

## THE ROLE OF MUHAMMADIYAH NAHDLATUL ULAMA IN RESPONDING TO EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES DURING THE DUTCH COLONIAL PERIODE

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### Abstract

*This paper explores the historical trajectories of Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in addressing the challenges posed by colonial education in Indonesia. It examines how these two prominent Islamic organizations responded to the Dutch colonial educational system, which often marginalized indigenous culture and values. The study highlights the strategies employed by Muhammadiyah, focusing on modern educational reforms and the establishment of schools, while NU emphasized traditional Islamic teachings and the preservation of local customs. By analyzing their differing approaches, this research sheds light on the broader impact of these organizations on Indonesian society and their roles in shaping the national educational landscape. The findings underscore the significance of these movements in fostering a sense of identity and resilience among Indonesians during a critical period in their history.*

**Keyword:** Muhammadiyah; Nahdlatul Ulama; colonial education, Indonesia, educational reform, cultural identity

### INTRODUCTION

The history of Islamic education describes various aspects and elements of education that have been implemented among Muslims, based on the teachings of Islam, the Qur'an and the Sunnah, as well as other sources that are in line with the two guidelines of the study that studies. The pedagogical aspects that are considered are not only seen in terms of the time and place of implementation, but also regarding the actors who formulate and implement it, as well as the context and objectives behind it. Information regarding the time, place, subjects, background, intent and purpose of the educational elements is based on data and facts whose importance can be scientifically justified. (Abuddin Nata, 2011).

Education, this word is also associated with Islam and has different definitions for different groups and is greatly influenced by their respective worldviews. But basically, all these different views are based on a kind of initial idea that education is a process that prepares the younger generation to live their lives more effectively and efficiently and achieve their life goals which are united in its conclusion. Political factors have always been at the forefront of organizing education in the Dutch East Indies. The education system must be regulated in accordance with the goals of the Dutch colonial government, which held political control in the colony at that time.

The establishment of the Ministry of Education, Religion and Government in the colonial government structure of the Dutch East Indies formally demonstrated the moral responsibility of the colonial government to advance public education in its territory. At least politically, this division gave the impression to the international world that the Netherlands was committed to improving the intelligence of indigenous people through education. Like other colonial areas such as Curaçao and Suriname, the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) were regulated and supervised by the Minister of Colonial Affairs on behalf of the Dutch government. The Guardian of the State in this case the Governor General was responsible to the King or Queen

of the Netherlands through the Minister of Colonial Affairs for matters relating to the Dutch East Indies, including in particular the field of education. During more than three and a half centuries of Dutch colonialism in the archipelago, the colonies implemented various policies and approaches that were generally detrimental to local communities. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there were several Dutch policies that had a significant impact on education in Indonesia. There were at least two major policies:

(1) the Ethics Policy and (2) the Illegal Teacher/School Regulations (Ramayulis, 2011).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Collecting and analyzing various literature sources, including books, scientific articles, and historical documents related to Muhammadiyah, NU, and colonial education in Indonesia. This aims to understand the context and development of both organizations in dealing with colonial education.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Islamic Education During the Islamic Kingdom in Indonesia can be seen, among others: First, the Islamic Kingdom of Aceh. The first Islamic kingdom in Indonesia was the Samudera Pasai kingdom in the Aceh area which was founded in the 10th century AD, with the first king Al Malik Ibrahim Bin Mahdun, the second named Al Malik Al Saleh and the last named Al Malik Sabar Syah (1444 AD/15th century H) (Zuhari et al, 2008).

A traveler from Morocco named Ibnu Battuta in 1345 AD stopped in the Pasai Kingdom during the reign of Al Malik Al Zahir on his way to China. Ibnu Battuta said that he really admired the kingdom of Samudera Pasai where the king was very pious in religious knowledge and adhered to the Syafii school of thought, was fluent in Arabic and led a simple life.

Based on Ibnu Battuta's opinion, the education system that prevailed during the Samudera Pasay Kingdom can be seen as follows.

