DIALOGUE OF INTER RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN THE MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY OF DENPASAR CITY

I Gusti Made Ngurah[1], I Gde Semadi Astra[2],
I Made Suastika[2], I Gde Parimartha[2]

[1]Postgraduate Program, Udayana University
[2]Faculty of Letters, Udayana University
E-mail: gustimadengurah@yahoo.co.id

ABSTRACT

The dialogue of inter religious community members in the multicultural community of Denpasar has been beneficial to the organization of collective life. In relation to that, this study describes the phenomenon of cultural dialogues as an attempt to realize the idea of multiculturalism and to establish harmonious atmosphere in which differences are mutually accepted and appreciated. Field qualitative method is employed in this study and the data needed were collected by the technique of observation, the technique of in-depth interview and documentary study. The results of the study show that the idea of the dialogue has been based on heterogeneity, frequent conflicts and enthusiasm in establishing harmony. The policies which are referred to by the dialogue are regulated in various regulations issued by several ministers, the governor and the major. Such policies serve as the legal umbrella of the dialogue, while the dialogic programs are determined by the government and the Communicative Forum of Inter Religious Community Members (*Forum Komunikasi Antar-Umat Beragama*, hereon abbreviated to FKUB). The operating techniques of how the dialogue is conducted are organized by this forum. The dialogic fluency is motivated by the supporting factors which are hoped to bring much success. However, there are also some obstructions which may lead to failures. Attempts are made to develop it into a successful one and to avoid/eliminate its negative effects. In addition, the dialogue is also philosophically, dialectally and dynamically meaningful. Generally, the understanding of such meaningfulness can improve the quality of the multicultural life in Denpasar City. It seems that the formal dialogue of inter religious community members has only been intensively conducted by the religious leaders and the leaders of the related institutions. It has not been averagely conducted in the grass root level yet.

Keywords: Inter religious community members, harmony and multicultural

Background

A dialogue of inter religious community members is a type of dynamic meeting attended by the followers of two or more religions, in which there is an exchange of religious values and information among the different religious followers. It is intended to establish a cooperation, to foster harmony, and to accept and appreciate differences as the realization of the idea of multiculturalism. The multilateral and international meeting of the "Religious Parliaments" was held in Chicago in 1892, in which gists of thoughts "agree in disagreement" was agreed. Such an international dialogue has made the world's religious leaders, Indonesia, and the local people of Denpasar City aware that the dialogue or inter religious community members is really essential in the relationship among the religions. The one which has been conducted in Denpasar has been inspired by the international and national dialogue of inter religious community members. In addition, it is really needed for organizing religious life in a heterogeneous community which is faced with many challenges. The challenges faced by the heterogeneous community internally appear from every religious community. The incidents such as the bomb blasts taking place on 12th October 2002 and on 2nd October 2005 are stated to be external challenges. Attempts have been made to conduct the dialogue of inter religious community members as the answer to such challenges. It is also intended to more strongly establish the idea of multiculturalism in the multicultural community.

This study discusses the dialogical basis, the supporting and obstructing factors, the effects and meanings of the dialogue of inter religious community members in the multicultural community of Denpasar City. It aims at describing the cultural behavior and the harmonious and peaceful multicultural community. Its significance is not only to strongly establish the understanding of the idea and implementation of the multicultural community but more importantly it is also intended to give beneficial contribution to the development of science in general and to the cultural studies in particular.

Discussion

The communicative, hegemony, deconstruction and multicultural theories are used to analyze the problems. The results show that openness has taken place among the religious members, the tension among the different religious members has been decreasing, misunderstanding has been getting less, act of despising religions has been

minimized, harmony has been getting more established and SARA related conflicts have been able to be avoided. The last took place almost all over Indonesia in the end of New Order government, that is, in 1998. The plurality in Denpasar City community is in layers marked by the existence of six religions such as Hindu, Islam, Protestant, Catholic, Buddhist, and Kong Hucu. The followers of each religion come from different ethnic groups with different languages, traditions, characteristics, and social conditions. Under each religion, there are further ideologies.

