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Developing a Harmony Ethnic Plurality in Pohuwato Society in Public Administration Perspective

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The research aims at studying the existence of social integration that is built through the values of local policy in order to preserve the harmony of Pohuwato society's plurality which is formulated in *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* and multiculturalism attitude as a potency to achieve national and regional development comprehensively. Therefore, the specific target to be achieved is to study the issue of society categorization based on primordial class to solve the problems related to ethnic integration, and also local government policy in managing inter-ethnic relations; and to construct Gorontalo society model as the important element of social, culture and politic which are well-known as open and tolerant. Thus Research Contribution Theoretically (1) Development of public administration theory through multiethnic community approach, and Empirically: (1) As consideration for government in formulation of policy related to arrangement of ethnicity in multicultural society in local level. (2) Developing harmony among multiethnic groups in order to bind through multiculturalism education by raising their social awareness and social contribution. (3) As a recommendation for the government of Pohuwato on how to manage the harmony to develop systemic integration, and to develop multiculturalism.

Keywords: Plurality, Ethnic, Harmonization, Public Administration.

1. INTRODUCTION

People at Pohuwato district, Province of Gorontalo have multi-cultural ethnicity formed into *torang basudara* jargon (we are all brothers). This pluralism phenomenon of Pohuwato people appears to have conducive and harmonious multi ethnic interactions. Concerning ethnicity, Pohuwato are populated with various ethnics such as, Gorontaloese as the majority ethnic and other minority ethnics such as, Chinese, Arabic, Minahasa, Sangir Talaud (Northern Sulawesi descendants), Javanese, Balinese, Sumbawane, Lomboknese (West Nusa Tenggara), Buginese and Makassarnese people. Sumbawa, Lombok (Nusa Tenggara Barat). These ethnics groups have diverse cultural, languages, and religious background.

Within this composition of society, an interesting and unique phenomenon has arisen like in no other regions. Even though, Gorontaloese is the major ethnic, the other minority ethnics have equal opportunity in all aspects of lives, socially, politically and economically. The fact that the social life of Pohuwato society is filled with pluralism and is similar to Van den Berghe (1970) research, in which, (1) There are various social and cultural groups available; (2) These groups coexist together; (3) These groups exist within a political unity; (4) They have

a common economic system that makes these groups dependent each other; (5) These groups are autonomous and have their own different structures such as kinship, religious, economic, and others.¹

Theories on ethnic identity and acculturation have increasingly recognized that both ethnic self-understanding and acculturation strategies of ethnic minorities relate to how individualism negotiate their interaction with their culture of origin and the culture of settlement.⁸ On the other side Ethnic identity (Ei) is the strength of one's connection to an ethnic group (Moran, Fleming, Somervell and Manson, 1999 means that ethnic identity. To strengthen the harmonious assimilation of ethnics' diversity (multiculturalism), the government of Pohuwato supports this through its vision and mission statement and incorporates the local wisdom values on multiculturalism by creating the common foundation for people to cooperate through "Mohuyula" culture, regardless, to their race, ethnics, religion, culture and language. In other words, they can still cooperate regardless of their background because they are still brothers and sisters. This concept is built as a policy to deal with various social problems such as, multidimensional conflicts that emerge from various social segmentations.

This policy is taken in regard to the previous conflicts that happened during the New Order Regime, such as, the 1982 conflict

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at the migrant residence, the 1992 conflict between the Javanese and the Lomboknese, and other ethnics and religious conflicts by repelling the foreign descendants people who trash certain religions, conflicts on establishment of praying houses, and racial conflicts at Randangan sub-district, as well as other criminal conflicts that often involved two or more different ethnics. In addition, the policy of Pohuwato government is very open and has commitment on maintaining the harmonious relationship among ethnics. These policies are: First, open public bureaucracy to adapt to the multitechnicity of the people of Pohuwato by recruiting the individuals from various ethnics; Second, optimizing the harmonization among ethnics and religious groups such as in Banuroja village of Randangan sub-district, which are populated by different ethnics, where they have declared themselves to live peacefully on June 2011 and witnessed by the Governor of Gorontalo at the time.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research method is qualitative approach by describing and investigating the phenomenon with unique characteristics in developing the multiculturalism values that are able to strengthen the social integration for diverse ethnics groups in Pohuwato.

According to Borg and Gall (1989) the implementation of research and development includes ten stages. The stages consisted of:

- (1) research and data collection,
- (2) planning,
- (3) development of product draft,
- (4) initial field trial,
- (5) revision on results of trial,
- (6) field trial,
- (7) improvement in product of field trial,
- (8) trial of field implementation,
- (9) improvement in final product, and
- (10) dissemination and implementation.⁶

This research is conducted in Pohuwato district of Gorontalo Province, considering this area has various ethnics and has proven that these multi ethnicity do not prevent them from living peacefully with one another. The data are collected integrally by considering the relevant data from various available sources, namely:

First, primary data source in the area of Pohuwato district, province of Gorontalo through observation and interview with relevant key informants, in regard to the social phenomenon of inter ethnicity relation. This in-depth interview is conducted to gain empirical data related to the understanding on development of integration, assimilation, and implementation of multiculturalism education on people of Pohuwat. This in-depth interview is also conducted to obtain empirical data on implementation of multiculturalism education. Second, secondary data source is also obtained through documents and other relevant literatures available through local government, community, media, library, and workshops.

