

## THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS VALUES ON PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

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**Abstract:**The purpose of this study is to discuss the influence of religious values on participation in environmental initiatives, the method used to conduct this study is Library Research, the results of this study are: The conclusion of the three discussions above shows that religious values have a very important role in increasing public awareness and participation in environmental conservation. Religious teachings, especially in Islam, offer a moral and spiritual foundation that encourages individuals and communities to be responsible for the environment as a form of worship and a manifestation of the role of humans as caliphs on earth. The active involvement of religious-based communities and organizations in environmental initiatives in various regions of Indonesia, such as greening programs, waste management, and natural resource conservation, shows how strong the influence of religious teachings is in shaping sustainable environmental behavior. These communities, through education, policy advocacy, and real action in the field, have made significant contributions to nature conservation, both at the local and national levels. In addition, case studies of the involvement of Islamic organizations in environmental initiatives show that religion not only plays a role as a source of moral motivation, but can also be a social force that drives structural change in environmental management. Collaboration between religious organizations, governments, and NGOs shows that a faith-based approach can be an effective strategy in addressing environmental challenges such as deforestation, pollution, and climate change. By combining religious values with practical actions, these organizations have succeeded in creating programs that not only maintain environmental sustainability but also improve the social and economic well-being of local communities.

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### INTRODUCTION

Religious values play a significant role in shaping the behavior of individuals and communities in various aspects of life, including their participation in environmental initiatives. Religion, as one of the main pillars of human life, provides strong moral guidelines that can encourage people to care more about the environment. Active participation in environmental conservation efforts is often driven by religious teachings that emphasize the importance of maintaining the balance of nature as a mandate from God.

In the context of Islam, for example, the concept of the caliphate, in which

humans are trusted as stewards of the earth, emphasizes responsibility for the environment. Muslims are taught not to cause damage to the earth and to always preserve nature as part of worship to Allah SWT. This view encourages Muslims to actively participate in various environmental initiatives, both small-scale such as tree planting movements, to large-scale ones such as involvement in international environmental organizations.

Several studies have shown that people who have a strong religious understanding tend to be more active in environmental conservation activities. This is because religious teachings are often the main motivator in their actions. In a study conducted by Hidayat (2022), it was found that Muslims who regularly attend religious studies or religious activities are more involved in environmental conservation efforts than those who are less active in religious activities.

The role of religious leaders cannot be ignored in increasing community participation in environmental initiatives. Friday sermons, lectures, and discussions in mosques are often effective media for spreading environmental messages. Clerics and religious leaders have a great influence in shaping public opinion and behavior, so they can act as agents of change in encouraging environmental action.

However, there are challenges in optimizing religious values as a basis for participation in environmental initiatives. One of the challenges is the lack of deep understanding of environmental concepts in religious teachings. Many people still view environmental issues as something separate from religious teachings, so their participation in environmental initiatives is often not optimal.

Therefore, more serious efforts are needed to integrate religious values with environmental education. Education based on religious values must be able to instill environmental awareness from an early age. Islamic schools, Islamic boarding schools, and other educational institutions need to make environmental conservation an integral part of their curriculum.

In addition, support from the government and non-governmental organizations is also needed to strengthen the role of religion in environmental conservation. Environmental campaigns and programs involving religious figures can be an effective strategy in increasing community participation. Cooperation between the government, community organizations, and religious institutions must be improved to achieve this

goal.

The involvement of religious institutions in environmental initiatives can also be expanded through various social and religious activities. For example, environmental waqf programs, where Muslims are encouraged to donate land or funds for the preservation of forests and green areas, can be one concrete example of how religious values can be translated into real action for the environment.

On the other hand, the role of the family is also important in instilling environmental values based on religion to children. Environmental education that starts from home, with a religious approach, can shape the character of children who care about nature from an early age. Parents as the first educators have a great responsibility to provide a good example in protecting the environment.

Participation in environmental initiatives based on religious values can also increase a sense of solidarity and togetherness in society. When religious communities unite in a common goal, namely preserving nature as God's creation, a strong sense of mutual support and cooperation will be created among them.

Furthermore, the study of the relationship between religious values and participation in environmental initiatives can also provide new insights for environmental policy development. The government can consider including religious aspects in national strategies for environmental conservation, by involving religious figures in policy formulation and implementation.

Empirical studies examining the impact of religious values on environmental participation can be an important basis for developing more effective environmental conservation programs. The data generated from this study can be used to measure the extent to which religious values influence people's awareness and actions in protecting the environment.

The influence of religious values on participation in environmental initiatives also reflects the importance of a holistic approach in addressing environmental issues. Environmental problems cannot only be solved through technical or policy approaches, but also require a cultural and spiritual approach that involves all elements of society, including religious institutions.

