

THE CHALLENGES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHARACTER EDUCATION IN BUILDING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH MULTICULTURALISM PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: Multiculturalism is often perceived as a political instruction and the value of diversity in a pluralistic social order. The two terms are in fact closely related to the world of education in which they are not mutually exclusive. It can be said like two sides of a coin. Various concepts relevant to multiculturalism among others are democracy, justice and law, cultural values and ethos, unity in equal diversity, ethnic, ethnicity, ethnic culture, religious beliefs, expressions of culture, private and publicdomain, human rights, community cultural rights, and other relevant concepts. Multiculturalism Education is to be a challenge for the development of national character education implementation as a place for the achievement of citizens' competences. Civic Responsibility as part of the citizenship competencies is relevant to the strengthening and development of the nation's Character Education as well as the development of human resources that are ready to compete in society. Indeed the diversity of Indonesian society becomes a crutch for human resources development in Indonesia. Thus the character education does not only discuss issues impacting the development of the character of the nation, but comprehensively influence and impact on the establishment of the civic responsibility. Character education as part of efforts to build the nation's character is urgent to be applied. Character education is vital andis needed to establish a 'new' Indonesia, a country which is able to face regional and global challenges.

Keywords: Character Education, Civic Responsibility, Multiculturalism

A. INTRODUCTION

It cannot be denied that the Indonesian nation is made up of various ethnic groups, cultures, religions and others so that Indonesia can simply be referred to as a "multicultural"society. But on the other hand, the "multicultural" society has an urgent need to reconstruct "the national culture of Indonesia" which can be "integrating

force" that binds all the ethnic and cultural diversity. In a multicultural society, conflicts are very potential to occur; therefore, education that can build the character of peace-loving of the citizens is absolutely necessary. Without that character, it is difficult for the nation and the state to withstand a variety of challenges and conflicts born from diversity. In this regard, education

is the most important bridge to form the character of multicultural society.

In the past, good examples were shown by the founders of the nation and the other national figures. Nowadays, exemplary figures are becoming rare. The elite no longer provide good exemplary for society. They are more concerned with their own interests and do not think about the nation's sake like what was represented by the earlier national figures. Characters that have been initiated by the founders of this nation are those that correspond to the values of Pancasila about nation and character building and are parts of the strengthening of civic responsibility.

Ellen G. White's statement quoted by Hidayatullah (2011) claims that the character building is the most important effort ever given to man. Character building is an outstanding goal of a good education system. The statement reinforces that character building cannot be separated from education. Even Stiles (in Hidayatullah, 2011) states that "character building cannot be done immediately without systematic and programmatic efforts since the beginning".

In that context, education needs an order of values which is able to change and to fix all problems that exist. This paper intends to show that the challenges of the development of character education is not only a part of the settlement of the problems faced by education in Indonesia and the problems faced in the multicultural society, but will be answered if: (1) The existence of the community is a laboratory and a source of macro-filled alternative to

enrich the implementation of the process of education; (2) Multicultural education is a progressive approach to transform education which thoroughly dismantle the shortcomings, failures and discriminatory practices in its process; and (3) Efforts done to be able to realize innovations in education.

B. CONCEPT OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

Character education has been debated in many countries. The pros and cons views have been coming along with the discourse of character education for a long time. Indeed, character education is an essential part of the duties of the school, but has been given less attention. The lack of attention to character education in the realm of schooling, as stated by Lickona, has led to the development of various social ills in society. Ideally, the school is not only obliged to improve academic achievement, but also responsible for forming the character of the students. However, economic and political demands of education led to an emphasis on the academic achievement and beat the ideal role of the school in the formation of character.

Character education is defined as the deliberate use of all dimensions of school life to foster optimal development character. This means that to support the character development of students, education should involve all components in the schools either from the aspect of content (the content of curriculum), the process of instruction, the quality of relationships, the handling of discipline, the implementation of co-

curricular activities, as well as the whole ethos of the school environment (Zubaedi, 2011: 14).

According to David Elkind dan Freddy Sweet (Zubaedi, 2011:15), character education is the deliberate effort to help people understand, care about, and act upon core ethical values. When we think about the type of character we want for children, then it is clear that we expect them to be able to recognize the truth, really care about the truth, and do what is believed as the truth, even when we get pressure from outside and efforts from inside.

