

## **MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION POLICY IN INDONESIA: REVIEW OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In recent decades, the Indonesian government has implemented a series of policies to integrate multicultural elements into education, with the aim of promoting respect for cultural differences and creating unity in a pluralistic society. The approach used in this study is a library approach with a data collection method in the form of documents in the form of books, literature and scientific journals related to the topic written in this article. The data analysis technique used is an interactive analysis technique consisting of three steps, namely data reduction, data display and data verification. This study concludes that there are several factors that influence the formation of multicultural education policies in Indonesia. Here are some of them: Historical factors, Geographical factors, Physical and geological factors, Foreign cultural factors and Political factors. Multicultural Education Policy also has an impact on Students, Teachers, and Society. Some of the challenges faced in multicultural education include social, political, and cultural challenges, such as lack of knowledge about other cultures, government support that has not been optimal. Overcoming these challenges requires joint efforts from various parties, including the government, society, educational institutions, teacher training, curriculum development, and continuous monitoring of the implementation of multicultural education.*

*Keywords: Government, Multicultural Education, Policy Impact.*

### **A.INTRODUCTION**

Multicultural education comes from two words, education and multicultural. Education is the process of developing attitudes and behavior of a person or group of people in an effort to mature humans through teaching, training, processes, actions and educational methods. On the other hand, education is the transfer of knowledge or transferring

knowledge (Muzaki & Tafsir, 2018).

Multicultural etymologically, multi means many, diverse and diverse, while cultural comes from the word culture which has the meaning of culture, tradition of politeness or maintenance. The series of words education and multicultural provide a terminological meaning, namely the process of developing all human potential that respects plurality and heterogeneity as a consequence of

cultural, ethnic, tribal and religious diversity (Rois, 2013).

Multicultural education is an educational approach that aims to respect, understand, and promote appreciation for cultural diversity in the context of education. In Indonesia, multicultural education is becoming increasingly important along with the unique and rich cultural diversity in this country (Raihani, 2018). Education is the main tool in ensuring that this diversity is empowered to advance society and the country.

Indonesia's long history involving various ethnic groups, religions, languages, and cultures has created a strong foundation for multicultural education (Zarbaliyev, 2017). In recent decades, the Indonesian government has implemented a series of policies to integrate multicultural elements into education, with the aim of promoting respect for cultural differences and creating unity in a pluralistic society (Anwar, 2021). Multiculturalism is an ideology that calls for the unity of various cultural groups with equal rights and socio-political status in a modern society. Multiculturalism is often used to describe the unity of

different ethnic groups in a country.

The goal of all stages of multicultural education is respect for cultural differences.

Indonesia does have a very rich cultural diversity. With more than 17,000 islands and more than 300 ethnic groups speaking more than 700 different languages, Indonesia is one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world. This diversity includes not only ethnic and linguistic differences, but also various religions, traditions, customs, and cultural values (Juditha, 2015).

The cultural diversity in Indonesia shows extraordinary cultural richness. Indonesian culture includes various arts, music, dances, and local wisdom that are an important part of Indonesia's cultural heritage (Santoso et al., 2023). The main objective in developing multicultural education is to increase deeper understanding of the diverse cultures in Indonesia and to encourage appreciation of cultural diversity. Basic principles such as inclusion, respect for human rights, and unity in diversity are the main guidelines in designing

multicultural education (Barella et al., 2023).

The history of multicultural education policy in Indonesia includes a series of policies implemented by the government to ensure that the education system takes into account cultural diversity and promotes appreciation of this diversity. Recent developments in multicultural education policy reflect changes in the approach and targets set by the government (Hasanuddin, 2024).

Although the importance of multicultural education has been widely agreed upon, the implementation of this policy has not always been smooth. Social, political, and cultural challenges arise in integrating multicultural approaches into the education system. Controversial issues such as how to address cultural inequality and discrimination have also been the focus of debate.

Social and political factors play an important role in the development and implementation of multicultural education policy in Indonesia. Changes in political dynamics, social changes, and shifts in societal views can have a

significant impact on this policy (Sibaweh et al., 2024).

