

Building the Essence of A Nation With Diverse Cultures Through Multicultural Education

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Abstract

Cultural diversity (multicultural) is a natural event due to the meeting of various cultures, the interaction of various individuals and groups by bringing cultural behavior, having different and specific ways of life. Diversity such as cultural diversity, family background, religion, and ethnicity interact with each other in the Indonesian community. The intensity of interaction between humans is quite high, so that the social skills of citizens in interacting with each other need to be possessed by every member of society. Multicultural education teaches the meaning of love for the homeland, nationalism, or values of commitment about how to become a strong citizen physically and mentally, and have special integrity, so this can be categorized as a form of effort that is appreciated by Islamic teachings, because it is oriented towards character and nation building.

Keyword : education, culture, nation, diversity

A. Background

Indonesian President Joko Widodo invited Muslims throughout the country to strengthen togetherness in the diversity of the Indonesian nation, which is very much needed in realizing a country and nation that is *baldatun tayyibatun warabbun ghafur*.

The Qur'an is a miracle from Allah SWT. of which there is no doubt. The Qur'an is a guide and distinction between what is right and what is false. As a warning, as a blessing, as an explanation, as good news, and even as medicine for a heart that is sad and sick.

As a godly nation, the Indonesian people are required to believe and have faith in God Almighty. In addition, the consequence of believing in God Almighty is to accept with an open heart that this diversity is the will of Allah SWT. The Qur'an emphasizes that the diversity that occurs in various creatures of God is essentially *sunnatullah*, a decree of Allah SWT.

Therefore, it is important to maintain, care for, and manage well the diversity possessed by the Indonesian nation as a gift from Allah SWT. Each element of the diverse nation is believed to have its own goodness and advantages that must be utilized for the common good.

It is not uncommon for doubts to arise in the heart about the character of the Indonesian nation, including questioning its commitment to building this country. Is it true that every subject of this nation has ideals and a strong spirit to build this country? Is it true that the children of this nation have a strong character in loving their country?

When many subjects of this nation turn out to show statements, attitudes, and actions that are contrary to the interests of the people or do not support the ideals of national development, then it is not wrong if an assumption or assessment arises that these statements, attitudes, and actions are worthy of being categorized as conditions that indicate a crisis of nationalism or the erosion of the nation's character.

Assumptions or evaluations of the condition of the nation's subjects are often associated with the implementation of the learning process for the nation's children or educational development. The relationship between education and the condition of the nation is logical, because strategic activities in the world of development in general are determined by the quality of the world of education.

Education that is well organized or prioritizes the formation of quality human resources, is well planned, has the right orientation, or the right direction, will have a big impact on the subjects of education. The learning process that places the subjects of education as intelligent and democratic subjects will make them intelligent and democratic subjects as well.

On the other hand, when many problems occur in society, such as frequent radicalism or behavioral patterns that destroy the lives of fellow human beings, harm adherents of other religions, or thwart the realization of a harmonious social and religious life, then this indicates a failure in the learning process.

B. Research Method

This study applied a qualitative approach, which means that the data is expressed verbally, not in numbers form, and did not use statistical techniques.

The data analysis of the study was more focused on library research, specifically reading, examining, and reviewing books and writing sources that are closely related to the issues being discussed. Library research or literature can be defined as a series of activities involving library data collection methods, reading, recording, and processing research materials (Muhyiddin et al., 2022).

Data collection techniques were carried out by collecting and studying materials related to the subject of research obtained from books and national and international journals.

After collecting materials relevant to the issues to be discussed in this study, the researcher analyzed and narrated to reach conclusions.

C. Result and Discussion

Getting to Know the Diverse Indonesian Nation

Indonesian society in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia has diversity, including various ethnicities, languages, religions, cultures, and social statuses. Diversity can be an "integrating force" that binds society but can be the cause of clashes between cultures, races, ethnicities, religions and values of life.

Cultural diversity (multicultural) is a natural event due to the meeting of various cultures, the interaction of various individuals and groups by bringing cultural behavior, having different and specific ways of life. Diversity such as cultural diversity, family background, religion, and ethnicity interact with each other in the Indonesian community. In horizontal communication between communities, Mulyana said, clashes between tribes still occur in various regions, starting from mere stereotypes and prejudices between tribes, discrimination, to open conflicts and

massacres between tribes that claim lives .¹ Inter-tribal competition not only among the community but also among the political elite and even academics to occupy positions in various agencies.

In a multicultural society, human interaction is quite high in intensity, so that the social skills of citizens in interacting with each other need to be possessed by every member of society. According to Curtis, these skills cover three areas, namely: affiliation, cooperation and conflict resolution, kindness, care and affection/ empathic skill.²

The diversity of tribes, races, religions, differences in language and values of life that occur in Indonesia often result in various conflicts. Conflicts in society that stem from violence between groups that explode sporadically in various regions in Indonesia show how vulnerable the sense of togetherness that is built in the Indonesian Nation-State is, how strong the prejudice between groups is and how low the mutual understanding between groups is.

Violent conflicts in Indonesia often end up as humanitarian disasters that tend to develop and expand both in type and perpetrator. This is what makes the conflict resolution process take a long time with extraordinary social, economic, and political losses. Based on these problems that come and go, Indonesia could enter a complex emergency situation. Conflict and violence have entered various social environments. The triggers for acts of violence that have occurred so far are often the estuary of conflicts that are handled incorrectly. Conflict is the cause of violence, because behind every form of violence there is a conflict that has not been resolved .

