

"EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION
TOWARD EXCELLENT QUALITY
BASED ON **ASEAN** COMMUNITY
CHARACTERISTICS"



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THE CHALLENGES OF MADRASAH AT GLOBAL ERA

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Abstract

The author has thought that an Islamic educational institution including a Madrasah will face opportunities and challenges in today's global era. Madrasah will always be in demand and sought after by the public, if the conduct of the madrasah itself towards positive changes and better quality. To change the direction of a qualified and better Madrasah, we should pay attention to two important factors. Firstly, there is earnest effort of the government to improve the educators. Secondly, madrasah has to complete some required tools of madrasah including some labs and manage madrasah well.

Keywords : Madrasah, the Globalization Era, Education

A. Introduction

Madrasah is an Islamic educational institution that has significant mission. It is to prepare young moslem generations ideal and qualified actors to participate in developing society and nation in the future. Madrasah is part of Islamic educational institutions including also pesantren (Islamic boarding) and Islamic university that now facing various difficult challenges, examinations or disturbances which must be solved soon. The challenges are

very complex which ranges from human resources, finances, tools, infrastructures, and qualified graduates who moslems hope. Each challenge must find appropriate solutions and then develop, improve and enhance better qualities. Today, society very needs madrasah and its contributions to make character and personality of nation qualified and noble moral in our beloved country.¹

Modern educations emerge advanced culture and professional people without moral improvement. Meanwhile, the moslem progress on modern technology today is poor and less developed.² Therefore, rearrangement of islamic educational institutions' mission including madrasah is very required because almost 100% of its students who learn in the institution are the children of moslem families or *santri*. Madrasah condition differs from general school or university who its students are the children of moslem (*santri*), upper class and lower class families. If the quality of their education that they got in madrasah is good, excellent and qualified, they will be qualified people and have important role as a leader of moslem society and nation which is *rahmatan lil-`alamiin* (blessings for all creation). On the contrary, if the quality that they got is bad, less qualified and less standard, likely they will be a part of problems of society and people who cannot solve society's problem.

According to historical record, madrasah is an educational model development of pesantren education. In the past, before Dutch colonized our country, pesantren appears in Indonesia as an islamic educational institution which its activity focuses on islamic education

¹ Arief Furchan, *Pemberdayaan Madrasah dan Tantangan Globalisasi*, Makalah, disajikan di Pondok Pesantren Zainul Hasan Genggong, 25 April 1999, hal. 1

² Mulkhan, Abdul Munir, *KECERDASAN MAKRFAT, Jalan Pembebasan Manusia dari Mekanisme Konflik*, dari Pidato Pengukuhan Guru Besar Filsafat Pendidikan Islam disampaikan dalam Rapat Senat Terbuka UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 31 Maret 2004, hal. 5

or *tafaqqof fidiin*³. The main difference of madrasah and pesantren is on its educational system. Madrasah follows formal educational system according to national curriculum that generally has scheduled course and examination, and has seat and blackboard like West educational model, while pesantren follows non formal system with local curriculum, has unequal course, has no examination to measure student achievement and has different style. In 1975, Indonesian Joint Ministerial Decree of Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Culture and Education Affairs and Ministry of Home Affairs established that graduates of madrasah are equal with graduates of general school; and graduates of madrasah also can move or continue their study to general school on appropriate level. The compensation of the equality said that its curriculum must contain 70% of general lesson and 30% of religious lesson. Now, curriculum of madrasah on 1994 must contain 100% curriculum of general school. On the laws no. 2 1994 of National Education System, madrasah is categorized as "general school" which has "Islamic character."

Moslem society actually has high interest on madrasah. There are some regions which the number of students at madrasah Ibtidaiyah (equal to elementary school) and madrasah Tsanawiyah (equal to junior high school) are many more than at general elementary school or junior high school. Based to their view, madrasah has special quality if it is compared to general school, particularly madrasah that is inside Pondok Pesantren (Islamic Boarding School) providing strong religious mentality for their students. Therefore, they are expected to be a honest, believable and moral leader if they become a leader in the future. But, according to researcher, the quality of the institution is decreasing. Why the quality of madrasah outside Pesantren is under standard viewed on its islamic education and general education, specially if its foundation is less strong? Madrasah outside pesantren has worse islamic education

