Conceptual Article

Education Reform; Between Hope and Reality

Saeful Anam1*

Institut Keislaman Abdullah Faqih Gresik, Indonesia

Article Info

Received: 30 July 2020
Revised: 15 August 2020
Accepted: 05 September 2020
Available online: 01 October 2020

Keywords:
Curricula
Education Reform
Learning Model

This article describes the importance of educational reform as an act of innovation and educational renewal, especially in Indonesia. The forms of educational reform are very diverse, one of which is in the form of decisions and policies issued by the government in enforcing provisions in national education, such as curricula, learning models and other policies. However, in carrying out an education reform one must always remember the basis for the implementation of education itself so as not to take wrong actions and result in failure in its implementation.

To Cite this article:
Anam, S. (2021). Education Reform; Between Hope and Reality. Journal of Education and Religious Studies, Vol. 01 No. 01 January 2021. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.12345/jers/0000

Introduction

In Starting this paper, I would initially quote an article written by Utomo Dananjaya with the title “Educational Reform”. In the article, it was stated that education is expected to strengthen unity in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), provide equal opportunities for all citizens to participate directly in development, and enable each citizen to develop his/her potential (Dananjaya, 2012).

The statement as noted earlier is a great motivation for Indonesia’s educational life, which invites all elements of society to take part in the development of this unitary state. The interaction of the two (education and society), provides an opportunity for the progress of this country. Because it is frequently stated that the development of a nation is initiated by the fate of the development of education. “A nation which has a bad education system will have negative effects on the population and the development of a country” said the sixth president. Education itself will be able to advance in succession with the support of all elements of society, including parents (Wahjoetomo, 1997). Referring to the statements as mentioned above, it can be concluded that education plays an important role to a changing situation and environment of a country.

The increasing public interest in realizing a dynamic and harmonious social life is brought about by the concept of education. Public awareness of the issue of the AEC (ASEAN Economic Community) was initiated and promoted through education, and public awareness of the dangers of drugs and/or cheating in work was also exhaled through education. Therefore, education has a strategic position in advancing the

1 *Corresponding Author: Doctor of Instructional Technology in Institut Keislaman Abdullah Faqih Gresik, Indonesia. (shbt.saef@gmail.com), Orcid no: 0000-0002-9989-7510
nation, especially Indonesia which has a lot of natural and cultural potential. Therefore, one of the policies that is committed by the government is to provide the education budget with a portion of 20% of the state revenue (Ministry of National Education, 2009).

With such a sizeable budget, education began to develop an adjustment capability by providing reforms in it. This can be seen in several policies that have been issued, such as the policy of providing certification for educators, providing large portions of scholarships through several scholarship education programs. Or the policy of providing assistance funds for underprivileged students through BKSM (Special Assistance for Poor Students) or BOS (School Operational Assistance) which is currently better known as KIP (Kartu Indonesia Pintar). The series of programs is not sufficient to answer the success of education, especially if it reflects on the progress of education in developed countries, as stated at the meeting last week. However, this program policy can be used as part of the direction towards the success of the national education goals which are stipulated in the SISDIKNAS Law.

From the description above, raises several questions, particularly; to what extent has the education reform in Indonesia been applied? What is the current portrait of Indonesian education? Can Indonesian national education emulate the educational system of developed countries and compete with them? To answer these questions, it is absolutely required to think deeply about the portrait of Indonesian education, as well as educational reform itself, because the search of self-identity is still being carried out by the educational authors in this country regarding to their analysis, as a consequence, all trials are still being attempted to find the suitability of education in this beloved country. By carrying out reforms and educational reforms, it is possible to be able to reformulate a new education policy by reflecting (I’tibar) on past education problems in order to realize the quality of Indonesian education for the better in the future. Subsequently, in this short paper, several traces of educational reform will be discussed as a portrait of Indonesia’s national education.

**Definition of Educational Reform**

Before the author reveals about the education reform, the author tries to emphasize the meaning of education, which is originated from the notion of education contained in the SISDIKNAS Law. Why is this necessary to know? Because by knowing the meaning of education itself, we will know the direction of education reform.

