

## Rethinking the Special Library's Role in Building a Foundation of Interreligious Harmony

**Indah Novita Sari**

Universitas Gadjah Mada (65141), Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

E-mail address: [indah.novita.s@mail.ugm.ac.id](mailto:indah.novita.s@mail.ugm.ac.id)

**Ni Putu Premierita Haryanti**

Universitas Udayana (80613), Bali, Indonesia.

E-mail address: [premierita@unud.ac.id](mailto:premierita@unud.ac.id)



Copyright © 2018 by Indah Novita Sari, Ni Putu Premierita Haryanti. This work is made available under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0

International License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

---

### Abstract:

*Special Libraries which belong to the houses of worship, the likes of mosques, monasteries, temples and churches, face major challenges in building the foundation of interreligious harmony. Religious issues related to radicalism up to terrorism can be a sensitive issue which is likely able to create disunity. This study sought to uncover the efforts conducted by special libraries in Indonesia to maintain the harmony and to capture social activities in developing proper spiritual knowledge.*

*The research methodology employed was a qualitative method by undertaking observation and interviews with librarians and visitors. The research was carried out in the library of Besakih temple in Bali, Budha Sakyamuni monastery in Bali, Gedhe Kauman mosque in Yogyakarta, and Kolese St. Ignatius - kolsani in Yogyakarta. The results portrayed their means in adding library collections and in delivering their particular program to achieve the harmony and captured visitors activities inside of those special libraries. In a broader purpose, the research can be used by information managers to get the right position in their contribution effort as peacekeepers by being a bridge between the individual and the needs of spirituality and humanity.*

**.Keywords:** Special Libraries, Interreligious and Harmony

---

## Introduction

Special library mainly related to the actual place of worship has a long history in the world of libraries. "the fifth century ad the roman empire had undergone two fundamental changes political one an the other spiritual ... Reviews these arose as part of the Christian churches, monasteries, and the like and spreading far and wide during the middle ages, were steps in progression toward the libraries of today (Casson, 2002)."Therefore, a special library that owned the place of worship is very developed at that time. In addition, a clear picture related to the strategic role of the church library written by Umberto Eco in the novel "the name of the rose." As time passed, the question arises whether special libraries which belong to the houses of worship still has a central role as in previous centuries?

Actually, there has been a researcher on the role of churches and mosques libraries. The church library can equip the church in its many battles against immoralities, ignorance, and poverty while guiding its faithful on the right path to prosperity and proper ethical conduct (Onwueme, 2016). While the study of mosque libraries have a role in educating the Jemaah to educate Jemaah (Yakin, 2016). Previous studies largely discuss how libraries have a role in providing services and have contributed to the knowledge of spiritual pilgrims. However, a more specific study discusses the library's role in building the foundation of religious harmony in Indonesia have not been many authors found. This study is interesting to study and to do given the magnitude of problems relating to religion in Indonesia.

*First*, problems of intolerance up to radical actions continue to rise each year in Indonesia. Based on the data released by the National Human Rights Commission, it is revealed that there were up to 97 complaints of violations on the right of religious freedom in 2016. The number has significantly increased compared to 2015 which showed only 87 cases. *Second*, (Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama, 2010) mentions one of some factors driving to violence in religion which is people who are lack of knowledge and understanding of religion, but possess a high motivation to fully practice religion based on their own understanding.

Involving religious issues is expected to be mitigated by open dialogue and open up horizons of knowledge of the Jemaah. Special Libraries which belong to the houses of worship has become a challenge for the open dialogue and provide a collection to add to the spiritual knowledge of the pilgrims. Therefore, this study seeks to uncover any existing activities in special libraries owned by mosques, churches, temples, and monasteries.

This study is an attempt to understand the contribution of special libraries which belong to the houses of worship in building the foundation of inter-religious harmony, in order to then be compiled measures more contextual development. In practical terms, this study is necessary to execute for two various reasons. First, efforts to maintain religious harmony requires support from a various element, including the library. Second, the librarians in special libraries which belong to the houses of worship need to position themselves to have a role in improving religious literacy Jemaah in order to achieve peace and harmony in society.

