Education reforms in Indonesia in the twenty-first century

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This article examines the reforms in education that have been occurring in Indonesia following the socio-political change marked by the fall of the Soeharto regime. Democratic citizens are now desired explicitly in the 2003 Education Act. As the decentralisation policy in governance has been implemented, autonomy in education has resulted in several consequent reforms. School Based Management has been chosen as a new paradigm in school management, while the new curriculum focuses on competency-based principles and school-based development. However, obstacles including cultural and economical barriers are assumed potentially to hinder the success of the implementation of reforms, if not carefully and appropriately handled.

Indonesian education; school-based management; competency-based curriculum; education reform; education autonomy

INTRODUCTION

Since the fall of the New Order\(^1\) regime in 1998 in Indonesia, many changes have been or are occurring. In terms of policy, the restriction to two periods of the presidency, direct election, and the implementation of the policy of autonomy are among the significant reforms. These changes have had an impact on education. However, information about such changes and the impact in Indonesia, written in scholarly articles and internationally accessible, is hardly found. This article is, therefore, in a way intended to reduce the lack of information by examining educational reforms in Indonesia around the turn of the twenty-first century and presenting it to international readers. The first section describes the change in objectives of Indonesian education, taking The 2003 Education Act\(^2\) into account. The second section examines the recent education management reform following the implementation of The Regional Autonomy Act in 1999. This reform was marked by the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) as a new paradigm in school management. The third section reviews the reform in school curricula that now focus on a competency-based approach in teaching processes and a school-based approach in its development. Finally, this article points out several challenges that are likely to hinder the success of the implementation of such reforms, if they are not handled appropriately.

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\(^1\) New Order or Orde Baru is a term used to refer to a period of Indonesian modern history after the fall of Sukarno (Old Order or Orde Lama) in 1966. The changing order was marked with the coup de état of the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) on the 31\(^{st}\) of September, 1965. In 1966, General Soeharto took power and became the second Indonesian president. In 1998, following the severe economical crisis that hit Asian countries including Indonesia, Soeharto was forced to resign, and the New Order regime collapsed. The current order, frequently called the Reform Era, began.

\(^2\) 2003 Education Act was passed after the fall of the Soeharto regime in 1998, aimed at decentralizing the education system and increasing the autonomy of schools.
OBJECTIVES OF INDONESIAN EDUCATION

In accordance with the socio-political changes, the Acts associated with the Indonesian national education system have been issued several times after Independence in 1945 up to the most recent time including in 1950, 1956, 1989, (Poerbakawatja, 1970; Tilaar, 1995) and in 2003. The 2003 Act (Indonesian National Education System Act or INESA) is regarded as important since Indonesia has undergone dramatic recent changes particularly in the political system with the movement from authoritarianism to democracy, which started shortly after the fall of the Soeharto or New Order regime in 1998. The governance system has also changed, from centralist to decentralist or, rather, to what is popularly termed as ‘otonomi yang lebih luas’ meaning a ‘wider autonomy’ (Jalal & Supriadi, 2001).

As stated in INESA 2003, national education is aimed at developing each student’s potential to become people with faith and piety towards God the Only One, good morality, good health, knowledge, intelligence, creativity, independence, and to become democratic and responsible citizens [my translation] (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2003d, 2, article 2). There is an emphasis in The Act on religious and moral values, intellectual competences, and democratic values.

Although Indonesia is not a theocratic country, the people put religion as one of the main considerations in their activities. Indeed, UUD (the State Constitution) 1945 emphasises that each citizen must adhere to a religion (Ministry of Public Religion (MPR), 2003). There are now at least five religions formally recognised by the Indonesian Government, the main ones being Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. It can be understood, therefore, that religion plays an influential role in almost every aspect of life in Indonesia including education (Novera, 2004). Religious values are taken as one of the educational standards and objectives. These values are expected to become an integrated part of students’ personality, and to be manifested in their morality (Tilaar, 1999). These religious and moral objectives have been repeated explicitly in each Indonesian Education Act (Poerbakawatja, 1970; Tilaar, 1995), though there has been an ongoing apprehensiveness that such objectives have not been achieved (Adimassana, 2000; Sudarminta, 2000).