In particular, the dialogic idea has been made to appear by plurality in the community, frequent conflicts and enthusiasm in creating harmony. These three things are used as the basis for the dialogue, which are then completed with policies in the form of regulations and the dialogic programs created by the government and the FKUB as the references.

The supporting factors such as (1) the essence of religious teachings which implies that every religion recommends to settle any problem through dialogues; (2) the values of Balinese local genius (*menyama braya*) are accepted to be the guideline when conducting a dialogue; (3) equality of religious community members refers to the equality in age, education, knowledge, experience and social condition of the participants of the dialogue; (4) models of behavior shown by the religious leaders; and (5) the development of science and technology which can be maximally used have contributed to the success of the dialogue as expected. The supporting factors are obstructed by the obstructing factors such as (1) unpreparedness of the participants of the dialogue; (2) the insufficient supporting facilities and infrastructures; (3) the policies considered unfair; and (4) the close attitude of the religious community members. However, the dialogue of inter religious community members has resulted in positive effects such as the harmonious life among the religious community members has been getting more established, the cooperation among the religious community members has been getting improved; and the mutual acceptance and appreciation have been getting better. However, negative effects have also been identified such as there has been an anxiety that the dialogue will result in syncretism, pressure from the majority over the minority and religious conversion.

Apart from the effects, the results of the research also show that the dialogue can give three meanings such as (1) philosophical meaning, as far as the material and mental spiritual development is concerned which will basically lead to harmonious and peaceful life; (2) dialogic meaningful, as far as the intensification of religious teachings and understanding other religious are concerned, which will lead to harmony or symmetry among the different religious community members; and (3) dynamic meaningful, as far as the dialogue conducted to give deep understanding of the idea of multiculturalism and to establish the implementation of the multicultural community. This is intended to anticipate SARA related conflicts and to obtain solutions to the problems collectively encountered.

The findings of the study are: first, the establishment of *Badan Musyawarah Umat Beragama Daerah Tingkat I Bali (*another forum of the dialogue of inter religious community members in provincial level in Bali) in 1975 has inspired the establishment of *Wadah Musyawarah Pusat* (another central similar forum) and the establishment of *FKAUB Bali* in 1999 which then led to the issue of the PBM No. 9.8 of 2006, which has allowed the establishment of FKUB in the provincial and regencial levels all over Indonesia. Second, the dialogue of inter religious community members continuously conducted in Denpasar City can avoid SARA related conflicts, which then can be used as the model referred to by the other provinces and regencies all over Indonesia. Third, the development of religious ideologies and the arrival of new migrants with their different cultures in Denpasar City has not been included as part of the dialogue of inter religious community members, whereas in fact these two things will potentially lead to conflicts and affect the dialogue itself.

Conclusions

The dialogue of inter religious community members in the multicultural community of Denpasar City has been able to be conducted based on (1) the plurality of the community, frequent conflicts, and enthusiasm in establishing harmony; (2) policies and (3) the implementation of the programs created by the government and FKUB have been getting more directed and fluent .

The supporting factors such as the essence of each religious teaching, the values of local genius, the equality of religious community members, their social condition, the

models given by the religious leaders, the development of science and technology can lead the dialogue to a success as expected. On the other hand, the obstructing factors such as the unpreparedness of the participants of the dialogue, the differences in cultural values, the close attitude of the religious community members, the policies considered unfair, and insufficient facilities and infrastructures will potentially lead the dialogue to a failure.

The positive effects of the dialogue of the inter religious community members are that the harmony among the different religious community members are getting established, the cooperation among the religious community members are getting improved, the mutual acceptance and appreciation among the religious community members are getting better, and the awareness of establishing multicultural enthusiasm is developing. While the negative effects of the dialogue of the inter religious community members, based on the previous experiences, are that there is an anxiety that such a dialogue will lead to syncretism, pressure from the majority over minority, and religious conversion.

