-Qurtuby's notes, it is mentioned that some subordinates

of Cheng Ho lived in lasem to supply food for crew members from china and they taught the religion of islam.

b. The Development of Islamic Boarding School (Pesantren)

The high level of social interaction between Chinese and Javanese who are mostly muslim students have made the inter-religious people developed. Data obtained from the Office of the Ministry of Religion of Rembang Regency states that even though Lasem residents were dominated by Chinese ethnic, the number of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) continued to grow. Until 2017, there were 28 boarding schools which can accomodate up to thousands of muslim students [4]

The history of Lasem's islamic boarding school cannot be separated from the role of Kiai Ma'Shum. He is a pioneer who builds pesantren Al-Hidayat in Dasun, Lasem. Besides teaching the muslim students, he also gets along with the residents of Lasem, not only javanese but also chinese. The neighborhood where he lives is in the area of Dasun's Chinatown, which in the previous century was the Lasem Chinese residential area. Kiai Ma'Shum is known as tolerant person to other people in Lasem, it can be seen from the interaction with the people around his residence by teaching religious studies and daily help. Kiai Ma'Shum is a firm person, if there is a provocation, for example, he rejects the establishment of Christian Chinese schools around islamic boarding school in Lasem [5]

Besides Al Hidayat islamic boarding school, there is also Kauman Islamic Boarding School which is located behind Lasem Mosque, in the middle of Chinese houses in Mahbong area. This islamic boarding school is a traditional educational institution for muslim students, which was established in 2003 in Kauman village, Lasem. This pesantren (islamic boarding school) is located in Kauman, Lasem, which is behind the Great Mosque of Lasem, which lies in Chinatown that has been around for a long time. Thus, the Kauman boarding school is in the middle of the Lasem Chinatown area. This boarding school is in an old house building, owned by a Chinese businessman which was for a Soda factory. This house was bought when the owner moved to Singapore. Therefore this Kauman boarding school is in an old building full of Chinese ornament.

This islamic boarding school is established by KH Zaim Ahmad (His nickname is Gus Zaim), who is KH Ma'Shum's grandson. Gus Zaim is one of the young priests in Lasem, who has wide relation with chineses. In this islamic boarding school, the relation between muslim students and chinese goes well as harmonious interaction, this is proved that they often meet each other to have conversation in the hall of islamic boarding school. On the west side of the school, there is security office which is built with pagoda architecture. At glance, this pagoda seems like small pagoda which is built by Gus Zaim along with Chineses of Karangturi.

The head of Islamic boarding school has many roles; priest, religious figure, also tourism ambassador of Rembang. If tolerant life is used as destination for every person who wants to take in the good example of social interaction in Lasem, Gus Zaim is proper one to be a role model. He becomes the source of history and he practices that tolerance in society and daily life. Besides Gus Zaim, another figure who also becomes a pioneer of harmony in religions in Lasem is Mr. Sigit Wicaksono. He is a Chinese elder in Lasem. His real name is Njo Tjoen Hian, he always campaigns the harmony in religion in Lasem with Gus Zaim.

c. Lasem as The Role Model of The Harmony of Multiculturalism

The explanation above shows that the condition of Lasem societies is multicultural with the different religion, tribe, and race. That diversity is well accepted by Lasem residents, so that it can create harmonious life, peace, and they are tolerant to each other. The societies believe that the diversity is a gift from God to develop their personality to be the human beings who respect each other even though they have their own beliefs, religions, tribes, or races. This can be a good example for other societies in developing harmony in diversity in their areas. Some strategies in developing the harmony of multiculturalism which can be taken from Lasem are:

1) Strengthen the religious studies of every society

Every religion must have good values that instruct the people to love their fellow humans and respect each other. The religious studies of each religion teaches human values to develop mutual love and affection for each other by prioritizing the principle of *ukhuwah basyariyah* (unity of humanity) and *ukhuwah wathoniyah* (united nations). The majority of Lasem people who are Muslim students causes them to be able to practice their religious studies related to tolerance.

2) Improving the role of religious leaders and community leaders

Religious leaders and community leaders do not only play a role to give advice to the people to develop the tolerance but also play a role in daily life by giving examples of tolerance to the societies, they often discuss with people from other religions and determine deliberation in solving problems in Lasem. The examples are Kiai Ma'shum, Gus Zaim and Mr. Sigit Wicaksono.

3) Improving the role of government

The role of the local government is able to shape the tolerance with policies that can strengthen relations between religious communities through

deliberations which involve different societies, and activities that can enhance community solidarity such mutual cooperation, welcoming parties from officials, Laseman celebrations which shows Lasem cultures, and so on.