As education should be able to develop specific cognitive, psychomotor, and affective objectives (Bloom, 1956), practising religious morality is not sufficient for children to survive in this competitive era. A range of attributes is needed such as the basic competences and life skills (Bailin, Case, Coombs, & Daniels, 1999; Blank, 1982; Bloom, 1956; Cameron, 1986; Campbell, 1996; Metais, 1999). However, as Muhaaimin, Suti’ah, and Ali (2001) and Darmaningtyas (2004) have pointed out critically, the Indonesian education system has so far placed a heavy emphasis on cognitive attainment by students. Knowledge learnt and mastered by students has been separated from its application (Darmaningtyas, 2004). Learning objectives would seem to have been formulated for students to meet certain targets of curriculum content without sufficient attention being given to the issue of how the learnt knowledge was to be applied in real life (Joni, 2000). Consequently, many school graduates are unable to take active roles in the community and survive at a time when change and competition have become common features (Darmaningtyas, 2004; Joni, 2000; Tilaar, 1999).

After the fall of the Soeharto or New Order regime, Indonesia underwent a dramatic change, particularly in terms of the political system, as it moved from authoritarianism to democracy. This

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2 The Education Acts in Indonesia are explicitly mentioned in the Indonesian 1945 Constitution (Undang-Undang Dasar 1945) for government to issue as a legal foundation for the establishment of the national education system. The constitution says, ‘each citizen has the right to education’, and ‘government must carry out a national education system, which is arranged by national acts’ (MPR, 2003).
has had a great impact on education, as education cannot be separated from politics (Jalal & Supriadi, 2001). Students need to be enlightened to the democratic values and practices, as indicated in INESA 2003. Hochschild and Scovronick (2002) stated that schools were a crucial locus for educating children to become democratic citizens, who contributed to constructing and sustaining a democratic country. Azra (2002) argued that a democratic governance system had become an unavoidable trend since the fall of the Soeharto regime, because of both global and local demands. Thus, an important stage for Indonesians has been reached in that the phrase ‘warga Negara yang demokratis’ (democratic citizens) was explicitly put in The 2003 Act, and was absent in The 1989 Act, as one of the objectives of education.

These three aspects of objectives are to be integrated into the personalities of Indonesian children. They are expected to exercise religious and moral practices and values, be intelligent, have life skills, be democratic, and be responsible to the nation. These objectives certainly have significant implications for other parts of the national education system, particularly management and curriculum.

**SCHOOL MANAGEMENT REFORM**

As described earlier, the current political reform, marked initially with the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998, had an impact on education. The decentralisation policy in the governance of the state had significantly influenced educational management and the curriculum. As a result, in 1999, ‘Manajemen Berbasis Sekolah’ or school-based management (SBM) was introduced to reduce the severe dominance of the central (Jakarta) authority over almost every aspect of schooling.

According to the *World Bank Report* in 1998, Indonesia had had very centralised management with regard to education until 1999 (The World Bank, 1998). The central educational authority determined almost every aspect of schooling, while subordinate authorities (offices at the provincial and district levels) only had to implement the policies. Consequently, as the World Bank concluded, that there were ineffective institutional arrangements in the Indonesian education system. These ineffective arrangements resulted in some major constraints:

a) a division of responsibility for delivery of primary education among various government agencies and ministries which resulted in a lack of accountability for results;

b) overly centralised management at the junior secondary level;

c) little autonomy for principals and lower level managers, leading to ineffective school management;

d) a fragmented and rigid budgetary process; and

e) civil service incentive structures that did not reward good teaching practices and led to an uneven allocation of teachers in schools (Jiyono et al., 2001; The World Bank, 1998).

In line with the centralised management, as Umaedi (2001) and Jalal and Supriadi (2001) stated, Indonesian educational management had been very largely macro-oriented. Tilaar (1999) explained that the policies about school affairs were issued heavily based on macro educational analysis. Bjork (2003) and Tilaar agreed (1999) that policy based on case studies was hardly ever found. Consequently, different needs of particular schools were not addressed on an individual basis. All schools received the same treatment.

It is through *Act No.22/1999 of Otonomi Daerah* (Regional Autonomy) that an ever-major decentralisation of the country’s policies and management has occurred. According to Jalal and Supriadi (2001, pp.124-5), the objectives of the decentralisation are to:

1. lessen the central government’s burden and its interventions over local problems;
2. improve people’s understanding and their support for social and economic development;
3. plan better programs of social and economic improvement at the local level;
4. train people to manage their own affairs; and
5. strengthen the national unity.