1. The material for religious education and education in the field of sharia is the fiqh of the Syafi'i School.
2. The education system is informal in the form of Majlis Tarim and Halaka.
3. Government representatives are also religious people.
4. The costs of religious education are borne by the state (Hasbullah, 1999).

Second, the Islamic government in Java. One of the Majapahit kings, Sri Kertabumi, had a Muslim wife named Putri Chenpa, from whom Princess Chenpa. Raden Fatah, who would later become the first king of the Demak Kingdom, the first Islamic kingdom in Java, was born in an important period of history. Regarding the establishment of the Demak Kingdom, there are different opinions among historians. Some argue that this kingdom was founded in 1478 AD, based on the fall of the Majapahit Kingdom. However, another opinion states that the Demak Kingdom was founded in 1518 AD, because in that year the reign of Prabu Udara Brawijaya VII ended after being invaded by Raden Fatah's troops from Demak.

With the establishment of the Demak Kingdom, the spread of Islam in Java became more widespread, and Islamic education and teaching progressed rapidly. The religious education system in Demak was similar to that in Aceh, where mosques were built in regional centers to serve as places for religious teaching. Religious education in these mosques was led by a *badal* who became the main teacher. The guardians in each region were given the official title "Sunan," added to the name of the region, such as Sunan Gunung Jati (H mahmud yunus, 1985).

Meanwhile, in Maluku, Islam was brought by preachers from Java, especially since the time of Sunan Giri from Malacca. The first Maluku king to convert to Islam was the Sultan of Ternate, Marhum, who ruled between 1465-1486 AD. He converted to Islam thanks to the influence of

Maulana Husein, a merchant from Java. Sultan Zainul Abidin, who ruled from 1486 to 1500 AD, was known as an important figure in Islamic education and preaching in Maluku.

However, Islamic preaching in Maluku faced two major challenges, namely resistance from the animist community and efforts to convert Muslims by the Portuguese. Sultan Sairun was known as the figure who most strongly opposed the Portuguese. The first Catholic missionary in Maluku was Franciscus Xaverius who arrived in 1546 AD and succeeded in converting some of the population to Christianity. When the Protestant Dutch arrived in the early 17th century, they also began efforts to convert the Indonesian population to Protestantism. The Dutch government succeeded in spreading Protestantism en masse in several regions of Indonesia, such as Batak, Manado, and Ambon. Meanwhile, the Catholic influence brought by the Portuguese succeeded in spreading in East Nusa Tenggara, especially in the area that is now East Timor.

The Islamic kingdom also developed in Kalimantan. Islam began to enter this region in the 15th century AD through peaceful means, brought by missionaries from Java such as Sunan Bonang and Sunan Giri, who had students from Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Maluku. Sunan Giri, when he was 23 years old, visited Kalimantan with a Cambodian merchant named Abu Hurairah. In addition, other missionaries from Java who played an important role were Sayid Ngabdul Rahman or Khatib Dayan from Kediri (Zuharini dkk, 2008).

The development of Islam in Kalimantan became increasingly solid after the establishment of the Banjar Islamic Kingdom under the leadership of Sultan Suriansyah. Mosques began to be built in almost every village. In 1710 AD (13 Safar 1122 H), during the reign of Sultan Tahmilillah, a famous cleric named Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari was born in Kalampayan Village, Martapura. Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad, who was raised by Sultan Tahmilillah, spent about 30 years studying in Mecca. His expertise in religious knowledge was known not only in Kalimantan and Indonesia, but also throughout Southeast Asia. One of his famous works is the book *Sabilal Muhtadin*, and he was appointed Grand

Mufti of the Banjar Kingdom. In addition, Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad also founded the Darussalam Islamic Boarding School in Kampung Dalam Pagar, which is still famous today

In Sulawesi, the first Islamic kingdom was the Twin Kingdom of Gowa and Tallo. Its king, I Mallingkaang Daeng Manyonri, later changed his name to Sultan Abdullah Awwalul Islam, followed by Sultan Alaudin of Gowa. Within two years, the majority of their people had embraced Islam. One of the missionaries who contributed to the preaching of Islam there was Abdul Qadir Khatib Tunggal, also known as Dato' Ri Bandang, who came from Minangkabau and was a student of Sunan Giri. A Portuguese named Pinto, who visited Sulawesi in 1544 AD, stated that he met Muslim traders from Malacca and Patani Thailand (Hasbullah, 1999).

