

**MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND THE  
NATIONALISTIC REALITY  
(PHOTOGRAPH THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN  
BUILDING  
A MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS IN INDONESIA)**

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***Abstract***

*Various multidimensional crises that exist in Indonesia which is recognized or not is the part of cultural problem, one of the reasons is the diversity of the cultures that exist in our society. The diversity of culture should not be the cause of the existence of discrimination, injustice, suspicion and a variety of human rights violations, but being the power to build a community sense. The multiculturalism thought that exists in Indonesia resting on Islam as a source of thought. With the implementation of multicultural education, teachers are expected to be able to encourage learners to have an awareness and understanding to always uphold the values of justice, democracy, humanity and pluralism in the association in the middle of the national reality that is full of diversity.*

***Keywords:*** *teacher, Indonesia, Multiculturalism, education*

## **A. Introduction**

As an archipelago, Indonesia is a diverse country, both in terms of ethnicity, religion or culture. From the side of ethnicity, Indonesia consists of more than 101 ethnics with diverse language they have. The ethnic spread from Sabang until Merauke. From the side of the religion, the religious diversity that exists in Indonesia can be seen from many religions that exist in Indonesia, they are: Islam, Catholic, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Konghuchu and various other local beliefs. The diversity in one side is a huge potential for Indonesian progression, but in the other side it is vulnerable to the occurrence of social communal conflict.

After the 1998 reform, the diversity of culture in Indonesia started to get a serious test. Various communal violent conflicts, such as Sambas, Ambon and Poso appear that endanger Indonesia community togetherness. The social conflict about SARA cannot be underestimated, because it will ignite conflict in other areas. Therefore, it should immediately be addressed adequately and proportionally so it will not create a national disintegration (Ainul Yaqin, 2005: 45). At least, there are four factors that encourage the presence of the culture of violence in Indonesia, they are: first, the stuttering culture. Secondly, the accumulation of hatred in the society, it starts from the wrong prejudice against other religions. Third, the society of Indonesia has been caught up in the culture of intolerant; do not receive the plurality of traditions, way of communicating, a way of looking towards life and pressure against tradition. Fourth, the political that does not favor to the justice that is run by the "Orde Baru" government, because politics run by the violence cultural preservation form which is institutionalized (Nurul Huda, 2005: 165).

By seeing the variety of conflict above, it needs a fundamental understanding about life together in different cultures, it often referred to the term of multicultural.<sup>3</sup> Multiculturalism is closely related with the issues related

to politics and democracy, justice and law enforcement, employment opportunities and striving, human rights, the rights of cultural communities and minorities, the principles of ethics and morals, and the level of quality and productivity. Building an awareness as explained above is not easy, it should there be a serious effort and continuous improvement. It needs to be realized that it is more important than the inclusive attitude is to develop an attitude of multiculturalism. This attitude is indicated by every member of society by simply acknowledge that we are diverse over the differences that exist, but also encourage each believer to contribute actively towards the processes of life together.

The multiculturalism that is basically a view of the world that can then be translated into the various cultural policies which stressing the acceptance of the religious reality, plurality, and multicultural contained in the community life. Multiculturalism can also be understood as a worldview that manifested in the political awareness. Borrowing the term of Bikhu Parekh, multicultural society is a society that consists of some sort of cultural communities, with all the benefits, with little difference regarding the conception of the world, a system of meanings, values, forms of social organization, history, customs and habits (Parekh, tt: 7).

In the aspect of education, the multiculturalism thought should also be lowered in a variety of important terms that become the supporter of hefty diversity which exists in Indonesia, such as: guarantees of freedom in religion, guarantees the existence of fundamental rights of humanity (basic right) protection, democratic culture, and the protection of the minority (Franz Magnis Suseno, 2003: 120-123). Therefore, an open attitude, tolerance, anti against violence is a basic value that must be developed as a spearhead in living a life of religion, nation and State.