As has been stated in the National Education System law, it is implied that education is a conscious and planned effort to create the learning atmosphere and the learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, as well as the skills needed by them, society, nation and state (Ministry of National Education, 2009). Referring to the description as mentioned before, there is heterogeneity in the direction of the educational presence itself, this is essentially an important function of education. And the heterogeneity of these directions can be distinguished in detail, including; First, education is based on the formation of individuals who have high religiosity, specifically the growth of religious spirituality in each person in accordance with their faith and beliefs. Considering this, it is possible to develop self-control, correct ethics and noble character towards students. Second, education is based on the formation of obedience to the nation and state, it can be conveyed through the last part of the statement above, in other words, education must be able to inspire the students to become good citizens.

From the two heterogeneities in the direction of education above, it becomes a necessity that education has an innovative, progressive and corrective nature. Thus, education will always be able to adapt to its era which is always developing until now. Then, where is the education reform itself? To answer this, let us examine the meaning of reform itself.

Ordinarily, in various Indonesian dictionaries, particularly the KBBI which has considerably high accuracy, defines reform as a drastic change for the improvement of the social, political and/or religious fields in a society or country (Poerwadarminta, 2007). Regarding to this matter, we can analyze together that the foundation of a reform lies in future needs, re-emphasizes the original form, acts to be better by stopping some deviations that have existed, as well as on a wrong practice and then introduces more better procedures (Zainuddin, 2008). as the short-sighted writer in Zainuddin’s writing stated that reform is often equated with the term revolution, this is definitely true, however, the main key that distinguishes reform from revolution is the absence of violence in changing the existing system and order (Zainuddin, 2008). In addition, reform is
carried out on a comprehensive overhaul of a system of life in various aspects, such as in the political, economic, legal, social aspects and obviously in the realm of education.

And finally, referring to this matter, we can all know that educational reform is a way of improving, justifying and perfecting something that is considered inappropriate in the network of the education system which is carried out for the benefit of future education. Such as through changes in educational policies, educational institutions and others.

Portrait of Education Reform in Indonesia

It is necessary to note that educational reform has two basic characteristics, namely programmed and systemic. This is as contained in Zainuddin. Programmed education reform can be demonstrated by the existence of a curriculum or program of an educational institution that refers to the nature of its innovation. Namely the act of introducing new ideas, new methods or new means to improve several aspects of the educational process, so that changes occur significantly (Zainuddin, 2008). As the curriculum changes from year to year, there is a reform of the curriculum program to find the right education system. Meanwhile, systemic reform is related to the relationship between authority and distribution and allocation of resources that controls the education system as a whole. This often occurs outside the school environment and is under social and political forces, for the author, seeing the condition of the nation as such, the characteristics of this systemic reform are difficult to realize, because it involves the power structure, such as the confusing decentralization of education that raises many problems related to the implementation of national exams and even education equity with the emergence of relatively sensitive education funding in the hearts of the public.

1. Curriculum Changes

As the author has mentioned in the above article, curriculum changes are included in program reform, so this is interesting for us to look at as a beginning to see a portrait of traces of educational reform in Indonesia (Anam, 2016).

The history of curriculum changes in Indonesia has changed in a period of less than a decade, although the last years of the change were less than 10 years (Abdullah, 2007). Starting from the first curriculum “curriculum 1947” to the last curriculum “K13”. The question that arises is why the curriculum in Indonesia changes frequently, does the reform of the program referred to above require continuous change? Specifically the reality of education in Indonesia?

To answer this question, the author borrows an analysis provided by Winarno Surahmat in his writing entitled “Avoiding a Trapping Curriculum”. It is stated in the paper that there are at least four factors that influence why the curriculum changes frequently, including:

To answer this question, the author borrows an analysis provided by Winarno Surahmat in his writing entitled “Avoiding a Trapping Curriculum”. It is stated in the paper that there are at least four factors that influence why the curriculum changes frequently, including:

First, the factors originating from the bureaucracy, which allows the expectation and excessive treatment among bureaucrats regarding the role of the curriculum. Second, the factors originating from the preparation of the curriculum, especially due to the weak philosophical and psychological foundations in the elaboration of the curriculum program. Third, the factors originating from the curriculum implementers, namely the level of competence and professionalism of teachers who are less supportive among teachers. Fourth, the factors originating from the education ecosystem, mainly due to the absence of social support and the availability of adequate educational infrastructure (Surakhmad, 2009). The four factors in Surakhmad’s perspective have a synergistic relationship as a combination that ensures failure and change. This is obviously true, because the changes of curriculum as part of educational reform have a significant correlation with actors and bureaucracy of the education itself.

