

# Equality and Human Security in Education: A Public Policy Perspective

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## ABSTRACT

Human security is a multidimensional concept based on the respect for all human rights and democratic principles, freedom from all the forms of poverty, violence, conflict, and discrimination to achieve a civilized society through a sustainable development. In education context, equality is an increasingly strategic issue in enhancing human security because without education policy and governance that are affirmative to the powerless society, disparity, discrimination, and structural social exclusion may occur and constrain the achievement of goals in formation of a sustainable civilized society. This paper aims at analyzing the policy on equality in education to enhance human security and the obstacles in implementing such policy in diverse societies of a developing democratic country such as Indonesia. The findings of the analysis showed that to date approximately 20 percent or more of the National Budget has actually been allocated to education sector since 2007 with priorities to build educational infrastructures and teaching human resources throughout Indonesia. However, equality has been difficult to implement through education policy in Indonesia due to some factors. First, disparity in education access in Java Island and outside. Second, disparity in school infrastructures and facilities between urban and rural areas. Third, discrimination in welfare between certified and honorary teachers. Fourth, social exclusion in occupational domain where the highly educated people work with high revenue and exclusive life style, being different from the lower educated ones. A comprehensive public policy and governance framework for equality in education is necessary by institutionalizing a universal, free, public, inclusive education system in order that human security can be sustainably achieved in a civilized society of the developing democratic country of Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Democracy; Education; Equality; Human security; Public policy

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Human security is a multidimensional concept based on the respect for all human rights, democratic principles, and liberation from all the forms of poverty, violence, conflict and discrimination in order to achieve a civilized diverse society through sustainable development (UNESCO, 2008). In education sector, equality is increasingly a strategic issue in improving human security. Without education policies and governance that are affirmative to the poor, disparity, inequality, discrimination, and social exclusion can easily occur and hinder the achievement of goals in formation of a democratic, civilized and sustainable society.

Education is an effort to improve human intelligence in order to be able to improve human life towards the highest quality of human resources (Harahap et al., 2020). As a developing country, Indonesia faces many issues related to human security, especially inequality in education in the Western and Eastern territories of Indonesia (Azzizah, 2015); inequality in education due to income or economic inequality (Nurjanah, 2016); unequal access to education due to limited school infrastructure and facilities (Sukasni & Efendy, 2017); inequality in teachers' welfare due to the discriminatory policies for certificated and honorary teachers (Sulisworo et al., 2017); and inequality in school graduates and structural social exclusion in the workplace (Widyanti, 2018). All of these issues show inequality in education, which has the potential to threaten human security. This paper aims to analyze policies on education equality, institutionalization of equality-oriented education governance in terms of enhancing human security as well as constraints in the implementation of policy on equality in education in diverse societies of the developing country such as Indonesia.

The human-centered security approach develops from the intersection of trends in security, development, and human rights, so that this approach is ideally integrated. Human security can be an effective tool for conducting policy analysis, including in education sector. This study adopts a human security approach as a policy framework to integrate human security, human rights, and human welfare in the education policy agenda. In this context, the issue closely related to human security in the education sector is inequality in education, particularly for citizens in various regions.

In the perspective of UNESCO (2008), education is a basic human right, so that every citizen has the right to receive appropriate education and training at every level of the different formal and non-formal education systems, especially for vulnerable populations and those in difficult circumstances such as women, children, the elderly, the disabled, minorities and indigenous peoples, displaced persons and those living in extreme poverty. Education is one of the principle means of raising awareness about human rights and preventing threats on human security. Education is a means of community empowerment through universal basic education programmes to provide citizens with the knowledge and skills for human security. The education development policy and governance framework is the most important way to disseminate the concept of human security, especially through equality in education in various regions.

In dealing with various educational problems arising in the public sphere, central and local governments are necessary to issue public policies in education. Public policy refers to the attitude of public authorities to problems in the public sphere as an effort to solve, reduce and prevent the problems, so that they do not cause some unexpected great impacts (Syafiie, 2006). Policies are actions done by an actor or a number of actors with specific purpose to solve problems, especially by government agencies and officials. The government's attitude to solve, reduce, and prevent the problems in the public sphere do not rise immediately but through a gradual process until the public policies are formed. Public policies issued by a government need to be implemented with equality-oriented governance. Without the equality-oriented policy and governance in the education sector, the problems will develop and have structural impacts that threaten human security.