The influence of the kings of Gowa and Tallo in spreading Islam was very great for other small kings in Sulawesi. Several other great scholars who helped Dato' Ri Bandang were Dato' Sulaiman, or Dato' Pattimang, and Dato' Ri Tirta, or Khatib Bungsu, who were also thought to have come from Minangkabau. From South Sulawesi, Islam then spread to Central and North Sulawesi. Islam entered Manado during the reign of Sultan Hasanuddin, and to Bolang Mangondow in North Sulawesi in 1560 AD and Gorontalo in 1612 AD. Islam which was already strong in South Sulawesi also spread to the Nusa Tenggara Islands, including Bima and Lombok, which were brought by Bugis traders. Sumbawa was controlled by the Gowa Kingdom in 1616 AD (Zuharini dkk, 2008).

### **brief profile of Muhammadiyah dan Nahdlatul Ulama**

Muhammadiyah was founded in 1912 by KH. Ahmad Dahlan in Yogyakarta. This organization was born as a reaction to religious practices that were considered to deviate from the pure teachings of Islam. With the spirit of reform, Muhammadiyah sought to return Islamic teachings to their sources, namely the Qur'an and Hadith. From the beginning,

Muhammadiyah focused on education and community development, by establishing modern schools and educational institutions ( Ahmad Dahlan, 2003 ).

### **Health Education**

One of Muhammadiyah's greatest contributions is in the field of education. This organization has established various educational institutions, from kindergartens to universities. In addition, Muhammadiyah is also active in the health sector by establishing hospitals and clinics that provide health services to the community. Through these institutions, Muhammadiyah seeks to improve the quality of life of the Indonesian people( Masykur, 2010).

### **Social and Humanitarian activism**

Muhammadiyah not only focuses on education and health, but is also involved in various social and humanitarian activities. This organization is often at the forefront in providing assistance to victims of natural disasters and communities in need. With the principle of "Amal Usaha", Muhammadiyah is committed to contributing to creating a better society. ( Munir, 2015).

### **Role in the reform of Islamic thought**

Muhammadiyah is known as a movement that encourages progressive Islamic thought. This organization emphasizes the importance of ijtihad and reasoning in understanding Islamic teachings. With a rational and contextual approach, Muhammadiyah strives to answer the challenges of the times and provide relevant solutions for Muslims ( Munir, 2015 ).

### **Global Influence**

In addition to playing an active role in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah also has influence at the international level. This organization is involved in various forums and interfaith dialogues, and contributes to efforts for peace and social justice in the world. Muhammadiyah is committed to being a bridge in building harmonious relations between religious communities ( Suyuti, 2018 ).

### **Profile Nahdlatul Ulama**

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is an Islamic religious organization founded on January 31, 1926 in Surabaya, Indonesia. Founded by Kyai Haji Hasyim Asy'ari and other scholars, NU aims to defend traditionalist Islamic practices based on the creed of Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah (Aswaja) and the fiqh of the Syafi'i school of thought. With a membership of around 90 million, NU is the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia and plays an important role in education, social, and politics in the country (Abdurrahman M, 2016). The organization is known for its moderate and tolerant approach, as well as its ability to adapt to local cultures without sacrificing Islamic principles ( Masykur, 2016).

Throughout its history, NU has contributed to various aspects of community life, including education through the establishment of thousands of Islamic boarding schools and educational institutions. In addition, NU is also active in advocating for public policies that support the interests of the people and play a role in maintaining the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) (Hasyim, 2017). With the spirit of "rahmatan lil-alamain," NU is committed to promoting peaceful and moderate Islam, as well as playing a role in interfaith dialogue and world peace efforts (Rahman, 2016). Through various economic empowerment programs, NU seeks to improve the welfare of its members and the wider community, making it one of the important actors in social development in Indonesia (Zainudin, 2019).