It is time for us to be able to make changes in perceptions, conceptions and appropriate curriculum strategies, in response to the four factors that cause sustainable curriculum changes above, as materials for advancing education in Indonesia. Changes in perceptions, conceptions and curriculum strategies can be formulated as follows:

- Placing teachers at a central point, respecting their autonomy, and providing the full support needed so that teachers can work with optimal achievement. In this connection, placing the curriculum as a companion in professional aspects, and not as a set of provisions that install teacher professionalism.
• Formulating a curricular program by taking into account the philosophical, pedagogical, psychological, socio-cultural, technical and political foundations as the basis for the curriculum, and taking into account the real conditions in society and the world of education.

• Facilitating teachers to better understand the basics of considering the new curriculum, involving teachers actively in studies, trials, and assessments of various curricular aspects. Furthermore, to continuously empower teachers in increasing their professional abilities as curriculum resource persons.

• Turning on the support and concern of the community, especially parents and other interested parties, to the school curricular efforts, as well as complementing all the needs to ensure success and quality improvement.

Apart from the four changes above, it should also be necessary to issue a policy jointly to facilitate and clarify the understanding of teachers, parents and stakeholders of the educational curriculum, as expressed by Surakhmad, the understandings of that policy are as follow:

a) The curriculum is no longer needed as a more important reform strategy than teachers, who make teachers merely as implementing elements of the curriculum.

b) The curriculum is no longer the only source and standard of authoritative knowledge, negating the need for learning resources are likely to be far more relevant.

c) The curriculum is no longer needed in a standardized and universal manner, which precludes the possibility of regional potential in the context of decentralizing education, as well as in developing contextual regional education programs.

d) The curriculum is no longer positioned as the most important element in determining quality, but as a consequence of a visionary strategy formulation process, which involves various determinant elements.

e) The curriculum is no longer a symbol of the past and underdevelopment, but symbolizes a pioneering commitment and planned future progress (Surakhmad, 2009).

2. Education Financing

The second trace of education reform is on education financing, this is as the characteristic of which the author has reviewed in previous writings. It seems sensitive when we talk about education financing, because this problem is closely related to people’s economic life. In the past, not everyone was able to get education (formal education), apart from the limited education institutions, the high cost of education was one of the crucial factors in breaking the intention to go to school. This concrete evidence can be found in Indonesian society from the post-independence era to the 1980s, many people who dropped out of school and did not even attend school due to fairly basic reasons of “cost”. In the 1990s, when the author was still in elementary school, the community complained about the high cost of education, both private and public, and education was assumed to be accessible for those with economic stability. However, over time, Indonesian education has changed by reforming its system. The manifestation of this systemic reform is the existence of a legal basis for the SISDIKNAS Law No. 20 of 2003, which shows that the government has planned and provided the widest possible access to the community to complete compulsory education. This is as the editorial of the SISDIKNAS Law Chapter III Article 4 which reads;

a. Education is carried out in a democratic and just manner and is not discriminatory by upholding human rights, religious values, cultural values, and national pluralism.

b. Education is held as a systemic unit with an open and multi-meaning system.

c. Education is held as a lifelong process of cultivating and empowering students.

d. Education is held by modeling, building willingness, and developing the creativity of students in the learning process.

e. Education is held by developing a culture of reading, writing and arithmetic for all members of society.

f. Education is held by empowering all components of society through participation in the implementation and quality control of educational services (Ministry of National Education, 2009).