Character education, according to Ratna Megawangi (2004: 95), is an effort to educate children to make decisions wisely and practice it in our daily lives, so that they can make a positive contribution to the environment. Another definition was proposed by Fakry Gaffar (2010: 10). He states that character education is the transformation of the values of life in one's personality so that it merges with the behavior of that person.

Characters which are defined by Ryan and Bohlin (Tafsir, 2011) contain three main elements, namely knowing the good, loving the good, and doing the good. In character education, the goodness is often summed up in a series of good qualities. Thus, character education is an attempt to guide human behavior toward the gold standard. This effort also gives way to appreciate the perception and personal values performed at school. Character education focus is on ethical goals, but the practice includes strengthening the

essential skills that include social development of students.

Homy and Parnwell (Tafsir, 2011) reveal that character is mental quality, moral strength, and name or reputation. Hermawan Kertajaya defines character as the "hallmark" which is owned by an object or individual. The distinctive feature is the original and rooted in the personality or the individual objects and is the driving engine of how a person acts, behaves, says, and responds to something.

The terms of character and personality is often used interchangeably, but Alport claims that the word 'personality' means normative, and is the ethical sense; he states that character is personality evaluated and personality is character devaluated. Character is personality, nature, or things that are so abstract existing in a person (Lickona, 2004).

The dynamics in understanding character education proceeds through three moments: historical moments, reflective moments, and practical moments. Historical moment is the attempt to reflect the experience of human being who is trying in sustaining the concept and praxis of education, especially ups and downs in developing character education for students in accordance with the context of their era. Reflective moment is a moment through which a man is trying to see methodological, philosophical, and principal issues applicable to character education through his intellectual understanding. Practical moment is a moment where, with a better theoretical conceptual understanding, humans try

to invent effectively so that projects of character education can be effectively implemented in the field (Muslich, 2011).

Character education aims at developing the values that establish the character of the nation, namely Pancasila which includes: (1) developing students' potentials in order to be people who are kind-hearted, think better, and behave well; (2) building a nation with Pancasila character; (3) developing the potential for citizens to have a confident attitude and proud of their state and nation as well as loving the mankind (MONE, 2011: 7). In the context of character education, the skills that must be developed through schooling is a wide range of capabilities that will make human beings who are faithful (receive and obey the concept of God) and fulfill their duty as a leader in the world. In addition, character education must be directed to the formation of personality.

In addition, character education has three (3) main functions. First function is the function of establishing and developing potentials. Character education serves to establish and develop the potential of learners in order to think good, kind-hearted, and well-behaved in accordance with the life philosophy of Pancasila. Second function is the function of correcting and reinforcing. Character education works to improve and strengthen the role of the family, educational units, communities, and governments to participate and be responsible for developing the potential of citizens and nation building heading to a developed,

independent, and prosperous nation. Third function is the function of filtering. Character education serves our own national culture sort and filter the other nation's cultures that are incompatible with the values of the culture and character of the nation.

Character education functions to select and sort the national cultures and filter the cultures of other nations that do not conform with the values of the culture and character of the nation. The three functions are performed through: (1) the use of Pancasila as the philosophy and ideology of the state, (2) the strengthening of values and constitutional norms, (3) the strengthening of national commitment as the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), (4) the strengthening of the values of diversity in accordance with the concept of Unity in Diversity "Bhineka Tunggal Ika", and (5) the strengthening of the excellence and competitiveness of the nation to the sustainability of society, nation and state of Indonesia in the global context.

According to Dony Kusuma, character education is a continuous dynamic development of human ability to hold internalization of values so as to produce an active, stable disposition within the individual. This dynamic makes the individual growth becomes increasingly intact. These elements become the dimensions that permeate the process of formation of each individual. Character education as a curricular program has been practiced in some countries. Character education is all the efforts of teachers, which affect

the character of the students. Teachers help to shape the character of the students. This includes the example of how the teachers behave, how the teachers stalk or submit material, how the teachers tolerate, and a variety of other related matters. Character education has the same substance and purpose as ethic education, as a means to make a fundamental change because it changes the individual until the basic things.