³ Martin Van Bruinessen, *KITAB KUNING, (PESANTREN DAN TAREKAT) Tradisi-tradisi Islam di Indonesia*, pengantar : Abdurrahman Wahid, Mizan (Khazanah Ilmu-ilmu Islam), Bandung, 1995, hal.17s/d 19

than madrasah inside pesantren. Then it is also bad in its general education when compared to general school in surroundings. Certainly, there are exceptions of madrasah that generally is higher than general school, like MIN Malang I, MIN Jejeran, MIN Yogyakarta I and the others, although there are not many.⁴

B. Globalization

1. Meaning of Globalization

Talking about free market era or globalization era is often discussed by economic observers since many years ago until now. Globalization terminology is defined as: "something that spreads fast to the whole world". Robertson in his book *Social Theory and Global Culture* (Londo Sage: 1992) defines globalization as the compression of the world into a single space and the intensification of consciousness the world as a whole. Globalization also brings out global culture which encompasses the world at international level.⁵

Globalization as process of life from one level to other special level has long history. Globalization ensures the free market happens and value becomes creative tools and expansion for the growth of international trading, and development of higher science and technology. It means that social change which changes communication, technology, production and consumption pattern, and also the increase of internationalism has cultural value and new civilization. Globalization era can cause dual impacts on all sides. It can be positive and negative impact and it can benefit and harm for human life. The positive and benefit impact can give opportunity to make wide cooperation to outsider or foreign countries but, if we cannot against them because lower human resources, it can harm our nation itself. Hence, our challenges in the future are developing competitiveness in all sides and competitive superiority in all sectors, both real and

⁴ *Ibid.*, Arief Furchan, hal. 2

⁵ Armai Arief, *Tantangan pendidikan di Era Globalisasi*, Makalah, tt. Hal. 1

monetary sector, stressing on skills of human resources, technology, and management without decreasing comparative superiority possessed by our nation itself.

All parties must take advantage of the free market in all aspects, including educational aspect on madrasah because the education of madrasah must be able to face the fast and very big change of free market by producing competitive and strong individual. Convincingly, the high competitiveness will determine the level of progression, efficiency and quality of nation to compete in the strict competition of the free market⁶. According to Muslim Nasution, strong human resources must possess compressive science, technology, faith and taqwa (Goodness). The task of education including madrasah is not only to prepare human resources as a subject of free market, but also to develop the competence of science and technology which very helps business field to grow national economy.

2. Opportunity and Globalization Threat

An anxiety is predicted that religious resurrection on 21st will lead global radicalization, as the justification of 11 September 1996 tragedy in United States of America. On the other hand, issue of terrorism spreading extensively after the tragedy makes the relationship between Moslem Countries and West more critical. The critical relationship is caused by socio-economic disparities between northern regions of West which has more progression than southern regions who moslem nations are poor and less developed.

The global condition is consequence of congenital defect of modernism when it was born. Creative and imaginative capability as spiritual enthusiasm has lost its way when education is aimed to prepare human resources facing the conflict competition. Meanwhile, modern civilization does not give opportunity to live equally.⁷

⁶ *Ibid.*, Armai Arief, hal. 1

⁷ *Ibid.*, Mulkhan, Abdul Munir, *Kecerdasan Makrifat, Jalan Pembebasan Manusia dari Mekanisme Konflik*, hal. 6

Then, globalization will have positive and negative impact for the interest of nations and all people. In the positive side, it makes us easy to get information from outside until it helps us to find new solutions to solve our problems today. For example, now we can find some information of whole world without spending much money like in the past through internet. Then, it is also help us on jobs vacancies, finances and goods. In the economic field, free market accross countries means free market make our products more available, both goods or services.

Then, consumption of wrog and unrequired information that can harm cultural systems, moralites, and attitudes that we obey is the negative impact. For example cases of infidelity because of the spreading of pornographic film from outside, through televisions, pictures, vidieos, and magazines, and the emergence of political understandings that is different from our understanding before. In the ecomic side, by perforce we must compete against foreigners in our country itself because of the free market. The foreigners usually are more succes than local society because they perforce must struggle to work, so that socio-ecomic disparities and jelousy between them can not be avoided. If we lose in the competition, we only will be a watcher of our country itself as we can see on film industry sector in our country, for example.⁸

Avoiding globalization or throwing all the negative impacts away is impossible. By perforce, we have to face it and accept all the impacts, both positive and negative impacts. So, the challenge that we have to face is by maximally maintaining all the positive impact and its opportunities and minimalizing the negative impacts and its threats. For Islamic education manager or actor, it presents a question: how can our institutions produce graduates who are ready and able to survive in this globalization era that play important role in this life without losing of character as Indonesian moslem.