In the field of education, the decentralisation policy was not only a national issue, but also a
global movement. Bjork (2003) explained that in recent years international funding organisations
have provided a large amount of money for the promotion of the decentralisation of education
systems around the globe. Proponents of this approach argued that decentralisation would result
in one or more of these following outcomes: (a) redistribution of power, (b) increased efficiency,
or (c) greater sensitivity to local culture (Bjork, 2003). These three outcomes corresponded to the
problems that Indonesia had faced owing to the overlapping and centralised management, as
indicated previously.

Although the decentralisation of education had previously been one of the growing concerns of
the New Order regime marked, for instance, by The Government Act No.28/1990 (Jalal &
Supriadi, 2001; Tilaar, 1999), there was no serious change made in the early 1990s in that regard.
Criticisms on the implementation of such an Act and related decisions included both the lack of
political will to implement such decentralisation, and the limited scope of decentralised matters,
which covered only school physical development and maintenance (Jalal & Supriadi, 2001). This
did not touch the more fundamental aspects of education, such as curriculum and instruction, and
managerial issues, such as budget and recruitment of teachers and other staff.

However, the current decentralisation policy in education was marked significantly by the
introduction of School-Based Management (SBM) to primary and secondary schools in 1999
(Jalal & Supriadi, 2001; Umaedi, 2001). This introduction has been one way of implementing the
policy of educational autonomy embedded in Act No. 22/1999. This also corresponds to the global
perspective that SBM is now becoming a common phenomenon, believed to be a promising
means for whole school improvement. Advocates of this approach have argued that within SBM
schools, where democratic structure and culture were promoted, improvements in all aspects of
school became more feasible and possible (Caldwell & Spinks, 1998; Cheng, 1996; Everard &
Morris, 1996; Gamage, Sipple, & Partridge, 1996; Mohrman, Wohlstetter, & Associates, 1994;
Wohlstetter, Van Kirk, Robertson, & Mohrman, 1997).

Umaedi, the former Director of Secondary Education of the Ministry of National Education
(MNE), asserted that SBM in Indonesia had been implemented to improve school quality
(Umaedi, 2001). Therefore, some functions were being decentralised with which individual
schools were supposed to deal in the sense that they were given a greater proportion of the
responsibility and power of doing so. The developed functions include learning and teaching
processes, school program planning and evaluation, curriculum development, staff management
and recruitment, resources and facilities maintenance, finance management, student services,

Translating the above plan, Jiyono et al. (2001, pp.161-3) proposed a model for Indonesian SBM,
which had five basic components – management, teaching and learning processes, human
resources, resources and administration, and school council.

1. Management focuses on: (a) providing school organisational management and leadership,
(b) developing school planning and policies, (c) managing school operations, (d) ensuring
an established effective communication between school and the community, (e)
encouraging the community participation, and (f) maintaining the school accountability.
2. Teaching and learning process functions to (a) improve the students’ learning, (b) develop suitable learning programs to meet students’ needs, (c) offer effective instructions, and (d) provide students with personality development programs.

3. Human resources function to (a) distribute and place staff with the ability to fulfil students’ needs, (b) select staff with knowledge of SBM, (c) promote continuous professional development, (d) ensure the prosperity of staff and students, and (e) promote discussions of school processes.

4. Resources and administration function to (a) identify and allocate the resources available in accordance with the needs, (b) manage school funds, (c) provide supporting administration, and (d) provide for the building maintenance.

5. The school committee, comprising the active participation of community leaders, professionals, principals, teacher representatives, the district education authority representatives, and parent representatives, is responsible to elect the principal, collect money, control school finance sourcing from the community, block grant, central government’s funds (except salary), and be involved in curriculum development.

In order for each above component to function properly, Jiyono et al. (2001) set up two pre-requisites. (1) Funds should be allocated and directly given to individual schools, contrasting with the long tradition in which funds were given to schools through long bureaucratic lines. (2) SBM-skilled staff should be available in the first instance in order to support and ensure effective implementation. Once these two pre-requisites were met, according to Jiyono et al. (2001), the implementation of SBM in Indonesia was on track. Unfortunately, until now, the investigator has not found from the accessible literature, so far, any research-based evidence of how SBM has been implemented.

Some Indonesian school principals, who were participating in a workshop of SBM conducted by the Managing Basic Education (MBE)\(^3\), have defined the characteristics essential to Indonesian SBM. While these characteristics were indeed not drawn from the factual phenomena of the Indonesian SBM through a scientific inquiry, they importantly revealed the principals’ understandings and expectations of SBM. The characteristics were as follows:

1. The vision and mission of the school are formulated by the principal, teachers, representative of students, school alumni and other stakeholders.