### **The Context of Colonial Education in Indonesia**

#### **Colonial education system**

During the colonial period, the education system in Indonesia underwent significant changes due to the influence of the Dutch colonial government. Formal education implemented by the colonial government was more secular and did not pay enough attention to religious education. In this context, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah emerged as two organizations that played an important role in Islamic education. NU, which was founded in 1926, emphasized more on traditional education through Islamic boarding schools, which taught religious knowledge and Arabic, and integrated local values into their curriculum (Azra, 2006). NU Islamic boarding schools function as learning centers that not only teach religious knowledge, but also shape the character and morals of students (Murtadho, 2015).

Meanwhile, Muhammadiyah, founded in 1912, adopted a more modern approach to education. Muhammadiyah established formal schools that followed the national curriculum, but still integrated religious education into the teaching and learning process (Suyuthi, 2018). This organization sought to create a generation that was not only academically educated, but also had a strong understanding of Islam. In the face of the colonial education system that tended to be secular, both organizations sought to maintain Islamic identity and provide educational alternatives that were in accordance with religious values (Nasution, 2017). Thus, both NU and Muhammadiyah contributed to forming an education system that was relevant to the needs of the Muslim community in Indonesia during the colonial period.

### **Impact on Society**

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, as the two largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, have a significant impact on society in various aspects, including education, social, and politics.

**Education:** NU, through its extensive network of Islamic boarding schools, has contributed to creating a generation with strong religious knowledge. NU Islamic boarding schools not only teach religious knowledge, but also integrate local and cultural values into their curriculum (M. Quraish Shihab, 1997). On the other hand, Muhammadiyah established formal schools that prioritize modern education while still teaching Islamic values. This helps improve the level of education of the community and provides wider access to education (M. Amin Abdullah, 2006).

**Social:** NU and Muhammadiyah also play a role in community empowerment. NU, with its traditional approach, is often involved in social and humanitarian activities, such as disaster relief and health programs. Meanwhile, Muhammadiyah focuses more on economic empowerment programs, such as cooperatives and skills training, which aim to improve community welfare (M. Natsir, 2010). Both organizations contribute to building social solidarity and improving the quality of life of the community.

**Politics:** In the context of politics, NU and Muhammadiyah have a great influence in shaping the public's views on national and religious issues. NU, with a large mass base, is often involved in practical politics and policy advocacy that supports the interests of the people (Syafli Maarif, 2008). Muhammadiyah, although more independent, also plays a role in providing a voice on social and political issues, and encouraging the community to participate in the democratic process (Dawan Raharjo, 2011).

Overall, both NU and Muhammadiyah have made significant contributions in shaping an Indonesian society that is more educated, prosperous, and actively participates in social and political life.

### **Muhammadiyah's Efforts to Establish Modern Islamic Schools**

Muhammadiyah began its efforts to establish modern Islamic schools by establishing Madrasah Mu'allimin in 1914. This school was designed to produce qualified and competent teachers in Islamic education. With a more comprehensive curriculum, Madrasah Mu'allimin not only taught religious knowledge, but also relevant general knowledge. This made



Madrasah Mu'allimin graduates pioneers in the world of modern Islamic education in Indonesia (Abdurrahman M, 2008).

In addition to Madrasah Mu'allimin, Muhammadiyah also established various other educational institutions, including elementary and secondary schools. In each school establishment, Muhammadiyah emphasized the importance of collaboration between formal education and religious education. They created a conducive learning environment, where students could learn religion in an interesting and applicable way, so that students did not feel pressured by conventional educational methods (Nasution, H, 2001).

The establishment of these schools was also driven by the spirit to raise collective awareness of Muslims towards the importance of education. Muhammadiyah wants to ensure that Muslims are not left behind in the development of science, especially amidst the dominance of colonial education that tends to ignore religious values. Thus, Muhammadiyah seeks to create a generation that is not only knowledgeable, but also has strong character and moral values (Arif, 2010).