The thought of multiculturalism that exists in Indonesia resting on – one on Islam as the source of thought, so with

Islam as a world view as well as basic thoughts, put down the basic framework for fundamental humanitarian world view. In this case, the multiculturalism put the relationship of individuals and communities, both with regard to human rights and the balance between the rights of individuals with social responsibility (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2011:11). The concept of multiculturalism became important in reality of the nationality, because multiculturalism wants the existence form of openness from the Islamic community in the middle of the life of a plural society. Therefore, various problem of humanity with a wide variety of injustices, it will encourage the occurrence of changes in the political and economic structure (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2011:11).

Thus, the most possible instruments to make earthed the thought of multiculturalism in building awareness of the nation reality, one of them is through education. With education, teacher finds a media to introduce the diversity of cultures that existed in Indonesia. It is the more basic in an effort to prevent horizontal conflict and disintegration of the nation. The importance of the teacher role in building awareness of the diversity existence and promoting diversity through education of multiculturalism which has a significant relevance in photographing the realities of nationhood.

## **B. The Overview of Multiculturalism**

The term of multicultural is widely used to describe the unity of various different ethnic communities within a country. Etymologically, the term of multiculturalism comes from the root word: multi (many/varied) and cultural (culture), which means cultural diversity. Multiculturalism is an ideology that confessed and glorified the difference in equality both individually as well as in culture (David, 1991:319). The culture that should be understood is not the culture in the narrow sense, but rather a culture is understood as all the dialectics of man against his life. This dialectic will bear much of the face,

such as history, thought, culture, language and verbal.

Multiculturalism is a plurality of relations in which there is a problem of minorities versus majorities, in which there is an existential struggle for recognition, the equation (equality), equality and justice. Multiculturalism is clearly enriching pluralism, although it could not be equated with it (Bhikhu Parekh, 5). From the historical side, the concept of multiculturalism is not just a discourse but an ideology that has to be fought, as it needed as a foundation for the upright democracy, human rights, life well-being of the people. Various concepts that are relevant to multiculturalism are democracy, justice and law, cultural values and ethos, togetherness in equality, ethnic groups, ethnical culture, religious beliefs, cultural expressions, the private and the public domain, human rights, the rights of cultural community and other concepts that are relevant.

The concept of multiculturalism is not may be likened to the concept of diversity in ethnicity or ethnic culture that became the hallmark of multicultural community, because multiculturalism stressing the cultural diversity in equality (Parsudi Suparlan, 2002: 98). The plurality just represents the existence of multicultural, whereas multiculturalism gives affirmation that with all the differences that they are equal in public spaces. Multiculturalism essentially protects from various forms of discrimination and prejudice, they are free to try to maintain any kind of heritage or cultural identity that they want, as well as respect and tolerance with the rights of others (Bhikhu Parekh: 104-105).

In multicultural education there is a space for dialogue between ethnic identity, religion, gender, language, culture, and values. Individuals and society are observed to present its values, evaluates their traditions in a rational public discourse, as well as to interpret the returned identity according to the context of the times. In the perspective of multiculturalism, ethnic or culture (cultural groups) can coexist peacefully in

the principles of co-existence marked by willingness to respect other cultures (See Muhammad Ali, 2003: 93-94). What is desirable and awaited by our societies based on the atmosphere of pure friendship regardless of skin color, language, race and religion.

### **C. Multicultural Education**

The existence of a multicultural society seems wants something new that support the existence of the community. This is apparent in the various efforts attempted such as assimilation, self segregation, integration, multiculturalism and later appeared, for example in Indonesia the idea of multicultural education. A multicultural society must accept the cultural differences that exist in it, as well as guarantee the creation of equal opportunities for all its citizens that boils down to aspects of economic, social or political.

Indonesia is a country that is very diverse from reviewed aspects of any kind, whether religious, cultural, linguistic or ethnic. This diversity has the vulnerability the occurrence of conflict are quite high if not managed properly, which in turn will lead to disintegration. The last decade has happened various social unrest that poses a lot of losses and certain ethnic discrimination. Thus, the need for a strategy to manage all the differences mentioned above in different areas of social good life, economic, political, cultural, or religious education.

