RE-THINKING: VIOLENCE, EDUCATION, AND TEACHERS IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

Violence has become a solution for some social conflicts in Indonesia. Responding to these issues, the government is designing a new curriculum, which is inspired by principles of character education. On the other hand, the system seems nonsense if it is not supported by compatible human resources. Teachers as one of main actors in a teaching-learning process should be a concern as well. This paper is a brief reflection on violence, education, and teachers.

Keywords: violence, education, teacher, character-education

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1.   INTRODUCTION

Lately, Indonesians are treated by many reports of social clashes. They are horizontal and vertical conflicts. They occur in urban areas, small towns, rural areas, schools and campuses. They are caused by simple issues and/or complex problems; stimulated by certain individuals and/or triggered by larger groups.

Some special clashes might be expressed more clearly. For example, an unsatisfying treatment of corruption has roused a strict reminder from the public. Those who had felt upset and betrayed conducted some bad demonstrations. Another example is that some Indonesian badly protested against the government's policy in controlling the oil subsidising. In addition, some social clashes in some regions occurred between the apparatus and the civil; and/or among the people/forces. In Mesuji, for example, incompletely-resolved-old-cases grew into complex conflicts followed by burning the Regent's house. In Gorontalo, two state-agencies, which –actually – are responsible to maintain security and stability, involved in a clash.

The previous cases show us the fact that violence becomes a common preferred solution for resolving social conflicts in Indonesia. The claim Indonesia upholds 'consensus for agreement' (*musyawarah mufakat*) seems no sense. Violence is never a good solution for social problem solving. It only provides physical and psychological hurt to involved parties. It also damages structural dimensions such as foundations, systems, rules and traditions, which has existed in a society before. Therefore, violence never implies in the four pillars of Indonesian.

The conflicts might be caused by intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsically, they were triggered by individual encouragements, which later developed into groups' impulse. The encouragement could be irrational thoughts and actions, revenge, hatred and narrow interests. Meanwhile, extrinsic factors could include social inequalities, corrupt governance, and poor legal-enforcements.

Naturally, men have ratio and sense to do humanist thinking. However, these impulses make them lose 'their self-identity'. They become simply irritable. Education is considered the best solution. It is compatible to prevent and resolve social conflicts, which lead to violence.

2.   THE PLAN: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHARACTER-EDUCATION ON CURRICULUM 2013

The fact that the violence has replaced 'consensus for agreement' cannot be ignored. It should be a main concern of the government. Violence is a form of severe moral decadence; which involves complex elements. The depravity makes educational practitioners seriously think to formulate a fit system of education responding to the problems.

Character Education

"Character education is a national movement creating schools that foster ethical, responsible and caring young people by modelling and teaching good character through emphasis on universal values that we all share."[1] Character education is a system investing good values to educational community; including knowledge, awareness, willingness and action to implement the values. It involves all parties and stakeholders: from

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[1] Page 3. **Chapter 13,** *Character Education*. *The 1st Amandement to the United States Constitution.

(in)formal education sector to the government. It is expected to create personal goodness, turning social integrity, and to reduce/eliminate various forms of social clashes.

"Character education is an umbrella term used to describe many aspects of teaching and learning for personal development. Some areas under this umbrella are moral reason/cognitive development, social and emotional learning, moral education/virtue, life-skills education, caring community, health education, violence prevention, conflict resolution/peer medication, and ethic/moral philosophy" (in Larson, 2009).

Moreover, it is a large process covering various aspects of individual moral development. It seems to provide a long term solution to moral, ethical and academic issues growing in our society. However, this process requires an integrated and sustainable system. Character education is not a "quick fix".[2]

Lickona (1994) states: "Moral education is not a new idea. It is, in fact, as old as education itself. Down through history, in countries all over the world, education has had two great goals: to help young people become smart and to help them become good." Character education is not a new scheme; it does become synchronized with the goals of education - promoting personal growth (inner strength, character), mind (intellect), and children's body.[3]

In Indonesia, character education actually is not a new concept. RA Kartini, Ki Hajar Dewantara, Soekarno, M. Hatta, and other national leaders have tried to apply the spirit of character education to building of personality and national identity based on their context[4]. Nevertheless, character education is not regularly and consistently applied to Indonesian curriculum. Recently, the plan that character education will be integrated into the curriculum has re-emerged.

If the plan is realised, some aspects need to prepare. One major aspect is teacher. How to prepare an effective teacher to support character education? Teacher is not the only one being responsible for character education. However, mainly in Indonesia, teacher remains a central actor in education.

3.   VIOLENCE, EDUCATION AND TEACHERS

If the current system of education is considered a failure, the main cause must be the poor system and leadership in Indonesia. The existing system is still not integrated. *Pancasila* does not completely incorporate in the amended constitution. Many deficiencies make in the constitution miss some ideological values, equally in economics, politics, culture, and education. When a norm is implemented by an unfit regulation, it would be crushed by the regulation itself. A concrete example is the government's decision on international schools; were subsequently cancelled due to a consideration that it becomes a capitalisation of education – which should support the people.

The incorporated system of education is a history, impossibly changing. However, its impact should be seriously considered. One of my concerns is readiness of teachers, which have resulted from the poor system of education.

Violence and Education

A survey of the Protecting Commission of Indonesian Children (KPAI), to more than 1000 children in nine provinces, shows that 87.6% of them were reported experiencing violence at schools. The report involves various education levels; from elementary, junior to high schools. The violence entails both physical and psychological violence, such as yelling, insulting, beating, negative stigma, and serious abuse. In addition, largely, the child abuses at schools are done by teacher.[5]

A similar result was reported by UNICEF[6]. It shows that about 80% of children abuses at Indonesian schools are conducted by teachers – those who should be able to give a comfortable and safe feeling to their students. The reported data, in fact, is a small representative of reality. A number of child abuses at schools, actually, is higher than what has been presented; many of they are not detected.

