TOWARD MULTICULTURALISM IN DEALING WITH MINORITY GROUP:
A case study of Saminism from a social work perspective)

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Abstrak

Multikulturasime adalah istilah yang jamak di Indonesia karena menggambarkan ragam kelompok budaya di masyarakat. Multikulturasime tidak terlepas dari pembentukan negara bangsa Indoensia tercermin dari Pancasila sebagai filsafat negara dan UUD 1945 sebagai konstitusi bangsa. Walau telah diketahui secara konseptual, implementasi mutikulturaslisme masih menjadi isu krusial. Konflik etnis, isu minoritas dan masyarakat adat masih menjadi sumber perdebatan dalam penguatan negara bangsa Indoensia. Tulisan ini memotret konsep multikulturalisme serta implementasinya dari kasus masyarakat Samin di Kabupaten Pati, Jawa Tengah. Samin adalah bagian dari masyarakat Jawa yang memiliki konsep dan falsafah hidup yang berbeda dengan masyarakat Jawa lainnya. Tulisan ini didasarkan pada studi media dan penelitian lapangan. Tulisan ini menegaskan bahwa dari pengalaman masyarakat Samin kita bisa melihat gambaran masih kuatnya segregasi kelompok yang dominan dan tidak dominan. Situasi ini menunjukkan keadaan diskriminatif yang dialami kelompok minoritas dimana mereka masih kesulitan mengakses kesempatan yang sama dalam hal sosial, ekonomi dan politik. Hal ini menimbulkan pertanyaan tentang bagaimana multikulturalsime dapat mewujudkan keadilan dan kesetaraan di antara sesama warga. Negara sendiri tidak banyak melakukan perubahan. Hasilnya, kebijakan-kebijakan terkait multikulturalisme hanya menguntungkan kelompok dominan. Dalam hal ini, mendorong pemerintah mengadvokasi kepentingan kelompok minoritas menjadi sangat penting.
Kata kunci: multikulturalisme, minoritas dan Saminisme.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has been known as a country with many ethnics and cultural diversities. There are about 3000 ethnics in Indonesia that has their own culture and language (Liliweri, 2005, p. 6). They spread from Sabang to Merauke. Hidayah (1996 in Liliweri, 2005, p. 8) points out that there are 471 ethnics live in East part of Indonesia (KTI), in NTB 5 ethnics, NTT 23 ethnics, Maluku 33 ethnics, Kalimantan 85 ethnics, Sulawesi 141, and Papua 184 ethnics, whereas in the west part, there are only 100 ethnics which are divided into 84 ethnics in Sumatra, 8 ethnics in Java and Bali. Moreover, Liliweri (1994 in Liliweri, 2005, p. 8) highlights that in NTT itself there are 15 main ethnics groups, 75 sub-ethnics, and approximately 500 *marga* (extended family). By looking at the example above, we can imagine how many ethnics groups in Indonesia, and of course, how many cultures that they have and practice in daily lives. Therefore, Indonesia is considered as a multi-ethnic country.

In running the state that consists of multi-ethnic, there is a national motto "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*" (Unity in Diversity). This motto shows that there is a concept of implementing a national multi-ethnic thought by our founding fathers. Aragon (1994) argues that this motto was prominent in the era of Indonesia's two post-Independence leaders, Soekarno and Soeharto for two significant reasons. Firstly, it shows their early insights about the political

importance of promoting a diversified multi-ethnic fusion rather than an American style, melting pot. Secondly, maxim tellingly signifies how Indonesian government policies have been designed to attend to the political challenge of cultural pluralism through the mass manipulation of cultural ideas about a magnificent familiar history and the harmonies present founded on important unthreatening social differences.

However, after the falling down of the New Order Regime on 1998, as has been known, many conflicts between ethnics groups in Indonesia often happened and brought many disadvantages suffered by the ethnics groups involved in conflicts, both material and spiritual. Many people lost their houses, jobs, and family members. Many people died, many children became orphans. Sampit riot which was engaged Dayak and Madurese, Poso riot that caused many people died were the examples.

Accordingly, conflicts that happened were not only between ethnics but also between communities. Javanese are in conflict with other Javanese. Young people from one region attacked those who from other region because of one unimportant cause. People from one village did violence to their neighbour village. As a result, violence becomes a common terms among people.

Those circumstances rang a bell to us to question what wrong with our country. In the past, there were a small number of conflicts happened. It is in contrast with current situation. Some people argue that there were very limited contacts among people from different ethnics so that the conflicts occurred were also limited.