## **2. METHODS**

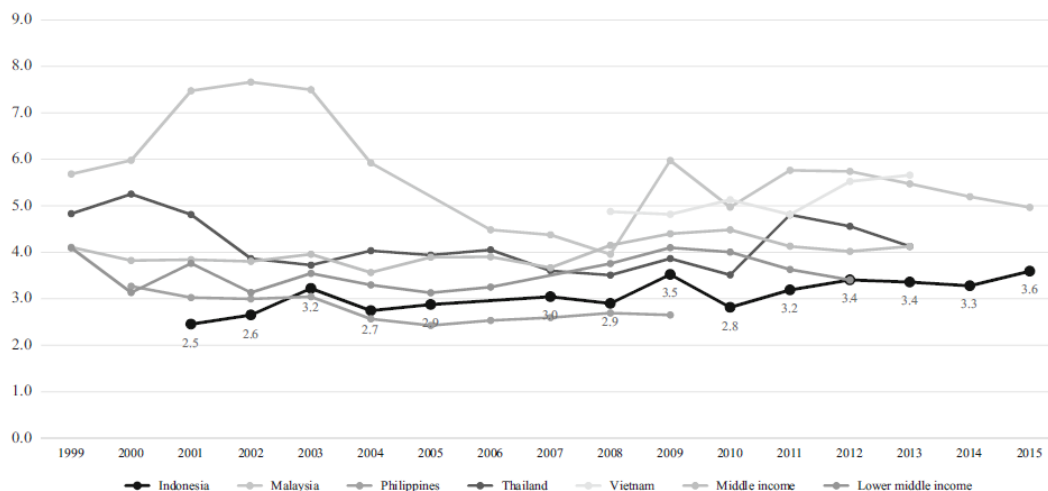
This study was conducted using a descriptive qualitative method with the focus on equality and human security in the education sector in Indonesia. It was conducted from August to October 2020. Data in the study were secondary data collected by documentation and literature study. The data collected related to the concepts of equality and human security in the education sector. In addition, data on equality-oriented education governance and its manifestation in the governance of national education were collected. Finally, constraints in the implementation of equality in education were collected, such as disparity in education development in various regions, inequality in education infrastructure and facilities in rural and urban areas, discrimination in welfare between certified and honorary teachers and income inequality due to inequal education and social exclusion in the workplace. The data were examined using a qualitative analysis technique.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **National Education Policy and Budget**

Education sector is one of the sectors that contributes to the development of human capital. In the developing countries such as Indonesia, the governments from central to local levels undertakes some efforts to develop formal education at various levels from primary, secondary to higher education in accordance with the objectives of national education system as stipulated in Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System. Since the reform era in 1999 to date (2020) the Indonesian government has successfully increased the national education budget to improve the quality of human resources.

At the beginning of the reform era, the national government implemented the School Operational Assistance (BOS) program to overcome negative impacts of the elimination of fuel oil subsidy in 2005 (Kawamura in Tsunekawa and Todo, 2019). The increase in the fuel oil price was anticipated, thereby not reducing the purchasing power of the poor households, which could potentially force them to reduce their education budget and lead to a large number of children dropping out of school or not continuing to higher education. Through the program, the central government provides budgets for primary and secondary schools to cut the cost of education for students from the poor households while supporting school-based management reforms.



**Figure 1.** Total education expenditure budget (% of GDP)

Source: Kawamura in Tsunekawa and Todo (2019)

In 2008, the national government fulfilled its constitutional obligation after the Constitutional Court ruled that the Amended 1945 Constitution provided 20 percent of the National Budget to be allocated to education sector spending at the national, provincial and local levels. The education budget has increased by 35 percent from 154.2 trillion in 2008 to 208.3 trillion in 2009, and accumulatively it is getting bigger to date (2020) (Kompas.com, 16/08/2008). The education budget has a larger share in the National Budget compared to other social budgets. This amount includes allocations in the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Religion, the General Allocation Fund for education in the Local Budget, the Special Allocation Fund for education, the Revenue Sharing Fund for education, and the Special Autonomy Fund for education. This increase in budget allocations was to rehabilitate school buildings and build tens of thousands of classrooms and thousands of new schools. This budget was also allocated to increase the teachers' welfare and competence by increasing their income. In 2004, the income of the lowest class teachers was IDR842,600/month, while in 2008 it reached IDR1,854 million, increasing twofold.