2. There is a school development plan based on this vision and mission.

3. A school budget plan, in line with the school development plan, is developed transparently by the principal, teachers, and school committee.

4. School autonomy is realised, as shown by the school becoming more self-supporting and focused on meeting local needs.

5. There is participatory and democratic decision-making.

6. The school is open to criticism, input, and suggestions from anyone to improve the program.

7. Everyone at school is committed to carrying out the agreed vision and mission.

8. All the potential of school stakeholders is utilised to achieve the goal.

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\(^3\) Managing Basic Education (MBE) is a project of improving basic education in Indonesia within the framework of SBM. This project is funded by USAID, and conducted in several districts in Java. Further information of MBE can be accessed on [http://www.mbeproject.net/](http://www.mbeproject.net/).
9. There is a working atmosphere conducive to improving school performance.

10. There is an ability to create a sense of pride among staff and the local community.

11. There is transparency and public accountability in implementing all activities (Managing Basic Education (MBE) Project).

These characteristics indicate implicitly some fundamental issues of SBM including: (a) school governance structure, (b) school autonomy, (c) shared decision-making, (d) school curriculum, (e) school management and leadership, and (f) staff professional development. However, the characteristics are not systematically conceptualised. Rubiannoor (2003), in his study of the principal’s roles in implementing the SBM in a school in South Kalimantan, concluded that the principal was found to have understood his new role in the SBM implementation: (a) developing the school vision and mission, (b) setting strategies for quality improvement, and (c) implementing participative management. However, since the school was only at the stage of preparing for the SBM implementation, proper assessment of the implementation phase could not be done. He also found that human resources such as staff and teacher readiness cognitively, mentally, and culturally were among the problems that might hinder the success of the implementation (Rubiannor, 2003, pp.146-9).

SCHOOL CURRICULUM REFORM

According to Mohrman et al. (1994) and Wohlstetter, Van Kirk, Robertson and Mohrman (1997), SBM should be seen as part of a more systemic set of changes, not as an isolated innovation, since it would not automatically improve the schools’ and students’ performance. A systemic set of changes in the SBM schools should encompass the introduction of new approaches to teaching and learning. In other words, structural reform through SBM implementation should happen side-by-side with, and connected strongly to, curriculum and instruction reform (Wohlstetter et al., 1997).

In line with the above argument, and following SBM implementation, the Indonesian Education Authority introduced a new curriculum: Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi (KBK: Competency-Based Curriculum) in 2003. This curriculum began to be implemented in 2004. Therefore, the official name for this curriculum was Kurikulum 2004 (the 2004 curriculum). According to MNE, this new curriculum put an emphasis on standardised competences that the students were to achieve and on a greater authority for the school stakeholders to participate in the curriculum development. Kwartolo (2002) explained that the aim of the 2004 Curriculum implementation was to produce the outcome of students with strong personality, and good competences and skills, in order that they would be able to develop successfully further such qualities either in the workforce or in higher education, and interact with the social, cultural, and natural environments.

A comparison between the 2004 Curriculum and the previous one, provided by the MNE (2003c), is summarised in Table 1. This comparison indicates, as Joni (2000), Sindhunata (2000), and Jalal and Supriadi (2001) suggest, in that the previous curriculum was material-oriented, overloaded with content, and centralist in its development.

The MNE (2003b, pp.35-7) also provided clear guidelines for curriculum development and management at every level—central and local authority, as well as school. The central authority plays the role of providing professional services for the regional or local curriculum developers, and seminars and workshops for quality curriculum improvement. The provincial authority functions to serve, support, monitor, and control syllabus implementation in the districts. Meanwhile, the district authority serves and supports the development, evaluation, and refinement of syllabuses. It also creates guidelines for schools in developing syllabuses, forms a team of the district syllabus developers, helps and analyses the school syllabus, and supervises and monitors
syllabus development and implementation. Schools are expected to develop their own syllabus, or use other schools’ syllabus, and to coordinate actively with the District to develop the syllabus.

