

# **Optimization of Social Character Building in The Empowerment of Islamic Communities In Pringsewu Lampung**

**WiwinWindayanti**

STIT Al Multazam Lampung  
*wiwinwindayantistitalmultazam@gmail.com*

## **ABSTRACT**

Various problems of social phenomena in the last decade tend to lead to a condition of degradation or 'shift' of social morality uncontrollably. If this condition is not considered by all elements of the nation, it will generally have an impact on the process of disorientation, direction and purpose of national life. For this reason, efforts are needed to strengthen social morality from various elements of the nation by developing character education or moral education for the younger generation at various age levels (children, adolescents, and youth) with the need to revitalize and optimize the role of family, school, and community institutions as 3 pillars of education. In fact, students are educated to form characters who will depart and return to society, thus requiring observers of education, including Islamic education, to reflect on the process of community empowerment. This study uses a qualitative approach because researchers want to understand and reveal the problems that are being experienced by the subject of in-depth study. Qualitative research is research that involves the collection of data in a natural environment with the purpose of explaining phenomena that occur in which researchers act as the main instrument. Human resource empowerment involves many aspects, namely mental attitude aspects, behavioral aspects, ability aspects, intellectual aspects, religious aspects, legal aspects, health, etc. All these aspects are two potentials that every individual possesses, which are physical and mental. It cannot be denied that the material aspect is always determined by the spiritual factor, which is the driving force that motivates people. To obtain quality human resources, the most important effort is actually to increase human potential through optimizing social character supported by government programs through educational institutions and community organizations.

**Keywords: Social Character Education, Empowerment, Potential of Islamic Society**

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

The decline in personality faced by schools and communities and the entry of global cultural values, such as the presence of cultural values of the Millennial generation (technology-using generation (information technology as a way of life) caused by the development of information technology will certainly have an impact positively and negatively to some aspects of school education and personal life as well as in the family and social environment. These living habits are characterized by a high need for daily information. The more sophisticated, the need for conveniences seems inseparable from daily routine. Moral deterioration is strongly influenced by the sociocultural conditions of the surrounding society. A bad social environment due to imitation of culture from outside is a form of lack of social institutions to control negative social changes.

Currently, Indonesia is facing the problem of weakening the nation's identity. This is evidenced by various national problems whose symptoms have slowly begun to appear over the past few decades (Idi and Sahrodi 2017). If this problem is not immediately addressed, it can threaten the existence and security of Indonesia. Some of the pressing problems faced by Indonesia today include weak national leadership, weak fighting spirit of the younger generation, high levels of corruption, and identity crisis. The impact of this problem is very diverse, such as the risk of disintegration, Indonesia's weak competitiveness in the international world, and the deterioration of Indonesia's image in the eyes of the world (Muslim 2017). Various issues surrounding this country raise the question: How is education in Indonesia organized to produce quality human resources (HR) who are generally not ready to compete in an era of liberalization? The role of education in Indonesia is only partial and emphasizes the development of cognitive aspects so that academic achievement has no correlation with student attitudes or behavior. Education is considered to have not contributed significantly to the formation of national identity according to basic values.

The fundamental question raised in this context is: What is the role of education in forming national identities that can be used as soft power as capital to deal with competition in the era of globalization? The argument that is tried here is that education is a basic element that must be built, strengthened and prioritized if the Indonesian nation wants to go in that direction. (Ziakas 2016) The achievement of survival of the fittest in the era of globalization can be achieved by displaying soft power as a modality. Based on data and facts as well as analysis by education experts, there are at least four main factors that require attention in the context of national

education, namely: curriculum factors, funding factors, educator readiness factors and environmental factors and a conducive atmosphere for the implementation of education. These four factors are related to each other to be able to produce human resources with national characters people who are able to compete in the era of globalization

Therefore, home and family, as environments that form personality, must first of all be more responsible. Hurlock also defines that the family is a "Training Center" for the cultivation of character values and the development of the child's nature or religious spirit, along with his personal development (Ismail 2016). The family, as the smallest unit of society, must once again be a school of love, a school of love or a place of learning filled with true love and affection (family is *sakinah, mawaddah and warrahmah*). While character education through school is not simply acquiring knowledge but more than that, it is cultivating morality, moral values, aesthetics, noble ethics, etc. Reward (prize) those who succeed and punish those who violate, cherish good values and conversely condemn and prevent (prevent) the emergence of bad values (Rusmini 2017).