## Research Question

1. How do the library's portraits as the places of worship in Indonesia look like?
2. What are the chances of collaboration between libraries in Indonesia involving the library a place of worship?
3. How can special library owned by places of worship contribute in maintaining religious harmony

## **Literature Review**

### **Special Library: Concept and Role**

The Library in mosques, churches, temple, and monasteries have a special uniqueness presented in the collection and its activities were undertaken that distinguishes it from other special libraries. (Murray, 2016) argues that “special library have unique characteristics and concerns which merit separate consideration.

Separately, some researchers express the interests of libraries in mosques and churches. Expressed by (Zuhdi, 2010) that the library of the mosque has an important role in educating the people and realize the learning society. While the study related to the library of the church in England conducted by (Jacob, 2011) resulted in the following findings:

“Libraries were intended to provide resources for godly preachers in preparing combination lectures, promoted by town corporations, to provide sound doctrine and instruction for godly living for their citizens, and to provide models of good preaching for the local clergy. Libraries established from the late sixteenth century until at least the mid-eighteenth century were part of a widespread initiative to achieve a well-educated clergy and to win the minds and hearts of the people of England, Wales, Scotland, and the Isle of Man to the national church, whether Anglican or Presbyterian.”

Further, disclosed by (Onwueme, 2016) that the church Library is not just a physical place for keeping church records and books but a resourceful hub for transmitting knowledge and refining hearts and minds. The results of the above studies become an important cornerstone in understanding the role of special libraries owned houses of worship in improving the knowledge of the people. More broadly, knowledge and a good understanding impact to maintain inter-religious harmony.

### **Collaboration in Special Library**

The library challenges arise in houses of worship in the 21st Century was the collaboration. Collaborative practice more common in colleges and public libraries, expressed by (Murray, 2016) the special libraries rarely belong to the association or forum. Though the usage of collaboration has benefits. More (Murray, 2015) argued that “the benefits of cooperation are very real, though. Groups of libraries banded together in a consortium can get a better per-library price for products and services and wield greater leverage in negotiations with vendors and publishers, perhaps even making possible a seemingly unattainable purchase.”

This form of collaboration assortment can be attributed associated with collections and library management. (Murray, 2016) argued that some form of collaboration that can be done by specialized libraries, for example, interlibrary loan, reciprocal borrowing agreements, consortial purchasing, and cataloging. More broadly, collaboration can be a power that can make the library more developed.