The development of the country done by the state promotes the frequency of contacts among people. For example, transmigration program that moves people from densely populated island, such as Java and Bali to non-densely ones, such as Sumatra and Kalimantan affects in the relationship between people. In one area, there are many ethnic groups which interacts each other. However, since the people who transmigrated have the skill in cultivating the land, they can easily boost their quality of life. On the other hand, people from the original area are left behind in many things.

Finding out the cause of occurring conflicts in Indonesia, we must see the real circumstances occur in this country. Ethnic groups that exist in Indonesia, on one hand, some of them are well known and their existences are recognized by the state even they can dominate in many aspects, such as economy, politics. On the other hand, the existences of some ethnic groups are rarely recognized and considered by the state; even they are dominated by the well-known ethnics. They have to struggle to get their rights as citizens because their rights are not recognized and are often neglected by the state and other ethnic groups.

As we have known that, there are also minority groups that exist in Indonesia but the same circumstances are also experienced by them. Injustice life and different treat from the government are common matter. Although they have tried hard to gain their rights to be recognized, they find it difficult to reach it since they have faced many obstacles, for instance the policy run by the government that do not support their struggle even impede it.

One example of minority group experiencing such kind circumstances is *Sedulur Sikep* who well-known as Saminism followers. They are suffering from domination and oppression from dominant groups, particularly from the State. Corresponding to the circumstances faced by minority groups in Indonesia, this paper tries to explore the underlying concepts of multiculturalism in Indonesia, the extent in which minority groups (in this case, Saminism) are treated in Indonesia with regard to multiculturalism, and the proper treat toward minority groups within social work perspective.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to reach the answers relating to questions above, we use Social Dominance Theory of Sidanius and Pratto (1999, pp. 31-50). Social Dominance Theory (SDT) starts with the basic observation that all human societies tend to be structured as systems of group-based social hierarchies. This hierarchical social structure consists of one or a small number of dominant and hegemonic groups at the top and one or a number of subordinate groups at the bottom.

The dominant group is differentiated from others by its possession of a disproportionately large share of positive social value such as political authority and power, good and plentiful food, fine homes, and high social status, or all material and symbolic things for which people struggle. On the other hand, subordinate groups posses a disproportionately large share of negative social value, such as low power and social status, relatively poor health care, poor food, modest or miserable homes.

SDT argues that group-based social hierarchy is driven by three proximal processes: aggregated individual discrimination, aggregated institutional discrimination, and behavioural asymmetry. The regulation of these three proximal processes is done by legitimizing myths. To what extent an individual bears legitimizing myths depends on his/her involving in endorsing, desiring and supporting a system of group-based social hierarchy. The generalized orientation toward group-based social hierarchy is called social dominance orientation (SDO).

Aggregated individual discrimination is the simple, daily, and sometimes quite inconspicuous individual acts of discrimination by one individual against another, for example the decision of the voter not to vote for a given candidate because of race, ethnicity, or gender.

Aggregated institutional discrimination is done by the rules, procedures, and actions of social institutions. These social institutions may be public or private, such as courts, hospitals, retail outlets and schools. Besides, institutions also help maintain the integrity of the social hierarchy by using systematic terror. In systematic terror, violence or threats of violence disproportionately directed against subordinates are often used. The aim of systematic terror is to maintain appropriate relationships between dominants and subordinates.

Behavioural asymmetry is the differences in the behavioural ranges of individual belonging to groups at different level of the social power scale. This behavioural asymmetry will be affected by socialization patterns, stereotypes, legitimizing ideologies, psychological biases, and the operation of systematic terror.

Here is the schematic overview of social dominance theory. Turning to nationality, we must first, consider national identity. According to Tomlinson (1991, p. 69), "national identity is the one among several ways in which people may experience a sense of cultural belonging, but that is has special political and ideological significance." However, creating national identity will face the plurality of cultures. Furthermore, identifying a unified national cultural identity is not easy, since culture that is a set of symbol, values and shared meanings of social collectivities do not draw precisely to the political framework of nation state. A State can consider a certain culture as their national culture, but in fact, within a nation-state there are different patterns of culture that may be in conflict with the national culture. As a result, there will be cultural domination when dominant cultures are chosen as "national culture".

THE CONCEPT OF MULTICULTURALISM IN INDONESIA

Prior to discussing multiculturalism in Indonesia, it is necessary to look at and understand the concept of multiculturalism, ethnic and minority group.Multiculturalism is a prominent terms in this era. Multiculturalism is the public policy for managing cultural diversity in a multi-ethnic society, officially stressing mutual respect and tolerance for cultural differences within a country's borders.