4) Developing an open minded and the atmosphere of good relationship among the societies

Lasem societies which live in the city and coast does not necessarily make them individualistic. The attitude of societies that opens up leads them to the acculturation of culture, even there is a lot of amalgamation among people of different religions. The societies always communicate with each other in their everyday lives; therefore, it increases their relationship.

5) Increasing community solidarity in facing external threats

Lasem's history is no less important in fostering tolerance between religious people in Lasem. This historical story is closely related to the story of the Lasem people's struggle against colonialists for centuries. In fighting the colonialists, all elements of the Lasem societies of different religions united and collaborated to chase away the Dutch colonial powers in Lasem. The peak of resistance to the Dutch colonialists occurred in the Yellow War which at that time Lasem was led by Duke Lasem Oei Ing Kiat, Major Raden Panji Margono, and Tan Kee We who ended the defeat for the Lasem people and later the story was enshrined to Gie Yong Bio pagoda. Therefore, it became the spirit for Lasem societies to live in harmony and diversity.

6) Affiliating the residence without any insulation and grouping

The harmony between religions in Lasem is supported by an integrated residential location pattern. This condition is a reflection of how tolerant the people with different religions are. Unlike in other regions, where there is a real limitation between the area where Javanese and Chinese live, there is no such thing in Lasem. Lasem societies can live peacefully and get along with their neighbours which have different ethnics without segregation and agglomeration efforts. In Lasem, Chinese houses are spread evenly throughout the city and mixed with Javanese architectural houses. It is undeniable that the structure and pattern of settlements in Lasem are aspects that contribute to the integration and harmony of multicultural in Lasem. Not only the houses, but there are also mosques and other holy places that are built close together without segregation and separation. Many Islamic boarding

schools stand majestically in the middle of buildings with Chinese architecture without giving negative stigma and prejudice among religious people.

7) Improving the cooperation among multicultural elements of society in their everyday life

This collaboration can be reflected in daily life, one of which is through economic activities where the Lasem societies have different social statuses with different levels of the economy. Differences in economic structure actually add to the diversity in Lasem. The Chinese usually have a higher structure and economic status than the natives. However, these conditions do not affect to social jealousy and social conflict in the community related to social mobility and the status quo. Instead, they can work together and help each other.

8) Improving the acculturation among people

The harmony between people who have different religions and ethnics is not only reflected in their activities but also it creates an acculturation and cultural assimilation that can be beautifully integrated. Acculturation and acclimation have graced various aspects of Lasem's life. The acculturation can be seen in terms of language, in terms of architecture, in Lasem Batik art, in terms of rituals or traditions there has been acculturation and assimilation between Javanese culture and Chinese, and in terms of people's names. In addition to acculturation, there are also many amalgamations among different communities in Lasem so that they increase the diversity and multiculturalism in Lasem.

The Lasem residents are fully aware of the love of their area so that they have a perspective to maintain each other with the slogan "Lasem Milik Bersama" ("Lasem is ours"). This slogan is intended to open a space for interaction between the Lasem people so that it can create solidarity between them to work together to maintain the security in Lasem. This is an implication of the existence of mutual ownership, mutual care, and mutual need among religious people in Lasem, Therefore, Lasem becomes a harmonious and safe area.

IV. CONCLUSION

Lasem is known as small china because of its similarity of chinese architecture and the number of chineses who lived in this city. Eventhough they grow up in the area of chinatown, in fact that chineses in Lasem do not only communicate with their internal group. Instead, they get along with javanese, arabic community, and muslim students. The high level of social interaction between chinese and javanese which are mostly muslim students make the people who have different religions open up and developed. The history of Lasem's islamic boarding school cannot be separated from the role of Kiai Ma'Shum. He is a pioneer who builds pesantren Al-Hidayat in Dasun, Lasem. Besides teaching the muslim students, he also gets along with the residents of Lasem and he becomes the pioneer of harmony in multiculturalism life.

Some strategies in developing the harmony in multiculturalism which can be taken from lasem are: (1) Strengthen the religious studies of every society, (2) Improving the role of community figures and leaders, (3) improving the role of government, (4) Developing the open minded and good relationship among societies, (5) improving the solidarity in facing external threats (6) Affiliating the residence without any insulation and grouping, (7) Improving the cooperation among multicultural elements of society in their everyday life, (8) Improving the acculturation among people. Lasem societies always prioritise ukhkuwah basyariah and ukhuwah wathoniyah to create the dynamic and harmonious life. Lasem is proper to be role model of diversity in Indonesia and to be *baldatun thayyibatun warabbun ghafur* based on the spirit of pancasila.

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