Social problems, especially poverty is a complex problem and is the main focus of the Indonesian government, from the Old Order, New Order, and to the current Reformation Order. Various analyses, approaches, and strategies are implemented to eradicate poverty. However, until now the data still shows the ups and downs of the condition of the poor with less optimization of social character formation which makes the resources managed less optimal (Nizar et al. 2023). However, this does not then become a justification for allowing poverty to occur in this country.

One form of character damage in society is crime. Quoted from the Pringsewu Lampung Police Station "Median Suwardi revealed" that criminal crimes in the Pringsewu area in 2021 reached 247 cases consisting of Curat, Curas, Curanmo, Gambling, Immorality etc. Meanwhile, in 2022, there were 212 criminal cases and 171 cases have been resolved. Of the number of crime cases that occur in Pringsewu, the most is the crime of theft with violence (Curas). Then there is the case of damage to the morale of the regional official, the chairman of commission IV of the Pringsewu DPRD, who committed corruption in 2 fiscal years, namely FY 2019-2020 with a total budget of IDR 55 billion. The calculation of state financial losses for corruption, misappropriation of activity funds at the secretariat of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) of Pringsewu Regency reached IDR 311 million and corruption in the

settlement of funds for shopping activities for meanings and beverages of the plenary meeting amounted to IDR 519 million (TribunPringsewu 2021).

From the case that occurred in Pringsewu, Lampung, it can be illustrated that optimizing social character is indeed very important to make people aware that actions that can damage the nation's morals also have an impact not only on the perpetrators but also on the surrounding community and family. The act of misappropriation of state funds also indicates that there has not been a comprehensive community empowerment in the Pringsewu area of Lampung.

However, the education unit can determine the priority of optimizing its development to continue the pre-condition values that have been developed. The implementation of character values that need to be developed can start from essential values that are simple and easy to implement, such as: clean, neat, comfortable, disciplined, polite and courteous (Kemdiknas 2017). Therefore, character education aims to develop the values that form national identity, specifically Pancasila, including: a) develop the potential of students to become kind, well-intentioned and well-behaved human beings, b) build a Pancasila nation, c) develop the potential of citizens to have good attitudes confidence, pride in one's people and country and love for humanity (Rifqi 2017).

The concept of character education has been around since the time of Prophet Muhammad SAW. It is clear from Allah's command that the first and foremost duty of the Prophet was to ensure the moral improvement of his people. The discussion of the nature of the meaning of character is similar to the discussion of the concept of morality in Islam, both of which discuss human behavior. Al-Ghazali explains that morality is an attitude originating in the soul, from which various actions arise easily and easily without the need for thought and deliberation. (Wahab and Alim 2020) states that morals (character) are often also called behavioral science or temperament, because with this knowledge knowledge will be obtained about the virtues of the soul; How to obtain it and how to cleanse the soul that has been filthy. Here comes the role of Islamic education as an educational system. It cannot be denied that it has made a solid contribution to the formation of national identity through many quite profound strategies and methods.

In President Jokowi's government, a strengthening program was carried out, so it was known as the "Strengthening Character Education" policy, abbreviated as PPK. This policy is a manifestation of Nawacita point eight, namely strengthening the nation's character education

which gave rise to Gerakan Nasional Revolusi Mental (GNRM). Since 2016, through the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemdikbud), several schools have been coaching to implement PPK. (Kemdikbud 2017) In 2017, this policy was strengthened by the enactment of Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2017 concerning Strengthening Character Education. A year later, the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture (Permendikbud) Number 20 of 2018 concerning Strengthening Character Education in Formal Education Units was also established.

In essence, empowerment resides in humans, While factors external to humans only have the function of stimulating, stimulating the rise of the spirit, taste or encouragement in humans to empower, master themselves, and develop according to their potential. So, Community empowerment is an effort to enhance the dignity and dignity of those sections of society who, under current conditions, cannot escape the trap of poverty and backwardness, which is an effort to enable and independent the community (Musa 2017).

Muslim-majority Indonesians have this awareness basically in line with secular modernization thoughts about poverty and helplessness. They believe that the problems facing the poor originate because there is something wrong with their mental, cultural, or theological attitudes. The poverty of Muslims has nothing to do with the strengthening of neoliberalism or globalization. They attack Sunni theology dubbed fatalistic theology as the cause (Wahab and Alim 2020).

