

## History of the Development of Ahmadiyya Islam: Case Study Indonesia Starting in the 20th century

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### Abstract

*This study aims to analyze the history of the development of Ahmadiyah Islam in Jambi Province and the factors that influenced its spread. Ahmadiyah Islam, founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in India in the late 19th century, began to enter Indonesia in the early 20th century and spread to various countries, including Indonesia. Through a historical approach, this study explores written and oral sources to understand the process of Ahmadiyah's entry into Indonesia, the community's response to this sect, and the challenges faced by the Ahmadiyah community in the region. In this study, historical research methods were used, including heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and synthesis to compile a narrative of the development of Ahmadiyah in Indonesia. The results of the study show that the Ahmadiyah community in Indonesia developed through trade routes and close social relations with centers of da'wah in Indonesia, despite facing challenges from mainstream Islamic groups that reject their teachings. This study also reveals the social and political dynamics that influence the existence of Ahmadiyah in Jambi, both in the context of the internal community and local government policies related to religious freedom. This study is expected to contribute to the understanding of the diversity of sects in Islam in Indonesia.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Islam is a religion that first entered Indonesia around the 13th century, although a number of different theories state an earlier time. As the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia has had a long journey in the development of the Islamic religion which is marked by interactions with various cultures, kingdoms and international trade. The initial arrival of Islam in Indonesia was closely related to trade routes between West Asia, India and Southeast Asia. Muslim traders and scholars from Gujarat (India), Persia and Arabia brought Islamic teachings to the island's coasts. Over the centuries, Islam developed through a process of acculturation with local culture, forming an Islamic identity that is uniquely Indonesian. In the 16th and 17th centuries, Islamic kingdoms in Indonesia such as the Sultanate of Malacca, Aceh, Demak and Mataram became centers for the spread of Islam which became increasingly strong throughout the archipelago. The spread of Islam was not only through trade routes, but also through preaching carried out by Songo ulama and saints who were famous for their peaceful and cultural approach. Over time, Islam in Indonesia became an integral part of social, political and cultural life, with a variety of practices and traditions being heavily influenced.

The history of the development of Islam in Indonesia also faces challenges, both from Dutch colonial rule which tried to control the spread of religion, and from the socio-political dynamics that have developed in the modern era. Despite this, Islam in Indonesia remains persistent and sovereign. In Indonesia, Ahmadiyah was introduced at the beginning of the 20th century,

precisely in 1925, through the influence of followers who studied abroad and Ahmadiyah missionaries who visited Indonesia. This sect received attention by spreading its teachings in a more organized way, by building activity centers and Islamic boarding schools, as well as establishing relationships with a number of religious figures in Indonesia. Although initially growing rapidly and being accepted by some Muslim circles in Indonesia, Ahmadiyah was not free from controversy and rejection.

This controversy arose in connection with the prophetic claims put forward by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, which contradicted the view of the majority of Muslims in Indonesia who believed that the Prophet Muhammad SAW was the last prophet. Over time, various movements of rejection and criticism of Ahmadiyah teachings emerged from mainstream Islamic circles, who considered Ahmadiyah teachings to be heretical. Despite this, the Ahmadiyah community continues to grow in Indonesia, by establishing various educational institutions. The development of Ahmadiyah Islam in Indonesia is also influenced by the country's political and social dynamics, including government policies that affect religious freedom and diversity of sects. Despite experiencing challenges in gaining recognition and rejection, Ahmadiyya remains part of the Islamic tradition in Indonesia.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

Historical research methods are methods or procedures used by investigators to explore, analyze and compile past events with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of a historical event or phenomenon. This method not only aims to describe historical events, but also to analyze the consequences, relationships between events, and the impacts they have. In general, historical research uses a systematic, analytical and critical approach to available historical sources. There are several main stages in historical research methods, which consist of Collecting Historical Sources (Heuristics). The first stage in historical research is collecting relevant historical sources. These historical sources can be written documents (such as archives, newspapers, books, travel notes, etc.), oral (interviews with historical witnesses), historical objects, or archaeological finds. Source collection must be done carefully and carefully to ensure the authenticity and accuracy of the sources used.

**Source Criticism** Source criticism is an important stage in historical research which aims to test and convey the authenticity and credibility of historical sources used in writing history. Historical sources can be various types of documents, both written and oral, as well as historical objects or archaeological remains. The purpose of source criticism is to ensure that the sources used are trustworthy and relevant to the research being conducted. Source criticism is divided into two main types:

**External criticism and internal criticism.** These two types of criticism serve to assess the quality and accuracy of the sources used in historical research. **External Critique (Critique Externe)**, External criticism aims to assess the authenticity of historical sources, namely to ensure that the source really comes from the relevant period and has not been falsified or altered. Some things explained in external criticism include:

**Authenticity:** Checking whether the document or source used is an original document or a copy, and whether there is the possibility of forgery. **Origin:** Assess who produced the source, when, and where. This assessment is important to find out whether the source comes from a trusted party or has a certain agenda. **Social and Cultural Context:** Understand the social, cultural and political background at the time the source was created, to find out whether this context influences the content and how it is interacted with.