However, the massive investment in increasing the budget allocation to be 20 percent or more of the National Budget in the national education sector have small impacts and has not automatically been followed by an increase in quality of education throughout Indonesia. The 9-year "Compulsory Education" policy for primary and secondary school children has to date been good enough as indicated by higher expenditure on education and broad access to education with a drastic increase in the enrollment of primary and junior high schools for the poor people. However, access to senior high schools is still not maximal. This means that the amount of budget allocation in education for 20 percent of the National Budget has not ensured the improvement of student academic performance in Indonesian schools in accordance with the expected target. This was partly due to the pattern of spending in the education sector where a large share of the education budget has been allocated to pay teachers' salaries and allowances for certified teachers. The increase in expenditure budget for teachers' salaries and allowances has also increased drastically in line with the rapid increase in the total number of teachers (Sukasmi & Efendy, 2017). Teacher certification could indeed improve teacher livelihoods but it has not had impact on improving student academic performance equally in various urban or rural areas, both in Java and outside Java. However, this program has not run optimally, causing educational inequality, which in turn threatens human security, especially in marginalized societies.

### Constraints in the Implementation of Equality in Education

The implementation of equality-oriented policies and governance in the education sector at the practical level often faces obstacles. Not all policies can be implemented as originally designed because the policy interventions are poorly managed or threatened by political interference. The implementation of policies in the education sector is also sometimes unsuccessful because field workers are not available or the required facilities are not available adequately, field implementing staff do not carry out appropriate interventions due to a lack of motivation or even expertise, participants in policy are not available in sufficient number or identified improperly or not willing to cooperate (Khan & Khandaker, 2016). Thus, it can be concluded that the implementation of education policies can be ineffective due to a lack of adequate resources, low incentives, and limited competent staff.

In the education sector, the implementation of education policies is more directed at governance to solve public problems in order to increase equality in achieving human security. The indications include the increased sense of security in diverse society and citizens can be free from any forms of inequality, disparity, discrimination, and education-based social exclusion. In this case, the government plays a major role in protecting the human security by minimizing the threats of inequality in the education sector. However, it must be acknowledged that the implementation of policies and governance in the education sector oriented to equality in Indonesia so far has not been going well and has not been able to create a sense of security and the society's freedom from inequality in education. The lack of effectiveness in implementing such education policies and governance was influenced by the lack of acceleration in the development of the education sector in various regions, the inequalities in school infrastructures and facilities in various regions, low capacity of the State and discrimination in welfare related to teachers' salaries and allowances, and education-based inequality of jobs, income, and social exclusion in the workplace. The findings of this study indicate that it is still so difficult to achieve equality through education policies and governance in Indonesia, which has potential to threaten human security and reduce the welfare of citizens in a diverse society.

### **Inequality in Access to Education in Various Regions**

Inequalities in access to education are found in various regions throughout Indonesia. Disparities are found related to the insufficient availability of teachers, school infrastructure and facilities between the Java Island and outside. In many underdeveloped rural areas, access to education is limited in various regions, the quality of education is low, and this cannot be separated from the low quality of infrastructure and facilities of the schools. Many buildings were damaged, do not support instructional media, lack of library collections, inadequate information technology, and low quality of teachers (Nurjanah, 2016). This shows that the real structural problem Indonesia faced is unequal access to education between the Java Island and outside. Many school-age children cannot get sufficient education with a high dropout rate. This inequality in access to education is still found in various regions of Indonesia.

### **Disparity in Education between Urban and Rural Areas**

The disparity in school infrastructure and facilities causes the low quality of human resources in rural areas. Actually, various efforts have been done by the government in order to support educational development such as construction of primary school in rural areas, compulsory education program, School Operational Assistance, graduation requirements, and the accreditation of schools to improve the qualification of human resources (Nurjanah, 2016). However, such efforts have not shown satisfactory results yet. Inequality still occurs as indicated by the unequal quality of education graduates between urban and rural areas. The limited access to education in rural areas contributes to the increase of urbanization when families in underdeveloped areas move to urban areas to obtain better education. The higher the inequality of education graduates between urban and rural areas, the higher the perceived threat to human security in Indonesia's education sector, reducing the welfare of citizens in diverse society.