⁸ Arief Furchan, *Pemberdayaan Madrasah dan Tantangan Globalisasi*, Makalah, Surabaya, 1999, hal. 4

According to Five-Year Development Plan, Indonesian government has tried to build this nation prominently in its economic sector which aimed to increase the economic prosperousity of nation. The economic sector which previously focused on agrarian sector, now gradually it changes to industry sector. The changes certainly cause the change of job need from traditional workers to labors. Today, Indonesian products turn in to international trade to get more foreign exchange. The government wants the composition of students of university in Indonesia since 1993/1994 which consists 73% of social sciences, 14% of natural sciences and 13% of engineering becomes 30% of social sciences, 24% of natural sciences, and 45% of engineering in the end of PJP II, to fulfill the needs of worker in the industrialization era and to increase the competitiveness of the science and technology.

3. Keys of Success in Globalization Era

The agreement of free market across countries will cause competition across the countries and influence economic sector. The law of competition everywhere is same: who is the superior is the winner. They are who do not have superiority will be losers. Latter-day expression states significant superiority is the superiority in economic sector.⁹ This is the kind of competition today. The competition in economic sectors means the competition of qualities of human resources. Only human resources who have superiority on economic sector and science and technology will be able to survive and be the winner in the international competition today.

Education is an effort of awareness of nation to make its young generation become an ideal individual. Therefore, the challenge of national education in the globalization era is: can our national education produce qualified and superior individuals until they can be the winner of the global competition today?¹⁰

⁹ *Ibid.*, Arief Furchan, hal, 5

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Arief Furchan, hal, 7

C. The growth and the development of Madrasah

The inception of madrasah has happened around 20th century. Nevertheless, the factors of the establishment of madrasah can be separated from these factors; the first is the spirit of Islamic renewal that originates from Middle East.¹¹ The second, it was an educational response to policies of Dutch government who created and developed school. Madrasah becomes an Islamic educational institution because the anxiety of Dutch government that built schools and thought their students without providing Islamic course.¹² However, some researches of Islamic educational history in Indonesia generally tell about the important role of *Madrasah Diniyah Labai al-Yunusiah* who established by Zaenudin Labai el-Yunusi in Sumatera (1890-1924) and *Madrasah Mambaul Ulum* in Java.

Then, researchers of Islamic educational history agree to categorize some madrasah based on its growing period, particularly in Sumatra and Java regions. Mahmud Yunus tells about madrasah that categorized based on the growing period, for example: *Adabiah School (1909)* and *Diniah School Labai al-Yunusi (1925)* in West Sumatra, *Madrasah Nahdlatul Ulama* in East Java, *Madrasah Muhammadiyah* in Yogyakarta, *Madrasah Taswiq Thullab* in Middle Java. *Madrasah Persatuan Umat Islam* in Java, *Madrasah Jami'atul Khair* in Jakarta, *Madrasah Amiriah Islamiyah* in Sulawesi and *Madrasah Assulthaniyah* in Kalimantan.¹³

Based on its development, educational system of madrasah has not used educational system which is same as educational system of pesantren because madrasah has begun to include general lessons. Then, its learning method has not used *halaqoh system*, it has used

¹¹Ibid., Martin Van Bruinessen, *KITAB KUNING, (PESANTREN DAN TAREKAT) Tradisi-tradisi Islam di Indonesia*, hal.32 s/d 34

¹² Khoirul Umam, *Madrasah dan Globalisasi*, Makalah, Jakarta, 2008, hal. 3

¹³ Karel A Steenbrink, *Pesantren Madrasah Sekolah Pendidikan Islam dalam Kurun Modern*, LP3ES, Jakarta, 1986, hal. 198

modern educational method which is similar to West like using class room, chair, table and blackboard in learning-teaching process.

Based on the history, definitely we are proud of the madrasah and its system that Indonesia has. Moreover, its learning and curriculum methods have adapted general system and curriculum. The significant role and contribution of madrasah after Indonesia just has got its independence intensively related to the role of Ministry of Religious Affairs which legitimated on 3 January 1946¹⁴. The Ministry then struggles for the political issue of Islamic education. It orients on aspiration of moslem society that religious education should be learned beside the development of madrasah itself.¹⁵

The development and the advancement of Islamic education significantly increase. It can be seen from some reports in the mid of 1960's that said madrasah has spread broadly in some regions of all province of Indonesia. In that time, it also reported that there were 13.057 of madrasah Ibtidaiyah. Based on the number, at least 1.927.777 students have got religious education. It also reported that there were 776 of madrasah Tsanawiyah with 87.932 students. Then, there were 16 of madrasah Aliyah with 1.881 students. Thus, this wholly shown that there were 13.849 of madrasah with 2.017.590 students in that time. This development indicates that madrasah has significantly contributed in building intellectuality, attitude and moral of nation from the start.