As a policy, multiculturalism gives emphasis to the unique characteristics of different cultures, especially as they relate to one another in receiving nations. The word multiculturalism was first used in 1957 to describe Switzerland, but came into common currency in Canada in the late 1960s. It quickly spread to other English-speaking countries.

The concept of multiculturalism in American society became a significant force in the 1970s and 1980s when African-Americans, Latinos, and other ethnic groups explored their own history(The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, 2002).

Blum (in May, 1998) offers a definition for multiculturalism:" multiculturalism involves an understanding, appreciation and valuing one's own culture, and an informed respect and curiosity about the ethnic cultures of others. It involves a valuing of other cultures, not in the sense of approving all aspects of those cultures, but attempting to see how a given culture can express value to its own members".

In other words, multiculturalism can be explained as two different concepts that interconnect each other. First is multiculturalism as a cultural diversities or cultural pluralities of a society. It is assumed that this society can promote tolerance between people. Second is multiculturalism as a set of central government policies that is arranged in order to encourage people to respect and pay attention toward other cultures from all ethnic groups (Liliweri, 2005, p. 68).

Generally speaking, the implementation of multiculturalism, around the world, important government multicultural policies can include: 1) dual citizenship, 2) government support for newspapers, television, and radio in minority languages, 3)support for minority festivals, holidays, and celebrations, 4) acceptance of traditional and religious dress in schools, the military, and society in general, 5) support for arts from cultures around the world, 6) programs to encourage minority representation in politics, education, and the work force.

In its development, multiculturalism faced many critics from some scholars. Ayn Rand denounced the world-wide ethnic revival of the late 1960s as a manifestation of tribalization that would lead to an ethnic destructive to modern industrial societies. The feminist like Susan M Okan argues that multiculturalism that concern about the preservation of cultural diversity should not surpass the discriminatory nature of gender roles in many minority cultures, that, at the very least, "culture" should not be used as a justification for discouraging the women's rights movement. Furthermore, the political theorist Brian Barry, who argues in his 2002 book "Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism" says that multiculturalism divides people when they need to be united in order to struggle for social justice.

Despite the fact that there are many critics toward multiculturalism, it is still has significant role in this globalization era. Since the migration of people is easier than before, the interaction between people from different cultures, religions and ethnicity can not be avoided. Multiculturalism as an understanding will help people to build their way of thinking about other cultures and then will assist them to interact in mutual interaction.

Ethnic groups usually correlated to language. How many languages that exist on the country or region show how many ethnic cultures there. Every ethnic has its ethnic self-concept. The way a person looks the world around him/her (the world-view) is basically depended on his/her culture. It is often happened, people from one ethnic think their ethnic culture as a centre (ethnocentrism).

It can be said that ethnic group, is a social group that posses same culture, tradition and history and because of that sameness they have identity as sub-group in society. Their culture differs from others because they have their own characteristics. Ethnic group usually have their own language, religion, customs which are different with other ethnic groups.

In terms of ethnicity, this concept explains five variables. First, the status of a group of people which based on culture inherited from their ancestors. Second, culture and norm values that distinct members from one group to another. Members from ethnic group are aware of same culture and norms values and use it as their basic identity. Third, classifying ethnic based on affiliation that meant what people affiliated to showing their identities and it can be used to identity whether an individual belong to certain ethnic group or not. Fourth, race distinction which means ethnicity is a process of exchanging behaviours and culture over the time. Fifth, group identities are based on same linguistic, cultural, historical, geographical characteristics. Sixth, ethnicity is always related to exaggerate belief on language, religion compared with other groups (Liliweri, 2005, p. 14).

Minority group is usually related to ethnic group. This definition is not one hundred percent wrong because many minority groups are ethnic groups, but it is also not one hundred percent correct since there are minority groups that are not one certain ethnic group but part of one ethnic group.

Discussing minority group, sometimes will lead to confusion. Minority concept can not be defined clearly until now. Ferdinand Capotory (in Budiman,2005, p. 10) explains minority as "a group, numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in non-dominant position, whose members- being national of the State- posses ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religions or language."

Furthermore, Jules Deschennes in proposal concerning a definition of the term "minority UN Document argues that minority is " a group of citizens of a State, constituting a numerical minority and in a non-dominant position in that State, endowed with ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics which differ from those of the majority of the population, having a sense of solidarity with one another, motivated, if only implicitly, by a collective will to survive and whose aim is to achieve equality with the majority in fact and in law."

