



# The Implementation of Multicultural Education of Social Studies in Indonesia

Alfian Sulistiyono, Setyabudi Indartono

**Abstract:** *Multicultural-based learning in Social Studies is urgent, considering that post-reformation shows the disintegration of the nation with a variety of issues, as well as various issues that all lead to conflicts that threaten the disintegration of the nation. Therefore, some of the focus of this study is a multicultural-based Social Studies learning model, which based on its design has the potential to accommodate multicultural issues that ultimately create a conducive learning environment for diversity values that are very useful in efforts to reduce ethnic conflict and enhance the values of national integrity. Multicultural education as an instrument to encourage schools to play a role in instilling awareness in multicultural societies and developing tolerant attitudes to realize the needs and abilities to work together with all the differences that exist.*

**Keyword:** *Multicultural Education; Social Studies*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Based on the phenomena in this country that still puts forward an emotional-exclusivity mindset, it has become an irony. This causes a lot of suffering, hostility and unfair competition that leads to behavioral destructive both individuals and groups in various dimensions of life. As a result, harmonious life and a pattern of inclusive life becomes very rare. If there is any, it will be very difficult to be reached. Because of such a life, we must of course back to the education. One of them is multicultural education, which will always put forward to the practice of inclusive-tolerant life against all differences, whatever the differences.

According to some educational experts, there is a mutual relationship between education and social conditions of a community. This means that what goes on in education is a picture of real conditions in the complex life of society. Therefore, forming an education with the multicultural paradigm is a necessity. By this view, education is expected to be able to shape students who have broad horizons, respect differences, full of tolerance and respect for all forms of differences (Naim & Syaqui: 2010: 49)[1]. Currently, multicultural-related conversations are more related to religion, social, or political, while it is less discussion of education aspect. A multicultural country like Indonesia must be wisely anticipative and responsive to the phenomenon of cultural heterogeneity. The existed differences have caused some negative impacts. One of them is conflicts caused by the heterogeneity of the social differentiation of the community. For example, the conflict between Madura and Dayak tribes in Sambas, Central Kalimantan, religious conflict issues in Poso and Maluku, Aceh separatist movement which was caused by an unfair different knowledge (Fadjar, 2004)[2].

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Multiculturalism acknowledges differences in society, where differences not only descriptive differences but also differences in normative. The point is the differences that exist not only known but must be realized in an egalitarian and democratic life. Without awareness of multiculturalism, certainly, the nationalism that has been built up will be distracted by conflict and separatist movements. One of the media that is meaningful for developing an awareness of multiculturalism is social studies. Social studies learning is an effective medium to instill multicultural awareness, because one of the social studies missions in primary and secondary education is: equip students with a set of knowledge, attitudes, values, morals and life skills that are useful in understanding themselves and the environment of the nation and country. The environment referred to in this context is one of them is the diversity of tribes, religions, races, ethnicities, and languages in Indonesia. Education that has been implanted in the basic education curriculum to universities has explained the concept of diversity. However, the implementation of social studies learning has not been optimal in emphasizing education about normative diversity. To actualize the educational goals of a multicultural pattern, every educational community needs to notice the concept of unity in diversity. Furthermore, it must also be accompanied by an attitude that not only presupposes a mechanism of thinking towards a culture that is not mono-interpretable but also requires awareness of morality and goodness. Surely, the planting of concepts like this was done by not affecting the purity of each of the cultural and religious backgrounds that are believed by students. This must be made an affirmation so that there is no misunderstanding.

## II. Literature Review

### A. Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is needed by the Indonesian people who have a composition of society with various ethnicities, religions, races, and cultures. As explained by Koentjaraningrat (1999: 384)[3], in Indonesia there are many ethnic and groups. Every tribe, class, and religion has the characteristics of both language, behavior and religious ceremonies. Relations between these groups can continue to run well but still have the potential for conflict that can explode at any time due to conflicts of interest between groups. For this reason, conflicts of interest must be muted to avoid conflicts. Rex, one of the experts in a multicultural society in Liliwari (2005: 58)[4] argues that an ideal multicultural society is characterized by a balance of opportunities, which is the basic principle of democracy. Rex's opinion centers on the separation between the private domain and the public domain.