The problem of lack of community empowerment is more in the extent to which they are able to prepare suitable human resources and can compete in the free market system. In facing the challenges of globalization of capitalism and the strengthening of liberalism, these naïve Muslim intellectuals actually explore Islamic teachings that are in accordance with modernization and liberalism, reinterpret religious teachings that are not in accordance with the times, without fundamentally questioning the problems caused by neoliberalism (Muslim 2017).

So, the issue of fostering character (moral) and personality education in school-age children, adolescents and students / youth is the most crucial social investment. In an effort to fix the decline of social morality. The back and forth of the nation is very much focused on social morality, therefore, Improving the quality of human resources (human resources) is a top priority. Imbibing the values of religious (Islamic) education requires optimal contribution from: families/parents, schools/madrassahs/universities, communities (religious activities and ta'lim

assemblies), and the government (through strategic policies that favor all aspirations of a pluralistic community (Sudarmiani, Hanif, and Sutinah 2021).

## **B. METHODS**

This study uses a qualitative approach because researchers want to understand and reveal the problems that are being experienced by the subject of in-depth research. Qualitative research is research by collecting data in a natural setting with the intention of interpreting the phenomenon that is happening where the researcher acts as a key instrument (Zuchri 2021). Through this qualitative research, researchers can recognize the subject, and also feel the problems that are being experienced by the research subject. This research uses a type of descriptive research, researchers will describe and reveal phenomena and problems that are happening in people's lives related to Islamic religious education and community empowerment, these search results will then be collected as words.

Descriptive method is a method that describes or describes the state of the subject or object of research (a person, institution, and society) at the present moment based on facts that appear or as they are. The method used in this study is descriptive method because this study is carried out to see the optimization of social character formation in empowering Muslim communities in Pringsewu Lampung. In order for researchers to describe clearly and in detail and get in-depth data from the research focus, this study uses a qualitative research approach.

In this study puts the researcher as the main instrument in the process of collecting research data. Researchers as the main instrument directly go into the field to interact and interview informants, observe situations and conditions through Islamic educational institutions and community institutions in the Pringsewu area of Lampung. This research is carried out systematically through observation, among other activities of loading attention on an object or existing phenomena using all observation media. Furthermore, this observation method is an observation activity carried out directly on the phenomena of objects to be studied objectively and the results will be recorded systematically in order to obtain a more concrete picture of existing field conditions. Some of these analyses will be discussed in more detail in the following sections: Data Collection, Data Reducation, Data Display. Conclusion Drawing and verification.

Analyzing data is carried out qualitatively, that is, a research process that generates descriptive data in verbal or written form from observable people. In this case, using the

thinking method used is Inductive, analysis that moves from data or empirical facts in the field (Ruane 2021). The inductive approach emphasizes observation first, then drawing conclusions based on that observation. This method is often referred to as an approach to inference from the specific to the general. With this method, the author analyzes specific data and then develops it in a general discussion.

## **C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Social Character Building**

National character education aims to form a nation that is tough, competitive, moral, tolerant, cooperative, patriotic, dynamically developing, knowledge-oriented and technology-oriented, all of which are imbued with faith and piety to God Almighty as aspired to the philosophy of Pancasila (Alfi 2020). Character formation is an important issue in the world of education associated with the phenomenon of moral decline taking place in society and in an increasingly diverse government environment. Crime, injustice, corruption, violence against children, and human rights violations are evidence that there has been a crisis of identity and character in Indonesia.. The values of politeness, and legitimacy that are upheld and become the culture of the Indonesian nation so far seem to be weak and feel foreign along with the entry of global cultural values (global culture of the millenials era), so they are rarely found in the midst of society. Islamic education is a strategic response to achieve the formation of national character from family (informal), institutions (formal) and learning groups in society (informal), creating become the main capital in forming national character (Dewantara et al. 2020).

(Kosim 2020) The journey of Islamic education is inseparable from the ups and downs of the national education system itself as Muslims cannot be separated when talking about the fate of the Indonesian nation and even Islamic education has a long history in Indonesia which has participated in coloring the nation's life both in the period before colonialism and even after Indonesia became independent. In the Unified State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), where the majority of the population is Muslim, Islamic education should underlie other educational education, and become a prima donna for students, parents, and the community. Likewise, to improve the quality of education, Islamic education should be used as a reference to form students' character and personality, as well as build the nation's morality (Building national character).