By looking at two definitions, it shows that a group can be recognized as minority if their quantity is less significantly than other population from one State. It seems that minority must be understood in quantity. Besides, minority group is always in non-dominant position in the State context. A group having great quantity but not having dominant position in the State can not be recognized as minority. As well as a group having small quantity but having dominant position in the State is not recognized as minority.

THE PRACTICE OF MULTICULTURALISM IN INDONESIA

Since Indonesia has many ethnic groups, it can not be categorized as homogeneous country but a plural and heterogeneous country. Demographic pluralities promote cultural plurality. Multiculturalism become Indonesia's special character because of natural condition, particularly as maritime country which is geographically separated by oceans, seas, rivers, mountains (Alqadrie, 2003, p. 99).

In 1900s, every ethnic group has their own territory. They live in certain area so that at that time Indonesia was composed as mosaic pattern and ethnic group is recognized by their territorial, such as Javanese are in central and East Java, Batak in North Sumatra, Madurese in Madura. However, in the present time, because there has been always a high degree of movement within the archipelago, the ethnic pattern changed. It became tapestry pattern where in one area is not merely occupied by one ethnic but also other ethnics which live together and interacting. Let's take it for example, Sampit in Central Kalimantan used to be the territorial of Dayak at first, but after the migration of people from other islands, there are Madurese, Javanese who live next to Dayak.

Intermarriages are no longer something that is strange. The number of intermarriage is increasing. Many different cultures meet in family institutions. As a result, a multicultural society has been formed.

To begin with, basically, Indonesian people long before the Independence had considered the concept of multiculturalism. Indonesia was established by relationship and cooperation among different ethnic groups when they agreed to declare their unity through the Youth Pledge (*Sumpah Pemuda*) on October, 28th 1928. Racial diversity developed national platform that was accepted by the people. In this matter, the strength of ths State relies on racial diversity that unite in cooperative and dependence ways. It has proven that not all diversity become obstacle in creating cooperation (Chang, 2003, p. 30).

After reaching its independence, the founding fathers of Indonesia had considered multiculturalism in establishing the State.

The new independent government under Soekarno was able to arrange public policies which bounded all ethnic groups in the process of constructing new national identities. Malay language was used as national language rather than Javanese language although Javanese were the majority. They chose Bhinneka Tunggal Ika the motto. Furthermore, in deciding the national philosophy, they still considered multi-ethnicity. Pancasila which outlined by the President Soekarno in 1945 are: belief in a supreme God, humanitarianism, national unity, democracy, and social justice. Soekarno also inserted term 'Tuhan Yang Maha Esa" into the first principle rather than the Islamic term "Allah". It shows that Soekarno encompassed the legitimacy of Hindu, Christian, and Buddhist minorities of the country to counterbalance the potentially unstable political power of the Muslim majority (Aragon, 1994).

The concept of multiculturalism has also been included in the constitution UUD 1945 in which founding fathers designed nation's culture. The chapter 32 of UUD 1945 says: "nation's culture is the top of regions' culture" (Suparlan, 2002).

At that time, although there were many sporadic ethnic rebellions that broke out in many areas of the country between 1950 and 1964, virtually those rebellions were motivated by the struggles for the higher position in politics within the new nation, not for separation from it (Anderson, 1983, p. 120).

However, in the New Order era, there was different implementation of multiculturalism concept. The New Order regime emphasized that Indonesia is plural society so that to support the success of the development, there should be unity in the form of uniformity. As a result, many minority cultures which are different with the dominant culture were not recognized by the government. Under this regime, certain aspects of ethnic difference have been covered up while others have been promoted, co-opted, even invented to serve the twin causes of national stability and economic development (Aragon, 1994).

After the reformation in 1998, the idea of multiculturalism strongly emerged. New building of the new Indonesia is an Indonesia multicultural society which was formed from the ruin of New Order's plural society. Consequently, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* is no longer appreciated as the ethnic diversities and their cultures but cultural diversities which are exist in Indonesian society (Suparlan,2002). Multiculturalism becomes the main reference in establishing an Indonesian multicultural society.