Table 1. A Comparison of the 1994 and 2004 Curricula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similarities</th>
<th>1994 Curriculum</th>
<th>2004 Curriculum</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 9 year compulsory learning</td>
<td>• 9 year compulsory learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>• emphasis on abilities of reading, writing, and arithmetical functions</td>
<td>• emphasis on abilities of reading, writing, and arithmetical functions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• essential concepts and materials in each subject to achieve competences</td>
<td>• essential concepts and materials in each subject to achieve competences</td>
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<tr>
<td>• local content curriculum</td>
<td>• local content curriculum</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 45 minutes allocated for each learning hour in every level of school</td>
<td>• 45 minutes allocated for each learning hour in every level of school</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• centralist</td>
<td>• decentralist</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• contains no standardised competences</td>
<td>• contains standardised competences</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• no activities to familiarise students to content and concepts</td>
<td>• integrated and programmed activities to make students familiar with content and concepts</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• no ICT</td>
<td>• introduction of ICT</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• multiple choice assessment</td>
<td>• classroom-based assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• thematic approach for grades 1 &amp; 2 students of elementary school (recommended only)</td>
<td>• thematic approach for grades 1 &amp; 2 students of elementary school (compulsory)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• no continuity of competences</td>
<td>• continuity of competences stratification from grades 1 to 12 (over school levels)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• no curriculum diversification</td>
<td>• curriculum diversification: special and international curricula</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• syllabus developed by the local education authority or school depending on needs</td>
<td>• giving opportunities to teachers, schools, and local authority for program elaboration and adaptation or analysis of materials</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in Blank (1982, pp.3-6), competency-based principles are not only related to the curriculum in the sense of formulating learning objectives and selecting content that is competency-oriented, but it is also related to the quality of instruction. It is therefore important to develop the teaching and learning processes that provide students with high quality, carefully designed, student-centred activities, and with media and materials designed to help them master each task or ability. For this, the MNE proposed what the teaching and learning process should be like in the context of the implementation of the 2004 Curriculum.

The MNE (2003a, p.7) defines learning as an active action by students to build meaning and understanding, while teaching is the responsibility of teachers to create situations supportive to students’ creativity, motivation, and responsibility for life-long education. The MNE (2003a, pp.7-11) also provided a list of effective teaching and learning processes that includes the following principles:

1. **Reversed meaning of learning**: This refers to a concept of information building and understanding by students, not knowledge transfer from teacher to student.

2. **Student-centredness**: Each student is different, and therefore the teaching and learning process must cater to the individual needs of every student.

3. **Learning by experiencing**: The process provides students with rich real life experiences related to the knowledge they are acquiring.

4. **Developing social, cognitive, and emotional skills**: this puts an emphasis on interaction and communication during the learning process.
5. Developing curiosity, creative imagination, and the quality of believing in God: The process facilitates students’ increasing their curiosity and imagination. The process also creates awareness of the Divine dimension.

6. Life-long learning: The process supplies students with learning skills covering self-confidence, curiosity, the ability to understand others, and to communicate and work together with them.

7. Integrated independence and interdependence: This means that the process develops the spirit of competition within togetherness.

Besides such a list of the components, the MNE provides guidelines for effective teaching and management of learning. Such guidelines are important for a school’s teachers in the process of the implementation of the new curriculum (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2003a). This is because a comprehensive understanding of such a competency-based approach in teaching, and, hence, more responsibilities and creativities of teachers, are needed.

**OBSTACLES OF IMPLEMENTATION**

The literature also suggests some obstacles that might hinder the successful implementation of SBM and the 2004 Curriculum in relation to the Indonesian educational context. One of the obstacles lies in the fact that teachers have culturally been accustomed to a centralised system. Bjork’s (2003) study indicated an insufficient response from teachers to the decentralisation program in curriculum development. Although the study was conducted in the context of the Local Curriculum Content (LCC) program in 1998, it is pertinent to mention it here as some cultural situations may have remained similar between the time of his study and the present.

According to Bjork (2003), three reasons were identified justifying the insufficient teacher response. First, the civil service culture had prevented teachers from becoming free individuals who were able to be active, creative, and innovative. The civil service culture was replete with values of loyalty, obedience, responsibility, cooperation, and the like. As Emmerson (1978) observed, this culture of transmitters of directives from their superiors rather than representatives of local communities resulted from the authoritarian practices of the New Order regime for more than three decades. Bjork (2003, p.205) clearly stated that Indonesian teachers tended to value the security of their job more than opportunities to influence school policy or to make a difference in the lives of their students.

