REGIONAL AUTONOMY AND ITS IMPACT ON MADRASAH EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The appearance of regional autonomy policy and decentralization in education aims to provide opportunities to educational participants to obtain skills, knowledge, and attitude which are useful to society. Madrasah could respond to sudden change in curriculum as it does not exactly follow the national curriculum. As an educational institution born out of societal needs, madrasah integration in society is easier, as the society participates more in madrasah operation. The involvement of society is not only limited based to parents involvement, but also the wider societal involvement. As in accordance with the spirit of decentralization which takes in aspiration and participation of society, the involvement of society at large is needed to develop and improve madrasah educational quality.

Keywords: Autonomy, education, Islamic

Introduction

Madrasah could be deemed a new phenomenon among Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. Its teaching and learning has not yet been standardised from one region to another, especially regarding curriculum and lesson plans. Effort to unite and standardise the madrasah system has only been tried since the 1950s after Indonesia obtained its independence. In its development madrasah is divided into levels; Ibtidaiyah, Tsanawiyah and Aliyah. Madrasah is younger than pesantren. The first madrasah was the Madrasah Manba’ul Ulum of the Surakarta Kingdom in 1905 and the Adabiyah School founded by Syekh Abdullah Ahmad in West Sumatra in 1909 (Malik Fadjar, 1998). Madrasah was founded to realize the renewal of Islamic educational system by some concerned Muslim scholars. The renewal, according to Karl Sternbrink (1986), consists of three things:

- The effort to perfect the pesantren educational system.
- Adjustment with Western education system, and
- The effort to bridge the traditional educational system with Western educational system.

Madrasah as an Islamic educational institution is now placed as a school under the national education system. The signing of Joint Decision Letter (Surat Keputusan Bersama - SKB) of three ministers (Religious Affairs, Education and Culture, and Interior) indicated that the position of madrasah is strong enough to equal the position of school. In addition the SKB was also deemed as a positive step to increase the quality of madrasah from the aspects of status, degree value and curriculum (Malik Fadjar, 1998). In one of the deliberation points for the SKB it was stated that steps to increase madrasah educational quality needs to be undertaken such that madrasah alumni could continue or transfer to common schools from the
primary to tertiary level.

Problems of Madrasah in Indonesia

First, weak foundation, vague purpose, irrelevant curriculum, unqualified teachers, hazy evaluation. Madrasah education is imprecisely defined from primary to tertiary levels. According to Moh Raqib madrasah alumni is also not creative gauged from the abundance of unemployment among them as they prefer to become civil servant in which quota is limited. This shows a lack of creativity to generate self-employment. This lack of creativity often caused by the lack of emphasis on creativity in the educational system.

Second, the lack of teacher’s professional competence. The teachers, who are the most important component in an education system, in general lack this competence.

Third, educational leaders who are weak in communication and negotiation. They often do not have sufficient ability to build internal communication with the teachers.

In addition of internal factors, there are also internal factors:

First, the discriminative treatment of Islamic education system by the government. The fund allocation given by the government to Islamic education is comparatively very little compared the funds given to non-Islamic education system.

Second, the bureaucrat’s paradigm on Islamic education has been dominated by sectoral approach not functional approach. Islamic education is not considered as part of the education sector as it is not under the Education and Culture Department.

Third, Islamic education institution is the last alternative of many youths in society after they are not accepted in non-Islamic educational institution. This view of society can certainly be an indicator of their lack of trust of Islamic education system.

The position and role of Islamic education with its variety of educational institution are still topics of contention. Islamic education should be able to play its part as alternative education promising a good future. But the fact remains, madrasah, school, and Islamic higher education institution tend to affiliate with Islamic social organization such as Muhammadiyah, NU, and Persis or Perguruan Islam bodies/foundations.

It is hoped that there would be efforts for schools and related institutions to create an ideal Islamic education system to develop optimally spiritual, emotional and intelligence quotients. The three of them are integrated in a virtuous circle, which then create a new paradigm in society that Islamic schools are of good quality. As such the discriminative attitude and the problem of educational quality could slowly change. Certainly through the concept of integrated curriculum, the education process could balance between religious studies and non-religious studies.

Regional Autonomy

The emergence of regional autonomy policy and decentralisation aims to provide opportunity to educational participants to obtain skills, knowledge, and attitude which can contribute to society. Madrasah could also survive more in the fast-changing curriculum, as it does not follow the national curriculum. The decentralization management delegates responsibility to school to conduct teaching and learning process according to local need. As such, madrasah could manage its activities without central government intervention. Through teaching and learning based on local need, curriculum is not burdened with unnecessary materials. The teaching and learning process is hoped to be effective such that a higher achievement could be obtained. The involvement of government in education caused madrasah management to include additional programs to increase educational quality. Remedial and
course programs to increase cognitive, social and emotional ability of students from low socio-economic background could be added.

In the spirit of decentralization which allows society to channel its aspiration and participate in education quality development and improvement, society needs to have a high degree of care of educational institutions in their vicinity. This could inculcate a high degree of ownership through contribution in management, control, development, and other forms of participation to make local community proud of educational institution in their midst.

The problem of madrasah arises of the forgetting of its roots. There is dual interpretation. Madrasah is not an extension of pesantren. On one hand, madrasah is identical with school because it has a relatively similar curriculum with non-Islamic school. The solution of madrasah problem is the policy taken to determine madrasah’s fate, which should not put at a disadvantage its Islamic specialty in the short and long term.

There should be no more discrimination between madrasah and school. The local government needs to pay adequate attention. Eventhough all this while madrasah is under the control of central government. If the current design of madrasah development is deemed effective to achieve and maintain vision, mission, and purpose of national education, the Ministry of Religious Affairs need to optimalize coordination with Education Council and School Committee, in addition of increasing accountability. Madrasah as an educational institution from, by, and for the society has not obtained fully our attention. The increase in educational quality would not be realized without the participation of all parties. As such, madrasah needs to be helped, defended and fought for.

References
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