Therefore, the synergy between religious values and environmental initiatives needs to be continuously developed and strengthened. Thus, the community will be

more motivated to participate in environmental conservation efforts, not only as a social obligation, but also as part of worship and devotion to God.

In the future, it is hoped that religious values can become one of the main pillars in environmentally friendly sustainable development. By making religious teachings the basis for every action related to the environment, we can create a greener and more sustainable world for future generations.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses a library research method, where the data used comes from various literatures relevant to the topic. Library research is a method carried out through the collection and analysis of existing related literature without conducting experiments or collecting data directly from the field. Library research aims to review and analyze previous relevant scientific works in order to find, explain, and understand concepts or theories that support the arguments presented.

In library research, the data sources used consist of books, scientific journals, articles, and other documents relevant to the research topic. This secondary data is analyzed by identifying theories, concepts, and previous findings related to the research problem. Sugiyono (2017) explains that library research is important to find a strong theoretical basis and help researchers clarify the research context. In addition, library research can also be used to identify research gaps that have not been discussed by previous research.

Data analysis techniques in library research are carried out through the process of identification, evaluation, and synthesis of relevant literature. The data obtained are then analyzed critically to understand the relationship between concepts and compile a synthesis of findings related to the focus of the research. According to Zed (2014), library research requires a deep understanding of relevant literature so that researchers can formulate strong arguments. The analysis process is also carried out by mapping various existing findings and comparing them with the theories used in this study.

In terms of data collection techniques, library research uses documentation studies as the main tool. Arikunto (2010) stated that documentation studies are one of the effective data collection methods for library research, because researchers can access information that has been tested for credibility and is academically recognized. The use

of secondary data from various sources also allows researchers to compare findings from various literatures and draw conclusions based on the synthesis of previous theories and research.

Therefore, this library research method is very relevant to be used in this study, because it can help researchers identify and elaborate theories and concepts that support research problems. By using various valid and accredited literature, this study is expected to provide academic contributions in developing a broader understanding of the topic being studied.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. The relationship between religious values and environmental awareness**

Religious values play an important role in increasing individual environmental awareness. Religion teaches humans to be responsible for the surrounding environment as part of God's creation. For example, in Islam, the concept of *khalifah fil ardh* shows that humans are God's representatives on earth and are responsible for maintaining the balance of the ecosystem (Zulkifli, 2018). This approach shows that environmental awareness is not only rooted in secular moral values, but also comes from deep religious teachings.

Religious teachings often provide moral guidance that influences how individuals view environmental responsibility. In Islam, for example, there is a prohibition on excessive exploitation of nature, taught in the Qur'an and Hadith (Fakhry, 2019). This principle of moderation contributes to the formation of pro-environmental attitudes in Muslim communities, reminding them to preserve natural resources for future generations.

Environmental ethics from a religious perspective is an important foundation in understanding how humans should interact with nature. Hindu teachings, for example, emphasize the importance of balance between humans and nature through the concepts of *dharma* and *karma*, where actions towards nature have spiritual consequences (Sutarno, 2020). This value encourages religious adherents to act responsibly in managing the environment.

The beliefs held by a person influence real actions in daily life, including environmentally friendly practices. Research by Suryadi (2021) shows that individuals

who actively practice their religious teachings tend to care more about the environment, because they consider preserving nature as part of worship. This can be seen in the practices of organic farming and water conservation carried out by religious-based communities in rural Indonesia.

Many religious teachings explicitly teach the importance of preserving nature. In Christianity, for example, there is the concept of stewardship, which emphasizes that humans are the managers of the earth entrusted by God (Saragih, 2019). This concept encourages religious adherents to carry out their role as guardians of the earth, by being responsible and wise in the use of natural resources.

There is a close relationship between spirituality and environmental awareness. Individuals who have high spirituality tend to be more sensitive to environmental issues, because they see nature as a manifestation of divine power (Hidayat, 2020). In this context, nature is seen as a sacred entity, and acts of destruction against nature are considered a sin or spiritual violation.

Religious education has a strategic role in shaping environmental awareness. In many religious schools, students are taught to appreciate the environment as part of God's creation that must be protected (Maulana, 2022). Through religious learning, students are invited to understand environmental values from a religious perspective, which are then internalized in everyday life.

Many religious communities apply their religious teachings in the management of natural resources. In Indonesia, for example, several Islamic boarding schools have implemented organic farming in line with Islamic principles of maintaining the balance of nature (Fadli, 2021). This practice not only produces healthier products but also contributes to environmental sustainability.