### **Discrimination in Welfare related to Salaries and Allowances**

Discrimination in welfare occurs between certified and honorary teachers as an unsolvable structural problem. Teacher competence in Indonesia needs to be improved. For this reason, in improving the quality of teaching in Indonesian schools, the national teacher certification programme was started in 2007. This programme aims at improving teacher qualifications for 5-7 years to achieve the minimum standard for all school teachers. However, the improvement of quality among many teachers in a short period of time has raised problems regarding the quality of training for the teachers. Heyward and Sopantini (2017) explained that teacher certification was directly related to increasing salaries, so that the salaries for the certified teachers are discriminatory compared to the honorary ones. With the certification, teachers' salaries and allowances increased twofolds.

The unexpected problem is that the efforts of increasing the efficiency of teacher recruitment through certification have actually led to the neglect of many small schools in the underdeveloped areas due to the limited number of certified teachers. The implication is that the teacher-and-student ratio is low, leading to an increase in the need for honorary teachers who are paid far below the certification salaries and allowances. The issue of discrimination in welfare between certified and honorary teachers was particularly found, especially between the excessive number of teachers in urban areas and the lack of teachers in rural areas. This is related to low quality and access as well as the unequal distribution of teachers in various areas between urban and rural areas (Sukasni and Efendy, 2017).

### **Inequal Education and Social Exclusion in the Workplace**

Education can have a positive effect on economic growth as a result of an increase in skilled labor, but it also have adverse effects such as income inequality (Martins & Pereira, 2004). This means that income inequality is one of the most important factors that creates a wider income gap between poor and rich groups (Wicaksono et al., 2017). In Indonesia, income inequality occurs due to unequal employment opportunities, unequal employment and high concentration of wealth (World Bank, 2016). This is deeply rooted in unequal access to education. Results of Ariutama and Syahrul (2014)'s research emphasized that income inequality caused inequality in education due to the low opportunities for people to access education. This in turn leads to future inequality as less educated people tend to be involved in low-wage jobs and are usually in the informal sector. In that context, differences in wealth accumulation are very important in determining the access to education service, in turn affecting the potential future income of family members.

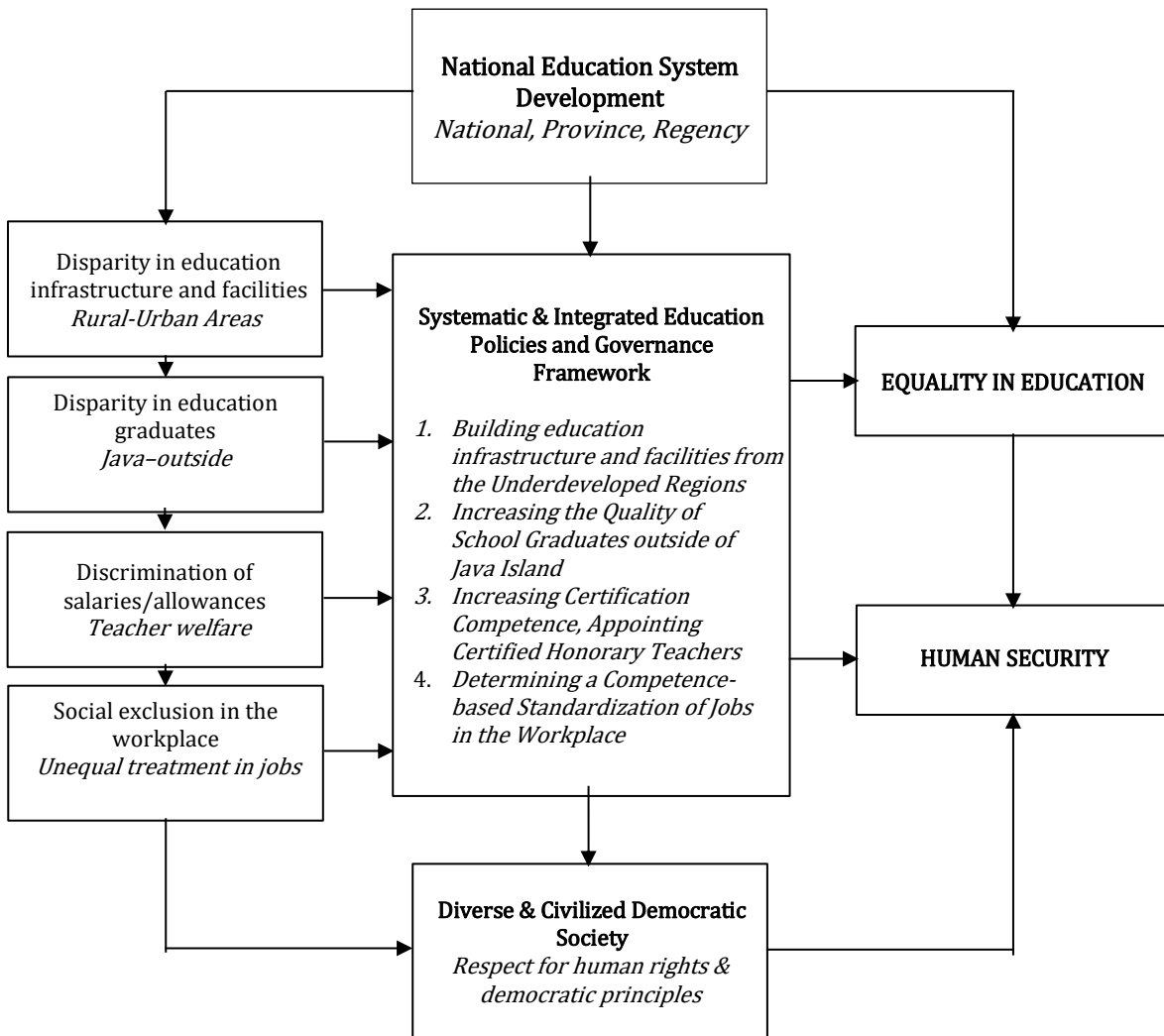
Income inequality could initially affect education access, and education levels determine income, which differentiates the poor from the rich in access to education (Sylwester, 2000). In practice, differences in education levels affect the acceptance of school graduates in the workplace. This education-based inequality underlies social exclusion in the workplace so far where highly educated people work and have high income with an exclusive lifestyle and different from people with low education. This large income inequality causes the budget allocation for education to be smaller, so that the quality of education is less good (Harahap et al., 2020). In addition, the benefits of education have not been felt equally due to the low quality of graduates and the lack of relevance of education in accordance with the needs of society due to inequality in education between urban and rural areas as well as between Java and outside Java (Sukasni and Efendy, 2017). Thus, income inequality in various societies could be generally the result of inequality in education, educational attainment, work experience and work skills, which leads to social exclusion and threatens human security in the workplace.