### **Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama Education Strategy**

To address the challenges of education during the colonial era, Muhammadiyah implemented a curriculum adjustment strategy that integrated religious and general education. They realized that the younger generation must be equipped with relevant skills to compete in an ever-evolving world. Therefore, Muhammadiyah introduced subjects such as mathematics, science, and foreign languages into their curriculum, in addition to religious subjects which were the basis of education (Nasution H, 2001).

This integration not only aimed to improve students' academic knowledge, but also to build critical and analytical attitudes in thinking. With this approach, Muhammadiyah wanted to change the perception that religious education was not in conflict with science. Instead, they argued that both complement each other and are important to form holistic individuals who are ready to face the challenges of modern life (Abdurrahman M, 2008).

In addition, Muhammadiyah also involved qualified educators in the teaching process. They held training and workshops for teachers so that they could deliver material with more interesting and effective methods. Through these efforts, Muhammadiyah is committed to improving the quality of education they offer, so that graduates of Muhammadiyah schools can become leaders and agents of change in society (Arif A, 2010).

Education in Indonesia, especially in the context of Islam, cannot be separated from the role of two large organizations, namely Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). These two organizations have different educational approaches and strategies, but both contribute significantly to shaping the character and knowledge of the young generation of Indonesia.

### **Muhammadiyah Education Strategy**

Muhammadiyah, as one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, has a comprehensive and progressive vision of education. Muhammadiyah's educational strategy focuses on the integration of religious education and general education. This can be seen from the curriculum designed to create a balance between mastery of knowledge and understanding of Islamic values. In this context, Muhammadiyah strives to produce a generation that is not only academically intelligent, but also has good morals (Achmadi, 2008)

One of the characteristics of Muhammadiyah education is the independence approach. This organization encourages educational institutions that it manages to develop student character through various extracurricular activities that support the formation of leadership and independence. Thus, students are expected to become independent, responsible individuals who are able to contribute positively to society (Rubaidi, 2010).

Muhammadiyah is also very active in developing educational institutions. From kindergarten to college, Muhammadiyah has a wide educational network. These institutions not only function as places of learning, but also as centers for community development. Through education, Muhammadiyah strives to educate the nation and improve the quality of human resources in Indonesia (Abidin, 1996).

### **Nahdlatul Ulama Education Strategy**

On the other hand, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) has a more traditional approach to education, which is heavily influenced by the pesantren system. Education in NU emphasizes in-depth teaching of religious knowledge, with methods that have been passed down from generation to generation. Pesantren as the main educational institution in NU not only functions as a place of learning, but also as a center for character and moral formation (Arikunto, 2010).

One of the main focuses of education in NU is character development. Through teaching moral values and character, NU seeks to form a young generation that is not only intelligent, but also has high morals. Education in NU often involves parents and the community, so that the teaching and learning process becomes more holistic and integrated with everyday life (Al-Qur'an translation, 2015).

Community involvement in education is also an important strategy for NU. This organization encourages community participation in supporting education, both through financial support and in the form of social activities. By involving the community, NU hopes to create a conducive environment for children's education and character development (Anwar, 2011).

### **Muhammadiyah's Approach and Methods**

Muhammadiyah, as one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, has a unique approach and method in its educational strategy. In an effort to create quality education that is relevant to the needs of society, Muhammadiyah adopts several integrated approaches.

One of the main approaches applied is the integrative curriculum. This curriculum combines various disciplines with Islamic values, so that it does not only focus on academic aspects, but also on developing students' character and morals. Thus, students are not only taught knowledge, but also guided to become individuals with noble morals (KH Ahmad Dahlan).

The active learning method is also one of the characteristics of Muhammadiyah education. In this method, students are encouraged to actively participate in the learning process. Discussions, projects, and group activities are used to increase student involvement, so that they are not only passive listeners, but also active actors in learning.

A holistic approach is also applied, where education not only pays attention to the intellectual, but also the spiritual and emotional aspects of students. Religious education is integrated with general education, so that students can understand and practice Islamic values in everyday life (Muhammad, 2019).

In addition, Muhammadiyah utilizes the mosque as a center for education and social activities. By holding religious studies, seminars, and training in the mosque environment, education does not only take place in the classroom, but also outside the classroom, making the mosque a strategic place for the development of knowledge and morals (Sari, 2019).