The analysis of multicultural education policy in Indonesia is very relevant and important considering the high cultural diversity and the social and political changes that have occurred. This research is expected to provide valuable insights and recommendations for better understanding and improvement in multicultural education, which in turn will help promote appreciation of cultural diversity in Indonesia and create a more inclusive and united society.

## **B. METHOD**

The research method used in this study is the literature review method, which aims to limit the scope of the problem in the study (delimiting the research problem) (Agustianti et al., 2022). Limiting the problem is an important step, because research can fail if the scope of the problem is too broad. Choosing a specific problem and studying it comprehensively is more effective than studying a problem that is too broad without focus.

Through a literature review, researchers can understand how

other studies have formulated successful research flows in a broader context (Ramdhan, 2021). In this study, the literature review was conducted during the first and second weeks of November 2023. The data sources used include books and articles published in national journals.

The stages of this literature review include several main steps, namely data collection, data reduction, data display, discussion, and drawing conclusions (Sugiyono, 2019). This approach is expected to provide an in-depth picture of multicultural education policies in Indonesia, especially in terms of implementation and impact.

## **C.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **History of Multicultural Education Policy in Indonesia**

Multicultural education in Indonesia was born 30 years ago, namely after World War II with the birth of many countries and the development of democratic principles. The view of multiculturalism in Indonesian society in state practice has not been implemented properly. The symbol of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, which has the meaning of diversity in unity, is actually only emphasized on

its unity and ignores the diversity of Indonesian culture and society (Rosada & Albertus, 2019).

During the New Order era, it showed the relationship of society to the practice of state life. It turns out that our society wants to show its identity as a Bhinneka society which during the New Order had been oppressed in various ways in order to achieve national unity. Likewise, educational practices since independence until the New Order era have ignored the richness of Indonesian cultural diversity which is actually a strength in a democratic life (Wahab, 2015).

Since the fall of President Suharto from power, which was then followed by a period called the Reformation era, Indonesia has experienced disintegration, monetary, economic, political and religious crises which have resulted in a cultural crisis in the life of the nation and state. In the Reformation era, education was used as a political tool to perpetuate power that monopolized the education system for certain groups. In other words, multicultural education has not been considered important even though the reality of culture and

religion is very diverse (Mahamboro, 2023).

There are several factors that influence the formation of multicultural education policies in Indonesia (Hasanuddin, 2024). Here are some of them:

1. Historical factors: Indonesia's rich and diverse history influences the formation of multicultural education policies in Indonesia.
2. Geographical factors: Indonesia's strategic geographical location between two continents and two oceans makes Indonesia an international trade route. This creates a new culture in the country and encourages the formation of a multicultural society.
3. Physical and geological factors: Differences in climate and soil structure also influence the formation of a multicultural society in Indonesia. Communities that depend on the agricultural sector have provided a new

cultural system in the community environment.

4. Foreign cultural factors: Foreign culture is also a factor that encourages a pluralistic society. If Indonesian society accepts foreign cultures that enter, Indonesian culture will become more diverse. This condition also causes a multicultural society.
5. Political factors: The Indonesian government has issued several multicultural education policies, such as Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Government Regulation Number 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards, Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 55 of 2007 concerning Multicultural Education, and Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 23 of 2015 concerning the Implementation of Civic Education.

Multicultural education policies aim to maximize the function of schools in dealing with the diversity of their students, train students to have a positive attitude towards the diversity of tribes, ethnicities, cultures, and groups that are different from themselves, and hone students' social skills in interacting in a heterogeneous environment.

### **Analysis of the Impact of Multicultural Education Policy on Students, Teachers, and Society in Indonesia**

#### **Impact on Students**

Multicultural Education Policy can have a positive impact on students, such as increasing attitudes of tolerance and diversity, and strengthening a sense of unity and togetherness between ethnicities and cultures. Research shows that the implementation of multicultural education can help students to better understand cultural diversity and appreciate differences (Arfa & Lasaiba, 2022). In addition, multicultural education can also help students to develop better social and emotional skills.

However, the impact of the implementation of multicultural education on students can also vary depending on factors such as the social, cultural, and economic environment. Therefore, it is important for schools and teachers to consider the local context when designing effective multicultural education programs.