As the review of the law above, it can be seen that the principle of providing education is oriented towards the life of the community as a whole, just according to the wishes and expectations, and is built on the basis of one unity in order to uphold the mutual harmony held by all elements of society.
Apart from these principles, the law also provides a clear rule for both central and regional governments that have the obligation to provide services and facilities, and ensure the implementation of quality education for citizens without discrimination. This is as stated in article 11 paragraph 1. As a consequence, the (central) government and local governments are obliged to guarantee the availability of funds for the implementation of education for every citizen aged 7-15 years (article 11 paragraph 2). That is the reason for the (central) and local governments to guarantee the implementation of compulsory education for up to 12 years, and at least at the basic level of education free of charge, because compulsory education is the responsibility of the state which is carried out by the (central) government, local governments, and the community (article 34 paragraph 2).

The form of financial exemption provided by the government with the BOS (School Operational Assistance) program at the basic level was 397,000 in 2009 and increased in 2015 to 800,000. At the junior high level, the exemption was given in the amount of 570,000 in 2009 and increased to 1,000,000 in 2015. As for the upper middle level, the fee exemption given by the government in the same program was 1,200,000 in 2015, this is aimed at achieving equitable education all over the country by completing the 12 years compulsory education. In connection with programs related to education exemption, the government has also provided the BSM (Assistance for Poor Students) program at both the primary and secondary levels. This has a significant effect, so that public participation in education begins to increase, as evidenced by the APK for SD/SDLB/Paket A of 97.31% and APK for SMP/SMPLB/Paket B of 74.29%.

Meanwhile, in the financing of upper-level education or at higher education institutions, the government provides scholarships for students either on merit scholarships or Bidik Misi scholarships for underprivileged people.

By increasing the education budget by 20%, the government has begun to provide a different nuance to Indonesia’s education rotation, because education funding is a shared responsibility between the government, local government and the community. It is recorded that starting from 2012, the education budget has reached 20% of the APBN, and in 2016 the education budget has reached IDR 419.2 trillion or 20 percent of the total state expenditure of IDR 2095.7 trillion. Of the total achievements, IDR 49.2 trillion was allocated for the Ministry of Education and Culture, IDR 39.5 trillion for the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education, IDR 46.8 trillion for the Ministry of Religion, IDR 10.7 trillion for the State Ministry and other institutions, and the education budget through transfers to the regions and village funds received a disbursement of IDR 267.9 trillion and the education budget through financing expenditures of IDR 5 trillion. So that the total achievement of all was IDR 419.2 trillion (Budget, 2017).

Thus, from 2012 to 2016, the budget for education funds has reached 20%, and the ministry of finance will commit to the Education budget in the 2017 State Budget to be maintained at 20% of state spending, with a focus on improving access and quality of education services in accordance with the mandate of the law (Budget, 2017).

![Figure 1: Education Fund Budget Report from APBN (Budget, 2017)](image)

The target of the Ministry of Finance’s commitment to Indonesia’s education fund budget in 2017:

a. Professional Allowances:
PNSD Teacher Professional Allowance: 1.3 million teachers (according to basic salary/teacher/year)
Special Allowance for PNSD Teachers in special areas: 41.6 thousand teachers (according to basic salary/teacher/year)
Lecturer Certification Allowance: 102.7 thousand lecturers (according to basic salary/lecturer/year).

b. Smart Indonesia Card (KIP):
The 2017 RKP target was 19.7 million students. With the details of SD: IDR 450 thousand/student/year
SMP: IDR 750 thousand/student/year
SMA/SMK: IDR 1 million/student/year.

c. Bidik Misi Assistance:
There were 362.7 thousand students, the funds to be allocated to universities as tuition fees of IDR 2.4 million/student/semester. And for the students themselves, it was IDR 3.9 million/student/semester.

d. School Operational Assistance (BOS):
With a total number of 54.7 million students with details; 8.5 million students (central), namely MI: IDR 800 thousand/student/year
MTs: IDR 1 million/student/year, and 46.2 million students (regional) namely SD/SDLB: IDR 800 thousand/student/year
SMP/SMPLB/SMPT: IDR 1 million/student/year.

e. School (Classroom Rehabilitation):
A total of 54,739 classrooms (Center) for the public school were 39,906 rooms and for the Religious school were 14,833 rooms. As many as 27,140 classrooms (regional) for SD: 15,420 rooms, SMP: 8,720 rooms, and SMA: 3,000 rooms.