Although, the ministry has made some changes and formulations to develop madrasah, it has not yet represented a better result if it is compared to the general schools that Ministry of Education manages.¹⁶ It was because society considers and interest in general school rather than in madrasah/islamic shools until 1990's. They think that general schools are more pretogious than madrasah. On the other hand, job oppurtunities of graduates from general schools are more than graduates

¹⁴ I Djumhur dkk, *Sejarah Pendidikan*, CV Ilmu Bandung, 1976, hal. 159

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Khoirul Umam, hal. 6

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Khoirul Umam, hal. 7

from madrasah. The facts above emerge an image that graduates from madrasah cannot compete against graduates from general schools. Graduates from madrasah only can become an islamic teacher (ustadz). Meanwhile, graduates from general schools can continue to more bonafide school and get more guarenteed job oppurtunities.

Based on contemporary context, the image of madrasah has changed. Now, it is not only lower-middle class society who interests in Madrasah, but also upper class society who interests in because there are many elite madrasahs/Islamic schools now that are equal to other general school have appeared, for example: MIN Malang I, Madrasah Pembangunan UIN Jakarta, Madrasah Yayasan Ali Maksum Krapyak Yogyakarta, MIN Jejeran, MIN Yogyakarta and etc.

D. The Challenges of Madrasah in Globalization Era

Before madrasah develops like today, madrasah only is addressed for lower-middle class society. But, upper class society now also becomes also interested in madrasah. It is because madrasah now adapts modern educational system from West by regarding what have existed and provides supporting facilities in the learning-teaching method. Moreover, there are many madrasahs run English Day program in which teachers and students have to speak English in learning-teaching activity, for example Madrasah Pembangunan UIN Jakarta, Islamic School Al-Azhar, Islamic School Insan Cendekia, etc.¹⁷

Skills of using foreign language like English and Arabic language are urgently required in this globalization era. So the madrasah should not only develop English skill but it also should develop other language skills like Arabic, Japanese and Mandarin language in madrasah Aliyah. Besides, madrasah as an Islamic institution should not feel satisfied enough if it gets success in developing language skills for its students.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Khoirul Umam, hal. 5

Then, the design of appropriate curriculum is required to face some challenges in this era.¹⁸

Furthermore, madrasah has to think continually towards the progression of madrasah and its students. So, providing additional course like skill training of students in madrasah is urgently needed. It can be extracurricular or intracurricular activities like training of computer, dancing, music, engineering, mechanic, painting and journalism.¹⁹ It is hoped that it can be applied after the students graduated from madrasah. Why are the skill trainings important? It is because students who cannot continue to higher education (for example, to a university) can apply the skills that madrasah provided and they may not have difficulties to find a job.²⁰

Therefore, some professional skill trainings are significant for madrasah because students directly can apply what they got if they have graduated. Then, the graduates from madrasah are expected to be able to respond the challenges of globalization era that becomes more competitive. In the end, the image of madrasah also gets positive response from society because its graduates also have competence that shows superb quality equal to the general school.²¹

Compared to the general school, madrasah has great noble missions. It does not only provide general lessons but also provide religious lessons and religious settings. If the missions succeed, the graduates will live happy in the world and hereafter.

¹⁸ Mulkhan, Abdul Munir, *SPIRITUALISASI IPTEK DALAM PERKEMBANGAN PENDIDIKAN ISLAM*, Artikel dari judul Buku, *Paradigma Baru Pendidikan (Restropeksi dan Proyeksi Modernisasi Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia)*, Editor: Kusmana, JM. Muslimin, penyelenggara : Direktorat Pendidikan Tinggi Islam Direktorat Jendral Pendidikan Islam Departemen Agama RI, 2008, hal. 169

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Khoirul Umam, hal. 6

²⁰ *Ibid.*, Mulkhan, Abdul Munir, *SPIRITUALISASI IPTEK DALAM PERKEMBANGAN PENDIDIKAN ISLAM*, Artikel dari judul Buku, *Paradigma Baru Pendidikan (Restropeksi dan Proyeksi Modernisasi Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia)*, hal. 170

²¹ *Ibid.*, Khoirul Umam, hal 7.