## **Methods**

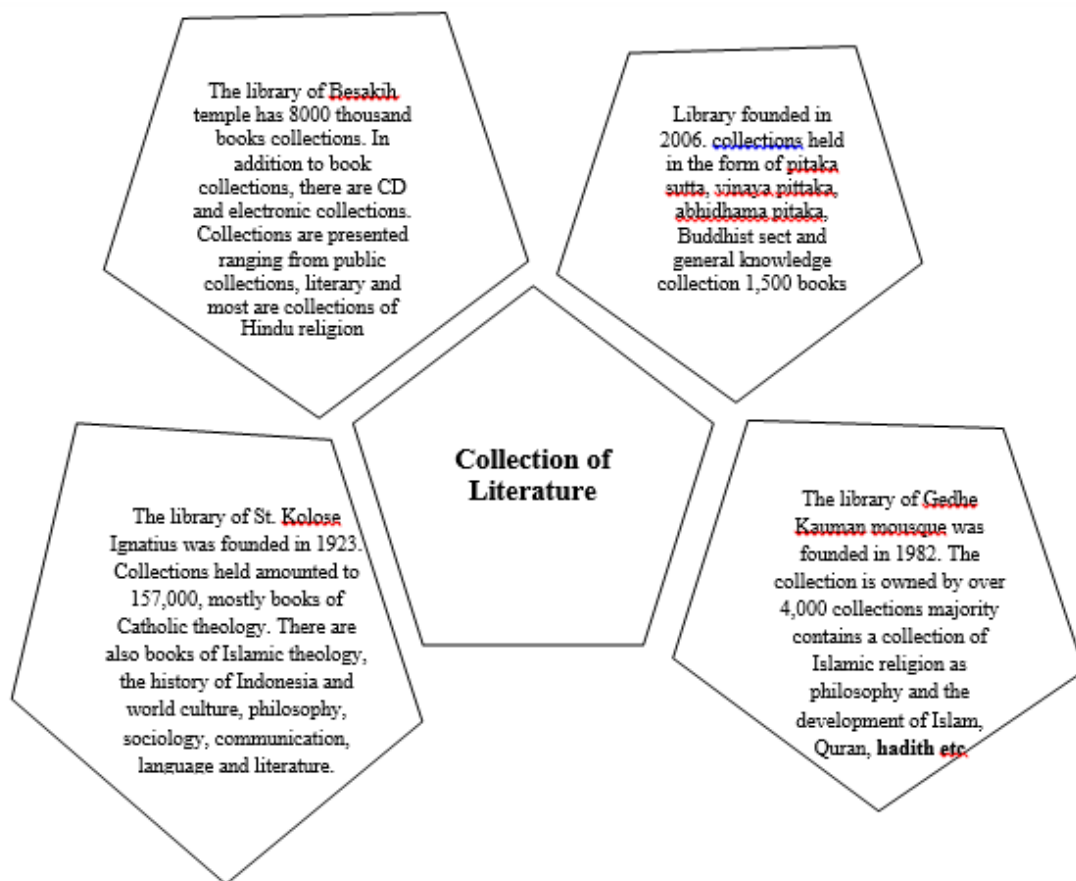
The research method used in this research was qualitative descriptive. (Bungin, 2015) explained that "qualitative descriptive format aimed to describe, summarize a variety of conditions, circumstances or various phenomenon of social reality in the community which was the object of research..." This study sought to uncover portrait a special library which belong to the houses of worship and thinking the role of special libraries in resolving the religious issues in Indonesia. Setting the research was conducted in Besakih temple in Bali,

Budha Sakyamuni monastery in Bali, Gedhe Kauman mosque, and Kolese st. Ignatius – Kolsani in Yogyakarta.

The data collection was done by an observation in the special library and an in-depth interview with informants. Informants are the librarian of special libraries and library users. Mainly, the librarian has been expected to describe the collections, challenges and opportunities in the special library management. Library users also interviewed to provide a portrait of user activities in special libraries and to measure the contribution of special libraries for increasing religious knowledge.

### Images of Special Libraries in the Mosque, Temple, Monastery and Church

Based on the observations in the library of Besakih temple in Bali, the library of Budha Sakyamuni monastery in Bali, the library of Kolese st. Ignatius - Kolsani, and the library of Gedhe Kauman mosque in Yogyakarta, it was found that the library under places of worship open to the public and can be accessed by users from different religious backgrounds. In summary, the writer will present an overview of special libraries in temples, monasteries, mosques and churches as follows:



Figures 1  
Literature Collection at the Special Libraries Places of Worship

### Special Libraries and Potential Collaboration

Special library actually has associations at national and international levels. The national level is “Forum Perpustakaan Khusus Indonesia” which consists of libraries in government agencies, private institutions, and places of worship. In addition, the international level is Special Library Association. Based on the interviews with librarians in the library

author mosques, churches, temples and monasteries, no librarians follow the library association. The informant at the church library that they do not understand the benefits of the special library association. Participation in professional associations make librarians bound by the rules applied to the library. Though they have a system that matched to the user. The library of Gedhe Kauman mosque has a partnership with the public library which enables the provision of collection and training for the mosque library administrator. They are also working with University of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta Libraries for improving managerial system and trying to build cooperation with the ministry of religion. Besakih temple and Budha Sakyamuni monastery library has a partnership with the public and university libraries. While the library of kolese St. Ignatius develop cooperation with Sanata Dharma University for the development of electronic systems. At the national level, the library national also contributes indirectly by issuing manuals on library management of places of worship.

