

## History of Muhammadiyah: The Role in Social Reform

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### ABSTRACT

Muhammadiyah is one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia which was founded by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan in 1912 in Yogyakarta. This organization plays an important role in the renewal of religious thought and practice as well as in various aspects of social life in Indonesia. The history of Muhammadiyah covers a long journey from its founding to its role in social reform in Indonesia, making it an important subject to study. The aim of this research is to examine the history of Muhammadiyah from its initial founding to its contribution to social reform in Indonesia. By understanding the history and role of Muhammadiyah, it is hoped that it can provide deeper insight into the contribution of this organization to social reform and change in Indonesia. Method This research uses historical methods with a qualitative approach. Data was obtained through literature studies which included books, journals, articles and documents related to Muhammadiyah. The research results show that since its inception, Muhammadiyah has focused on education and health reform, which then developed into a broader social reform movement. Apart from that, Muhammadiyah also plays an important role in advocating social and political issues related to justice and equality. Muhammadiyah's role in social reform includes various initiatives in education, health, and social welfare that continue to this day. Conclusion Muhammadiyah has shown a significant role in Indonesian history, not only as a religious organization but also as an agent of social change. Muhammadiyah's contribution to social reform has had a broad positive impact on Indonesian society, making it one of the important pillars in the history of social reform in Indonesia.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Muhammadiyah is one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia that has played an important role in the nation's journey since the early 20th century. Founded by KH Ahmad Dahlan, Muhammadiyah seeks to purify Islamic teachings from practices considered deviant (*bid'ah*) and to adapt religious teachings to the demands of the modern era. (Husin, 2023). Through various educational, health, and social programs, Muhammadiyah continues to play an active role in social reform in Indonesia. This article aims to describe in depth the history of Muhammadiyah, its influence on Muslims in Indonesia, and its role in advancing society through social reform (Dalimunte et al., 2024).

The background to the establishment of Muhammadiyah was Ahmad Dahlan's concern about the condition of Islamic society at that time, which he considered to be greatly influenced by superstition and heresy, as well as a lack of adequate education. (Dalimunte et al., 2024). With the spirit of renewal, Ahmad Dahlan founded Muhammadiyah with the aim of purifying Islamic teachings and improving the quality of life of Muslims through education and social services (Sari et al., 2023). Along with the times, Muhammadiyah continues to develop and adapt to social and political changes in Indonesia. This organization has succeeded in establishing various educational institutions, hospitals, and social institutions that have contributed significantly to improving the quality of life of the Indonesian people. (Ma'rif & Akbar, 2024). In addition, Muhammadiyah is also active in advocating social and political issues, fighting for justice and equality, and encouraging active community participation in the democratic process. (Fahrezi et al., 2023).

This study aims to examine the history of Muhammadiyah from its founding to its role in social reform in Indonesia. By understanding the history and contribution of Muhammadiyah, it is hoped that it can provide deeper insight into the role of this organization in social renewal and change in Indonesia. (Babay, 2023). This study uses a historical method with a qualitative approach, which includes literature studies and descriptive analysis of important events in the history of Muhammadiyah and their impact on social reform. (Rinaldi, 2024) With this background, this study will discuss the long journey of Muhammadiyah from its founding, its development and expansion, to its contribution in various social fields. (Memenuhi et al., 2019). In addition, this study will also examine the various challenges and achievements that Muhammadiyah has achieved in its efforts to create a better and more prosperous society. (Maarif, 2017)

## 2. METHOD

The research on "History of Muhammadiyah: The Role in Social Reform" uses a qualitative approach with historical methods. This method was chosen to examine in depth the journey of Muhammadiyah from its establishment to its role in social reform in Indonesia. The following are the method steps used in this research:

### 1. Literature Study

Literature study was conducted to collect data and information from various written sources related to the history of Muhammadiyah. These sources include books, journal articles, archival documents, magazines, and relevant digital sources. This study will utilize various scientific works and writings from experts in history, sociology, and Islamic studies who have studied Muhammadiyah.

### 2. Data Collection

The data used in this study are secondary and obtained from various literature that has been reviewed. The main data sources include: History books that discuss Muhammadiyah and its main figures in depth, such as works about KH Ahmad Dahlan. Scientific journal articles that focus on specific aspects of Muhammadiyah, such as the organization's role in education, health, and social reform. Archival documents from Muhammadiyah and related institutions that store important records regarding Muhammadiyah activities and developments. Mass media that provides contextual information regarding the development of Muhammadiyah from time to time.

### 3. Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out descriptively with the following steps: Identification and Classification: Identifying important events in the history of Muhammadiyah and classifying them based on time periods and major themes such as education, health, and social reform. Interpretation: Interpreting the data that has been collected to understand the historical context and role of Muhammadiyah in various fields. This involves understanding the social, political, and economic background that influenced the development of Muhammadiyah. Contextualization: Placing important events in a broader context to see how Muhammadiyah adapted and responded to changing times, and how its contributions influenced Indonesian society.

### 4. Data Validation

Data validation is done by: Source Triangulation: Using multiple data sources to confirm the information obtained. For example, data from history books is verified with data from journal articles and archival documents. Consultation with Experts: Involving experts in history and Islamic studies to provide input and corrections to research findings, so that the results are more accurate and accountable.

### 5. Preparation of Reports

Research reports are prepared systematically with a structure that includes: Introduction: Explains the background, objectives, and significance of the research. Research Methods: Explains the research approach and steps taken. Discussion: Describes the results of data analysis regarding the history of Muhammadiyah, its development and expansion, and its role in social reform. Conclusion: Summarizes the main findings and provides an assessment of Muhammadiyah's contribution to history and social reform in Indonesia.