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Based on these facts of cultural diversity, it shows that we cannot reject diversity, therefore we live together and form a society called multicultural society. Multiculturalism provides recognition of social and cultural equality between various groups in a society. There is no better culture for other cultures or societies, every culture must have contributed to every process of human civilization.

For this reason, every human culture must be respected and cared for because there is no unequal culture. In the concept of a multicultural society, every group can enjoy their equal and balanced rights, can live and walk on their cultural traditions.

### B. Multicultural Education

The multicultural reality in Indonesia is a double-edged knife. It can be potentially good if he is encouraged to be a joint force and safeguarded to become a potential wealth of the nation. But on the contrary, it can be a potential conflict that threatens national integration. For this reason, it is important to make policies to maintain our diversity as a civilized society. The widening of the gap, the marginalization of groups in citizens, the weakening of social sensitivity, the loss of identity from some groups and the rise of horizontal conflicts as part a signal of disunity in society. It needs to be responded together and there needs real action at all levels. Rediscovering national education is the best way to stem the flow signals of national disunity (Suyata, 2006:212)[5]. Multicultural education is a necessity amid cultural diversity at the local, national and global levels and interrelated. According to Ainul Yaqin (2007: 25)[6], multicultural education is a way of learning by using cultural differences of students such as ethnicity, race, religion, and gender so that the learning process is easier and more effective. This educational strategy is applied to all types of subjects and teaching and learning activities. Multicultural education is also to build the character of students and teachers about democratic, humanist and pluralist attitudes in society. The principles of equality, democracy, diversity, togetherness, and justice are needed in multicultural education. The position and role of each existing culture have the same guarantees, facilities, support, and protection. Gollnick and Chinn (2006: 5)[7] highlighted the understanding of concepts and practices related to multicultural education. Multicultural education aims to encourage the realization of the concepts of culture, diversity, equality, social justice and democracy in the context of school life by utilizing various cultural backgrounds of students. The diversity of culture is used to effectively influence the learning and school environment.

### C. Social Studies Learning

Learning is a process of interacting students with teachers and learning resources in a learning environment that includes teachers and students who exchange information. Social studies learning carried out both in basic education and in higher education doesn't emphasize the theoretical aspects of science, but the practical aspects of learning, reviewing symptoms, and social problems of the community, which is adapted to the weight and comprehensiveness of each education level. The study of the community in social studies can be carried out in a limited environment, that is the environment around the school or students and in a broad environment, the environment of other countries, both in the present and in the past.