**Internal Criticism (Critique Interne)** Internal criticism focuses on evaluating the credibility and truth of the source's content. This criticism seeks to ensure that the information conveyed in the source can be accounted for. Aspects explained in internal criticism include: **Consistency and Openness**, checking whether the information contained in the source is consistent with other relevant sources. When there is a discrepancy, debating requires analyzing the reasons behind the discrepancy.

**Bias and Objectivity:** Assess whether the source author has certain biases that affect the objectivity of the writing. For example, whether the author attempted to manipulate events for personal or certain group interests. **Logic and Factual Accuracy:** Checking whether the information in the source makes sense and corresponds to facts known or accepted by experts in the field. **Expert Opinions on Source Criticism** The following are several views from experts regarding source criticism in historical writing. Muhammad Ali (1987) In his book *\*Historical Research Methods\**, Muhammad Ali explains that source criticism is a very important step in historical research because it helps separate valid facts from information that cannot be justified. Ali emphasized the importance of these two types of criticism (external and internal) to avoid wrong interpretations in compiling history. (RG Collingwood 1946).

### 3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ahmadiyya is a sect in Islam founded at the end of the 19th century by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in India, who claimed to be al-Mahdi (the long-awaited leader) and also as Isa (Jesus) who returned in spiritual form. Although Ahmadiyya consider themselves part of the Muslim community, their views and teachings are often considered controversial by most other Muslims, especially regarding Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's claims which differ from the majority Muslim beliefs regarding the prophethood and Islamic eschatology.

#### 3.1. The Beginning of the Establishment of Ahmadiyya

The Ahmadiyya sect began in 1889 in India, when Mirza Ghulam Ahmad founded his community. He claimed to be the Mujaddid (religious reformer), al-Mahdi, and even Isa (Jesus) who returned in spiritual form. Ghulam Ahmad refuses to consider that the Prophet Muhammad is the last prophet in an absolute sense, because according to him, the arrival of a new prophet in Islam can occur as long as it does not bring new revelations or different laws. Ahmadiyya developed rapidly in India and spread to other countries, including Indonesia. This organization is comprehensive in two branches

#### 3.2. The entry of Ahmadiyah into Indonesia

Initially, Ahmadiyah was accepted by several Muslim groups in Indonesia because they considered this teaching to be part of Islam which encouraged modernization and introduced new teachings in terms of renewing Islamic thought. Ahmadiyya teachings offer a more flexible interpretation of religious texts. However, as time went by, Ahmadiyah began to receive rejection from various groups of Muslims in Indonesia, especially internal disputes regarding teachings and leadership among major Indonesian religious leaders, such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Many scholars believe that Ahmadiyya teachings conflict with the concept of prophethood in Islam, especially Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's claim to be a prophet.

#### 3.3. Controversy and Rejection of Ahmadiyah in Indonesia

The biggest problem facing Ahmadiyah in Indonesia is Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's claim to be a prophet, which contradicts the main teachings of Islam which states that the Prophet Muhammad was the last prophet. Rejection of Ahmadiyah became stronger when the MUI (Indonesian Ulema Council) issued a fatwa in 1980 stating that Ahmadiyah was a heretical sect. This controversy increased at the beginning of the 21st century, with a series of acts of rejection and violence against the Ahmadiyya community in several regions in Indonesia, especially in West Java and other areas. In 2008, the Indonesian government issued a Joint Regulation of the Minister of Religion and the Minister of Home Affairs prohibiting Ahmadiyah activities deemed to be spreading teachings that conflict with mainstream Islamic teachings. The government argued that Ahmadiyah teachings had spread the Muslim community and threatened the unity of the community. This rejection received various reactions, both from groups that oppose Ahmadiyah teachings, as well as from groups that support religious freedom and freedom of belief. Many people think that the firm action against Ahmadiyah is a violation of human rights, especially the right to follow a religion and worship according to one's beliefs.

### 3.4 Social and Political Impact on Ahmadiyah in Indonesia

The development of Ahmadiyah in Indonesia not only has an impact on religious aspects, but also on social and political aspects. This sect is often a controversial subject in identity politics discourse, especially in the context of religion and religious freedom. Ahmadiyah at the social level, Ahmadiyah people in Indonesia face discrimination, violence and marginalization. Some Ahmadiyah congregations have to live in fear, because of threats from intolerant groups who oppose them.

## 4. CONCLUSION

In Indonesia, the development of Ahmadiyah faces various challenges, both in religious, social and political aspects. Although some Muslims reject Ahmadiyya because of differences in views regarding the prophethood, there are also segments of society who support religious freedom. In the future, the development of Ahmadiyah in Indonesia is very dependent on social and political dynamics, as well as the government's attitude in maintaining religious freedom and social justice for all religious groups, including Ahmadiyah. Of course, big challenges remain, especially regarding how to balance freedom of belief and maintaining harmony between Indonesia's many religious communities.

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