In addition to the above mentioned effects, the dialogue has three meanings. The first meaning is philosophical, in which the mental and spiritual development to be able to live harmoniously and peacefully in diversity is implied. The second meaning is dialogic, in which intensification one's religion which can be attempted by making comparison to another's religion so that there is a mutual understanding is implied. The third is dynamic meaning, in which what is done by the religious community members in implementing their respective religion is implied. The understanding of the differences and similarities in religious teachings through the dialogue can develop the anticipatory behavior against SARA related conflicts and at the same time can improve the cooperation among the religious community members in solving the problems collectively encountered.

It is considered necessary to perfect the system of the management of the dialogue starting from the betterment of understanding of the base of the dialogue, the perfection of the policies, the perfection of the attempts made to prepare the facilities and infrastructures, and the allocation of the sufficient funds needed for the dialogue through APBN/APBD. Improved supervision is also necessary in every religion. Apart from the

formal dialogue, informal dialogues also need to be intensified (work dialogue) to fasten the implementation of the dialogue in the grass root.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ali, H.A. Mukti.1976. *Agama dan Pembangungan di Indonesia*. Jakarta: Biro Humas Dep. Agama R.I.

Ali, Mursyid. 1999. *Pluralitas Sosial dan Hubungan Antara Agama*. Jakarta: Balitbang Agama, Proyek Peningkatan Kerukunan Hidup Beragama.

Aryadharma, Suarpi. 2009. *Konversi Agama "Penyakit Kronis di Bali" Manfaatkan Kelemahan Agama dan Pelaksanaan Adat*. Media Hindu,November 2009, Edisi 69.

Budiyono. 1983. *Membina Kerukunan Hidup Antarumat Beragama*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Yayasan Kanisius.

Darmaputra, Eka. 1999/2000. "*Kehidupan Beragama dalam Masyarakat Majemuk*" dalam Chairul Fuad Yusuf & Muchlis. *Agama, Generasi Muda, dan Intergrasi Bangsa di Masa Depan*. Jakarta: Badan Litbang Departmen Agama RI.

Djauhari, H.A. Zaidan. 1983/1984. *Pedoman Dasar Kerukunan Hidup Beragama*. Jakarta: Proyek Pembinaan Kerukunan Hidup Beragama Department Agama RI.

Effendi, Djohan. 1985. "Dialog Antaragama Bisakah Melahirkan Teologi Kerukunan" dalam Prisma. *Agama dan Tantangan Zaman Piluhan Artikel Prisma 1975 – 1984*. Jakarta: LP3ES.

Hardawiyana, Robert. 2006. *Dialog Umat Kristiani dengan Umat Pluri-Agama/Kepercayaan di Nusantara*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius.

Hefner, Robert W. 2007. *Politk Multikulturalisme Menggugat Realitas Kebangsaan*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Kanisius.

Ruslani.2000. *Masyarakat Kitab dan Dialog Antaragama*. Yogyarkarta :CV Adipura.

Saidi, Saleh. 1996. "Perkembangan Akulturasi Islam dan Hindu di Bali" dalam Aswab Mahasin dkk. *Ruh Islam dan Budaya Bangsa Aneka Budaya Nusantara*. Jakarta. Yayasan Festival Istiqal.

Schmann. 2008. *Dialog Antarumat Beragama Membuka Babak Baru dalam Hubungan Antarumat Beragama*. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia.

Sundarajan. 2000. "Model Dialog Antaragama Menurut Hindu", dalam Kamdani, *Agama untuk Manusia*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar Offset.

ACKNOLEDGMENTS

In this opportunity, great indebtedness is extended to the Rector of Udayana University and the Director of the Postgraduate Program of Udayana University for the opportunity and facilities provided when attending the Doctorate Program (S3) in Cultural Studies at Udayana University. High appreciation is also provided to the Supervisor, Prof. Dr. I Gde Semadi Astra, Co-Supervisor I, Prof. Dr. I Made Suastika, S.U., and Co-Supervisor II, Prof. Dr. I Gde Parimartha, M.A., for their useful guidance and advice during the process of writing this dissertation. Many thanks also go to all the parties whom cannot be mentioned one by one for their assistance in conducting this research.