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NON FORMAL EDUCATION FOR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY IN INDONESIA: AN INITIAL REVIEW

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Abstract

The needs to study at least should be improved in indigenous community through indigenous values that has been stable and rooted in social life. Local knowledge or local wisdom should be included in educational curriculum as innovation and skill sources that can be developed for the prosperity of society. The proses of education was essentially an abstract to direct and mobilize two powers; in one side the powet to conserve and the other side the power to develop. To fulfill the citizen's right in gaining the solemnity of education, especially 9-years primary education, National Education Departement of Indonesia developed two education types, which were education through school and non formal education. Non formal education consisted of Set A program (equal with Elementary School), Set B Program (equal with Junior High School), Set C program (equal with Senior High School) and various life skills. Non-formal education was more flexible than school education from its curricula, time schedule, place, students and educators. Non-formal education was one of alternatives because it was not too restricting the activities of students both to study and to work on their real life in their surrounding.

A. Introduction

According to the data from Social Departement of Indonesia Republic, it was stated that in 2003, there were 208,277 indigenous ethnic group population or 1,041,000 people in Indonesia. They were disseminated in 18 provinces, especially in hinterlands and remote islands. This indigenous community was still wandering, settled semi-permanently and permanently. This indigenous community was opened, semi-opened and closed toward the modern influence. (Kompas, September 29, 2003).

To fulfill the right of every citizen in gaining the solemnity of education especially 9-years primary education, National Education Departement of Indonesia developed two education levels, which were education through school and non formal education. Non formal education consisted of Set A program

(equal with Elementary School), Set B Program (equal with Junior High School), Set C program (equal with Senior High School) and various life skills. Non-formal education was more flexible than school education from its curricula, time schedule, place, students and educators.

The development of modern education should not direct to degenerative change that could create apriori attitude of indigenous community toward school. Degenerative change was a change that had destroyed the balance of social life and frequently damages the ecological balance of its (Koentjaraningrat, 1993:347). Koentjaraningrat said that in the development of isolated society in Indonesia, that attitude could lead to the situation as happened in Badui people in Banten or could lead to cargo, either passive or aggressive, such as in some isolated societies in Irian Jaya. Those development programs were forced from outside, and they were seldom along with the needs and aspiration of a community (Judistira, 1993:160). The observation conducted by Judistira (1993:160) about Badui people explained that Badui community had sociocultural mechanism that enabled them to adapt new environment and conserved their existence.

Therefore, local knowledge or local wisdom should be included in educational curriculum as innovation and skill sources that could be developed for the social prosperity.

B. Indigenous Learning System

Indigenous learning system was a learning system used by traditional people in order to maintain and conserve their social system for their viability. The indigenous learning system was traditionally used to fulfill practical needs and to perpetuate sociocultural heritage, skill and rural society technology from generation to generation. (Coombs, 1973: 41).

Freire (1973:123) stated that import education was a form of alienated or isolated culture that was essentially an attached thing for the people who imported it. Moreover, Paulo explained that such education was not genuine education because it was not in dialectic link with its context and did not have power to change reality. The indigenous learning system in traditional society had its own

power. There were at least six essential learning needs. (Coombs, 1973: 14-15), which were; (1) positive attitude toward cooperation among people, (2) functional reading and computing skills, (3) having scientific perspective and basic definition of the process toward nature, (4) functional knowledge and skill to get income, (5) knowledge and skill to earn for living, (6) functional knowledge and skill for citizenship participation in national life.

The learning needs should minimally be improved in traditional society through stable indigenous values and rooted in social life. Soriano (1981:9) suggested that in order to be specific, it should be noted the learning style, material and procedure that made our ancestor could develop culture completed with useful knowledge and skills and develop their life through persistent and enduring indigenous values preventing from loss due to dissonant modern influences. Traditional societies had developed their own tradition education through indigenous learning system in transaction and adaptation processes among them, their surrounding and toward their world. Such learning process could be understood by using “*experiential learning*” theory by Kolb (1984). Kolb (1984:38) stated that learning was a process in which knowledge was built through experience transformation. Kolb explained four stages in learning process based on experience involving adaptive learning style, such as: *concrete experiences*, *reflective observation*, *abstract conceptualization*, and *active experimentation*. *Concrete experiences / abstract conceptualization* model, in one side, and *active experimentation / reflective observation*, in another side, were two dimensions in which each of them represented two adaptive orientations contrasting dialectically (Kolb, 1984:40). Such educational process was actually human learning process (in accordance with human development and God’s will). Human had his forth potency in which one’s learning process would cover the process; experiencing a thing concretely, thinking conceptually, observing a thing while thinking and trying in other wider situation. This matter was contrary with learning process in school education context that tended to do learning process deductively, from *abstract conceptualization process* to *concrete experience process*.