### **An Integrated Education Policy and Governance Framework**

The national education system in Indonesia should ensure the equality in education to improve the quality of Indonesian society in facing the globalization of this archipelagic country. The government should ideally focus on developing human capital as indicated by increasing educational outcomes (Barro, 2013). The increase in human capital has enabled the adoption of modern technology from developed countries. In that context, a systematic and integrated public policy and governance framework is necessary, so that human security can be achieved in a sustainable manner in a diverse and civilized society that respects human rights and democratic principles in the developing democratic country such as Indonesia. Education policies and governance are implemented in addressing the structural problems of education in Indonesia related to underdeveloped regional education infrastructures and facilities, the quality of education graduates between Java and outside Java, welfare between certified and honorary teachers, as well as income disparity and social exclusion in the workplace.

In the education sector, the public policies issued by the government are macro in nature. In the developing democratic country, the public policies issued in the education sector are oriented towards the increase of equality in improving human security in diverse local societies of the country. This equality in education can be reflected in the equality of education development in various parts of the archipelago, equality of educational infrastructure and facilities in urban and rural areas, equality in welfare for teachers, and equality in educational graduates in the workplace. With these equalities, it is expected that a diverse and civilized society can be established with an indication of respect for human rights and democratic principles.

In Indonesia, public policy attention is required in the efforts to solve the public problems in an integrated manner such as the issues of underdevelopment in education, disparity in educational infrastructure and facilities, discrimination in welfare of honorary teachers, and unequal education and social exclusion in the workplace. In that context, the more equitable the development of the education sector between urban and rural areas throughout Indonesia, the less the disparity in education in the regions, the more equitable access to educational infrastructure and facilities, the less the discrimination among certified and honorary teachers, and the less the unequal education-based social exclusion in the workplace, then the less these inequalities to threaten human security in the education sector.