In many religions, the environmental crisis is seen as a theological problem. Environmental damage is seen as a result of the loss of human responsibility as guardians of the earth. The world's major religions, including Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism, have responded to the environmental crisis by calling for a return to moral values that respect nature (Rahman, 2020).

The relationship between religious values and environmental awareness is a strong synergy. Religious teachings provide a moral and spiritual foundation for individuals to understand the importance of protecting nature. Environmental awareness

that stems from religious values tends to be stronger and more lasting, because it is supported by deep spiritual beliefs (Abdullah, 2022). This shows that religion can be a solution to the global environmental crisis by strengthening ethical values that encourage responsibility towards nature.

## **2. Participation of faith-based communities in environmental activities**

Faith-based communities play an important role in raising awareness and participation in environmental conservation. Religious teachings that emphasize the responsibility to care for God's creation provide a strong foundation for religious groups to engage in environmental activities. In Islam, for example, there is the concept of a caliph who teaches that humans are responsible for preserving the earth (Zulkifli, 2019). This understanding motivates Islamic communities to organize various activities that support environmental conservation.

Religious groups are often the driving force behind local environmental conservation initiatives. In Indonesia, faith-based communities often initiate tree planting, water conservation, and waste management programs that are in line with religious teachings. Research by Suryadi (2020) shows that Muslim communities in rural Central Java have a high level of participation in environmental activities due to the religious drive to protect nature as a form of worship to God. This shows that religion can be a driving force for change in people's environmental behavior.

Religious education within religious communities also plays an important role in building environmental awareness. Many Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia have begun to include material on the importance of protecting the environment in their curriculum. Fadli (2021) stated that several Islamic boarding schools have taught the principles of organic farming to their students as part of their religious-based education. This initiative not only provides practical skills to students but also instills sustainable values that are in line with Islamic teachings.

Religious groups are also often involved in campaigns and advocacy on environmental issues. Churches, mosques, and other places of worship often serve as centers for environmental information and action. According to Saragih (2018), churches in North Sumatra have led campaigns to reduce the use of single-use plastics and promote recycling among their congregations. These campaigns demonstrate how

places of worship can serve as effective platforms for spreading environmental messages.

In addition to campaigns, several faith-based communities are also directly involved in real actions to protect nature. For example, in Kalimantan, several religious organizations collaborate with local NGOs to conserve tropical rainforests. According to Rahman (2021), this collaboration involves training local communities to manage forests sustainably and in accordance with religious values. This collaboration shows that religious groups can act as a bridge between religious teachings and sustainable environmental practices.

The role of religious groups in protecting the environment is also supported by theological teachings that encourage nature conservation. In Hinduism, the concepts of karma and dharma teach that every human action towards nature has spiritual consequences (Sutarno, 2020). Thus, Hindus in Indonesia are often involved in environmental activities as part of their efforts to carry out their spiritual obligations. This strengthens the role of religion as a driver of participation in environmental initiatives.

Religious groups can also form strong networks of cooperation to promote environmental conservation at the global and local levels. According to Abdullah (2022), the Islamic community in Indonesia has begun collaborating with international environmental organizations to develop programs focused on climate change mitigation. This collaboration shows that religion can be a global force that drives solutions to complex environmental challenges.

In addition, religious groups can also have a positive influence on government environmental policies. Several religious organizations in Indonesia are actively involved in dialogue with the government to promote environmentally friendly policies. Maulana (2019) noted that several Islamic groups in West Java have advocated for regulations that protect forests and water resources. Their participation in the policy-making process shows how religion can provide moral legitimacy to environmental conservation efforts.

Religiously driven environmental awareness also includes an understanding of sustainability. In many religions, the concept of sustainability is not only related to the preservation of the physical environment, but also to spiritual and social balance.



According to Hidayat (2020), the Muslim community in Lombok has adopted a holistic approach to sustainability, where economic, social, and environmental activities are integrated within the framework of Islamic teachings. This approach shows that religious values can support sustainability as a whole.

Finally, the role of religious groups in environmental conservation cannot be separated from the basic values of the religion itself. Values such as justice, responsibility, and compassion taught by various religions provide a strong impetus for active participation in protecting nature. According to Fakhry (2019), the participation of religious-based communities in environmental activities is often driven by the belief that protecting nature is part of carrying out a larger spiritual mission. Thus, religion provides not only moral motivation but also a practical framework for real environmental action.

### **3. Case study of religious organization involvement in environmental initiatives**

The involvement of religious organizations in environmental initiatives in Indonesia is an important factor in encouraging environmental conservation efforts. Islamic organizations in various regions have taken an active role in environmental programs, both in the form of real actions and policy advocacy. One concrete example is the contribution of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in preserving the environment through an organic farming program in East Java (Fadli, 2020). This program aims to reduce the use of hazardous chemicals and encourage people to implement environmentally friendly agricultural practices in accordance with Islamic principles.