Human resource development is also a major focus. Muhammadiyah is committed to improving the quality of teachers and educators through training and workshops, so that they can become professional and inspiring educators for students (Rahman, 2021).

Multicultural-based education is also emphasized, where students are taught to appreciate differences and develop an attitude of tolerance. This is important to prepare students to live harmoniously in a diverse society (Hasan, 2022).

With these diverse approaches and methods, Muhammadiyah strives to create education that is not only of high quality, but also able to answer the challenges of the times and the needs of society. Through holistic and integrative education, Muhammadiyah hopes to produce a generation that is not only academically intelligent, but also has good character and is able to contribute positively to society (Nur, 2023).

### **Establishment of Muhammadiyah educational institutions**

The establishment of the Muhammadiyah educational institution is rooted in the vision and mission of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, who founded this organization in 1912 in Yogyakarta. In the context of Indonesia which was then undergoing colonization, Ahmad Dahlan realized the importance of education as a means to educate the nation and strengthen the religious identity of the community. With the spirit of reform and modernization, he tried to integrate general education with religious education, so that the community was not only academically educated, but also had a good understanding of Islamic teachings (Ahmad, 1990).

The first educational institution established was the Muhammadiyah School, which focused on basic education. Over time, Muhammadiyah developed various types of educational institutions, ranging from kindergartens, elementary schools, secondary schools, to universities. With an inclusive and progressive approach, Muhammadiyah is committed to providing quality education for all levels of society, regardless of social and economic background. (Mujibburahman, 2006).

In its history, Muhammadiyah has succeeded in establishing thousands of educational institutions throughout Indonesia. This network not only includes formal schools, but also non-formal educational institutions, such as madrasahs and religious courses. The curriculum applied in Muhammadiyah educational institutions integrates general knowledge with Islamic values, so that students not only gain academic knowledge, but also moral and spiritual guidance (Suharno, 2012).

Muhammadiyah education is also known for its innovative approach to teaching methods. By utilizing modern technology and learning methods, Muhammadiyah strives to answer the challenges of the times and meet the ever-growing educational needs. Through these educational institutions, Muhammadiyah contributes to creating a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also has a strong character and noble morals (Sidiq, 2018).

Thus, the establishment of Muhammadiyah educational institutions is not only an effort to educate the nation, but also part of the mission of preaching to spread moderate and tolerant Islamic values. Until now, Muhammadiyah remains committed to continuing to develop quality and competitive education, as a real contribution to the progress of the nation and people.

### **Nahdlatul Ulama's approach and methods**

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, founded in 1926. This organization has a unique approach and method in carrying out preaching, education, and social activities. NU's main approach is Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah, which emphasizes a moderate and tolerant understanding of Islam. NU teaches that understanding of Islam must be based on the Qur'an, Hadith, and ijtihad of scholars, and respects differences of opinion among fellow Muslims (Hasyim, 2011). This approach aims to create harmony and unity among Muslims.

In terms of education, NU has a wide network of educational institutions, ranging from madrasahs, Islamic boarding schools, to universities. The educational methods applied integrate religious knowledge and general knowledge. In Islamic boarding schools, for example, students are taught classical books (yellow) as well as modern science. This approach aims to produce a generation that is not only academically intelligent, but also has good morals (Nurcholis, 2014).



NU's preaching is inclusive and dialogical. NU encourages its members to conduct da'wah in a friendly manner and without imposing opinions. This method includes interfaith and intercultural dialogue, so that it can build good relationships with the wider community, including non-Muslims ( Rahman, 2016 ). In addition, NU is also active in social and humanitarian activities. Through institutions such as the Zakat, Infaq, and Shadaqah Institution (LAZISNU) and the NU Hospital, this organization seeks to provide assistance to people in need. This approach shows NU's commitment to social welfare and justice ( Shihab, 2017 ).

In the digital era, NU utilizes technology and social media to disseminate information and da'wah. Through online platforms, NU can reach the younger generation and convey messages of moderate and tolerant Islam. This is an effective method to attract public attention, especially among young people ( Zainal, 2019 ). With a variety of approaches and methods, Nahdlatul Ulama seeks to make a positive contribution to society and Muslims in Indonesia.