**Figure 2.** An Integrated Education Policies and Governance Framework towards Equality and Human Security in the Education Sector

**Education Infrastructure and Facilities from Underdeveloped Regions**

The government needs to give a priority to the development of education infrastructure and facilities from underdeveloped areas. In this case, it needs to determine the stages to accelerate the development of education infrastructure and facilities from the most underdeveloped regions towards the less underdeveloped areas. With the logic of accelerating the development of education infrastructure and facilities, the excessive development of education infrastructure and facilities in urban areas can be avoided well, the distribution of education can be equal, and human security in education can be increased in the underdeveloped areas.

**Increasing the Quality of School Graduates outside the Java Island**

The government needs to give priority to the efforts to increase the quality of school graduates outside the Java Island to the Javanese standard. The quality improvement can be carried out through the efforts to accelerate the development of education at primary and secondary school level so that it is more standardized in accordance with other regions in the Java Island. In addition, the government needs to facilitate the establishment of large university branches in various regions outside the Java Island to increase the opportunities for high school graduates to continue their education to a higher level. Finally, it needs to facilitate partnership between the public and the private sectors in expanding the non-formal education programs to improve the quality of education graduates outside the Java Island, so that they are able to compete in the workplace in accordance with international standards.

### **Competency Certification and Certified Honorary Teachers**

The government needs to give the priority to the efforts of increasing the certification more based on competence but not just degrees. In addition, the focus is not on drastically increasing the certified teachers' salaries and allowances, but on the equitable distribution of teachers' income at a national level in the form of educational competency incentives. On the other hand, the competency of existing honorary teachers should be enhanced, they are appointed to be certified teachers, or their status were raised to be certified honorary teachers. If the government's budget capacity was not sufficient to provide the equal distribution of salaries and allowances to certified teachers, the moratorium policy on assigning the certified teachers and the procurement of non-certified honorary teachers will be enforced. If the teacher-and-student ratio in rural areas is still inadequate, the distribution of certified teachers and certified honorary teachers needs to be increased, so that there is equal distribution of teaching staff between urban and rural areas with the support of competency incentive policies.

### **Competency-Based Work Standards**

The government needs to set the work standards in the workplace more based on competency, but not just based on degrees and the Grade Point Average (GPA). For example, if a graduate from a private university with A accreditation has GPA of 3.8, this does not mean that he/she is more competent than a graduate from a well-known university with a GPA of 3.5. Thus, competence needs to be the main standard for works in the workplace, especially in government circles so that competition is fairer and there is the equal distribution of works based on competence.

In the education policies and governance framework oriented to equality, the government should ideally standardize competency-based work proportionally at the national and regional levels in accordance with the proportion between the areas and population density and the growth rates of various sectors. With this framework, equality can be realized to improve the human security in national, provincial, and local education. This standardization needs to be supported by an acceleration of the development of education infrastructure and facilities, thus improving the quality of school graduates from the underdeveloped areas outside the Java Island, reducing discrimination in welfare between certified and honorary teachers, and increasing the standardization of works more based on competency, but not degrees and GPA. It is expected that the constraints in the implementation of equality for achieving human security in education can be overcome properly.

### **Public and Quality Education System for All**

Ideally, the structural problems in education development in Indonesia are solved in a comprehensive, systematic, and integrated manner. The government is not only focused on increasing the education budget allocation but also improving the quality of human resources and the quality of education, not only in the Java Island, but also equally in various regions throughout Indonesia. The main focus of improving the governance of education sector should ideally be increased by the implementation of a competency-based graduate quality-oriented curriculum, and this is implemented evenly in various urban and rural areas, both in the Java Island and outside. Both certified teachers and certified honorary teachers need to be involved more intensively and given the flexibility to implement the school-based curricula with an orientation towards improving basic competencies.

With the principles of good education governance, all education officials in governments must implement education development programs properly and be away from the tendency of corruption, collusion and nepotism with the principle of equality for human security in the education. The policy of education budget allocation for 20 percent or more of the National Budget can be maintained only if its implementation is truly directed at an even and balanced distribution of the education budget. Thus, the government should ensure that every citizen gets a good education without disparity in education between urban and rural areas, both in the Java Island and outside. It is expected the government can ensure that every marginalized community has equal access to quality education, both in terms of education infrastructure and facilities, teaching staff, and the quality of graduates from any schools throughout Indonesia.

In Indonesia, education development needs to be implemented with the support of good policies and governance framework, ensuring its positive impacts on reducing the inequality as well as enhancing the human security in education.