From the total budget, how big is the quality of Indonesian education, is it stagnant or is it the opposite? To answer these questions, consider the last part of the article in the discussion of this paper.

3. Decentralization of Education
The next focus after discussing about the curriculum and financing as a form of educational reform is the decentralization of education as a manifestation of educational reform itself.

Since the issuance of Law No. 22 of 1999 which was later strengthened by the existence of Law No. 25 of 1999, which the first discusses the regulation of regional government, the second regulates the balance of central and regional finances, then the centralization that appears to have existed in the new order has been overhauled, which means it has been removed from its original form, so that a policy has emerged to decentralize central to regional authority, including the authority in the field of education. From these changes, Susetyo stated that institutionally there was a reduction and also a streamlining of government institutions at the central level, such as the merger between the Ministry of National Education Office and the regional P and K Offices to become (new) Provincial Offices (Susetyo, 2005).

Etymologically, the term decentralization comes from the Latin word, de means detached and centrum means center (Juliantara, 2006). Therefore, if viewed from the origin of the word, decentralization means letting go from the center. Meanwhile, according to the term of the KBBI, decentralization is the transfer of governmental authority by the central government to regional governments (Poerwadarminta, 2007). So in other words, decentralization is the transfer of power, or autonomous to organize and manage self-government in the system of the Republic of Indonesia.

Notion quoted by Huda said that decentralization of education as part of regional autonomy is a must. For him, there are three urgent aspects of the implementation of decentralization, namely; a) development of a democratic society, b) development of social capital, and, c) increasing the competitiveness of the nation (Huda, 2010). Therefore, decentralization of education is aimed at improving the quality of education and human resources including teacher professionalism.

In addition to Law No. 22 of 1999 and Law No. 25 of 1999, Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System is also used as the basis for the implementation of decentralization of education, provided that the following authorities are:

a. The government determines national policies and national education standards to ensure the quality of education;
b. The provincial government coordinates education delivery, educational personnel development and evaluation;
c. Regency/city governments manage primary and secondary education as well as education units based on local excellence (Ministry of National Education, 2009).

From that, in order to support the improvement of the quality of education in education decentralization, School Based Management (SBM) was formed. This policy is a government effort in the framework of empowering the community in the field of education, improving the quality and relevance of education, and improving management at every level, track and type of education. SBM itself aims to increase the excellence of schools through collective decision making. Providing learning services in accordance with student needs, meeting criteria in accordance with the expectations of parents of students as well as school expectations in building a competitive advantage with similar schools. Such as the realization of school implementation with the Full Days School system, schools with the asrama as a learning support system and others.

With the existence of School Based Management (SBM), schools have the right to modify the educational services they want to achieve as a tangible manifestation of achieving school quality. The quality of a good school is standardized on the basis of fulfilling the current and future needs, wants and expectations of its customers (the community), in the Islamic concept, it is called khairunnas anfauhum linnas.

Indonesia’s Education Ranking in the Educational Reform Era

In 2015, the World Education Ranking published by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) determined several rankings achieved by developed countries in terms of education. The rankings determine which countries are the best in terms of reading, math, and science. Indonesian actually ranked 64th out of a total of 72 countries. With the acquisition of reading scores of 397, mathematics of 386, and natural sciences of 403. This ranking showed that Indonesia is still in the lower positions even though there are still some countries that are far behind Indonesia.

As reported by the Kompas media, applicatively, Indonesia in teaching in schools has 1,095 hours of tuition per year. This is quite large if we compare it to other countries such as South Korea which only has 903 hours per year, and Japan which imposes 712 hours per year (Kompas, 2016). In this country, classroom learning is still emphasized a lot on memorizing lessons (Anam, 2017), this is evidenced by the results of the survey conducted above that Indonesian students are good at filling in questions related to memorization while in the level of reasoning and application it is far behind. Therefore, it is necessary to promote contextual learning so that students’ imagination can be increased.