In the aspect of education, multicultural education then offers an alternative through an implementation strategy and education concept based on the utilization of the diversity that exists in the community, especially in learners such as ethnic diversity, culture, language, religion, social status, gender and race. The most important purpose of multicultural education is to increase awareness of learners to behave humanist, pluralist, and democratic in addressing all the differences that exist in society.

Basically, in this multicultural education, the teacher

sued not only masters the science and to be professional in teaching the subjects, but also must be capable of instilling the core values of multicultural education like democracy, humanism and pluralism. With the education as mentioned above, it is expected that learners are capable of being the generation that always uphold morality, discipline, caring, humanistic and honesty in their everyday behavior.

#### **D. The Role of Teachers in Implementing the Multicultural Education**

Education is the means to safeguard the values that felt able to encourage growth and survival of life in the community. In multicultural education, teacher is expected to be professional, but also must be able to inculcate values such as democracy, humanism and pluralism. With the instilling of such expected values, the learners are expected to uphold the principles of morality, discipline, humanistic, caring, and honesty in their everyday behavior. In relation to the implementation of multicultural education in building awareness of learners for addressing the diversity that exists in Indonesia, then the teacher can do a few things.

##### **1. Build attitudes of equality**

In the history of human life for centuries, similarities and differences between human beings have always been a discussion that may underlie almost all theories of human and the intricacies of life. Further distinctions can be found by a human when he interacts with other human beings. According to Bikhu Parekh there are many studies that attempt to understand the human being in relation to the substantive theory of equations, this more into account the marginal or marginalized groups. The equality required the existence of involvement, freedom and equal opportunity with a different cultural background. The most basic of degree is the reverence on the right of each individual (Bhikhu Parekh: 241).

Teachers in this context should encourage the multicultural awareness by building a spirit of empathy, equality and tolerance to learners. By emphasizing that anyone with any background has equal rights as citizens. Should not be one group dominates and violate the rights of other groups. The majority group should not be hegemony the minority groups. The value of the multicultural installation became important in education in Indonesia. Learners should be instilled the spirit of cooperation in equality, and do not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion or gender.

According to Abdurrahman Wahid, the keywords in the life of a nation is the equality treat to get recognition or respect its existence, the equalities in getting a chance, and the same treatment in the law, regardless of culture, race, ethnicity, and religion. This is where learners can sharpen the taste sensitivity to minority cultures and moves the culture of the majority group in order to have the same feelings and attitudes with other groups or cultures (Bhikhu Parekh: 42).

## 2. Encourage the Substantial Democracy

The diversity that exists in Indonesia often spawns conflicts of harshness. The conflict that should only be between the differences of ideas has penetrated to the differences of gender, race, religion, tribal, social and economic status.

The education with the character of multicultural should be able to encourage the learners to understand the differences so the conflict can be managed properly. Education should be able to encourage the existence of ethics to build consensus in the community. The need for this consensus aims to respect the difference without violating the principle of equality, and individual rights.

Teacher with his multicultural education has always encouraged enforcing democracy as a means of building consensus all over the citizens. Multicultural education



wanted the presence of substantive democracy, not just procedural. The real democracy is not just ceremonial. It is because such of the democracy would always encourage the equality of citizens in the law.

Multicultural education should be able to encourage an inclusive attitude, tolerance and open to a wide range of diversity that exists. Education should be able to build the multicultural life attitude instead of mono cultural, an updates way of life not intermingling, pro-existence not co-existence, not of separation but the interaction. Teacher through multicultural education is the best means to process the culture. Learners would be trained and awaken her consciousness to be democratic, humanist and pluralist in their lives.

### 3. Build the Gender Equality

Gender is a trait that is placed on the men and women who are socially or culturally constructed. Because it is purely a social forming so gender is not applied to forever, it can be fickle, and varies with each other and not the nature of God (Nasaruddin Umar, 1999: 40). A wide range of gender inequalities occurred in the middle of the life of the community. The injustice in general covers a few things, they are: marginalization, sub-ordination, stereotype, violence and workload (*double burden*).