Following the data collection, data analysis are conducted using the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman⁴ that consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing components.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Pluralism and Multiculturalism Development Policy in Pohuwato

Policy related to local politic development in which, togetherness is one of its dimensions is a pattern that not only make the local government and development runs, but also a pattern that avoid centrism and hegemony of certa in ethnics through creation of gaps and inequity toward certain ethnics. This centrism and hegemony pattern is a pattern that the current government, under the lead of Syarif Mbinga as its Bupati, is trying its best to avoid dissatisfaction and discrimination toward minority ethnics groups. Therefore, one of the local government development management is the management of multi ethnic's society.

This multi ethnic's development management has to be implemented with care, balance, and responsible, hence, this local level development value can determine the success of the region's development and ensures that it is acceptable by all parties standards. The government policy through its vision and mission statements that becomes the direction for managing the people of Pohuwato, one of them is trough creating development policies with society equity and incorporate pluralism of the society as mentioned in the description above. The vision of the Pohuwato Government is "*Terwujudnya kesejahteraan masyarakat Pohuwato di atas nilai spiritual melalui pembangunan sumberdaya manusia dan pengembangan ekonomi kerakyatan (improved welfare of the Pohuwato society on the foundation of spiritual values trough development of human resources and development of local economy.*"

In addition, its mission statement is closely related with pluralism and multiculturalism in this district, such as "*Mengembangkan masyarakat madani yang berakhlak mulia, berbudaya, menghormati pluralism dan kesetaraan gender. Selain itu menegakkan supermasi dan tata pelayanan publik yang lebih berkeadilan dan rasa aman bagi masyarakat (develop a civil society with noble characters, civilized, respecting pluralism and gender equity. In addition to that, enhance supremacy and a fairer and safer public services for its society).*"⁵ This policy to maintain the social harmony is due to the awareness of these ethnics group as well as the government concerns that manifested through the following actions:

- (1) Pohuwato government's policy through social justice dimension of its vision and mission;
- (2) Government policy to get closer with deliberatively multicultural public arena;
- (3) The policy to maintain the social capital and local wisdom toward acknowledgement of multiculturalism.⁵

In order to accelerate the implementation of the policy which supported by the conducive situation of the society toward the cooperation among different ethnics, there are several indicators observed and supported by various data source in the field to form integration and assimilation of majority and minority relationship in this area, either through mix marriage and through educational institutions.

3.2. The Multiculturalism Education Strengthening Model in Pohuwato Society

Empirical approach of multiculturalism through local institutions mechanism supported by local wisdom and local policy by the government of Pohuwato is the mechanism of multiculturalism education as a model manifested in daily life by the people of

Pohuwato. This region is part of Gorontalo province that is well-known of its openness toward the diversity of its people and in a wider context, as part of United Nation of the Republic of Indonesia with Bhineka Tunggal Ika as its tagline and ideology of pluralism, Pancasila. Regardless to the understanding of pluralism through multiculturalism education in Indonesia that still cannot be fully implemented, it has to be noted that within the community of Pohuwato, multiculturalism has been well manifested, and needs encouragement in socio economic aspects.

The factual condition of the success implementation of multiculturalism concepts, even though it is important to note that perhaps theoretically the people of Pohuwato do not have grammatical knowledge on multiculturalism, however, their social life practices in their social interaction, it is evident that the essence of multiculturalism has been well-practiced without them realizing that their behavior pattern has been practicing what is called as multiculturalism.

Manifestation of multiculturalism values are the success of both social capital and local wisdom in developing social integration of Pohuwato society that are able to reduce the social problems due to the individual tensions within the society, for instance, the juvenile delinquencies to prevent its exhalation into social conflicts that can trigger either religious or ethnicity-based communal conflicts. Several social capitals that exist within the people of Pohuwato are local wisdom, consensus, communal cooperation, togetherness, and tolerant values.

According to the Rejection-Identification Model, ethnic identity turned out to play a key role as a mediation variable between perceived discrimination and self-esteem. In this direction, in order to deal with the negative consequences of discrimination on well-being, people could increase the degree of identification with their minority in-group.⁹ Indeed One of multiculturalism practices within the people of Pohuwato lays on how its people understand the rules of tolerances toward minority groups with different faiths (such as, Sangir Talaud and Minahasa ethnics that are Christians, Balinese with their Hinduism faith) and the majority (Gorontalo ethnics with other minority ethnics that have similar religion such as, Javanese, Sumbawane, Buginese, Makassarese, etc.). Within the diverse ethnicity groups of Pohuwato people, it is evident that there is a very high appreciation toward the understanding of other different ethnics, religion, and cultural groups.