Related to globalization era and competitive free market, madrasah has to prepare its students to compete with any various field. It aims to get graduates unmarginalized from graduates of general school in gaining some positions and roles of the nation-developing movement. According to Laws of National Educational System, madrasah is categorized as general school, so the graduates of madrasah also have a right to continue his education to general university.²² This opportunity to continue higher education in a general university must be used. Espically entering faculty of economy, engineering or science and technology who usually graduates of madrasah avoid them, can has important role in the future national development. Hence, madrasah also has to increase the quality of lessons like mathematics, physics and biology. Madrasah has to encourage students' spirit to work in mathematics, engineering, economics and pure science so that fields are not only possessed by graduates from non-madrasah which might not have strong religious understanding.²³

To produce wise and thoughtful graduates who see the world of God (Allah) as a place to dedicate themselves, so madrasah also has to have compherensive thoughts. It is impossible that madrasah can produce thoughtful graduates if it does not have comprehensive thoughts. Madrasah has to prepare its students to go to continuing their education or to work abroad. Thus, proficiency of English and Arabic skill is very important. Then they also have to understand about foreign culture and civilization well.²⁴

Besides, role of government relating to these issues is very significant. Because government is a ruler of educational policy, it should give bigger financial support realizing educational program,

²² A Syafii Maarif dkk, *Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia Antara Cita dan Fakta*, Tiara Wacana Yogyakarta, 1991, hal. 8

²³ *Ibid.*, Arief Furchan, hal. 9

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Arief Furchan, hal. 10

especially for madrasah. Lowness of Education in Indonesia is the lack of its political will solving the educational issues.²⁵

Cooperation of some parties has to unite to anticipate the lowness. Not only educational institution but also government has to solve the problems seriously to get better quality of human resources. In this case, the government has to provide formulas and concistencies to accomadate the needs of education without descrimination. One of them is by increasing the budget of education minimally 20% to 25% of the budget state to pay attention of the educational activities. So, political will of the goverment is significantly required to maintain educational policies.

Honestly, the lowness of our education as mentioned above is primarily caused by the lowness of human resources. Moreover, human resources are the main factor that becomes indicators of the development of a nation beside natural resources and the scientific and techological resources. West succeeds because they supports to develop quality of human resources that considers education as a tool to manage human resources.

In conclusion, human resources in indonesia are low because basically indonesia has lower education and less skill of manangement and technology. So it results less ability to compete against foreign countries, whereas Indonesia includes in rich countries that have rich natural resources but our country cannot maximally manage the natural resources well because of the low human resources.²⁶

To answer some questions of education, espically madrasah, we have to consider madrasah as an effort and development process of human resources in which individual, family, society and goverment as the ruler of political will policy must realize.

As a result, education has significant and strategic role producing human resources that will develop our beloved country. This

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Armai Arief. Hal.7

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Armai Arief, hal 9

also means we could not underestimate the role of other parties in developing the country. Addressing the future of nation must always be important and strategic if it is based on empiric education that our nation always needs more qualified human resources to develop it for today and tomorrow.

Qualified human resorces also must have moral and strong national integrity, for example: no corrupt, honest, creative, anticipative and visionary until the multi-dimensional crisis of Indonesia quickly solved as soon as possible. As a comparison, strong supports to human resources in other countries like Malaysia, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Philippine are growing fast until they step out of their crisis as our country experiences. Even, in a case, Malaysia can recover its economic condition without depending on IMF and World Bank support like in Indonesia.²⁷

Again, all these need significant role and anticipation of education if the education is able to accomodate and give solutions in order to develop and win strict global competition or it is only less active and stagnant surrounding globalization ahead. All of these is challenges and oppurtunities for us especially moslem society as a leader to fulfill the mandate of God.

E. Conclusion

Therefore, the writer has perception that society will always get interested in and seek an Islamic educational institution including madrasah if it makes some qualified and good changes. Madrasah has to focus on two important factors to get the changes. The first is developing its educators to continue their education to higher level, for example suggesting them who do not continue a university to get a bachelor's degree or post-graduate degree to continue soon. The second, madrasah has to fix some required tools of madrasah including some labs and manage madrasah well.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Armai Arief, hal. 10

Besides, budget of state needs to be increased or even added to support the prosperity of teacher and educator's life. It is because to be a qualified teacher or educator needs high enough cost.

The writer also feels optimistic of certification program for teachers from government that recently starts because it is aimed to support the development from all factors. It starts from quality of education for their students, the responsibility of teaching and the full attention of their students that can develop. Moreover it can cover the needs of cost life and family well. Amin.

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