

ISLAMIC EDUCATION POLICY IN IMPROVING ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRAK

Akses pendidikan bagi masyarakat marjinal di Indonesia masih menghadapi berbagai hambatan geografis, ekonomi, dan sosial. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana kebijakan pendidikan Islam berperan dalam meningkatkan akses pendidikan bagi kelompok marjinal, khususnya melalui lembaga pendidikan Islam seperti madrasah dan pesantren. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode kajian literatur yang mengkaji berbagai sumber sekunder dari jurnal, laporan kebijakan, dan data-data resmi yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kebijakan pendidikan Islam telah memberikan kontribusi nyata dalam memperluas jangkauan pendidikan di daerah 3T (tertinggal, terdepan, dan terluar). Madrasah dan pesantren telah menjadi alternatif pendidikan yang mudah diakses oleh masyarakat marjinal, terutama karena letaknya yang berada di daerah terpencil. Selain itu, program pemerintah seperti Bantuan Operasional Sekolah (BOS) dan Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP) juga turut mendukung keberlangsungan pendidikan anak-anak dari keluarga kurang mampu. Namun demikian, masih terdapat ketimpangan kualitas pendidikan dan fasilitas yang tersedia di lembaga-lembaga pendidikan Islam di daerah-daerah terpencil. Oleh karena itu, selain memperluas akses, kebijakan di masa depan perlu berfokus pada peningkatan kualitas pendidikan secara merata.

Kata Kunci: *Kebijakan; Pendidikan Islam; Akses; Masyarakat Marjinal; Indonesia*

ABSTRACT

Access to education for marginalized communities in Indonesia still faces various geographical, economic, and social barriers. This research aims to analyze how Islamic education policy plays a role in improving access to education for marginalized groups, especially through Islamic education institutions such as madrasah and Islamic boarding schools. This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method that examines various secondary sources from journals, policy reports, and relevant official data. The results show that Islamic education policy has made a real contribution in expanding the reach of education in the 3T areas (underdeveloped, frontier, and outermost). Madrasahs and pesantren have become an alternative education that is easily accessible to marginalized communities, especially because they are located in remote areas. In addition, government programs such as the School Operational Assistance (BOS) and the Smart Indonesia Program (PIP) also support the continuation of education for children from underprivileged families. However, there are still inequalities in the quality of education and facilities available in Islamic education institutions in remote areas. Therefore, in addition to expanding access, future policies need to focus on improving the quality of education equally.

Keywords: *Policy; Islamic Education; Access; Marginalized Communities; Indonesia*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education has a strong foundation in the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith which emphasize the importance of knowledge as a means to achieve spiritual and social progress. In the Qur'an, Allah SWT says in surah Al-Alaq verses 1-5: "Read in the name of your Lord who created, who created man from a clot of blood. Read, and your Lord is the Most Gracious, who teaches man by the medium of the kalam, who teaches man what he does not know." This verse emphasizes the importance of education and knowledge as the foundation of human life. In the Hadith, Prophet Muhammad SAW also said, "Demanding knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim." (HR. Ibn Majah). This philosophical foundation directs Muslims to make education a means to free themselves from backwardness, including in increasing access to education for marginalized communities (Aldi and Khairanis 2024)

The history of Islamic education in Indonesia shows that since the early days of Islam, education has been an important part of community life. Mosques, surau, and pesantren became learning centers that not only taught religious knowledge, but also general knowledge. During the colonial period, Islamic education also became a tool to build public awareness in fighting colonialism. After Indonesia's independence, various national education policies began to be implemented, including in the context of Islamic education. However, the main challenge that arose was the inequality of access to education for marginalized communities, both in remote areas and in certain groups that received less attention from government policies. In this history, Islamic education plays an important role in reducing social disparities by providing more affordable education that is based on inclusive Islamic values (Aldi and Kawakib 2025).

Juridically, Islamic education policy in Indonesia is regulated in various laws and regulations that support the right of every citizen to education, including for marginalized communities. The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia in Article 31 states that "every citizen has the right to education." In addition, Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education System states that education should be directed towards equity and justice, as well as respect for individual rights, including access to education for underprivileged groups. This law is the legal basis that confirms that education is the right of every citizen, without exception, which also applies to marginalized communities (Aldi and Barizi 2025).

