



The Urgency of Social Studies Education in a Multicultural Society

Zurahmah

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Parepare
zrahmah@iainpare.ac.id

Abstract

Multicultural society is a society that is synonymous with diversity. In Indonesia, diversity is a necessity which in the end does not only bring positive influences, but also negative influences attached to it. Because of the existing diversity, it does not only make Indonesia a unique country but at the same time creates frictions that can lead to the breakdown of unity which is the lofty ideal of the nation's founding fathers. Through IPS education, it is hoped that future generations will be able to survive amidst of increasingly complex frictions of a multicultural society. Instilling human values in diversity is the main goal of the expected learning process. This study uses the method of literature study. The data were obtained through various literature, both from books and journals related to the topics discussed and presented descriptively. Data obtained from various literatures were analyzed qualitatively. Therefore, the actualization of social studies education is a preventive step that can provide students with future generations in dealing with all problems of a multicultural society which in the end becomes an important thing in creating peace in a multicultural country.

Keywords: *Social Studies Education, Society, Multicultural*

Abstrak

Masyarakat multikultural adalah masyarakat yang identik dengan keberagaman. Di Indonesia, keberagaman adalah sebuah keniscayaan yang pada akhirnya tidak hanya membawa pengaruh secara positif saja, namun juga pengaruh negatif yang melekat padanya. Karena keberagaman yang ada, bukan hanya menjadikan Indonesia sebagai negara yang khas namun sekaligus menimbulkan gesekan-gesekan yang dapat berujung pada retaknya persatuan yang merupakan cita-cita luhur para pendiri bangsa. Melalui pendidikan IPS, diharapkan para generasi masa depan mampu bertahan ditengah gesekan-gesekan masyarakat multikultural yang semakin hari yang semakin kompleks. Penanaman nilai-nilai kemanusiaan dalam keberagaman merupakan tujuan utama dari proses pembelajaran yang diharapkan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode studi kepustakaan. Data didapatkan melalui berbagai literatur baik itu dari sumber buku maupun jurnal yang terkait dengan topik yang dibahas dan disajikan secara deskriptif. Data yang diperoleh dari berbagai literatur dianalisis secara kualitatif. Oleh karena itu, aktualisasi dari pendidikan IPS adalah sebuah langkah preventif yang dapat menjadi bekal peserta didik sebagai generasi masa depan dalam menghadapi segala problematika masyarakat multikultural yang pada akhirnya menjadi suatu hal yang penting dalam menciptakan kedamaian di negara yang multikultural.

Kata Kunci: *Pendidikan IPS, Masyarakat, Multikultural*

Received : 23-01-2023 ; Revised : 23-05-2023; Accepted : 29-05-2023



Introduction

Indonesia is a country consisting of 1,340 tribes and 546 languages as well as 6 religions (Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Khong Hu Cu), heterogeneous social strata and gender (sexual orientation) which ultimately place Indonesia into a multicultural society. (Zahrawati B, 2018). Gender here does not only mean men and women but also represents various issues related to status, ethnicity, occupation, culture, desires and the body. (Davies, 2017).

The concept of Multicultural Society is composed of 3 components, namely: Community, Multi and Cultural. According to KBBI, society is defined as a group of people in the broadest sense bound because they have the same view of a culture. The concept of multi means diverse or many while the concept of culture means culture. Thus, a multicultural society is a group of people consisting of various diversities and cultures in which the habit of accepting each other is emphasized. (Nurhayati, 2020).

Multiculturalism as an ideology considers and upholds differences in equality. Where the community has a general culture that is characterized as a mosaic. The cultural mosaic referred to here includes all cultures from smaller societies to then realize a larger society. Therefore, multiculturalism is needed in society in order to create a harmonious and peaceful society even though it consists of various cultural backgrounds.

Basically, the concept of multiculturalism focuses on the willingness to accept other groups into a unity without discrimination against differences in culture, ethnicity, language, and religion. Where all differences that exist have the same position in the eyes of the public. Multiculturalism does not emphasize differences, but on equal treatment during existing differences. In other words, multiculturalism is a relationship where there are differences, but still appreciates equality in every difference in language, ethnicity, culture, and religion. (Arif, 2021).

Diverse races, languages, religions, cultures, and socioeconomic positions make up Indonesian society under the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. It is possible to see diversity as an "integrating force" that holds society together, but it can also be a source of conflict between people of different races, nationalities, beliefs, and values.

In Indonesia, differences in ethnicity, race, religion, language and life values can lead to various conflicts. Occasional inter-group violence in various parts of Indonesia shows how tenuous the country's sense of unity is, how deep the biases between communities are, and how few ways there are to understand each other.