Even in simple society, education grew in line with its demand and needs through indigenous learning system that came from the cultural root of its society and continually developed or changed naturally. The educational system and purpose should come from the society itself, based on identity, philosophy of life in the society (Quraish, 1992: 173). The touch of information and various mass communications they got could be absorbed selectively based on their needs. Some of those information and mass communication were absorbed completely but they were also rejected if they were contrasting with cultural value system that had rooted in the society.

If modern education should be a means for social and cultural change, then education should consider the importance of continuity among instructions at schools and social life where the schools located (Soriano, 1981:16). The dissemination of school education and non-formal education in the traditional, plural society should consider the existence of *horizontal plurality* (the existence of ethnic and sub-ethnic differences) and *vertical plurality* (the existence of social stratas). It was hoped that the effort to make national life clever through school or non-formal education was the social needs. Education was fully responsible for the life of society members from its beginning until the end of life, either in ethics, moral, spiritual, the performance of knowledge and various skill and competence that were continually developed (Nazili, 1989:57). Thus, education as a wish to develop the mentality of nations should not be limited to school through curriculum changes. Other opportunity through non-formal educational approach for remote rural societies and hinterland group should not be changed formally, but the arrangement should be fitted with society's needs.

Educational curriculum could be arranged by inserting a group of themes that enabled the educators and students as subject-subject in the process of knowledge to develop their knowledge to know (Paulo, 1967:123-126). The change of school curriculum adapting import cultural values, then, was given to the students from those sociocultural life environments. Moreover, if the curriculum were not too uniform and rigid, the learning and teaching process would be oriented to information transfer by one-direction and verbalistic

presnetation (Achmad Sanusi, 1984:17). The combination of two different cultural systems forcefully would lead to cultural contamination, then could destroy the indigenous cultural value system of traditional society.

Cultural transformation through school by using curriculum reference that did not orient to the reality of life totality and disregarded the society's cultural root would be difficult to anticipate the future of human resources development. A set of standard curriculum as national instrument that was prevailed massively and did not fully concern about its relevance to geographic and human resource factors could make the students lose their independence to prevent from the impact of knowledge and technology advance. Individuals must have environment-conception education to make them become their own identity, aware of their existence so that they could survive, change, and develop their independence. It was not fault to say that the effort of education was an abstract to give the opportunity "*to have*" and stabilize the awareness "*to be*" (Fuad Hasan, 1986:40). *To have* and *to be* were two humane fundamental categories. To make people exist, live and develop as individuals, they should have something (Sastrapratedja, 1986:103). The honorable job of education was to try to develop human individual aspect bodily and spiritually to make them maintain their existence as human. Through transformation, it was hoped to change individual attitude and behavior to realize qualified individual in line with their existence reality as complete human.

C. Education of Naga Village Society

Naga Village was located in the valley of Ciwulan river, Neglasari village, Tasikmalaya, West Java. The location of Naga Village was about 400 metres from Bandung-Garut-Tasikmalaya roads. Their main job was farming. Viewed from its location, it was not included as isolated area, the import of modern influence was not a difficult thing. But its sociocultural system was still conserving their traditional ancestor values. Eventhough the society of Naga Village was included as Sundanese, but its sociocultural system was different with other surrounding Sundanese ethnics. The differences could be seen from the model, construction

and material of house, farming tools and clothes (Awan Mutakin & Didin Saripudin, 2005:16).

The house of Naga Village people was a raised platform house made of wood, bamboo, and the material of its roof was plam fiber and *tepus* leaves. Their farming tools were still traditional such as hoe, plough, and harrow. They did not use modern farming tools. The clothes they wore were white or black *kampret* shirt, head bandage made of batik sheet and white or black *komprang* (loose) trousers.

Most of knowledge owned by Naga Village people was used to give meaning, function and media to interpret their surrounding. Knowledge aspects owned by them were different with other people surrounding them such as the way to arrange village land, the way to maintain their environment cleanliness, the concern about ecological elements and skill as bamboo-craft maker.

In Naga Village, there was one government elementary school, in which most of school-age children attended the school. The school conducted teaching and learning activity was similar with other schools using national standard. The curricula and subject given were also similar with other elementary school such as Indonesian, Science, Social Studies, Math, Religion, Civic Education and Sport. But in the elementary school of Naga Village, the students were given local content, beside Sundanese as local content for Sundanese (West Java) given starting from the first grade, they were also given the skill to plait bamboo, farmiong and *pencak silat* self-defence that were first given in the grade four.