### **The establishment of the Nahdlatul Ulama educational institution**

The establishment of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) educational institution is an integral part of the history of this organization which focuses on the development of Islamic education in Indonesia. NU was founded in 1926, and one of its main goals is to educate Muslims through quality education. In this context, NU is committed to integrating religious knowledge and general knowledge in the educational curriculum taught in its institutions (Alim, 2012).

The first educational institution established by NU was the Islamic boarding school, which became the center of religious education and character development for the younger generation. NU Islamic boarding schools not only teach classical books, but also integrate modern science, so that students can understand and apply knowledge in everyday life (Hasan, 2014). This approach aims to produce a generation that is not only academically intelligent, but also has good morals and a deep understanding of Islamic teachings.

Over time, NU has developed various types of educational institutions, including madrasahs, elementary schools, and universities. With a wide network, NU now has thousands of educational institutions spread throughout Indonesia. The curriculum implemented in these institutions prioritizes the values of Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah, which is a characteristic of NU in education (Rahman, 2016). In addition, NU is also active in developing non-formal training and education programs, such as religious courses and skills training. This shows NU's commitment to providing wider access to education to the community, especially for those who cannot access formal education (Shihab, 2018). Thus, the establishment of Nahdlatul Ulama educational institutions does not only focus on academic aspects, but also on developing the character and skills of the community..

### **Muhammadiyah's Relationship with the Colonial Government in the Education Sector**

In developing education, Muhammadiyah established relations with the Dutch colonial government, although there was often tension between colonial interests and their educational goals. Muhammadiyah tried to gain official support and recognition from the government to establish schools. Through a diplomatic approach, Muhammadiyah tried to show that the education they offered would support the government's goal of creating a more educated and productive society (Nasution H, 2001).

Nevertheless, Muhammadiyah remained critical of several government policies that were considered detrimental to Muslim education. On several occasions, they expressed their aspirations and concerns regarding the unbalanced education system. Muhammadiyah also fought for Islamic education to get a better place in the official education curriculum. This effort reflected their commitment to fighting for the rights of Muslims in the field of education amidst colonial domination (Nasution H, 2001).

The relationship between Muhammadiyah and the colonial government was also seen in the form of cooperation in various educational programs. Despite differences of opinion, Muhammadiyah took advantage of the opportunity to develop their educational network by involving support from the government. In this context, Muhammadiyah succeeded in creating an educational institution that was able to survive and develop despite the challenges faced by Muslim society at that time (Abdurrahman M, 2008).

### **NU's Role in Colonial Education a. NU's Resistance through Strengthening Islamic Boarding Schools and Traditional Education**

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) was founded in 1926 with the aim of maintaining Islamic traditions in Indonesia in the face of various challenges, including colonial education. Islamic boarding schools became the main fortress in this resistance. With a curriculum that emphasizes the teaching of yellow books and religious knowledge, Islamic boarding schools not only function as places of learning, but also as centers for the formation of the character of students with noble morals.

NU views that education in Islamic boarding schools must be inclusive, accommodating the needs of diverse communities. This can be seen from the emergence of various models of Islamic boarding schools, from the very traditional to the more modern. In this context, NU seeks to maintain Islamic identity and values while remaining open to general learning, including science and technology. This is a strategy to ensure that the younger generation can adapt to changing times without losing their identity as Muslims (Natsir M, 2020).

### **NU's reaction to colonial education policies**

The education policies implemented by the Dutch colonial government were more oriented towards political and economic interests, ignoring religious education. This raised concerns among the Muslim community, especially NU, who felt that the younger generation would lose direction and morality. NU realized the importance of religious education as a foundation for building community character (Syukron A, 2019).

In response, NU initiated various movements to establish independent Islamic educational institutions. They fought to gain support from the community so that they could establish schools that provided comprehensive religious education. NU also tried to establish communication with the government to integrate religious education into the existing formal education curriculum. In this context, NU did not only focus on education in Islamic boarding schools, but also tried to reach the wider community by providing easily accessible educational programs (Hasan A, 2022).