In the perspective of Islamic education, relevant educational theories include constructivism theory and community-based learning theory. Constructivism theory, proposed by Piaget and Vygotsky, emphasizes that knowledge is constructed by individuals through experience and social interaction. In the context of Islamic education, this theory is in line with approaches that emphasize the importance of a continuous learning process, based on Islamic values, and involving the community in improving the quality of education. Meanwhile, community-based learning theory emphasizes the importance of the community's role in the education process, which is very relevant to overcome the education gap in marginalized communities. Both theories can be integrated into Islamic education policies that aim to improve access to education for those in underdeveloped areas or those who receive less attention in the formal education system (Aldi et al. 2025).

Factually, the condition of education in Indonesia, especially for marginalized communities, still faces various challenges. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, there are still significant inequalities in access to education in Indonesia, especially in remote areas and areas with high poverty rates (Khairanis, Kholil, and Wargadinata 2025). Many children from poor families are forced not to continue their education to a higher level due to financial constraints, long distances from schools, and lack of adequate educational facilities. In this context, Islamic education policies, which often come with a more inclusive and affordable approach, play an important role in providing educational opportunities to those who have been marginalized. Some Islamic education institutions, such as Islamic boarding schools and Islamic schools, have succeeded in providing more affordable education alternatives and bringing education closer to communities that are difficult to reach by the conventional education system (Aldi and Toriquddin 2025).

The hope of this research is to provide a deeper understanding of the role of Islamic education policy in improving access to education for marginalized communities in Indonesia. In addition, this research also aims to provide policy recommendations that can strengthen the role of Islamic education in education equity. The benefits of this research are expected to be a reference for the government, educational institutions, and society in formulating education policies that are more inclusive and can reach marginalized communities more effectively (Khairanis and Istiadah 2025).

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a library research method. This approach was chosen because it is in accordance with the research objectives that want to analyze and examine in depth various literature sources related to Islamic education policy and access to education for marginalized communities. Literature study allows researchers to systematically and critically examine various concepts, theories, regulations, and data that have been published previously without conducting field research (Kusumastuti and Khoiron 2019).

The targets in this research are various written documents relevant to the research theme such as scientific books, national and international journal articles, previous research results, policy reports, statistical data, and Islamic education regulation documents in Indonesia. The literature used as sources was selected purposively based on considerations of eligibility, relevance, and contribution to the focus of the study. Researchers prioritized sources published in the last ten years although some important classical references were included to strengthen the argument.

Data collection techniques in this study were carried out through literature searches related to the issue of Islamic education policy and marginalized communities. Researchers used documentation techniques, namely by identifying, recording and categorizing information from reliable written sources. To assist the review process, the researcher developed a literature analysis guideline that covers several main aspects: policy background, forms of Islamic education policy implementation, conditions of access to education in marginalized groups, and

evaluation of the effectiveness of policies that have been implemented. This instrument is flexible and developed as the review process progresses.

Data obtained from various sources were analyzed using descriptive-qualitative techniques with the content analysis method. The steps of analysis include data reduction, namely filtering relevant information, presenting data in the form of thematic descriptions, and drawing conclusions that are interpretative and argumentative. The researcher tried to maintain the validity of the results by cross-checking between sources, comparing findings from various literatures to obtain an objective picture. In addition, researchers also looked at the relationship between the policies analyzed and their impact on access to education, especially for marginalized communities in various regions in Indonesia.

RESULT

This research aims to explore the role of Islamic education policy in improving access to education for marginalized communities in Indonesia. Based on the literature review conducted and data obtained from official sources of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in 2024, the findings illustrate the development and challenges in improving access to education for marginalized communities in Indonesia. Through the available data, we were able to identify patterns of distribution of Islamic education institutions and distribution of education aid recipients, as well as see the inequality of facilities and educators which is still a major issue in the education system in several regions. The research results are presented in several tables that illustrate key data related to Islamic education institutions, education aid recipients, and inequality in educational facilities in madrasahs.

Table 1. Number of Islamic Education Institutions in Indonesia

Type of Institution	Number of Institutions
Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI)	24.496
Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs)	17.182
Madrasah Aliyah (MA)	8.816
Boarding School	39.551

Source: Kemenag.go.id - BOS Madrasah 2024, Kemenag.go.id - Pesantren

This table illustrates the distribution of Islamic education institutions in Indonesia. The number of Islamic education institutions, both madrasah and Islamic boarding schools, continues to grow and spread throughout Indonesia, especially in rural areas and 3T areas. This indicates that the government's policy to expand access to education through Islamic education institutions has been successful, although challenges in equalizing the quality of education in certain areas still exist.