### **Measuring the Contributions of Special Libraries towards Inter-Religious Harmony**

*No world peace without peace among religions, no peace among religions without dialogue between the religions, and no dialogue between the religions without accurate knowledge of one another* Hans Kung in (Ismail, Mawardi, Rachmadani, & Haryanto, 2011). The interests of dialogue and individual knowledge become the important foundation in maintaining harmony among religious people. Special libraries which belong to the houses of worship can be a bridge with a role as a place for interreligious dialogue, providing collections and programs that can increase theological knowledge of the community.

#### **a. Library Collection to Introduce another Religion**

Religion as a matter of personal and sensitive raises its own clumsiness when discussed or questioned by lay people who have no particular religious background. (Secretariatus Pro Non Christianis, n.d.) Reading is necessary for a dialog. Special Libraries held a place of worship, can be used as the initial search process in an effort to understand other religions. Collections owned relate to inter-religious dialogue can be found in the special library a place of worship.

The results showed that the Library of Kolese St. Ignatius has a collection of Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism and Buddhism. In addition, there are hundreds of collections relating to inter-religious dialogue. From the search results, the authors found 572 books that contain religious dialogue between Islam and Christianity; dialogue between Buddhism and Islam as much as 5 pieces; dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity 203 pieces; and dialogue between the religions of Islam with other religions as many as 30 pieces.

The library of Gedhe Kauman mosque, in addition to having a collection of Islam also has collection related Christology. This collection is typically accessed by users who want to know more about the Christian and religious dialogue between Islam and Christianity. Collection of Islamic religion can also be found in the library of the temple and monastery. Library has a collection of religious temple Hindu, Buddhist and Islam. Monastery library has a collection of Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Christian.

When we had a great curiosity related to other religions, but cannot ask the people. Special libraries can then be used as a solution to obtain the corresponding initial understanding of other religions. This effort is also made to minimize suspicion of different religions and foster a sense of fraternity in human beings.

#### **b. Library as Place to Open Interreligious Dialogue**

The emergence of the concept of the public sphere by Habermas to *common learning* impact on the role of libraries in the present. Where the provision of spaces for discussion and learning becomes essential to meet user needs. Special library owned their place of worship, is useful as a place for dialogue among users who have different religious backgrounds. The

results showed that the library of kolese st. ignatius several times received visits from other universities that have a focus on the religion of Islam as a university Gontor, Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta and University of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta. While the library of gedhe kauman mosque also be a place of discussion for the adherents of Christianity who wanted to know at a glance about Islam. This is caused by the disclosure of the nature of the special library owned by the place of worship, where users from different backgrounds can access a library of mosques, churches, temples and monasteries are the object of research. Dialogue between users who have different religious backgrounds have the opportunity to build harmony and produce work that is beneficial to the public. In Church Library Kolese, the user (who is a lecturer in the Islamic religion and the clergy) to establish good relations and finally produce the paper together. In addition, the church library used for discussion among religious leaders on the global issues occurring in Indonesia.

c. Additional roles for special library

Special Libraries held a place of worship has a strategic role in building the foundation of inter-religious harmony with the provision of collection, places and programs for the library. However, that role is not sufficient given the demands of today's increasingly complex. Development role for the improvement of theological literacy, special library service is a cross between a place of worship and discussion among the religious leaders to solve global problems.

1. Theological Literacy

Internet with all conveniences provided, bring a special effect associated with religion. The emergence of hoaxes and deviant religious teachings can be found on the internet. This would jeopardize the Jemaah if it does not have sufficient knowledge of seeking and searching resources on the internet. Jemaah would be stuck with the narrow thinking related to religion and trapped in radicalism that allow endanger to others. Therefore, special libraries can begin to information literacy program to give insight to Jemaah accurately related sources of religion.

2. Interlibrary loan between a specialized library a place of worship

Services can be developed to a place of worship with the same religious background. This effort to increase interest in reading because users can access an increasingly diverse collection. Obstacles that may be encountered with regard to access to the places of worship and limited collection. This is similar to (Astanto, 2006) that execute cooperation between the monastery library is not easy due to the limited collection is owned by the local monastery. However, the success of this program can enrich the knowledge of the Jemaah and be better for the practice of harmony in society.