Therefore, students who learn social studies can live the present with the knowledge of the past of mankind. Samlawi and Maftuh (1999: 1)[8] states that: Social science is a subject that combines the basic concepts of various social sciences arranged through an educational and psychological approach as well as their worthiness and meaningfulness for students and their lives. In social studies learning activities discuss human beings with their environment from various angles of social science in the past, present, and future, both in the near environment and the wider environment of students. Therefore, the teacher must truly understand what and how the social studies field is. Social studies learning relates to human life which involves all of its behavior and needs. Social studies related to the way humans fulfill their needs, both the need to fulfill their material, culture, and psychology. Make use of existing resources on the earth regulate their welfare and government and other needs to maintain the lives of people. In short, Social studies learn about the human life system on the surface of the earth in its social context or humans as members of society. Social studies analyzing how human relations with each other in their environment. Social studies also examine how humans move and meet the needs of life. Therefore, Social studies examines the overall human activities. The complexity of life that students will face later not only due to the demands of the development of science and technology, but also the complexity of the diversity of Indonesian society. Therefore, social studies develop knowledge and skills related to humans and also empathic actions that bring up that knowledge. Eventually, according to Farris and Cooper (1994: 46)[9] that "social studies education is one effort that will bring awareness of space, time, and the environment for students". Social studies have a particularity compared to other subjects as educational disciplines, that is studies are integrated, interdisciplinary, multidimensional. This characteristic can be seen from the development of social studies as a subject in schools with wider material coverage. The dynamics of such coverage can be understood given the increasing complexity of social problems that require integrated studies from various social science disciplines, natural sciences, technology, humanities, the environment, and even belief systems. In this way, it is also hoped that social studies education will avoid being out of date, in addition to its existence which is expected to remain coherent with the social developments that occur. The Curriculum Center defines Social Studies as integration from various branches of the social sciences such as sociology, history, geography, economics, politics, law and culture. Social studies are formulated based on reality and social phenomena which embody an interdisciplinary approach from aspects and branches of the social sciences such as sociology, history, geography, economics, politics, law, and culture (Pusat Kurikulum, 2006: 5)[10]. According to Samlawi and Maftuh (1999: 4)[8] that "the Social Studies Structure is arranged in three levels from the narrowest to the most extensive, namely (1) facts, (2) concepts, and (3) generalizations". These three things build the material of social sciences.

Social studies is a set of facts, events, concepts, and generalizations relating to human behavior and actions to build themselves, society, nation, and environment based on past experiences that can be interpreted for the present, and future anticipation. Events of facts, concepts, and generalizations related to social issues are some of the things that become studies of social studies. The sequence of studies shows the sequence of the most concrete forms, from events to abstract levels, namely the concept of the role of events and facts in constructing concepts and generalizations. In line with that according to Sapriya (2009: 49)[11], social studies should include facts, concepts, and generalizations. The facts used occur in the lives of students, according to the age of students, and the stages of thinking of students. The basic concepts of social studies are mainly taken from the social sciences, which are related to social issues and themes taken in a multidisciplinary manner. While generalization which is an expression of statements from two or more interrelated concepts is used to organize and interpret facts and ways of living in a society.

### III. Discussion & Result

#### A. Multicultural based social studies learning

The study of multicultural-based learning models on social studies is quite urgent, considering that post-reformation shows the symptoms of national disintegration with various things, including the rise of conflicts both vertically and horizontally, as well as various problems which leads to conflicts that threaten national integrity. Therefore, some of the things that are the focus of this study are multicultural-based learning models, which based on their design have the potential to accommodate various issues of multiculturalism. Eventually can create a conducive learning environment for diversity values that are very useful in efforts to reduce ethnic conflict and instead improve national integrity values. Multicultural education can arise in the form of fields of study, programs, and practices planned by educational institutions to respond to the demands, needs, and aspirations of various groups. Therefore, multicultural education is not just an actual practice or field of study or an educational program, but it covers all aspects of education. The main objective of multicultural education is to change the teaching approach and bring learning towards giving equal opportunities to each child. Students are instilled lateral thinking, diversity, and uniqueness to be appreciated. That means there must be changes in attitudes, behaviors, and values especially for the academic community at school. When students are among others who have different backgrounds they have to learn from each other, interact and communicate so that they can accept the differences between them as enriching them. Related to the curriculum, the integration of multicultural education can be interpreted as a principle that uses cultural diversity of students in developing the philosophy, mission, goals, and curriculum components as well as the student learning environment. So that students can use their culture to understand and develop various insights, concepts, skills, values, attitudes, and morals that are expected. Multicultural education is a response to the development of the diversity of the school population as well as the demands of equal rights for each group (Suprihatin, 2017: 10)[12]. Multicultural learning is a policy in the practice of education in recognizing, accepting and affirming human differences