### **NU's adaptation in facing the development of modern education**

With the entry of the modern education system introduced by the Dutch, NU faced new challenges in responding to the educational needs of the community. The Dutch introduced schools that were more structured and used Dutch as the language of instruction. In dealing with this, NU chose not to reject, but rather to adapt a modern educational approach (Ahmad m, 2020).

NU began establishing madrasas that had a combined curriculum, which included religious and general subjects, such as mathematics, science, and language. These madrasas became an alternative choice for people who wanted to provide a balanced education for their children. In this context, NU tried to show that religious education and general knowledge were not contradictory, but rather complementary (Rahmad s, 2023).

### **Comparison of Muhammadiyah and NU Strategies Analysis of the differences and similarities between Muhammadiyah which tends to be progressive and NU which maintains traditional education in the face of colonial education.**

Muhammadiyah, founded in 1912, has a mission to reform Islamic practices and education. In facing the challenges of colonial education, Muhammadiyah adopted a more progressive approach, emphasizing the importance of modern education that integrates science and Islamic values. Muhammadiyah schools were established with a more open curriculum, which included not only religious studies, but also science, mathematics, and language, aiming to create a generation that could compete in the modern era. Through these educational institutions, Muhammadiyah encouraged students to think critically and innovatively, while maintaining strong moral and spiritual values (Hasyim M, 2019).

On the other hand, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), which was founded in 1926, focuses more on preserving conventional Islamic traditions and education, especially through Islamic boarding schools. In the context of colonial education, NU fought to maintain the teaching of yellow books and religious knowledge, which were considered the heart of Islamic education. NU not only tried to fight the dominance of colonial education, but also integrated local and traditional values into their education (Natsir M, 2020). This approach reflects NU's efforts to maintain Islamic identity and local culture, as well as ensure that students receive an education that strengthens their faith and morals (Rahman S, 2023).

Despite their differences in approach, Muhammadiyah and NU share a common goal: to create a generation with noble character and able to contribute positively to society. Both organizations understand the importance of education as a tool to shape the character and morality of Muslims. In facing the challenges of colonial education, Muhammadiyah tried to adapt modern methods, while NU stuck to traditional values by prioritizing Islamic boarding schools as the main educational institutions (Azhari A, 2020). In this context, both have shown the ability to adapt, albeit through different paths. This dynamic creates diversity in the landscape of Islamic education in Indonesia, with each making important contributions to the development of Muslim society in the country.

## CLOSING

The history of Dutch colonial education in Indonesia shows a significant impact on the development of the education system in the country, especially in the context of Islamic education. Islamic kingdoms in Indonesia, such as Samudera Pasai, Demak, and kingdoms in Maluku, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi, have made important contributions to the spread and teaching of Islam. The education system implemented during the kingdom period reflected strong Islamic values, where religious education was the main priority. However, the arrival of the Dutch colonialists brought new challenges, especially with educational policies that tended to ignore religious values, which triggered reactions from Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in an effort to preserve religious education amidst the dominance of modern education. Muhammadiyah and NU, despite having different approaches, contributed greatly to developing Islamic education in Indonesia during the colonial period. Muhammadiyah adopted a more progressive approach, by establishing modern educational institutions and integrating religious and general curricula, while NU preferred to maintain traditional education through Islamic boarding schools. Both were committed to creating a generation with noble character and broad knowledge, although through different paths. Muhammadiyah's adaptation to the development of modern education and NU's strengthening of Islamic educational traditions have created a rich diversity in the educational landscape in Indonesia, and demonstrated the ability of both organizations to adapt to the challenges of the times.

Both organizations also demonstrate the importance of collaboration between religious education and science to form holistic individuals. In facing colonial education, Muhammadiyah and NU struggled to position Islamic education in a better position, both in the eyes of society and the government. Their efforts were not only limited to religious teaching, but also included the development of character and morality that became the foundation for Indonesian Muslim society. Thus, the history of colonial education and the

response to it are important to understand in the context of the development of Islamic education in Indonesia today.

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