A deep understanding of intercultural knowledge and awareness must be possessed by the younger generation in order to be able to handle disparities within society, no matter how small it is. The younger generation is required to have a better understanding of cultural diversity, especially an understanding the types of prejudice, stereotypes, and racism in a multicultural society. (Rosyad & dkk., 2022).

Education is an important thing for a country and society. This is because education can be a solution and a pillar for a country to be able to maintain its identity in the international arena. With education, a country can become strong because human resources who get education can process their own natural resources. (Hilmi, 2017).

Through social studies education, output can be obtained in terms of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor as well as the ability to face the challenges that occur in life. In addition, it is expected that the next generation of the nation in solving the problems faced can be done rationally rather than emotionally. It should be noted that in this present time there is rapid development in various fields. In this regard, social studies has a role in mobilizing people to understand each other and uphold solidarity between fellow human beings. In addition, social studies education focuses on human relationships and social understanding. It can be concluded that social studies education encourages social care in people's lives. (Rofiq, 2020).

With education, a country can become peaceful and safe. Thus, every citizen must be given education in order to produce good citizens who obey the rules. The type of education that focuses on forming good citizens is social studies education. Social studies education is a basis in social science and interdisciplinary science, so that social studies education discusses problems according to various social science perspectives systematically. (Hilmi, 2017).

Method

In its implementation, this research uses the literature study method. Library research is a series of activities related to library data collection methods, reading and recording and processing research data. (Zed, 2008). Data was obtained through

various literatures both from book and journal sources related to the topic discussed and presented descriptively. Data obtained from various literatures were analyzed qualitatively.

Result and Discussion

Social Studies Education Development

Multicultural society is clear evidence that the world's population has blended in and has had a major influence on the progress of better education system, government, and economy. The world's population lives together and interacts with each other with various ethnic and national backgrounds. Therefore, everyone is born with their own uniqueness. But these gaps in culture, resources and desires can also lead to social discontent and conflict. And when differences in nationality, ethnicity and race are confronted with religious, economic, and social differences, the chances of inequality are even greater. (Baidhawiy, 2005).

Social studies is concerned with how humans in order to fulfill material needs, culture, psychology, empowerment of available resources, organize welfare and government, and matters relating to social studies. The life of modern society is so complex that it requires knowledge and skills to help students since entering elementary school to learn the social world and how it can happen, starting from the environment where they live, the school environment, until eventually later play a role in a more global environment such as the scope as a citizen and as a world community. Examining things related to society based on social studies can be started from the nearest environment first, namely the environment around students such as the school environment or the environment around the house and gradually learning social studies in schools expanded environment to the scope of the world in the present, past and future predictions in the glasses of knowledge. So that students who learn social studies will be able to explore the present and predict the future based on the provision of knowledge about the past of human life.

Social studies education has been described in 3 traditions, namely: a) social studies taught as the transmission of citizenship where the tradition of social studies learning focuses on instilling values into students so that they have a benchmark in terms of behavior and become good citizens; b) social studies taught as social science with the aim of creating citizens who have the thinking power of social science experts; c) social studies taught as reflective inquiry, namely where social studies learning

encourages teachers and students to be able to jointly determine the problems that are suitable for them and society. (Ayudia & dkk., 2022).

The need for humans to interact with each other makes them subject to the rules, values and social norms contained in society in order to be well accepted. Humans as creatures endowed with reason and emotions certainly have different ways of thinking from one another. These differences often lead to conflicts or problems in society. However, rules alone are not enough to make people obey and be able to coexist. The need for education for the community in order to understand how to live as a good citizen and society.

In simple terms, social studies education can be said to be a combination of several concepts or materials of social sciences for the sake of education and learning programs in schools to form students into good citizens. Due to one of the backgrounds of the birth of social studies is due to social conditions that are not good, so it takes a field of science that specifically examines the social life of society. (Setiawan & dkk., 2022).

The concentration of social studies, namely humans as citizens of society, is often faced with a scientific identity that is made blurred by social sciences that in fact have the same object of study, such as sociology, anthropology, economics, and political science. Actually, this blurring could not have happened if each science was able to occupy its scientific position.

Social sciences seek to be able to understand existing social phenomena and ultimately abstracted into concepts, generalizations, or theories. And conversely, social studies, which is part of the science of education, seeks to be able to develop the potentials of learners in order to form good citizens.

In reaching its target, the development method applied in social studies learning, among others, such as equipping learners with a variety of abilities needed as a good citizen of society, especially through learning conducted in formal education institutions. Through social studies learning, learners are expected to gain knowledge, skills, and attitudes in accordance with the needs of a good citizen.