and similarities that are linked to gender, race, and class (Sleeter and Grant, 1988)[13]. Multicultural education is a manner in viewing human uniqueness without distinguishing one's race, culture, gender, sex, physical condition or economic status (Skeel, 1995)[14]. Multicultural education is an educational strategy that utilizes the diversity of cultural backgrounds of students as one of the forces to shape multicultural attitudes. This strategy is very useful, at least for schools as educational institutions can form a mutual understanding of the concepts of culture, cultural differences, balance, and democracy in a broad sense (Liliweri, 2005)[4]. Multicultural education is defined as a social policy based on the principles of cultural maintenance and mutual respect between all cultural groups in society. Multicultural learning is a national education program so that multicultural communities can participate in realizing an ideal democratic life for their nation (Banks, 1993)[15]. Multicultural education is also a reform movement that is trying to transform schools and other educational institutions that students from all social classes, genders, races, languages, and group cultures will have equal opportunities to learn. (Banks, 1997)[16]. Multicultural education is an idea, trying to create equal educational opportunities for all students, including from different racial, ethnic and social-class groups. Multicultural education tries to create equal educational opportunities for all students by changing the total school environment so that it will reflect cultural and group differences in society. Multicultural education is a process because the goal is teachers and administrators must continue to strive to achieve. (Banks)[17]. In a larger context, multicultural education tries to help unite the nation democratically, by emphasizing on the perspective of a plurality of people in different nations, ethnicities and different cultural groups. Therefore, schools are conditioned to reflect the practices of democratic values. The curriculum shows a variety of different cultural groups in society, language, and dialects; where students better talk about respect between them and uphold the values of collaboration, rather than discuss competition and prejudice among several students who differ in terms of race, ethnicity, culture and social status groups. Multicultural based learning is based on philosophical ideas about freedom, justice, equality and protection of human rights. The nature of multicultural education prepares all students to work actively towards the same structure in school organizations and institutions. Multicultural education is not a policy that leads to institutionalization of education and not inclusive teaching by propaganda pluralism through a curriculum that contributes to the individual cultural competition. Multicultural-based learning seeks to empower students to develop respect for people of different cultures, providing opportunities to work together with people or groups who are different ethnicity or race directly. Multicultural education also helps students to recognize the accuracy of diverse cultural views, helps students develop pride in their cultural heritage, awakens students that value conflict is often the cause of conflict between community groups (Savage & Armstrong, 1996)[18].

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Multicultural education is held to develop students' ability to view life from various cultural perspectives that are different from the culture they have, and to be positive about cultural, racial and ethnic differences. (Farris & Cooper, 1994)[9]. The objectives of multicultural-based education can be identified: (1) to function the role of the school in viewing the existence of diverse students; (2) to assist students in establishing positive treatment of cultural, racial, ethnic, religious groups; (3) providing student resilience by teaching them to make decisions and social skills; (4) to help students build cross-cultural dependencies and give them a positive image of group differences (Skeel, 1995)[14]. In addition, multicultural based learning is built on the concept of education for freedom (Banks, 1994)[19]; which aims to: (1) help students or students develop knowledge, attitudes and skills to participate in democracy and freedom of society; (2) promote freedom, ability, skills towards crossing ethnic and cultural boundaries to participate in several groups and cultures of the others.