#### **Impact on Teachers**

Multicultural Education Policy has a significant impact on teachers (Kurdi, 2023). These impacts include:

- a. Increasing cultural awareness: Teachers will better understand and appreciate the cultural diversity around them. This will help teachers in creating an inclusive learning environment and integrating multicultural materials into the curriculum.
- b. Improving intercultural skills: Teachers will learn how to interact with students from different cultural backgrounds. This will help teachers build good

relationships with students and parents.

- c. Improving the quality of teaching: By introducing multicultural perspectives into the curriculum, teachers can provide more varied and interesting teaching for students.
- d. Improving the ability to manage cultural conflicts: Teachers will learn how to manage cultural conflicts in the classroom and create a harmonious environment for students from different cultural backgrounds.
- e. Improving gender awareness: Teachers will learn how to build gender awareness in the classroom and create an inclusive learning environment for students from different gender backgrounds.

### **Impact on Society**

Multicultural education not only affects students and teachers, but also society at large. Multicultural education contributes to society's understanding and acceptance of cultural diversity. Multicultural

education policies have the potential to have a very positive impact on society (Kamal, 2013). Through multicultural education, various significant benefits can be felt. First, this education is able to reduce the potential for inter-group conflict, because it encourages a deeper understanding of diverse cultures, backgrounds, and beliefs. This means that society can live in greater harmony and minimize social tensions.

Furthermore, multicultural education also has an important role in increasing the level of tolerance among individuals. By understanding and appreciating differences, individuals tend to be more open to dialogue, cooperation, and cross-cultural friendship. This in turn will result in a society that is more inclusive and friendly to diversity.

In addition, not only does it affect relations between groups and individuals, multicultural education can also help build a better character for the younger generation. They will be educated to become open, tolerant citizens who have a deep understanding of the values of multiculturalism. This will bring about positive changes in their worldview

and prepare them to play a role in an increasingly diverse global society.

So, overall, multicultural education has the potential to create a more harmonious, tolerant society and a young generation that is open to differences, which in turn will contribute positively to social and cultural development.

Multicultural education in Indonesia, as an effort to promote understanding and appreciation of cultural, religious and ethnic diversity, faces several challenges that need to be overcome in order to achieve this goal. Among the various challenges faced, some of them can include things like (Aprilianto & Arif, 2019):

1. Lack of knowledge about other cultures: Many students do not have sufficient knowledge about other cultures. This can hinder the cross-cultural understanding that is needed in a multicultural society
2. Lack of support from the government: The Indonesian government has not fully supported the implementation of multicultural education in Indonesia. Although there have been efforts to introduce

multicultural education in Indonesia, full support from the government in terms of policies and resource allocation is still lacking .

3. Lack of support from society: Indonesian society still tends to reject differences and is less supportive of the implementation of multicultural education. The tendency of society to reject cultural differences and be less supportive of multicultural education can hinder progress in creating an inclusive educational environment.
4. Lack of support from educational institutions: Educational institutions in Indonesia have not fully supported the implementation of multicultural education. Some educational institutions may not have fully incorporated the principles of multicultural education into their curriculum and school culture, making it difficult to implement multicultural practices.
5. Lack of support from teachers: Teachers in Indonesia have



not fully supported the implementation of multicultural education. Teachers are the main agents in delivering multicultural education to students. If teachers do not support or do not have sufficient understanding of multicultural education, its implementation will be hampered. Training and support for teachers need to be improved.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

Multicultural education aims to increase a deeper understanding of the diverse cultures in Indonesia and encourage appreciation for cultural diversity. Basic principles such as inclusion, respect for human rights, and unity in diversity are the main guidelines in designing multicultural education.

Although multicultural education has positive impacts, such as increasing tolerance, strengthening unity, and building the character of the younger generation who are open to differences, its implementation does not always run smoothly. Social, political, and cultural challenges, such

as lack of knowledge about other cultures, less than optimal government support, and community resistance to differences, are obstacles that need to be overcome.

To overcome these challenges, joint efforts are needed from various parties, including the government, society, educational institutions, and teachers. Teacher training, curriculum development, and continuous monitoring of the implementation of multicultural education are some of the important steps in advancing multicultural education in Indonesia.

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