To be a good citizen, there are several things that become indicators of the picture. In general, a good citizen is a person who is able to independently choose, determine and implement the decisions he makes and is able to be responsible rationally or morally. (S & dkk., 2022).

Social studies learning objectives are divided into 3 aspects, namely the development of intellectual abilities of learners, the development of abilities and a sense of responsibility as citizens of society and the state and the development of self as a person. The first goal emphasizes the development of intellectual abilities related to the learner's self and the interests of science, especially the social sciences. The second goal emphasizes the development of the learner and the interests of society. While the third goal emphasizes more on the personal development of learners with the aim of benefitting themselves, society and science. (Supeni, 2020).

Challenges of Multicultural Society

Multiculturalism has a major impact in various fields in the dynamics of community life in Indonesia. For example, the positive impact of multiculturalism in Indonesia is the creation and opening of social interactions from various diverse cultures. But on the other hand, it also has a negative impact, namely triggering primordialism, an attitude that upholds the values that have been brought from birth both in terms of traditions and beliefs so that it has a tendency to conflict over diversity.

The positive and negative impacts are proof that multiculturalism cannot be underestimated. In addition, multiculturalism has a close relationship with religion. Because religion is the most important part of diversity itself. (Ayunda et al., 2022).

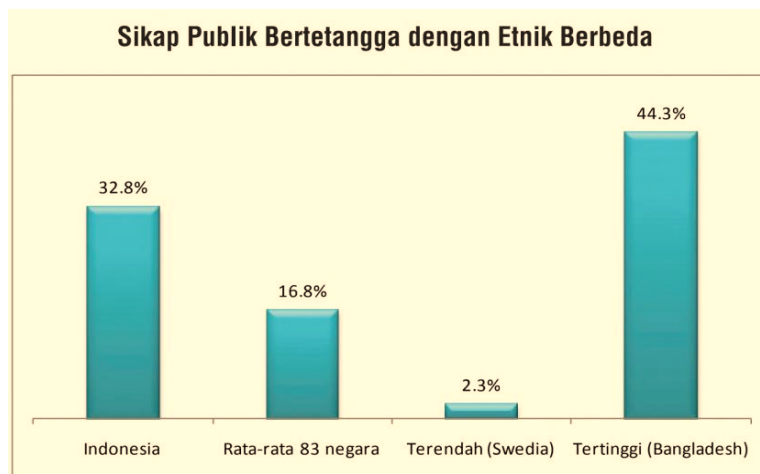
Multicultural society with a foundation of unity and integrity or commonly known by the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. This means that Indonesia has a uniqueness compared to other countries. The existence of diversity is a strengthening factor and harmony in religion, nation, and state. However, this diversity sometimes triggers problems in the form of conflict. The condition of Indonesian society that is prone to conflict is a natural thing if the differences are realized by the community as things that can be responded to with tolerance. Multicultural societies, such as Indonesia, are prone to conflict between groups, religions, ethnicities, and tribes. Conflicts are triggered because a group that acts refers to the issue of SARA (Ethnicity, Religion, Race and Intergroup).

Many conflicts with SARA nuances are carried out in various regions in Indonesia. Cases are triggered by the actions of certain discriminatory groups on behalf of ethnicity, race, religion, and culture. The community's concern for building a peaceful life based on *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* is slowly diminishing. This is because

every person and community in a multicultural society has a desire to be recognized so that they can get certain social awards.

Multicultural society has become a characteristic of Indonesia as a pluralistic nation. The diversity of the nation in terms of ethnicity, religion, regional language, geography, and culture. We can see the diversity of the Indonesian nation in two ways, namely horizontally, characterized by the emergence of social groups based on religion, customs, ethnicity, and different regions, while vertically it can be seen from the gap between the upper and lower classes. The plurality of society in Indonesia is a plurality that must be accepted. This means that Indonesia as a multicultural society has the responsibility to maintain diversity and not recognize all forms that can threaten to destroy the order of a plural society.

Within the scope of a multicultural society, we cannot deny that there are still many understandings that contain elements of ethnocentrism, which considers and judges another tribe based on the elements believed in their own tribe. In addition, there is primordialism that gives more attention to people who have the same ethnic, religious, and racial background. (PGSD/MI, 2020).



picture 1. Neighboring Public Attitudes

From the data of the World Value Survey (WVS) Indonesia is a country that has high reluctance to have neighbors with different ethnicities compared to the average of 83 countries in the world. (J.A, 2014).