THE CONCEPT OF SAMINISM: HISTORY, TEACHINGS, AND LIFESTYLE
The History of Saminism

Saminism was first introduced by R Kohar who then changed his name to Samin Surosentiko in two villages near forest in Randublatung, southern Blora region in the mid of 1890s. He was a farmer who owned approximately three *bau* (5 hectares) farming field (Fauzan

in Budiman, 2005:81). This movement spread fast to other villages. It stretched from Java North coast to the forest area in North and South *Kendeng* mountainous, in the border of Central and East Java province (Intisari, July 2001).

Suripan Sadi Hutomo, a humanistic folklore expert, in his book Tradisi Blora (1996) points out two important places in the Saminism movement. They are Klopoduwur village in southern Blora as the base camp of SaminSurosentiko and Tapelan Village in Ngraho Bojonegoro that having the greatest number of followers. Samin people in Tapelan started to convert Saminism in 1890. *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch Indie* (1919) explains that there were 2300 Saminism followers who disseminated in Blora, Bojonegoro, Lamongan, Pati, Rembang, Kudus, Madiun, Sragen, and Grobogan (Intisari,July 2001).

The followers of Saminism thought that forest privatization by the Dutch in 1875 by overtaking kingdom's land made people impoverished and they were chased out from their ancestors' lands. Their understanding about their land was that the land and the air are communal belongingness as the existence of God's power. In doing their movement, Saminism followers denied to talk with the forest controllers and the organizers in *krama* language, indeed they used *ngoko* Javanese that is rude.

When the supervisor charged the land tax, they would lay down in their land demonstratively and then shout loudly, "*kanggo*!" which means it's my own.

Initially, the movement was not considered by the Dutch colonial because it did not directly affect the colonial government. However, after the fast spreading of the movement when almost 3000 farmers joined together with it in 1904, and they decided to withdraw from the Dutch's control, the Dutch started to pay more attention on the movement and finally arrested Samin Surosentiko in 1907 and exiled him to Sawahlunto, west Sumatra (Fauzan in Budiman, 2005, p. 81).

This movement ended when the Dutch leaved Indonesia and Indonesia gained the Independence (Intisari, July 2001). Samin Surosentiko had two children, Karto Kemis and Paniyah. Paniyah married to Suro Kidin and they had eight children and an adoption child. This adoption child is Surokarto Kamidin and his descendant are living an Jepang Margomulyo, Bojonegoro now, as reported by Kompas on 4 March 2005). They don't have any enemies anymore, but the followers still exist until now.

Saminism teachings

Saminism followers are often called as *Samin* people by other people. However, they themselves reject that name because Samin came from the name of Samin Surosentiko, the founder of Saminism movement. They prefer to be called *wong sikep* or *Sedulur Sikep* because they hold the teachings that they inherit from their forebears. The word *Samin* itself stand for *'sami-sami amin'* which means all people agree and all people are prosper (Intisari, July 2001).

Saminism is understood as religion by its followers, so like other religion, sesdulur sikep also have holy book. Their holy book is *SeratJamus Kalimasada* which consists of several books, such as *Serat punjer Kawitan, Serat Pikukuh Kasajaten, Serat Uri-uri Pambudi, Serat Jati Sawit, Serat Lampahing Urip.* Those books are very popular among *Sedulur Sikep.*

There are many teachings included in those books that are hold by *Sedulur Sikep* in their daily lives. First is the *Angger-angger pratikel* (bahaviour law), that is "*aja drengki srei, tukar padu, dahpen kemeren. Aja kutil jumput, mbedog nyolong*, that means they are prohibited to do bad thing, have a quarrel, envious, and they are not allowed to take other possesses. The second is *angger-angger pengucap* (conversation law), that is "*Pangucap saka lima bundhelane ana pitu lan pangucap saka sanga bundhelane ana pitu*". These symbolic terms means that we have to avoid saying something that is not good and hurt other people's feeling. The third is *angger-angger lakonana* (law about anything that should be done), that is "*lakonana sabar*

trokal, sbare dieling-eling, trokale dilakoni". It means *Sedulur Sikep* have to be patient in their lives (Intisari, July 2001). All those teachings are taught to their community in spoken and examples in everyday life.

The main teaching of Saminism is marriage. As has been explained before that Saminism followers prefer to be called *wong* or *Sedulur Sikep*. This name to show that their duty and main goal in this life is to do *sikep rabi* (making love) and *tatane wong* (having descendants). On their point of view, making love is done by every human being and that is their sameness with other people. The difference is that only *Sedulur Sikep* who recognize it, even they openly declare it. Because of this, they think that other people will never be pure. To be pure, people must be *lugu-* frankly, honestly. This idea of purity is the core of Saminism teachings (Fauzan in Budiman, 2005, p. 94).