## **Conclusion**

The result shows that some places of worship such as mosques, temples, churches, and monasteries equipped with libraries. The collections and programs developed vary according to the needs of the users. Special Libraries owned mosques, churches, monasteries and temples have various types of collections with different subjects. The majority of the collection owned by dealing with the theology of the religion professed and several collections relating to other religions. The library can contribute to the improvement of theological knowledge and open dialogue to minimize the problem of intolerance in Indonesia.

Unfortunately, librarian at a special library of the research object no one was following special library associations both national and international levels. Whereas professional associations have many advantages, especially in the exchange of knowledge and cooperation. The results of the study indicate that the special libraries owned by places of worship build cooperation with public libraries, college libraries and ministries for the development of management and collection system.

Special Libraries held a place of worship has a role in the provision of collection and space to open a dialogue between users. The hope of a relationship of inter-religious harmony that access the library. However, that role is not sufficient at the present time. Required additional role in the improvement of theological literacy assembly when accessing electronic resources, inter-library loan service places of worship to a special program to invite religious leaders to discuss global issues that result can be a collection of the library.

## Suggestion

Special libraries in worship places should be the fundamental of library sustainability existence. Researcher recommendations are:

1. Librarians should ideally follow a special library association. This is useful for the development of science, network and update information related to the development of the current library.
2. Special library held a place of worship began to develop a guide to search information on the Internet, especially religious sources. It began to develop its own website to publicize the resources owned by the library.

## References

- Astanto, A. (2006, March). Kaum Religius menatap Perpustakaan. *ROHANI*, 9–13.
- Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama. (2010). *TERHADAP TINDAK KEKERASAN ( Studi Hubungan Antara Pemahaman Keagamaan (1st ed.)*. Jakarta: Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia. Retrieved from [http://simbi.kemenag.go.id/pustaka/images/materibuku/pandangan masyarakat terhadap tindak kekerasan atas nama agama-2010.pdf](http://simbi.kemenag.go.id/pustaka/images/materibuku/pandangan_masyarakat_terhadap_tindak_kekerasan_atas_nama_agama-2010.pdf)
- Bungin, B. (2015). *Penelitian Kualitatif* (2nd ed.). Jakarta: Kencana.
- Casson, L. (2002). *Libraries in the Ancient World*. United States: Yale University.
- Chakraborty, S., & Das, A. K. (2014). The Role of the Special Libraries Association in Promoting Library Professionals on a Global Scale. In *Collaboration in International and Comparative Librarianship* (pp. 64–84). PA: IGI Global. <http://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-4666-4365-9.ch007>
- Ismail, A., Mawardi, M., Rachmadani, A., & Haryanto, J. T. (2011). *Merajut Kerukunan Umat Beragama*. (A. Sodli, Ed.). Semarang: Robar Bersama.
- Jacob, W. M. (2011). Parochial Libraries and Their Users. *Library & Information History*, 27(4), 211–216. <http://doi.org/10.1179/175834911X13131454744798>
- Murray, T. E. (2016). The Forecast for Special Libraries. *Journal of Library Administration*, 56(2), 188–198. <http://doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2015.1124699>
- Onwueme, G. (2016). Church Libraries for Promoting Ethical, Spiritual Values. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from AllAfrica.com
- Secretariatus Pro Non Christianis. (n.d.). *For a Dialogue with Hinduism*. Italy: Editrice Ancora.
- Yakin, A. (2016). Peran Perpustakaan Masjid dalam mencerdaskan jamaah. Retrieved May 20, 2018, from <http://dpkp.ntbprov.go.id/berita-peran-perpustakaan-masjid.html>

Zuhdi, M. (2010). PERAN PERPUSTAKAAN MASJID DALAM MENCERDASKAN UMMAT Muhammad Zuhdi, PhD' Abstrak. *Al-Maktabah*, 10(1), 83–96.