To continue to Junior High School, the children in Naga Village must go outside their village because there was not any Junior High School in Naga Village. Therefore, the children from Naga Village mixed with the children from other villages in one school. Similary when they wanted to continue to Senior High School, they needed to find the school outside their area. Those Junior High School and Senior High School had similar curricula and system with other Junior High School and Senior High School in Indonesia, but they were completed with local content of Sundanese.

Based in the study of Didin Saripudin (2006), the educational experience of young generation in Naga Village was higher than their parents. Some youths had attended university, moreover in youth cooperation program of Indonesia and Japan, some youths from Naga Village had followed education and training in Japan for 12 months.

It seemed that in young generation of Naga Village people there was attitude transformation, either toward old form or new form. They were reconstructing the perception related to the most meaningful values for themselves, especially in welcoming their own future. They more realized that they were not only living in Naga society, but they and their society were in the middle of other societies. Some demands must be met to maintain the existence of the society in the middle of other developed societies. The finding result of Awan Mutakin & Didin saripudin (2005) and Didin Saripudin (2006) showed that the response and the attitude of Naga people toward the new elements such as Program Panca Usaha Tani or Farming Post-Effort Program (reformation in farming sector) was positive. Therefore it showed that through the education gained by young generation of Naga society, the modern cultural transformation occurred, especially in developing the possession and usage of technology in Naga Village people.

D. The Education of Sea People

In Riau archipelago, Sea People group was called by local people based on the name of island they lived such as Mantang People living around Mantang island, Barok People living in Barok Strait, Galang People living around Galang island, Pusek people living in Pusek island. In Eastern Indonesia, Sea People was well-known as Bajau People who were found in Makasar Strait in the Eastern coast of Kalimantan, in Bone gulf, in East Nusa Tenggara, in Tomini gulf, in North Maluku and Sulawesi Sea waters. Sea People were a group of people who had aquaculture as sea wanderer in Kajang small boat, semi-permanent in their floated housing or even lived permanently in coast and isolated islands.

According to Mohamad Zen (2002) who conducted educational research on Sea People in Riau Archipelago stated that the drop-out of elementary school was still higher among 9-10 years children. Their natural environment, especially in aquaculture sector with its ecosystem characteristic, had forced them to choose practical life at sea than study at school. Formal education level was limited to a set of standard curriculum, age limit and learning time schedule that was programmed strictly, were not interesting for the students to learn. The potential alternative that could be considered was developing non-formal education level that was not too restricting the students' activity to experience real life in their environment.

School education was not the only way to improve the quality of human resources and should not be forced to a traditional society that had traditional education and indigenous system. The indigenous learning system in traditional society through concrete experiences, in which they tapped an object as it was, depended on their sight. Sea People were still wandering at sea, semi-permanent and live permanently in the isolated islands. The habit of wandering at sea had undergone and formed their attitude and behavior to adapt with their wandering environment that was usually influenced by wind movement and season. Their knowledge and understanding on fish and sea biota cycles had been learnt since childhood from generation to generation through indigenous learning system transmitted by their parents. Their competence to know natural symptoms without apprehension was a learning process through concrete experiences that developed in indigenous learning system of family and society environment. Knowledge of the position and formation of stars learnt from concrete experiences was a to guide them in determining time, weather, fish cycle, navigation direction, wind direction, current circulation, season change, and as a natural sign that was always connected to sociocultural in their social life.

Their sense was very sensitive toward the natural environment situation that was changing and influencing their daily life. Intuitively, they could touch the vibration and sea water condition by using their hand and foot touch to determine fish cycle based on water temperature and sea current circulation. Their sense of

smell was sensitive to wind flow that brought sea aroma as the sign of season change. They had a skill to observe the signs guiding them to determine accurately the location as sea biota around coral reef. Their skill to control the ship in bad weather, the skill to survive in water and the skill to read and interpret the natural symptoms, were tradition education they gained since childhood through socialization process in family, society and surrounding life. The knowledge system of natural symptom was owned from generation to generation through socialization process and immediately applied in their daily life since the beginning of their childhood until the end of their life (Potter, 1988:7).

The group of Sea People lived depending on aquaculture sector, had a number of learning media such as folktale, pantun (traditional poetry), proverb and ritual song. This indigenous learning system was completed with guidance in group relationship and social responsibility such as respecting their ancestor, behaving appropriate with their age, obeying prevailed norm, taking and giving each other. Francisco (1918:127) identified at least three mechanism of the indigenous learning system, which were "*life cycle complex*", "*social control mechanism*" and "*ritual*" realized in belief system from indigenous people. Children obeyed prohibition and forbidence, followed ritual ceremony and followed accepted behavior through socialization from their family environment. They accepted and learnt the values from society in which they needed as life mechanism in their group (Mohamad Zen, 2002).