Second, there was a lack of rewards and incentives for teachers with new or increased responsibilities. Teachers, in Bjork’s (2003) observation, did not devote more of their time to something, which did not provide them with more financial gains. Indeed, it was the budget constraints that made the Government unable to provide financial rewards to teachers who agree to take on additional responsibilities. This budget constraint was acknowledged by some experts such as Sutjipto et al. (2001) who had been involved in formulating the Indonesian education reform policies. According to a report of Asia Times Online, the Indonesian education budget was the lowest in Asia, which only amounted to seven percent of the State Budget in 2000, while the neighbouring countries such as Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand allocate from 25 to 35 percent of their annual budget for education (Asia Times, 2000). The recommendation of the constitution for allocating 20 percent of the annual budget for education had not been fulfilled.

Third, centre-local relations were still at a more centralised point on the continuum. Although the central education authority’s officials expressed their commitment to empowering local authority people, they failed to provide sufficient means and assistance to support their commitment (Bjork, 2003; Rubiannor, 2003). Bjork (2003, p.208) described, “in theory, they [central people] want to increase local autonomy; in practice, they often undermine that very objective”. Weston, the chief party of the MBE project, stated, “in many cases their [the government officials] actions
contradict their words (they talk decentralisation but practice a centralised approach). There is no clear list of functions delegated to school level, and more importantly little funding is allocated to schools” (personal communication by email, 2003).

Bjork’s (2003) three cultural reasons for the failure of the LCC Program outlined the difficulties of implementing the educational reform agenda in Indonesia. The centralised long-standing socio-political situation resulting in a loyalty and obedience culture have influenced negatively the decentralisation processes. Rubiannoor (2003, p.147) noted that cultures of menunggu perintah dan meminta petunjuk or ‘waiting for commands and asking for directives’ from higher authority were hard to change. The current socio-political situations have probably changed since the reform agenda was launched and the autonomy policy initially implemented, but it will take time to change the cultural behaviours of teachers and other people working in education.

Finally, the economic condition of parents, as a result of the long economical crisis that Indonesia has been facing, can become another obstacle to more intensive parental involvement in the school processes. Some parents may not be able to become involved in, for instance, school meetings as a consequence of the SBM implementation, since they have to devote their time to earn their basic living. This situation is even worse for many parents who have to end their children’s schooling because of their financial difficulties (Hartono & Ehrmann, 2001). While both the implementation of reform require much more funding to be allocated, the parents’ economical disadvantages prevent them from providing contributions to it. In poor districts, according to Filmer et al. (1999), this is much more problematic for the schools as the district government may not be able to provide the necessary funding.

CONCLUSIONS

The Indonesian education system has been undergoing a radical change. This change, triggered by recent socio-political situations, encompasses at least three major aspects of education. First, there has been a redefinition of the national education objectives, which put an additional emphasis on the importance of achieving citizens for living in a democracy. Second, the school management approach has changed from centralist to decentralist management. This shift is to be crystallised into the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM). Third, there has been a shift of paradigm in terms of school curriculum by introducing the 2004 Curriculum, which is conceptualised in terms of: (a) setting nationally standardised competences for students to attain, (b) making a clear link between school graduates and job demands, and (c) accommodating local needs by involving local school stakeholders in the development of their school.

Obstacles that may hinder the success of the implementation of reform need to be dealt appropriately, or otherwise the reform remains good only on paper. Several recommendations can be advanced. First, in the framework of community involvement in education, socialisation of every policy and initiative taken need to be fully carried out. People cannot be left behind as if they are not one of the stakeholders of education and the schools. This needs to be followed by the empowerment programs of key stakeholders, parents in particular. Second, leadership at every level of education needs to be strongly developed as the literature (Fullan, 1999; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999; MacBeath, 1998) suggests what is necessary at a time of rapid change is effective leadership that guides and provides directions. Third, the civil servant culture of teachers needs to be changed into a professional culture. Teachers need to see their work as a profession with certain responsibilities and sufficient rewards. The Government’s plan to issue Teacher Professionalism Act in 2005 (Rancangan Undang-Undang Guru) is an appropriate step to take and is expected to create eventually the professional culture of teachers (Lie, 2005). Fourth, professional growth needs to be an integral part of the reform and fostered in meaningful and intentional ways. Fifth, 20 percent or more of the state budget needs to be allocated for education as recommended by the constitution in order to provide sufficient funding for the education process. An increase in the budget is needed as well to lessen the severe level of
corruption in education, which is happening at every level of bureaucracy, including the schools (Irawan, Eriyanto, Djani, & Sunaryanto, 2004). Finally, much research on every aspect of education in Indonesia needs to be carried out as part of the whole reform agenda to assess and evaluate the implementation of the reform. Case studies need to be accepted as the most widely employed approach as they are able to address the individual problems of each aspect studied.

REFERENCES