Therefore, in order to develop multiculturalism in Pohuwato society actually cannot be said as a not too hard thing, considering that the society have been practicing the process of managing the cultural diversity of different ethnics groups, by observing the equity and respects toward each other. Based on this composition, it has been previously explained that the diversity of Pohuwato society have been formed for a long time and becomes one of the elements that binds various cultures of the emigrants and this strength has become the basic capital for the local government to formulate policies that can unite the ethnic diversity in this area. Therefore, there are several model of multiculturalism development within the Pohuwato people as follow:

(1) *Multiculturalism education in building the social awareness of the Pohuwato society.*

The multiculturalism that is basically a view of the world that can then be translated into the various cultural policies which stressing the acceptance of the religious reality, plurality, and

multicultural contained in the community life.¹⁰ Through this approach, the role of acculturation can help develop the social awareness as the essence of multiculturalism among people of Pohuwato. It is important to first quote the meaning of acculturation according to Koentjaraningrat³ in which he said that acculturation can happen when a group of human with certain culture are faced with elements of alien culture, hence, through times, the elements of that alien cultures gradually becomes acceptable and incorporated into their own culture, without the risk of losing their original culture.

The process of interaction for acculturation to happen within a society that connects to each other can happen through many fields of life, like through trades, governance, etc. In this sense, the people of Pohuwato have long experienced acculturation process as consequences of its society composition that consists of various ethnics, in which, each ethnic carries has their own culture and encounters the culture of Gorontalo ethnics as the majority of indigenous ethnic of Pohuwato. The cultural differences of Pohuwato society indeed is a description that the community has equal competitiveness with other regions, which also have the diverse ethnicity.

Plurality of the Pohuwato society is a description that Gorontalo society at least has shown some diversity. The uniqueness of Pohuwato society as a plural region is also can be seen in Boalemo district, in which, Pohuwato was previously part of this district. The society in these two districts is not only unique because of their plurality, but also their peaceful and harmonious characters. Cultural diversity is marked by the incoming migration of various ethnics into this area, starting from social processes that forms social system through colonization, transmigration, or migration of people. These three creates acculturation that is able to create social awareness that reflects the meaning of multiculturalism within the society. In fact, the entrance of various culture form outside of Gorontalo (Pohuwato) has enriched the local culture of Pohuwato people itself as a consequence of acculturation. The emergence of a social process through infiltration of culture is rooted on the migration process.

(2) *Multiculturalism Education as pillar of social construction through respect toward diverse culture in Pohuwato society*

The multiculturalism of Pohuwato people from the social construction perspective can be interpreted into various dimensions, for instance, the relationship built among individuals, relationship among groups within the space of pluralism through intensive communication and without any stereotyping. Stereotyping which are based on prejudice within the society that often led to social problems such as conflicts, and it had happened in the past. However, learning from the experience of Pohuwato society, where prejudice can led to closed attitude due to jealousy and hatred, this stereotyping attitude is no longer evident. Even if there is a social cohesion, it is usually solved quickly to avoid things that can weaken the social integration by involving the communication with multi stakeholders, both community and local government.

The factual condition of the Pohuwato people is similar to what has been described by Berger and Luckmann² that social construction is a phenomenon developed together by individuals through on-going communication process, in which language is the most important element within it. Individual awareness that initially was only individual awareness then evolves into

social awareness when many of the individuals have had the same awareness.¹

Therefore, the essence of multiculturalism within the theoretical and empirical approaches for Pohuwato people as form of socio cultural construction can manifest in the form of respect toward the culture of each available and within itself a communication process among the diverse society is formed. In their daily life, people of Pohuwato are faced with interactions within the social system that require one way communication and each brings their own culture into the framework of understanding that eventually lead to respect for each other. Therefore, interaction through communication is part of the cultural attitude of a society that consists of ethnics groups.

Therefore, it can be said that for the interest of a nation, though in small scale, the ethnical integration of Pohuwato people has been a road map as well as an example of a cooperation model for a region that is part of Indonesia. It can be specifically said that a small and young district called Pohuwato, has been able to implement an awareness to maintain national integrity that currently in many cases at many regions has led to disintegration or ethnical conflict in other areas.

It implies that Pohuwato is an example of a pluralism region, an autonomous district that consists of several sub-districts filled with various ethnics groups, in which, almost in all its sub-districts and villages, harmoniously live various ethnics groups. This picture of diverse culture, religions, and languages has placed one of the youngest districts in Gorontalo province as highly multi cultured district. It is evident that the harmonious values that based on the multiculturalism view have been long embedded among the people of Pohuwato, this is a richness in diversity for Indonesia that is highly potential to be well maintained and become a national pattern for a

state that is currently struggling to develop permanent and real integration.

4. CONCLUSION

Local government policy in developing integration and assimilation of ethnical groups ideologically has been able to integrate various ethnics groups. Therefore, implementation of multiculturalism within the life of its people has been vastly developing along with the government efforts in creating fair and equal policies. This practice has started to create awareness within every people of Pohuwato through multiculturalism movement. People of Pohuwato have started to realize that easy acceptance within an acculturation process is dominated by young people that have been interacting with different ethnics since their early age, hence, they have no difficulty to immerse themselves and to accept elements of different cultures.

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