In general, "violence against children is defined broadly to include deliberate behaviour by people against children that is likely to cause physical or psychological harm. This includes physical abuse, sexual abuse and exploitation, societal forms of violence, such as exploitative child labour, and children's involvement in armed conflict"[7]. Child abuse is any kind of painful action against children, which might cause physical or

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[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Ki Hajar Dewantara, in *Policy Brief: Pendidikan Karakter untuk Membangun Karakter Bangsa*. Ed. 07-04-11.

[4] Page 44. Koesoema, Doni. *Pendidikan Karakter.*Grasindo, 2007.

[5] Http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/indonesian/2012-12-20/kekerasan-di-sekolah-meningkat-mendesak-kebijakan-sekolah-ramah-anak/1063558

[6] http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/indonesia_36114.html

[7] Skinnider, Eileen. VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN: INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE NORMS AND STRATEGIES

psychological hurt. It involves sexual abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and physical abuse. Some factors might lead to violence against children at schools.

False Consciousness

- Violence is discipline.

Basically, education has the same goal; it is not identical with violence – in the past/present. However, in Indonesia, violence is commonly related to discipline. Violence is considered one compatible way building students' discipline. Those who were educated in 1990s might be very familiar with such actions: being hit with a cane because they are failed to memorize UUD 1945 or let their nails long. The actions are likely considered reasonable. However, in 2000s, they became an issue. The experts and those who concern with children believe that the actions are a violation of children's rights and a source of more serious social-problems.

School, after family, is where children learn rules in their surrounding environment. In teaching-learning process, children tend to make mistakes. Mistakes, basically, facilitatechildren to distinguish useful/useless actions; proper/improper things. However, some teachers respond to the process with forces. The actions that children break rules need to control and punish; and forces are considered reasonable.

Children will record any received abuse in their subconscious. The memory will be kept throughout their lives. Consequently, they become an aggressive individual, who potentially conduct similar violence against another child. Moreover, all types of mental disorder are related to mistreatment received in childhood. When child abuse affects culture, it does not orient on sociological aspects. It means that child abuse is not merely a social problem. A social problem is something becoming issues in a group or society. However, it becomes false consciousness; which is considered reasonable by a group/society.

- Children are weak

The current curriculum is active-student-oriented but the paradigm that teachers are the centre of truth and knowledge remains. This paradigm is not totally negative. However, when a teacher puts his/her power too high over his/her students; violence is more likely to occur. It could be associated to an authoritarian government, where the government limits/eliminates its people's inspirational right. Teacher views him/herself having more moral and intelligence, thus s/he cannot be denied.

The system is matched with military education, which influences the 'old' system of education in Indonesia; it still exists today. It is reflected with students' minimal aspirations in classrooms, which are easily found in Indonesian schools, even up to universities. Far power distance between teachers and students does not facilitate a dialogue. Teachers' discourse becomes the only source of truth.

4. THE MAIN POINT: TEACHER TRAINING

Education should be able to empower and enrich students. Therefore, it should be free from violations of human rights, particularly child abuse. It is important for teachers to realize that teaching-learning process is a culture reproduction. Education which is closer to violence, only preserve the culture of violence. When the plan the character education will be integrated to the curriculum 2013 appears, teacher training should be focused as well. A curriculum will be ineffective if there is not supported by qualified teachers. The qualified ones are those who are free from the false consciousness.

In detail, Davis & Thomas (1989) explain characteristics of an effective teacher, which are compatible with character education. Teachers should have an ability related to classroom climate; skills related to management strategies; capabilities associated with providing feedback and reinforcement; and capabilities associated with individual development. Moreover, at least, there are seven characters of transformational teachers' leadership (Luthans, 1995): (1) identifying themselves as agents of change (update), (2) having a heroic nature, (3) trusting others, (4) taking actions based on the system of values (not on individual interests, or on a group's importance), (5) continuously improving his/her knowledge, (6) having an ability dealing with complex situations, (7) having upcoming visions. A teacher who has transformational-leader characters will act as a director considering cooperative principles, building trust, raising willingness, and creating comfort in a classroom.

The characters, in fact, have been implied in the law on teachers and lecturers. It defines nine principles of teachers' professionalism. Some closely related to this concern are that the teacher must 1) have talents, interests, and idealism; 2) have a commitment to improve the quality of education, faith, goodness, and moral; 3) have academic qualifications and educational background related to his/her duties, 4) have essential competences related to his/her duties.

To have qualified teachers, the government must strive. Beside a strict requirement, the government should think about how to build/improve current teacher resources to realize and understand children's rights at schools. Many teachers do not get sufficient information about the rights. It could be caused by a lack of socialising children's rights and related-legal-instruments. Moreover, some teachers do inactively improve their knowledge.

Here, the government needs to be more active. Trainings, seminars or workshops should be more effective and aggressive.

5. CONCLUSION

Violence is contrary to various principles in education: the legal, psychological, social, cultural, and philosophical. It can be prevented if teachers implement the principles of non-violence education. However, many teachers do not know, recognise, and understand the principles and the impacts of child abuse. Many of them keep false consciousness. If the government plans the integration of character education and the curriculum 2013, the improvement of teacher quality needs to focus. A well-designed system seems nonsense without qualified human resources.

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