The existence of this diversity can certainly cause problems like the ones we have faced today. Practices such as: nepotism, collusion, corruption, thuggery, separatism, political feuds, poverty, violence in the form of damaging the environment and the loss of humanity to always respect the rights of others are concrete forms of problems faced as part of multiculturalism. A more concrete example that we can see

is the massive killings by Indonesian Communist that occurred in 1965. Then, the violence experienced by ethnic Chinese in Jakarta in May 1998. was the culmination of discrimination during the New Order era where Chinese citizens experienced physical violence and material deprivation not only that, some even ended in murder and rape. (J.A, 2014). The Islamic-Christian war that occurred in North Maluku in 1999-2003, which claimed many lives and property losses, namely 400 churches and 30 mosques. In addition, the ethnic war that occurred between Dayak and Madurese residents that occurred from 1931-2000 which claimed approximately 2000 lives.

Based on the problems described above, by implementing and using an approach based on the vision-mission in instilling and respecting pluralism, humanism, democratic values, it is hoped that students as a generation can uphold humanistic care, discipline, morality, and honesty in everyday life. Thus, the problems experienced today can sooner or later be overcome so that in the future our generation can create a "multicultural generation" that can appreciate differences and uphold human values, justice, and democracy. (Yaqin, 2019).

Contribution of Social Studies Education

The birth of social studies pedagogically based on the desire to be able to prepare students to be responsible citizens, where they can carry out their rights and obligations on their daily. By implementing social studies education in life, it is hoped that students will not be formed into individualistic citizens, who are only concerned with personal needs and ignore the needs of other people and other communities. On the other hand, social studies education can give birth to citizens who have social personalities that aware of working with others and realize that other people only want to live together if they receive good treatment from them. (Kustiani & dkk., 2016).

Barr argues that "social studies is taught as the transmission of citizenship, social studies is taught as a social science, social studies is taught as a reflective inquiry". Based on the definition put forward by Barr, social studies education is expected to be able to shape the character of learners into a good person (good citizenship) which means that a learner is expected to think, act democratically and rationally adapted to the dynamics of pluralistic society. Therefore, social studies education with multiculturalism insight is an important point that must be developed in the present. (Pratiwi, Diani Ayu, 2021).

The essence of the purpose of social studies learning is in the form of changes in the behavior and attitudes of students towards positive in line with the values, habits, traditions and culture prevailing in their society. Therefore, with a multicultural approach in social studies learning, it is expected that students can participate more in building a national perspective and recommendation of local values. With this ability, students have the ability to develop an open, honest and tolerant attitude towards others with different backgrounds, be it religion, tribe, ethnicity or culture, respect for other cultures, accommodating, and have a high sense of empathy for the differences that exist and able to overcome conflicts that occur without violence (conflict nonviolent). (Sudrajat, 2014).

Globalization and technological developments have clearly changed the socio-cultural system in people's lives. The challenge of social change is something that must be predicted and prepared. Social studies education is one of the shields in dealing with social phenomena that may occur. Through learning social studies education, learners are expected to be able to interact, adapt, collaborate, communicate, build relationships, and think analytically and critically. (Widodo et al., 2020).

One of the sciences that influence the development of an understanding of multiculturalism is social studies education. Social studies education is effective as a means of developing multicultural understanding because one of the objectives of social studies education for primary and secondary education is:

- 1 The main keywords of multicultural education are pluralism and culture. Pluralism includes all forms of diversity and differences. While culture is related to four important points, namely tribe, race (ethnicity), religion and culture. It is expected that social studies education can have a major influence in shaping the character of students.
- 2 Both internally and externally, social studies education teaches certain cultural elements in the form of values, roles, attitudes, and patterns of behavior so that it can be concluded that social studies learning should be a guide for students so as to create human beings who are moral and ethical.
- 3 By integrating multicultural education in social studies education is expected to give effect to students in responding to the plurality and differences that exist in Indonesia is something that can increase the knowledge of students in

understanding the meaning of "Unity in Diversity". Integration of multicultural education into social studies education is expected to have an influence in creating a strong society amid "Diversity".

Social studies education in the midst of multicultural and global order is crucial to maintain harmony and integrity of the nation, therefore, there are several strategies that need to be applied such as: improving the quality of learning processes and products, providing an understanding (literacy) of the diversity of national culture, preparation of instructional tools that support the improvement of the quality of education, improvement of moral education and character, and other things such as the development of clear forms and learning strategies for multicultural and global learning. (Puspitasari & Permana, 2022).