C. CONCEPT OF CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

Winataputra (2001: 131) pays attention to the development of the view about civic and civic education, and on the basis of his theoretical studies, Winataputra formulates understanding the notion of "Civics," citizenship / civic education "as follows:

1. "Civics is the study of government taught in the schools. It is an area of learning dealing with how democratic government has been and should be carried out, and how the citizen should carry out his duties and rights purposefully with full responsibility."

2. "Civic / Citizenship education can be defined in two ways:

In the first sense, Civic Education is an area of learning, primarily intended to develop knowledge attitudes, and skills so the students become "good citizens, with learning experiences carefully selected and organized around the basic concepts of political science,

In another sense, Civic Education is a by-product of the variety of areas of learning undertaken in and out-of

formal school settings as well as a by-product of a complex network of human interactions in daily activities concerned with the development of civic responsibility."

From Winataputra's opinion above regarding the definition of civic education, it can be concluded that civic education is a subject that contains the governmental rules that are taught in school, which in the state of democratic government citizens should hold their rights and obligations with full responsibility.

Komalasari and Budimansyah (2008: 77) states that the development of Civic Education cannot be isolated from the trend of globalization that impact on the lives of the students. Globalization requires civic education to develop civic competence, which includes civic knowledge, civic skills, and multidimensional civic disposition. Civic education also brings the mission of Civic Education for Democracy and Value-Based Education.

Conceptually scientific, all the imperative or necessity requires the need for appreciation of new and development of civic education as a scientific concept, instrumentation, and educational praxis intact, which in turn can foster "civic intelligence" and "civic participation" as well as "civic responsibility" as Indonesian nationals in the context of the character and the civilization of Indonesia which applies the values of Pancasila.

Three main concerns in Civic Education are Civic Intelligence (the intelligence and reasoning power of

citizens both in the spiritual, rational, emotional and social dimension), Civic Responsibility (the awareness of their rights and obligations as responsible citizens) and Civic Participation (the ability of participating as citizens with the basis of responsibility, either individually, socially or as the future leaders).

D. CONCEPT OF MULTICULTURALISM

Etymologically, multiculturalism is rapidly adopted in the 1950s in Canada. According to the Longman Oxford Dictionary, the term "multiculturalism" is a deviation from the word "multicultural". The dictionary cites a sentence from a newspaper of Canada, Montreal Times, which describes the Montreal society as multicultural and multi-lingual society (www.Education Network / Articles).

The multicultural issues, then, became more crystallized in a more extreme view, namely multiculturalism. With the additional "isms" to the root (multicultural), this term was increasingly not easily understood. Bethany Bryson (in Mulyana, 2006), a professor from the University of Virginia, tried to explore the complexity of the meaning of the word. He interviewed a range of caliber professors in multicultural affairs which eventually came to the conclusion that the meaning of the term was still vague and needed to be fought.

The construction of these concepts must be communicated among the experts who have the same scientific concern about multiculturalism so that there is a common understanding and mutual support in

maintaining this ideology. Various concepts relevant to multiculturalism among others are democracy, justice and law, cultural values and ethos, unity in equal diversity, ethnicity, ethnical cultures, religious beliefs, expressions of culture, private and public domains, human rights, community's cultural rights, and other relevant concepts (Fay, 1996; Rex, 1985; Suparlan, 2002).

The model of multiculturalism has actually been used as a reference by the founding fathers of Indonesia in designing a so-called national culture, as expressed in the explanation of Article 32 the Constitution 1945, which reads: "the culture of the nation (Indonesia) are the tops of the regional culture". (Suparlan, 1999).

In the theoretical context, reviewing the models of multicultural education that have been existed and those which are being developed by the developed countries, known as the five approaches: first, education about cultural differences or multiculturalism; second, education about cultural differences or cultural understanding; third, education for cultural pluralism; fourth, bi-cultural education; and fifth, multicultural education as a human moral experience.

In Indonesia, a relatively new multicultural education is known as an approach that is considered more appropriate for the people of Indonesia that are heterogeneous, especially during the autonomy and decentralization that have been just started. Multicultural education developed in Indonesia is in line with democratic development that is implemented as a counter to the policy of decentralization and regional autonomy.

If it is implemented not carefully it will plunge us into national disintegration.