Multicultural Education Builds a Tolerant Nation

education aims to equip and strengthen students or learners with basic knowledge and skills of the relationship between the Indonesian state based on Pancasila with the state and fellow citizens, where multicultural conditions are a consideration or necessity. With basic or fundamental skills, it is expected (idealized) that educational subjects (such as students or learners) are able to apply Pancasila values in everyday life, have a solid personality, think critically, be rational, ethical, aesthetic, and dynamic, have broad views, be democratic and civilized .³ Education does bring about changes in the lives of humans or students, because education contains a process that places students as its special target.

There are a number of findings from education experts , some of which state that overemphasizing academic education (cognitive or left brain) and underestimating the importance of character education (emotional intelligence or right brain), is the main cause of the failure to build quality human beings. This is proven by several studies that show that human success in the world of work is 80 percent determined by the quality of their character, and only 20 percent is determined by their academic abilities.⁴

The description is also explained in a book entitled " *Emotional Intelligence and School Success* " which compiles various research results on the positive influence

¹Mulyana, A., Adnan, H., Indriatmoko, Y., Priyono, A., & Moeliono, M. (2008). Learning while teaching: facing social change for natural resource management. Cifor.

²Curtis, B., Krasner, H., & Iscoe, N. (1988). A field study of the software design process for large systems. Communications of the ACM, 31(11), 1268-1287.

³Rahayu, M. (2007). Indonesian language in higher education. Grasindo.

⁴Moh. Haris, et al. Character Education, Truonjo University, Madura, 2014, p. 4

of students' emotional intelligence on success in school. It is said in the book that there are a number of risk factors that cause students' failure in school. The risk factors mentioned are not located in brain intelligence, but in character, namely self-confidence, ability to work together, ability to socialize, ability to concentrate, empathy, and ability to communicate. This is in accordance with Daniel Goleman's opinion about a person's success in society, it turns out that 80 percent is influenced by emotional intelligence, and the other 20 percent is determined by brain intelligence (IQ).⁵ This is what makes it urgent for education to become a strategic bridge in forming the character of students.

As a strategic bridge, education clearly has a big influence or impact on human life, society, and civilization. An expert in the science of interpretation named Quraish Shihab argues that the more mature and adult a society is, the more solid the embodiment of the values they adhere to in their lives. An immature society is one that has not succeeded in its embodiment and a sick society is one that ignores these values. Diseases that continue untreated will accelerate the death of society. If the disease of society continues without treatment, then the death of society is inevitable.

Quraish Shihab said that if there are things in the members of society that are contrary to their identity and goals, then society should straighten them out so that there is harmony between the ego of each individual and the interests of society. Once again it is seen here how important it is to do what is termed *character and nation building*. (Hardian, 2008)

Building a liberating character in humans or learners, including students in the midst of society is not an easy job. Although there are already many educational models organized in this country, there are still many organizers who do not have a liberating mentality or have not made the world of education a path to liberation.

Once Gus Dur had an ambition to establish a pesantren consisting of students from different backgrounds (multicultural) in terms of identity, religion, economy, ethnicity, race, etc. This was recognized as an effort to learn real about the differences and diversity of Indonesian society. This was stated by Gus Dur to eliminate discrimination that often occurs with a background of differences in identity through education. Because education is the most powerful cultural path to build awareness of the equal rights of all human beings.⁶ Gus Dur's view can be understood, that education is a strategic or fundamental path that determines the construction of human resource personality.

Islam is known as a universal religion or (*syumuli*) which is the guideline for human life. It contains social, political, economic, cultural and educational institutions. Islam is also a religion in the technical and socio-revolutionary sense that is a threatening challenge to oppressive structures, as recorded in the history of the early presence of Islam among the Qurays tribe of Mecca (Asghar Ali Engineer, 1999) Its basic goals are universal brotherhood, equality and social justice.

Islam through its legal sources al-Qur'an and al-Hadith prohibits practices of oppression and injustice. On the other hand, it gives space for the creation of freedom for humans, so that Islam is called the religion of liberation of the *mustadh'afin* people, both weak materially, thinking and mentality as well as creativity.

⁵ *Ibid*

⁶ Ahmad Nurcholis, Liberating Religious Education, <http://ahmadnurcholis.wordpress.com/2012/05/09/pendidikan-agama-yang-membebasakan/>, accessed January 2, 2018.

Islam is indeed a liberating religion. The doctrine of liberation taught by Islam, among others, is to invite every human being, nation or citizen to free themselves from ignorance and backwardness. A nation will become strong if it is educated to become a nation of character that loves its homeland, a nation that does not allow its country to be weak, or a nation that does not tolerate any form of behavior that makes the construction of its country sick. This nation of character indicates the presence of large capital that has the potential to lead the country or society to glory.

When the world of education, especially higher education, teaches the meaning of love for the homeland, nationalism, or values of commitment on how to become a citizen who is strong physically and mentally, and has special integrity, then this can be categorized as a form of effort that is appreciated by Islamic teachings, because it is oriented towards *character and nation building*.

Article 1 of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System also states that Education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have spiritual religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble morals, and the skills needed by themselves, society, nation and state.

Mentioned in the words of Allah SWT: "*And let those who fear Allah should they leave behind them weak children, whom they fear for their (well-being). therefore they should fear Allah and they should speak the true words*" (QS, An-Nisa' (4): 9) . The verse shows or rather reminds the Muslim community not to leave (let) its students become a generation that is weak, uneducated, or does not have a noble (strong) personality.

D. Conclusion

In a multicultural society, the interaction between humans is quite high in intensity, so that the social skills of citizens in interacting with each other need to be possessed by every member of society. Multicultural education teaches the meaning of love for the homeland, nationalism, or values of commitment about how to become a strong citizen physically and mentally, and have special integrity, then this can be categorized as a form of effort that is appreciated by Islamic teachings, because it is oriented towards *character and nation building*.

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