Social Studies (IPS) is the study of humanities and social relations or society. There are 4 (four) roles of social studies learning, namely:

- 1 Elaborate concepts about the life of society and its environment
- 2 Build basic skills in thinking critically and logically, brain storming, curiosity, inquiry and ability in social life.
- 3 Instill an attitude of commitment to social and human values.
- 4 Develop skills in communicating, working together and competing in a pluralistic society, be it at the local, national or global level. (Kustiani & dkk., 2016).

Conclusion

Indonesia is known for its specialty as a multicultural country that cannot be separated from diversity. Diversity is a necessity, but the diversity that Indonesia has is likened to the two sides of a coin, on the other hand it becomes a distinctiveness that makes it different from other countries and becomes a rich country because of its diversity. But on the other hand, the diversity that exists in this multicultural society can be a problem or challenge in creating a safe and secure country. Therefore, the actualization of social studies education is a preventive step that can be a provision for students as future generations in facing all the problems of multicultural society which ultimately becomes an important thing in creating peace in a multicultural country.

Suggestion

Based on the conclusions expressed above that the urgency of social studies education in Indonesian society as a multicultural society is something that cannot be denied anymore. However, this is inseparable from the role of teachers in transforming knowledge in various cognitive, psychomotor, and affective aspects into social studies learning through case studies based on the problems that exist in society. So that learners will eventually have adequate provision as citizens in facing the challenges of a multicultural society.

References

- Arif, M. (2021). Model of Interreligious Harmony in the Multicultural Society of Cigugur Village. Madani ideals.
- Ayudia, I., & et al. (2022). Elementary School IPS Education. Indonesian Science Media.
- Ayunda, A. Z., Urbaningkrum, S. M., Nusaibah, A. W., Septiana, W., Widayani, S. S. N., & H, A. R. (2022). Challenges of Multiculturalism in Indonesia: Questioning Relations between Religion and Public Space. *Alsysis: Journal of Islam and Education*, 2(1), 1–18.
- Baidhawiy, Z. (2005). Religious Education with Multicultural Insight. Erlangga.
- Davies, S.G. (2017). Gender Diversity in Indonesia. Indonesian Torch Library Foundation.
- Hilmi, M. Z. (2017). Implementation of IPS Education in Social Studies Learning in Schools. *Mandala Education Scientific Journal*, 3(2).
- J.A, D. (2014). *Becoming Indonesia Without Discrimination (Data, Theory and Solutions)*. Inspiration. co.
- Kustiani, L., & et al. (2016). Teaching Materials for IPS Insights Course as a Study in the Formation of Attitudes and Values. NusaCreative Media.
- Nurhayati, I. and A. (2020). Multicultural Society: Conception, Characteristics and Forming Factors. *Academics*, 14(1).
- PGSD/MI, T. D. (2020). Strengthening National Identity Through Multicultural Education: Concepts-Implementation. Guepedia.
- Pratiwi, Diani Ayu, D. (2021). *IPS Basic Concepts*. Muhammad Zaini Publishing Foundation.

- Puspitasari, R., & Permana, R. (2022). *The Development of a Global Society*. Damera Press.
- Rofiq, M.A. (2020). *HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills) Oriented IPS Basic Concepts for Elementary School Teacher Education*. CV. Archipelago Pillars.
- Rosyad, R., & et al. (2022). *Tolerance and Peace in Multicultural Societies*. Study Program of S2 Religions at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung.
- S, L.A., & et al. (2022). *Pancasila as a Perspective in the Development of IPS-PKN Education*. Lakeisha.
- Setiawan, D., & et al. (2022). *Integrated IPS Learning*. Our Writing Foundation.
- Sudrajat. (2014). *Multicultural Education to Improve the Quality of Social Studies Learning in Elementary Schools*. Jipsindo, 1(1).
- Supeni, S. (2020). *Internalization of IPS Education in a Global Perspective in Elementary Schools*. UNISRI Press.
- Untari, S., & Rianto, G. (2019). *Explore Pancasila Education and Citizenship Volume 3*. Duta Publisher.
- Widodo, A., Indraswati, D., Sutisna, D., Nursaptini, & Anar, A. P. (2020). *Social Studies Education Responding to the Challenges of the 21st Century: A Criticism of Social Studies Learning Practices in Elementary Schools*. Entita: Journal of Social Science Education and Social Sciences, 2(2), 185–198.
- Yaqin, M.A. (2019). *Multicultural Education Cross Cultural Understanding for Democracy and Justice*. LKIS.
- Zahrawati B, F. (2018). *Freeing Children with Physical Disability in Realizing a Democratic Multicultural Society*. Al-Maiyyah, 11(1).
- Zed, M. (2008). *Library Research Methods*. Obo Library Foundation