E. EFFORTS TO FACE CHALLENGES

Developing multicultural education in the society order which is full of inter-group problems contains heavy challenges. Multicultural education does not mean that it is limited to just "celebrating diversity". Moreover, if the existing order of society is still full of discrimination and racist. It is also questionable whether it is possible to ask students who face discrimination or persecution in their daily lives because of his skin color or the difference from the dominant culture? In such conditions, education is more appropriately directed as an advocate for creating a tolerant society.

There are several approaches in the process of multicultural education, namely:

First, the approach which is no longer limited to equalize the view of education with schooling or multicultural education with formal school programs. A broader view on education as the transmission of culture frees educators from the assumption that the primary responsibility to develop cultural competence among students solely in their hands and even more parties responsible for school programs should be associated with informal learning in outside of school.

Second, avoid the view that equate culture with the culture of ethnic groups are the same. It means that the people no longer need to associate solely with the culture of ethnic groups as what has happened during this time. Traditionally, cultural educators

associate only with the social groups who are relatively self-sufficient, rather than the number of people who continuously and repeatedly engage one another in one or more activities. In the context of multicultural education, this approach is expected to inspire the drafters of multicultural education programs to eliminate the tendency to look at students stereotypically according to their ethnic identity and will increase exploration for greater understanding of the similarities and differences among students of different ethnic groups.

Third, because the development of competence in a "new culture" usually requires interaction with people who already have the competence, even it can be seen more clearly that the undertakings have been made to support separate schools ethnically, is antithetical to the purpose of multicultural education. Maintaining and expanding group solidarity is to inhibit socialization into a new culture. Education for cultural pluralism and multicultural education cannot be equated logically.

Fourth, multicultural education improves the competence in some cultures. Which culture to be adopted is determined by the situation.

Fifth, it is likely that the education (both within and outside schools) increase the awareness of competence in some cultures. Such awareness will then lead us away from the concept of bi-cultural or dichotomy between indigenous and non-indigenous. Such dichotomy restricts individuals to fully express cultural diversity. This approach increases the awareness of multiculturalism as a normal human experience. This awareness implies that multicultural education has

the potential to avoid the dichotomy and develop a better appreciation through cultural competency that is in the students (Suparlan, 2001).

It is necessary to attempt to pick the educational paradigm which is able to outline a substantive educational needs in various dimensions and scientific context to address contemporary challenges in global life, while also required changes in the orientation of education, that comes: (1) from a centralized to a decentralized; (2) from the side of partial - sectored approach to holistic - inter-sectored; (3) from the implementation of the teaching and learning activities which is teacher-centered to student-centered; and (4) from the quality of education which is national local insight-oriented to international standard.

CONCLUSION

To form a nation that has character, character education is required. In conducting the baseline study on the development of character education in the diverse community, there appear various challenges in building civic responsibility in the perspective of multiculturalism, namely: 1) society is the extension which is living, dynamic, and constantly evolving; 2) the public relies on the efforts of each individual's needs through its relationship with other individuals who

strive to fulfill the needs; 3) individuals, in interacting and strive together to meet the needs, make the arrangement to that effort with the so-called social challenges; 4) each community is responsible for establishing a pattern of behavior among individuals and communities that make up the community, and 5) growth of individuals in the community, interaction among them, and their development within the frame that lead them to be responsible for their behavior.

SUGGESTION

The suggestions for the above conclusions are as follows: **first**, it is necessary to establish an accountability national education institutions whose task is to: (1) pay attention and follow the educational development of the other nations so that the national education has international competitiveness; (2) determine the direction, objectives and results of mid-term educational development to be achieved; (3) determine the criteria of national education which is oriented to the dynamic change of international standards; **second**, it is important to develop educational management that considers the diversity of education based on the needs of the community and the diverse development needs; **third**, it is necessary to develop educational development ideas derived from the priorities of national development policy, which involves the interests of inter-sectored and inter-disciplinary; **fourth**, it is necessary to develop the guidelines for the teaching and learning process with more emphasis on developing and

coaching the initiative and creativity of the students; **fifth**, it is necessary to develop and maintain programs to improve the quality of education which is oriented to curricular materials and quality and assessment standards which are internationally comparable with other countries in the world.

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