In terms of religion, *Sedulur Sikep*'s religion is agama *adam* or agama *kawitan* or *adam kawitan*. However, *Sedulur Sikep* look it differently with us. They understand religion in several concepts. Firstly, religion is *agama* (in Indonesian). *Agama* means "weapon". this terms shows political weapon to fight over or avoid intervention from outside, particularly the State's intervention. Secondly, *gaman lanang* means sexuality which is explained that agama is man's weapon that is penis. Thirdly, *adam pangucape*. Adam is a terms that is usually used to say because Adam is the saying. Before making love, someone should deliver his purpose, especially in marriage ceremony. All people, food, clothes and that entire correlate with them need Adam. In this terms, Adam is language of *Sedulur Sikep* community. It means their weapon is language. Fourthly, *Dam, damel rabi*. *Adam* (penis and language) should be used in having relationship among them, mainly between man and woman (Fauzan in Budiman, 2006, p. 96).

Sedulur Sikep's Lifestyle

In accordance with their teachings, *Sedulur Sikep* regard human being as the same despite the fact that they have different race, ethnic, social class and nationality. Their important concepts in their life are concept of *wong* (human being) and concept of food and clothes (*sandang pangan*). However, *wong* (human being) place the highest position since human being who produce food and clothes (Fauzan in Budiman, 2005, p. 94).

Their life style is also based on their teachings. In their understanding, living in harmony and cooperative are important. Reminding each other is usually conducted in everyday life. However, they will never interfere other's business because all the behaviours of the individual are the responsibility of the individual itself (Kompas, 25 October 2005).

The clothes that they wear are almost the same. The men wear black shirt and ¾ trousers (*celana komprang*) and headband, while the women wear *jarit* and black or dark green blouse (suara Merdeka, 23 January 2003). Most of their houses are *limasan* style with panel of woven bamboo and land floor (Suara Merdeka, 17 Maret 2004).

In doing marriage ritual, there is *nyuwita* ritual. A man who will propose a woman should work and serve woman's family for certain time. It is usually done if the couples are still very young. If they have already proper to get married, they can directly get married (Intisari, July 2001). In marriage ceremony, according to their culture, the bridegroom vows "*syahadat*" that sound "since Adam prophet era, my work is married. At this time I'm married to a woman whose name.........I promise that I'll be loyal to her. We have lived together." (Suara Merdeka, 17 March 2004). This statement also has function as statement that someone is becoming *Sedulur Sikep*. They get married only once in their lives except if their wife died, they can get married again. They do not register their married to the State through KUA or Civil

Registration Office so that many people think that *Sedulur Sikep* do living together out of matrimony. However, nowadays, some *Sedulur Sikep* have registered their marriage.

In terms starting a day, they have ritual too. They start the day by facing to east in the morning as kawitan (beginning) and end the day by facing to west in the evening as *wekasan* (ending)(Intisari, July 2001).

Most *Sedulur Sikep* do not send their children to get formal education in the schools. They believe that schools will affect to their teachings. The denial towards formal education was one of their strategies in confronting the Dutch. School in their understanding is the farm fields and their teacher is the nature. In their point of view, going to formal education is to learn and it is the same with what that they do, learning from the family and the nature. The lessons in their lives is cultivating the land (Kompas, 26 October 2005).

However, in coping with these teachings, there are different views among *Sedulur Sikep*. *Sedulur Sikep* in Bombong Baturejo Sukolilo Pati, Central Java still strongly hold this principle. They have never sent their children to the formal education, whereas *Sedulur Sikep* in Jepang Bojonegoro have known formal education since 1970s. Most of their children learn in formal education, even one of them become civil servant. *Samin* community in Larikrejo Kudus also send their children to school. They argue that the aim of formal education is in order to can read and write so that their children can face their future (Kompas, 26 October 2005).

In terms of occupation, almost all *Sedulur Sikep* earn money by doing farming because of their principle about the source of their wealth. All of their wealth must be clear where it comes from and they believe that the only clear one is farming. They will never do trading because trading will lead them to do dishonestly. Indeed, if they sale their farming commodity, they do not call it as "sale" but "barter" (*ijol*) (Kompas, 26 October 2005). They have a high farming technique. They grow rice and second crops such as maize, nut (Suara Merdeka, 23 January 2003).

Sedulur Sikep live modestly. They manage their family more carefully than others (outsiders) do. They will not spend money on something that is not necessary (Intisari, July 2001).