By using this historical method, it is hoped that the research can provide a comprehensive and in-depth picture of the history of Muhammadiyah and its contribution to social reform in Indonesia.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study shows that since its inception, Muhammadiyah has focused on education and health reform, which later developed into a broader social reform movement. (Marsudi & Zayadi, 2021). This organization has succeeded in establishing various educational institutions, hospitals, and social institutions that have contributed significantly to improving the quality of life of the Indonesian people. (Madanih et al., 2024). In addition, Muhammadiyah also plays an important role in advocating for social and political issues related to justice and equality. Muhammadiyah's role in social reform includes various initiatives in education, health, and social welfare that continue to this day (Sholikin et al., 2024).

#### Result

**Early Period of Muhammadiyah Establishment** Muhammadiyah was founded on November 18, 1912 by KH Ahmad Dahlan in Yogyakarta. Ahmad Dahlan was inspired by the Islamic renewal movement in the Middle East, as pioneered by Muhammad Abduh and Jamaluddin Al-Afghani. (Khusniawati et al., 2021). In an effort to improve the religious practices of the community influenced by superstition and heresy, as well as to improve the education of Muslims, Ahmad Dahlan founded a school, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Diniyah Islamiyah, as the initial step of the Muhammadiyah movement. (Ismail, 2023). Since its founding, Muhammadiyah has grown rapidly by opening branches in various cities in Indonesia. In 1922, Muhammadiyah had 15 branches. The main focus of this organization is education and health, where they established various types of schools and hospitals. Muhammadiyah also established orphanages, nursing homes, and other social institutions.

Muhammadiyah plays an important role in social reform in Indonesia through various initiatives in education, health, and social welfare. In education, Muhammadiyah has established various educational institutions from elementary to university level. In health, Muhammadiyah has established hospitals and clinics that provide medical services to the underprivileged. In addition, Muhammadiyah is also active in social and political advocacy, fighting for justice and equality. Throughout its history, Muhammadiyah has faced various challenges, including political pressure, internal differences, and changing social dynamics. However, the organization has managed to overcome these challenges and continues to grow. Some of Muhammadiyah's important achievements include the establishment of Muhammadiyah University, expansion of the hospital network, and increasing the number of branches and members.

#### Discussion

The establishment of Muhammadiyah was a response to the social and religious conditions in early 20th century Indonesia. Ahmad Dahlan saw an urgent need to renew religious practices and improve education as a way to strengthen the Muslim community. (Pribadi, 2010). The inclusive educational approach, which combines religious and general knowledge, was a significant innovation at that time. This shows Ahmad Dahlan's progressive vision in preparing a young generation that is educated and has noble character. Muhammadiyah's rapid growth shows the need and support of the community for the reform movement carried out by this organization. By establishing schools and hospitals, Muhammadiyah has contributed greatly to improving the quality of life of the community. Muhammadiyah schools, which are famous for their balanced curriculum between religious knowledge and general knowledge, help produce a generation that is ready to face the challenges of modernity. Hospitals and other social institutions demonstrate Muhammadiyah's commitment to improving social welfare.

Muhammadiyah's role in social reform shows how the organization is not only focused on religious renewal, but also committed to creating broader social change. Education is Muhammadiyah's main tool for empowering society. Hospitals and clinics established by Muhammadiyah help improve access to health services, especially for the underprivileged. Muhammadiyah's social and political advocacy reflects their concern for issues of justice and equality, as well as their commitment to creating a more just and prosperous social order. Muhammadiyah's ability to overcome various challenges shows the strength of this organization in adapting to social and political changes. The establishment of Muhammadiyah University is one of the major achievements that shows Muhammadiyah's commitment to providing quality higher education. The expansion of the hospital network shows Muhammadiyah's success in the health sector. The increase in the number of branches and members reflects the trust and support of the community towards Muhammadiyah.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Research on the history of Muhammadiyah from its founding to its role in social reform shows that this organization has played an important role in religious renewal and social change in Indonesia. Founded by KH Ahmad Dahlan in 1912, Muhammadiyah has focused on education, health, and social welfare, establishing various institutions that have contributed significantly to improving the quality of life of the community. In addition, Muhammadiyah is also active in social and political advocacy, fighting for justice and equality, and encouraging active community participation in the democratic process.

Through its various initiatives, Muhammadiyah has succeeded in creating significant social change, facing various challenges with adaptability and strong commitment. The organization continues to grow, increasing the number of its branches and members, and expanding the reach of its education and health services. In conclusion, Muhammadiyah plays a role not only as a religious organization, but also as an influential agent of social change in Indonesia, with contributions that will continue in the future. Future research on the history of Muhammadiyah could focus on its evolving role in contemporary social reform movements in Indonesia. As an organization that has long been involved in education, healthcare, and social welfare, it would be valuable to explore how Muhammadiyah continues to influence public policy and social development in the modern era. The research could examine how the organization's historical values, rooted in the ideas of Islamic reform, have adapted to address current issues such as urbanization, poverty alleviation, and environmental sustainability. It would also be insightful to investigate Muhammadiyah's contributions to the national discourse on social justice, particularly its role in advocating for marginalized communities and promoting inclusive development.

Another area for future research could explore the intersection of Muhammadiyah's social reform efforts with global Islamic movements. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the impact of Muhammadiyah's philosophy and practices may extend beyond Indonesia, influencing Islamic reformist movements globally. A comparative study could examine how Muhammadiyah's approach to social reform aligns with or differs from other Islamic organizations, such as the Muslim Brotherhood or progressive Muslim groups in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. This research would not only provide a broader understanding of Muhammadiyah's historical significance but also offer valuable insights into the dynamics of Islamic reform movements in the 21st century.

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