The survey results above have made us proud even though we are still in the top 50 ranking, because from its history, Indonesia has been able to rise 6 levels since 2012, and what needs to be raised again is the realization of all educational actors that learning through subjects is not for mastering knowledge, but for building competence. In this XXI century, basic literacy in the form of science, mathematics, reading and technology must be mastered, moreover, critical thinking, creative, communication, collaboration and character skills are the main roles that need to be developed by them in early teaching, so that students have provisions to develop them in the future (Kompas, 2016).

What must be prepared by us is that the teaching staff, both teachers and prospective teachers, are able to collaborate with teaching that is in accordance with the times. Parents guide their children at home to pay attention to their study hours and always provide motivation, while teachers in classroom teaching provide optimal services in the form of a more humane method to stimulate students’ basic abilities. As maqolah of Sayidina Ali Bin Abi Tholib who said that educate your children with their time.

The weakness of Higher Order Thinking Skill makes students weak in concluding and analyzing a problem, so that not all students with high memory are able to provide a good analysis. Therefore, in education reform, especially in the realm of teaching, teachers must be able to stimulate students to ask questions and also make questions, learn by using teaching aids, and teachers develop learning methods and reasoned assessments. Apart from that, it also enlivens class discussions by familiarizing children with reading books, because for now, Indonesian children’s literacy is still considered weak, and they have been preoccupied with the presence of technology in the form of smartphones which negatively affects their love of reading books.
Figure 2: Survey results released by Kompas in 2016

Conclusion

Education reform in Indonesia is a transitional movement that must be appreciated, so that Indonesia is able to compete with other developing countries and is able to provide services that are in accordance with the mandate of the law. The author can bring up the form of this reform in the form of two major characteristics, namely first, program reforms that can be seen from curriculum changes, second, systematic reforms that can be seen from the existence of policies on education financing and education decentralization. With this, Indonesian education is expected to get better and provide benefits for this nation, both in this world and in the hereafter.

References

Abdullah, A. (2007). Kurikulum Pendidikan di Indonesia Sepanjang Sejarah; Suatu Tinjauan Kritis Filosofis. 
*Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan*, 13(66), 345–357.

Anam, S. (2016). Pesantren Entrepreneur dan Analisis Kurikulum Pesantren Mukmin Mandiri Waru Sidoarjo dalam Pengembangan Dunia Usaha. 
*Maraji*, 1(1), 304–329.

Anam, S. (2017). Melakukan Authentic Assessment dalam Pembelajaran Agama Islam. 
*JALIE: Journal of Applied Linguistics and Islamic Education*, 01(September), 309–332.

Anggaran, D. J. (2017). Informasi APBN 2017: APBN yang lebih kredibel dan berkualitas di tengah ketidakpastian global. (D. P. APBN, Ed.). Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Anggaran.

Dananjaya, U. (2012). Reformasi Pendidikan. 
*KOMPAS*.

Huda, M. (2010). 
*Kajian Filosofis Otonomi Daerah Bidang Pendidikan* (1st ed.). Malang: Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Negeri Malang.

Juliantara, D. (2006). Desentralisasi Kerakyatan Gagasan Dan Praktis (I). Yogyakarta: Pondok Edukasi.

Kompas, (2016). *Daya Imajinasi Siswa Lemah*. Jakarta: Kompas.

Nasional, K. P. Sistem Pendidikan Nasional (2009). Bandung.

Nasional, K. P. Undang-Undang Guru dan Dosen (2009). Bandung.

Poerwadarminta, W. J. S. (2007). Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (Ketiga). Balai Pustaka.

Surakhmad, W. (2009). 
*Pendidikan Nasional Strategi dan Tragedi* (S. Sularto, Ed.) (Pertama). Jakarta: KOMPAS.

Susetyo, B. (2005). Politik Pendidikan Penguasa (I). Yogyakarta: LKiS Yogyakarta.

Wahjoetomo. (1997). 
*Perguruan Tinggi Pesantren; Pendidikan Alternatif Masa Depan* (1st ed.). Jakarta: Gema Insani Press.

Zainuddin, M. (2008). Reformasi Pendidikan; Kritik Kurikulum dan Manajemen Berbasis Sekolah (Pertama). Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.