### ***National education is universal***

In Indonesia, the compulsory national education of 12 years are essential to ensure equality in education. The 9-year compulsory education model in Indonesia needs to be increased to 12 years,

especially in underdeveloped areas in rural areas, especially outside Java, with the support of adequate educational infrastructure and facilities as well as teaching personnel.

#### ***Free education***

The government needs to invest in free education and this investment is essential to develop equality in education. This investment provides every child with an equal opportunity to get an education, not just the children who can afford it. Costs that are still charged for primary and secondary education (junior and senior high school) should ideally be free for the poorest groups of society, especially women.

#### ***Public education***

In Indonesia, the public education system faces the main challenge of low learning outcomes. In this context, the choice is not to turn to the private sector, but more to invest in education with sufficient investment. In order to promote equality in education, the profit-oriented private education model is very dangerous in terms of promoting equality in education for all.

#### ***Investment in teachers with competence***

Teachers who are empowered and trained professionally can ensure a quality education. Teachers do not have to be the certified teachers, but also can be honorary teachers that are empowered so that they become certified honorary teachers with adequate allowances. In Indonesia, if the honorary teachers are still the backbone of national education system in improving the equality of education in the rural areas outside the Java Island, the government should ideally give priority to investment in certified honorary teachers by providing adequate allowances.

#### ***Inclusive education***

In Indonesia, education must meet the unique learning needs of all students and be designed to meet the needs of disadvantaged children, including the disabled children, minorities, marginalized groups, the poorest peoples, and school dropouts. The inclusive education system ensures that educational services are provided equally to all disadvantaged groups.

#### ***Relevant education***

In Indonesia, the curriculum taught in schools ideally ensures the maximum impact of education on poverty reduction programs that benefits all children of the disadvantaged social groups, but not just those of the rich. A curriculum that is based on the relevance of the market need for a suitable workforce can ensure that the education provided will make it easier for school children from disadvantaged groups to become graduates who are easy to find jobs in accordance with market needs.

In this context, a good national education system that can be implemented in Indonesia is a universal, free, public, and inclusive education system with the orientation of investing in large numbers of competent teachers with the ability to implement relevant curricula. This indicates that the central government needs to increase the allocation of National Budget to provide a public, universal and free education for the 12-years compulsory education from elementary to high school. This national education system is designed to provide a more equal education, especially in the underdeveloped rural areas, especially outside the Java Island. Equality in education needs to be focused comprehensively to solve inequality in education, thus ensuring the development of an equal teaching force, accompanied by an even allocation of budget for school infrastructure and facilities to improve standardized learning outcomes, especially for the disadvantaged social groups. This education policy and governance framework requires the government to play more strategic roles in developing the education sector in the poor marginalized areas for a long time. All of these education development policies and governance need to be supported by a free public education system to improve the quality and quantity of education for all disadvantaged people. With such affirmative policy, the allocation of education budget can be actively directed to overcome structural problems undergone by the disadvantaged social groups in increasing the equality in education.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

In Indonesia, the citizens' welfare as a part of human security is still under threat due to the many structural inequalities in the education sector at national, regional and local levels. Equality in education is still difficult to achieve through progressive proportional education policies in Indonesia. This still happens due to several factors. *First*, inequality in access to education between regions in Java Island and outside. *Second*, inequality in education infrastructure and facilities in urban and rural areas. *Third*, discrimination in welfare between certified teachers and honorary teachers. *Fourth*, social exclusion due to educational inequality, in turn causing income inequality in the workplace. Based on these findings, the government should establish a comprehensive and integrated equality-oriented policy and governance framework for education development, enabling human security to be achieved in a diverse and civilized society in a sustainable manner. Such education development policy and governance frameworks are intended to institutionalize a universal, free, public and inclusive education system with the main orientation of investing large numbers of competent teachers with the ability to implement relevant and more equitable



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curricula, especially in underdeveloped rural regions, especially outside the Java Island. Equality for human security in the education sector is focused comprehensively by increasing access to equitable education, providing the budget allocation for acceleration of the development of school infrastructure and facilities to improve learning outcomes, ensuring the development of teachers with competency-based welfare benefits and standards of work, especially for the disadvantaged groups of society. With such education development policies and governance framework for equality and human security, it is expected that with the reduction of disparity, inequality, discrimination, and social exclusivity in the workplace, the citizens' welfare as part of human security in the education sector can be achieved optimally over times in the context of a diverse and civilized society in the developing democratic country.

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