The existence of school in the residence of Sea People located in isolated islands could spend a lot of time for these school-age children to be familiar with their natural surrounding because they were restricted with routinity activity in the learning and teaching process at school. The different school and society environment, in which transformation given had made the children decide their choices appropriate with practical needs that were more useful on their rational consideration, although the decision was not ration on the consideration of education organization. Therefore, Educational Departement of Indonesia developed more flexible non-formal education than school education from

curriculum, time, place, students and educators factors. Regional government was given authority to develop Non-Formal education in line with scientific, social and cultural characteristics (Didin Saripudin and Abdul Razaq Ahmad, 2008).

Through non-formal education type, society was involved directly in the management of education by establishing Sanggar Kegiatan Belajar (SKB) or Study Group and Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat (PKBM) or the Center of Society Learning Activity. The society itself planned, conducted and monitored the activity, the government only supported and facilitated. Non formal education consisted of Set A program (equal with Elementary School), Set B Program (equal with Junior High School), Set C program (equal with Senior High School) and various life skills. The certificate from non-formal education was equal with school education. Therefore, if there was a student who wanted to continue to university, it would not be a problem.

In non-formal education, tutors were appointed by government and also involved the society itself and NGO party. The study place must not be in school building, but it could be at home, on boat or the potential place based on its environment. Besides the skill of 3 M (membaca, menulis, menghitung or reading, writing and computing) in line with school curriculum, they were also given the material of geometry, navigation, sea biology, oceanography, astronomy and fish processing based on the students' development.

E. Conclusion and Proposals

In Indonesia, there were still seen traditional society in small groups in isolated villages and hinterlands. To fulfill the citizen's right in gaining the solemnity of education, especially 9-years primary education, National Education Department of Indonesia developed two education types, which were education through school and non formal education. Each type of education offered to geographically and socioculturally isolated traditional society was required to take indigenous learning system that had grown as educational potency in their life. Environment-conception integrated education would create the harmonious learning situation that could

prevent from contamination or clash between new values offered nationally and traditional local values.

For the traditional people who had accepted school such as in Naga Village, the local knowledge or local wisdom could be included in the school curriculum in local content as innovation and skill sources that could be developed for the social prosperity. While the location of Sea People in isolated island had spend a lot of time for the school-age children to be familiar with their natural environment because they were restricted routinity activity in teaching and learning process at school. They could learn without any limit of age, time, place, sociocultural environment wherever they were and worked under the guidance of civil servants, community figures or NGO.

Operationalization of national education system was hope can realize vital idea and central value of Indonesia people by maintaining the indigenous learning system as a potency rooted in the tradition education of traditional society. The indigenous learning system should be maintained, provided that it was not contrasted with national idea. Every educational process was essentially an abstract to direct and mobilize two powers; in one side to conserve, and in another side to develop.

To improve the solemnity of education especially 9-years education for indigenous community in Indonesia, the writer suggested some proposals:

1. The compulsory education of elementary school must not only be arrange uniformly through school environment, but also could be done through non-formal education, but non-formal education was not only complement but should have equal position. Through non-formal education program, the gap of opportunity in gaining education from school could determine its orn alternative as a means to get the oportunity to learn appropriate with the demand of compulsory education program in educating national generation and improving the individual's productivity in isolated areas. The policy and the organization of integrated environment-conception education should improve the involvement of the whole society activities through Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa (LKMD), Custom Institution and NGO, to make

the transformation effort touch and become the needs of each individual in society.

2. The existence of schools in remote villages and hinterland with their insufficient facilities (teachers, books and learning instruments) was a problem that was difficult to solve. Therefore, each isolated island which were hundreds in number should not be given a set of school, but it was given in sub-district area only because the management cost was high. It should be considered that the management of long-distance learning through satellite communication set such as radio and solar-power education TV monitored by interactive-ministudio set as unlimited learning could reach isolated villages and hinterlands.
3. For nomad community in land and at sea, the seasonal education program should be planned fitted with the season when they should stay, such in the long dry season and when there was bad wave at sea. In certain seasons, they did not usually go to the sea and stayed in certain islands to wait for the better weather. Forcing them to change their habit and to stay permanently in the assigned residence was its own problem and needed persuasive to persuade them to live permanently. In fact, they were not meant to disregard to stay permanently, but the poverty had made them to be pragmatic in doing practical activities economically to be more profitable and could reduce their daily burden.

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