Although they live modestly, it does not mean that they reject technology. We can find some electronics appliances in their homes, such as televisions, radios, cellular phones, even computers (Suara Merdeka, 23 January 2003).

Other people often see all of the ways of life of *Sedulur Sikep* as something strange. They seem to be skeptic in interacting with others, but, actually it is the honestly of them. They strongly uphold the purity of their teachings.

SEDULUR SIKEP AND DOMINATION

The Domination of the State

Sedulur Sikep communities have suffered from domination, both culturally and structurally, since the Dutch colonial. As we know that the background of the emerge of *Saminis*m movement was to counter the Dutch rule that inflicted farmers, and in doing their movement, they rejected to pay land tax. The Dutch then considered them as disobedience community. This stereotype was strongly disseminated among other communities in order to reduce the spread of the *Saminism* teaching. Accordingly, this stereotype has been experienced by *Sedulur Sikep* communities even until now.

In the New Order regime, for a long time, *Sedulur Sikep* communities were recognized as minority groups having different culture, religion. As a result, the State tried hard encouraging them to convert their cultures to those which are similar with the dominant. For example, mass

marriage that was conducted for nine couples from Karangrowo, Undaan Kudus on January, 3rd 1997 was noted as the success of imposing them to leave their belief (Intisari, July 2001).

They were also forced to convert their religion because their religion "*agama Adam*" is not one of five religions that are recognized by the State. Finally, according to the State, they converted to Buddhism so that they are registered as Buddhist. However, *Sedulur Sikep* have different point of view toward this religion. They call their converse to Buddhism as *"budo"* (*mlebune wudo*) which that means in having sex (*sikep*) with their wife, they have to be naked. We will never find a *vihara* in their village because they remain practice their "*agama Adam*".

Sedulur Sikep community also face obstacles in doing matters related to the bureaucracy. To get an identity card, they have to cope with the rules about the religion that can be written in the identity card. They want their religion to be written "agama Adam" but most of officers do not allow it. The officers force them to choose among the religions that have been recognized by the State. This policy depends on the region where they live. *Sedulur Sikep* community in Bombong Sukolilo Pati gets identity cards without attaching their religion. However, some others in other region are forced to receive identity card with attaching religion that have been recognized by the state. In fact, some of them choose not to have identity card although they will face many other obstacles in their social lives, such as they will not have driving license, as a consequent they will be issued a traffic ticket by the police.

In terms of education, the State established schools in their communities. In this matter, among *Sedulur Sikep* themselves, there are different attitudes in dealing with this policy. Some of them remain rejecting the formal education; some others accept it by sending their children to the schools. Consequently, there are some shifts in their values and teachings.

Some *Sedulur Sikep* who get formal education start to interpret their teachings differently with who those do not. Going to school, a child must have a birth certificate. To get a birth certificate, their parents should have a marriage certificate. Thus, they have to register their marriage to the KUA or the Civil Registration Office. It means that they have left the teaching about upholding their origin religion and rejecting the State's intervention.

Some *Sedulur Sikep* communities in several parts also have put down their teaching about the source of their livelihood. Because of the incessant efforts from migrant workers brokers *(Perusahaan Jasa Tenaga Kerja Indonesia, PJTKI)*, many of their young generation go abroad becoming migrant workers, no longer farmer.

Although the political reform after the collapse of New Order regime in 1998 promotes some positive changes, particularly in dealing with minority groups, the State's policy about multiculturalism is not far different from the past. The policy changes and the programs strengthen the ambivalent in multiculturalism. Instead, although it aimed at promoting the welfare of minority groups, the policies and programs conducted lead to violating minority rights.

A clear example is empowering backward cultural communities (*Komunitas Adat Tertinggal*). This program is based on Keppres No. 111/1999. The program aims at doing KAT empowerment in all aspect physically, spiritually and socially so that they can fully participate in the development. Formally, KAT is defined as local cultural social groups that are dispersed and they are not fully involved in social, economy, and political service and network. They are characterized in seven points. First, their community is small, closed and homogenous. Second, their social structure based on kinship and cultural norms. Third, they are usually geographically and socially isolated from societies. Fourth, they still practice subsistent economic system such as hunting and gathering, shifting cultivation, subsistent fishing, or the combination between those. Fifth, their tools and technology are simple. Sixth, they highly

depend on their natural environment and resources. Seventh, there are limited basic social services.