Multicultural education requires respect for human dignity, which is the main goal in social studies learning. In this case, more leads to the achievement of a pattern of attitudes in students to respect and tolerate other cultures. So that the output of social studies learning through multicultural education can achieve active and more meaningful teaching and learning process. With multicultural-based learning, it is expected to bring a change in our education culture. The cooperative learning approach can be used as a learning model in multicultural education. At that time, multicultural education has not found an ideal form and it is sometimes less clear. Therefore, this learning strategy needs to be tested as a multicultural education model, in addition to continuing to look for better formats of multicultural education. Thus, multicultural education can be implemented in social studies learning with cooperative learning strategies (Sudrajat, 2014: 15)[20]. According to Sudrajat's opinion (2014)[20], multicultural education in social studies learning can be integrated into the learning process, one of which is through a cooperative learning approach, where this approach requires students to solve problems in groups and communicate to find solutions or answers to questions encountered. The implementation of multicultural education through cooperative learning approaches can improve the quality of social studies learning. Teachers as facilitators and mediators are greatly helped to implement multicultural education in learning. Through group discussion, many values can be embedded in students, such as cooperation, competing in a good way, respectful, and responsible manner. It is also part of the implementation of multicultural education in schools, especially social studies. Social is a potential field of scientific study for the development of value-rich learning tasks. The characteristics of science that are closely related to human life and discuss much how humans can establish harmonious relationships with others and with the environment, make this field of study very rich in attitudes, values, morals, ethics, behavior and of course knowledge. Social studies prepare students so that they have the knowledge, skills, and values needed to they can live in society. Through social studies learning, teachers teach about multicultural education and bring up multicultural values in students. This is very important so that students can live in the community by understanding the differences that exist in society. With the value of tolerance, mutual

respect, respect for differences, responsibilities, and growing awareness of each student they can solve the problems without creating new problems. By giving multicultural values they realize the differences that exist because in every school many students come from various regions in Indonesia. In the end, differences in race, ethnicity, culture, and religion will not be a problem in interacting at school (Rufaida, 2017: 20)[21]. Multicultural education through multicultural based learning strives to make students for respect cultural diversity and cooperate with people of different ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds. Multicultural education also helps students to bring up pride in their cultural heritage. Students can practice democracy and justice related to cultural differences. Teachers play an important role in the process of internalizing multicultural values. The teacher's way of internalizing multicultural values to grow up a multicultural attitude in students in the class by explaining it provides various examples to students so that students understand the importance of multicultural values and to grow up a multicultural attitude on each student. According to Putranto (2018)[22], the integration of social studies education in multicultural education can contribute to creating a resilient society amid various developments in globalization and upholding the basic philosophy of the country, namely "Kebhinekaan" to realize a peaceful and harmonious society. Social studies education can be a booster in the development of more advanced Indonesian education, make learning that has characteristics of Indonesian culture. The role of social studies in multicultural education can contribute to the improvement of the reality of life, with students having mutual respect and accepting differences, having a strong character, having moral values, having a sensitivity to the social conditions in need, promoting values not just knowledge.

## IV.CONCLUSION

Multicultural education is a systematic effort to build understanding and awareness of students towards a pluralist-multicultural reality. This is important because, without systematic effort, the reality of diversity will be understood sporadically, fragmentary or even create extreme exclusivity. At this point, diversity is assessed and viewed inferiorly. It may even grow the desire and ambition to conquer those who are different. Multicultural education does not force or reject students because of issues of ethnic, religious, racial or class identity. Those who come from differences must be positioned as egalitarian, equal and given the right medium to appreciate the characteristics they have. In this condition, no one is superior between one student and another. Each has the same position and must receive the same treatment. Multicultural education is a necessity, with the starting point of the nation's culture which is 'Bhineka Tunggal Ika' based on Pancasila, with the general aim of realizing an egalitarian and prosperous Indonesian society. Multicultural education in Indonesia can be used as an educational model by conducting a transformation process in school culture, school management, and learning processes. Healthy school culture needs to be built by fostering a sense of pride with the school, establishing communication among school residents,

socializing the school's vision and mission repeatedly and various media, holding joint activities involving collaboration between teachers and students. The learning process that adheres to the principle of multicultural is based on transformative, pedagogic which expresses human freedom and understanding. Transformative pedagogics emphasize cooperation, tolerance, mutual respect, and mutual success, not on individual competition and victory. Teachers are required to be more sensitive to the diverse cultural, ethnic, socio-economic backgrounds of their students so that they can integrate the material according to the cultural context and the diverse construction of students' knowledge to advance their learning.

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