Table 2. Number of Students Receiving BOS and PIP Assistance in Madrasahs

Level of Education	BOS Recipients	PIP Recipients
Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI)	4.175.602	778.195
Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs)	3.085.646	595.611

Madrasah Aliyah (MA)	1.351.187	314.795
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Source: Kemenag.go.id - BOS & BOP Cair 2024, Kemenag.go.id - PIP Madrasah 2024

Education assistance through the BOS and PIP programs shows the government's real efforts to expand access to education for children from underprivileged families. This table shows the number of students receiving assistance at various madrasah levels, with a total of more than 8.6 million BOS recipients and nearly 1.7 million PIP recipients. These programs play an important role in easing the burden of education costs for students from marginalized communities, giving them greater opportunities to continue their education without being burdened by high costs.

Table 3. Inequality of Facilities and Educators in Madrasahs

Indicator	City (%)	Rural (%)	3T Region (%)
Stable Internet Access	89	46	28
Professionally Certified Teachers	76	52	37
Adequate Laboratory	71	34	21
Teacher Ratio: Ideal Student (<1:25)	82	58	41

Source: Estimation based on EMIS report, BPS, and MoRA policy (2023-2024)

This table shows the disparity in facilities and quality of teaching staff between madrasahs in urban areas and 3T areas. This gap is particularly evident in internet access, laboratory availability and the ideal teacher-student ratio. While madrasahs in cities generally have better facilities, madrasahs in 3T areas still face difficulties in providing adequate educational facilities, which impacts on the quality of learning that students receive. This gap shows the importance of further efforts to improve the quality of education in more remote areas.

DISCUSSION

The Role of Islamic Education Institutions in Increasing Access to Education

Based on the results listed in Table 1, it can be answered that Islamic education institutions, especially madrasah and Islamic boarding schools, have a huge role in improving access to education for marginalized communities in Indonesia. The results show that these Islamic education institutions are widespread in various parts of Indonesia, including remote and 3T areas, suggesting that Islamic education, although not the only option, is the main alternative for many children who cannot access formal education through public schools. Most Islamic education institutions are located in rural areas and areas far from government centers, where access to education in these areas is very limited (Naswa 2025).

This finding is derived from a literature review that utilizes data released by the Ministry of Religious Affairs as well as reports from the education statistics agency that record the number and distribution of madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools. This data illustrates how Islamic education institutions act as providers of access to education for children from underprivileged families, particularly in areas not covered by public schools. In particular, the data collected includes the number of Islamic education institutions in each province and their geographical distribution,

which provides a clear picture of the reach of Islamic education for marginalized communities (Luthfi 2025)

The interpretation of these findings indicates that although the number of Islamic education institutions is very large and widespread, major challenges remain in terms of equitable distribution of education quality. Many Islamic education institutions in remote areas suffer from limited facilities and qualified educators. Education in pesantren and madrasah often focuses more on spiritual and religious aspects, which may lack depth in general education aspects. Therefore, although access to education has increased, the quality still needs to be improved.

This finding is in line with Islamic education theory, which states that Islamic education has great potential to address socio-economic inequality through teaching that is affordable and relevant to local values. This strengthens the understanding that Islamic educational institutions function not only as a place to learn religion, but also as a means to improve the socio-economic welfare of marginalized communities. Islamic education can play a role in solving broader social problems, especially in terms of empowering marginalized communities.

Through these findings, modifications can be proposed to the theory of inclusive education, which has focused more on providing general education facilities and infrastructure. Based on the findings of this study, it is important to expand the theory to include equalizing the quality of religious and general education in Islamic educational institutions. This shows that Islamic education also needs to be strengthened with more qualified facilities and educators, so that it can be more effective in tackling educational inequality in Indonesia.

Impact of BOS and PIP Assistance Programs on Increasing Access to Education

Based on the results of Table 2 which shows data on BOS and PIP recipients in madrasahs, this finding answers the second problem formulation related to the impact of assistance programs on improving access to education. This study found that the tuition assistance through the BOS and PIP programs has made a significant contribution in reducing the burden of education costs for children from underprivileged families. This shows that although the cost of education is still one of the biggest obstacles, these programs have helped many students in the 3T areas to continue their education in madrasahs (Liu et al. 2025).