In this program, *Sedulur Sikep* community in Bombong Sukolilo was the only minority group that is included as KAT because of their culture. According to Fauzan (in Budiman, 2005:90), there are three social political reasons in choosing them as KAT. 1) dominant's point of view about *Sedulur Sikep* as the representation of backwardness. 2). They are the strongest Sedulur Sikep community which strongly still uphold *Saminism* teachings. 3). This community play political pivotal role in their village. It can be assumed that this program had a hidden agenda; it is to rationalize them so that they can be easily controlled by the State.

Looking this program from social dominance theory, it seems that this program tries to transfer dominant's values to subordinates. Dominant groups, in this case the State, think that *Sedulur Sikep's* values and cultures are not in accordance with their values. They also have committed cultural imperialism by imposing their culture toward *Sedulur Sikep* community.

Sedulur Sikep vs Dominant Group

As has been explained before that *Sedulur Sikep* community experience stereotyping from the Dutch colonial and from the state after the Independence. Stereotyping towards them is still happened.

Other people from societies prefer call them "*wong Samin*". The word "*Samin*" or "*nyamin*" is often associated with the person whose behavior is strange and unusual, such as stubborn, fool, irrational, stupid and even crazy. To avoid this negative association, *Sedulur Sikep* neutralize it by naming themselves as *Sedulur Sikep*.

Besides, they also suffer from stigmatization. Many people from other communities avoid having close relationship with them. For example, when one of *Sedulur Sikep* was appointed the leader of farmers association, many of the members who chose to resign from the membership of the association after knowing that the leader is *Sedulur Sikep*.

SEDULUR SIKEP **AND OPPRESSION**

After examining the circumstances of *Sedulur Sikep* community from social work perspective, it can be said that there have been oppression faced by them. Oppression is social constructed through people's actions and their behaviors toward others (Dominelli, 2002:9). There are three level of oppression, personal , cultural and structural (Mullaly,2002). Unfortunately, they are facing three kind of oppression at personal, cultural and structural level.

Oppression at the personal level consists of thoughts, attitudes, and behaviours that show negative prejudgments of subordinate groups (Mullaly, 2002, p. 52). In the way of stereotyping by other people, *Sedulur Sikep* is associated to strange individual that is fool, stubborn, stupid and crazy.

Oppression at cultural level happens when the dominant culture want to hold the status quo so that they disseminate their culture toward other (subordinate). In this terms, *Sedulur Sikep* experienced it within stereotyping and stigmatization. In addition, the mass marriage and forcing them to convert to the religion that is recognized by the State are examples of oppression in this level.

Oppression at the structural level is oppression that is institutionalized in the society (Mullaly, 2002: 97). Many policies and programs that are conducted by the State are included to this kind of oppression. The examples of this oppression are the effort to send *Sedulur Sikep* to go to formal education by establishing schools and the KAT empowerment program.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, multiculturalism is a term that is actually has been considered by Indonesian people long before the establishing of the nation-state. It can be seen from the underlying

concept of multiculturalism in Indonesia that is comprised in the national philosophy Pancasila and the UUD 1945 Constitution. However, the implementation of multiculturalism in Indonesia did not start at that time.

The implementation of multiculturalism in Indonesia emerged when the discourse of multiculturalism have spread over the world. Consequently, Indonesia, as a country which has multi-ethnic and multicultural society have to practice it both socially and politically.

Since multiculturalism regards all groups involving in the State, both dominant groups and non-dominant ones, minority groups are had to have same opportunities in social, economy and political aspects. However, implementing multiculturalism is not as simple as imagined. There are several obstacles faced. On one hand, multiculturalism seems to be the best means in reaching social justice and equality among people. On the other hand, the social system constructed which is in domination of one or small cultural groups are difficult to be changed.

Regrettably, the State as the holder of the authority is in dominant groups' hand and it is trapped in defending status quo. As a result, the policies conducted relating to multiculturalism only benefit dominant group, whereas minority groups get nothing. It will be better if minority groups directly involved in deciding program that will be conducted in their community so that both the State and the minority group will benefit from the program.

From social work perspective, there should be an effort to struggle over injustice and inequality. The State should go back to its duty to gain the aims of the establishing the nation-state. All citizens, ethnic groups, minority groups should be involved in developing the country. Besides that, we (social workers) should raise people's awareness so that they are aware of their social life and they can avoid being oppressor towards others and also being oppressed. In the case of *Sedulur Sikep*, people from dominant culture should respect them by avoiding stereotyping and stigmatization. All of us are same regardless our ethnicities, religions, and cultures.

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