The result of the injustice seems that currently most of women very minimal gain the opportunity to participate and progress in social life when compared to men. It is also happened in the religious field (Budhy Munawar, 2001: 398). Teachers in building gender equality through the multicultural education should be based on the principles of kulliyah al-khams, (The concept of Al-kulliyah al-khams (the five principles of the subject matter of religion), namely: *hifz al-din* (religious beliefs and embraced the protection), *hifz al-' aql* (protection of reason), *hifz al-nafs* (the protection of

inhabitants), *hifz al-'irdh* (protection will honor), *hifz and al-nasl wa al-mal* (protection of the continuity of the lineage and property). which is the main purpose of laws (*maqashid as-syariat*). The principle of *al-kulliyah al-khams* emphasizes the equality and fundamental equality between men and women as well as their vital rights. Women also have the potential to be able to play the roles that had claimed only and must belong to the men. There are many of the women who are able to perform in a leadership role for domestic and public, in the field of political, economic and social (Husein Muhammad, 1994: 21).

Teacher with his multicultural education should be based on al-Qur'an in building awareness and instilling the equality to learners, because the Qur'an contains much of the concept of gender equality. First, the Qur'an recognizes the dignity of men and women in gender without discriminating alignment. Both men and women have the same rights and obligations of real life field. Those similarities can be seen from the dimensions: first, the fact of his humanity. Islam gave women a number of rights to improve the quality of their humanity, such as the right to get education, the political right, and other rights relating to public affairs. Second, in the terms of religious teachings, Islam teaches that men and women will get a reply when they do good deeds, and vice versa. Third, in the terms of rights within the family, Islam gives the right to earn a living and inheritance to women (Abdurrahman, 1999: 170).

Teachers should emphasize an understanding of religious texts with sociological-contextual approach, as it relates to the particular issue. Along with the development of their evolution awareness, that the existence of women in various areas of life are experiencing significant movement as well as fundamental changes so that it has the same chance in getting basic rights and justice as citizens personally. The spirit of the interpretation of religious texts should be based

on the ideal Islamic principle such as equality, justice, grace and benefit, without having to be restricted by the boundary of gender and social systems.

At this point, the thought of multicultural in education find kink. In relation to gender equality, multicultural education should be directed to seek gender justice. This is certainly based on the principle of equality of rights and obligations among Muslims should base it on the framework of balance (*tawazun*) by using various approaches, such as historical and sociological approach, approach to affairs and economic approach.

Thus, multicultural education will be able to build the re-implementation and new understanding which is built based on the reinterpretation of the religious texts dealt. This is done by looking at the back of the principle of *kulliyah al-khams* as well as *maqashid syar'i* as the foundation to neutralize the religious discourse which has alignments against the women as well as distanced from gender bias. Teacher with the multicultural education is expected to build humanist and gender understanding, so that women have roles and freedom in different sectors of life.

## **E. Conclusion**

Various multidimensional crises that exists in Indonesia, recognized or not is part of the cultural problem which is one of the reasons is the diversity of the cultures that exist in our society. The diversity of culture should not be the cause of the existence of discrimination, injustice, suspicion and a variety of human rights violations, but being the power to build a sense of community. In relation to the implementation of multicultural education in building awareness of learners for addressing the diversity that exists in Indonesia, teachers can do a few things, they are: 1) build an attitude of equation (equality), the teacher in this context should encourage multicultural awareness

by building a spirit of empathy, equality and tolerance to learners. By emphasizing that anyone with any background have equal rights as citizens; 2) encourages democracy substantially. Teacher with the multicultural education has always encourages enforcing the democracy as a means of building consensus throughout the citizen; and 3) build the gender equality. Teachers in building the gender equality through the multicultural education should be based on the principles of *kulliyah al-khams* which is the main purpose of *maqashid as-syariat*.

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