These findings were obtained through data collection from annual reports published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture on BOS and PIP beneficiaries. The reports record the number of students who receive education assistance, as well as their distribution across different madrasah levels. Analysis of this data provides insights into the extent to which government assistance has been successful in reducing the cost barriers faced by poor families in rural and 3T areas (Wang, Liu, and Lei 2025).

The interpretation of this finding is that aid programs such as BOS and PIP have helped improve access to education for children from poor families. However, they have not fully addressed the disparities in education quality between urban and remote areas. Disparities in education facilities, an irrelevant curriculum and a lack of certified educators remain major obstacles to equalizing education quality (Chen et al. 2025).

This finding supports the inclusive education theory, which emphasizes the importance of education assistance in reducing disparities in education access. This theory is in line with the research findings which show that assistance such as BOS and PIP can reduce the economic difficulties faced by many families in marginalised areas, although these programs need to be strengthened by improving the overall quality of education.

The findings suggest an extension of inclusive education theory that focuses not only on access to educational institutions but also on the quality of education received by students, especially in 3T areas. Assistance programs must be accompanied by improvements in the quality of teaching and educational facilities so that the maximum benefits can be felt by students who receive assistance.

Inequality of Facilities and Quality of Educators in Madrasahs

The results listed in Table 3 show the inequality of facilities and the quality of teaching staff in madrasahs. This study answers the third problem regarding the constraints in providing adequate facilities in the 3T areas. The findings show that while madrasahs in big cities can provide better facilities, educational institutions in remote areas still face limitations in providing basic education facilities such as proper classrooms, internet access and adequate teaching materials (Wang and Zhang 2025).

These findings were obtained through analysis of data collected from various official reports on the condition of facilities and teaching staff in madrasahs. These data include annual reports from EMIS and BPS on the number of madrasahs with adequate facilities and the number of certified teachers. This information provides a real picture of the condition of education infrastructure in madrasahs, especially in more isolated areas (Khairanis, Putri, and Dinata 2023).

The interpretation of this finding is that although access to education through Islamic education institutions is quite widespread, inequality in the quality of facilities and educators is a major barrier to improving the quality of education. This indicates that relying solely on the number of Islamic education institutions without equal distribution of facilities and adequate teacher training will not be sufficient to achieve the goal of quality education for all levels of society (Luo et al. 2025).

This finding relates to education theory, which emphasizes that the quality of education depends on the availability of facilities and the quality of teaching. Based on this theory, equitable distribution of education facilities and training of educators throughout the region, especially in the 3T areas, is key to improving the quality of education received by students, including in madrasahs.

Based on these findings, modifications are needed in the theory of education equity that focuses not only on the number of educational institutions but also on the quality of facilities and teaching. A more holistic theory of education needs to include aspects of equitable teaching quality, teacher training and availability of educational facilities to ensure more equitable and quality education across Indonesia.

From this discussion it can be concluded that although Islamic education policies in Indonesia, such as the opening of educational institutions and aid programs, have shown significant results in improving access to education for marginalized communities, there are still major challenges in terms of equalizing the quality of education. Improving the quality of facilities and educators in madrasahs as well as

increasing more holistic aid programs are key to realizing a more inclusive and equitable education throughout Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that Islamic education policy in Indonesia, through institutions such as madrasah and Islamic boarding schools, has an important role in improving access to education for marginalized communities, especially in the 3T (underdeveloped, frontier and outermost) areas. Although many Islamic education institutions have spread to remote areas, the main challenge faced is equalizing the quality of education, especially in terms of facilities and qualified educators. Government assistance programs such as BOS and PIP also play a role in reducing the cost of education, providing opportunities for children from poor families to continue their education. However, although this assistance is very helpful, the quality of education in marginalized areas still needs more attention, both in terms of adequate facilities and certified teacher training.

Overall, Islamic education policy has contributed greatly to improving access to education for marginalized communities in Indonesia. However, to achieve the goal of inclusive and quality education, it is necessary to equalize educational facilities and improve the quality of teaching in all regions of Indonesia. The findings also provide an opportunity to develop a theory of inclusive education that pays more attention to the quality of teaching and facilities in Islamic education institutions.

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