In the Aceh region, the Muhammadiyah organization has also played a role in environmental initiatives, especially in disaster mitigation and natural resource conservation. According to Maulana (2019), Muhammadiyah through its autonomous institutions, such as the Environmental Assembly, is involved in various post-tsunami reforestation projects and water resource management programs in rural areas. This involvement shows that Islamic organizations are not only engaged in religious aspects, but also have high social and environmental concerns.

Additionally, in the Kalimantan region, Islamic organizations are working with the government and local NGOs to combat deforestation. Rahman (2021) noted that several Islamic boarding schools in Kalimantan have developed training programs for

local communities on the importance of protecting forests. The program also promotes sustainable agriculture in line with Islamic teachings on maintaining the balance of nature. This collaboration shows how religious organizations can play an important role in forest conservation and preserving local ecosystems.

In Lombok, environmental initiatives by Islamic organizations have focused on waste management and recycling. Abdullah (2022) noted that the Muslim community there, led by local religious leaders, has developed a community-based waste management system that involves the entire community. This system not only helps reduce the environmental impact of waste but also creates a collective awareness of the importance of maintaining a clean and healthy environment as part of religious responsibility.

Islamic organizations in West Java, especially Persatuan Islam (PERSIS), have been active in advocating for sustainable environmental policies. According to Suryadi (2020), PERSIS is involved in discussions with local governments to encourage policies that support fair and sustainable natural resource management. This involvement shows that Islamic organizations have significant influence in the policy-making process, especially related to environmental issues.

In Jakarta, the Indonesian Mosque Council (DMI) launched the Environmentally Friendly Mosque program which aims to integrate environmentally friendly practices into daily mosque activities. Saragih (2018) noted that the program includes energy savings, efficient water use, and wise waste management. The program has been implemented in several large mosques in Jakarta and has succeeded in increasing environmental awareness among the congregation.

Not only in urban areas, in rural areas of North Sumatra, local Islamic groups have established greening and land conservation programs. According to Fakhry (2019), this greening program is implemented by Muslim communities in collaboration with local governments and non-governmental organizations, with the aim of rehabilitating critical land and preventing erosion. The involvement of local communities in this program shows that religious-based environmental initiatives can have a significant direct impact on environmental sustainability.

Islamic organizations are also involved in environmental education programs among youth. For example, in Yogyakarta, several Islamic groups have established

nature schools that teach students the importance of protecting the environment as part of their religious obligations (Hidayat, 2021). These schools not only focus on academic teaching, but also instill sustainability values that are in line with Islamic teachings.

In South Sulawesi, environmental initiatives by Islamic organizations focus on preserving coastal ecosystems. According to Sutarno (2020), local Muslim communities have collaborated with international organizations to develop mangrove protection programs, which aim to maintain the balance of coastal ecosystems and provide livelihoods for local communities. This involvement shows that Islamic organizations can play an important role in maintaining biodiversity and protecting natural resources.

Overall, the contribution of Islamic organizations in environmental initiatives in various regions of Indonesia shows how important the role of religion is in encouraging awareness and action for nature conservation. Through various programs, ranging from forest conservation to waste management, these organizations have proven that Islamic teachings on the responsibility to protect the earth can be applied in real actions that have a broad impact on environmental sustainability (Zulkifli, 2019).

## **CONCLUSION**

The conclusion of the three discussions above shows that religious values have a very important role in increasing public awareness and participation in environmental conservation. Religious teachings, especially in Islam, offer a moral and spiritual foundation that encourages individuals and communities to be responsible for the environment as a form of worship and a manifestation of the role of humans as caliphs on earth. The active involvement of faith-based communities and organizations in environmental initiatives in various regions of Indonesia, such as greening programs, waste management, and natural resource conservation, shows how strong the influence of religious teachings is in shaping sustainable environmental behavior. These communities, through education, policy advocacy, and real action in the field, have made significant contributions to nature conservation, both at the local and national levels.

In addition, case studies of Islamic organizations' involvement in environmental initiatives show that religion not only acts as a source of moral motivation, but can also be a social force that drives structural change in environmental management.

Collaborations between religious organizations, governments, and NGOs show that a faith-based approach can be an effective strategy in addressing environmental challenges such as deforestation, pollution, and climate change. By combining religious values with practical actions, these organizations have succeeded in creating programs that not only maintain environmental sustainability, but also improve the social and economic well-being of local communities.

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