Character education is the most important element of human resource development in the process of building the country. With education, children are expected not only to have the ability of technology but also religious science (shaping children into morals, ethics, personality, and character) Character education, began to be discussed again in the last 2 decades. (Makhrus 2018) which made the world of education in the United States aware of the importance of character education (for children) to achieve educational ideals. (Taufik 2020) said that this educational program that relies on character building departs from concerns over the condition of social morality in American society. This character building is based on the need to create a community that has humanitarian, moral, democratic discipline, prioritizes cooperation and problem solving, and encourages that those values be practiced outside the classroom.

Islamic education combines two aspects of human interests, namely secular and religious. Unlike secular education which focuses on only one aspect that of worldliness, all forms of success tend to be expressed in terms of material possessions or by position and influence in the world. world, where individuals live. In Islam, the human form consists of two potentialities that must be built, which are the external part which is the body and the spiritual part which is the controller of the body. Human development in Islam must certainly pay attention to these two potentials. Considering Indonesia's human development goal is to create a well-rounded human being, this goal must then pay attention to the two potentials that exist in humans. However, efforts to balance the development of these two potentials during the 32 years of the New Order have only been in conceptual form and have not been attempted in practice. It can be understood that Islamic education considers this major issue as human resources, especially issues related to ethics.

For now, Islamic educational institutions require strategic planning, synthesizing vision, vision, goals, objectives, methods, programs and activities. It is a long-term plan to meet increasingly dynamic and complex external challenges. This is when you need to analyze strengths, weaknesses (internal factors), opportunities and threats (external factors). Ultimately, knowing where the school is, where it is going and what the important issues facing it are, will help you create a strategic plan to achieve a better future.

### **Community Empowerment**

Community empowerment is a process that seeks to improve the quality of life of individuals or groups of people to move from the quality of their previous lives to the quality of



their next life (Dian et al. 2023). Therefore, the meaning of community empowerment has a broad scope such as educational, economic, political, and socio-cultural aspects. In relation to the theme above, it is strongly understood that the process of community empowerment in this case is focused on aspects of education, especially Islamic Education. Education is the organized and comprehensive development of all human potential, moral, intellectual and physical, used by individuals and communities with a view to integrating all these activities into together (Dedih, Ramdhan, and Kosim 2018).

As we know that the large number (Muslim community), has given birth to various potentials in optimizing the empowerment of the Muslim community in this country. Because, if the world of Islamic education is able to explore and manage human resources in the Muslim community in improving the quality of education will really provide maximum value achieved by Islamic educational institutions. Community empowerment within the Muslim community lies in the school committee or school board, school counselors, Islamic scholars, religious figures committed to Islamic teachings, araka community leaders interested and interested in improving the quality of education and others.

Empowerment or empowerment is a concept that was born as part of the intellectual and cultural development of Western society, especially Europe. This concept appeared in the 70s and continues to develop today. (Widodo and Al Muchtar 2020) Its emergence roughly coincided with schools such as existentialism, phenomenology, personalism and later the new waves of Marxism, Freudianism, structuralism and socialism. learn. At the same time, the concepts of elitism, power, anti-institutional, populist movements, anti-structuralism, legitimacy, liberation ideology and civil society also appeared. The concept of empowerment can also be seen as part of the school of mid-20th century, known as postmodernism, which emphasized anti-systemic, anti-structuralist attitudes and perspectives. and anti-determinism. , applied to the world of power (Supriati and Umar 2018).Community empowerment is a practice based on these four functions: describing events; explain the causes of the incident; predict what will happen next (including what will happen if or no intervention is made); and strive to manage and control changes at all levels of community activity (Alfi 2020).

In addition, related to character education, there are differences in morals, civility, morals, and values. Imam al-Jurjani said that morality is a building of the soul that comes from two sources. First, the source of spontaneous behavior without preceded by thought, in the form of

good behavior (good morals) or bad behavior or despicable morals. Al-Jurjani interprets morality as the constancy of the soul in humans, which encourages people to do good and bad. Human behavior, in this case, is driven from within his soul. A clear mind and conscience encourage good behavior, and lust encourages ungodly behavior. Morality becomes praiseworthy or despicable depending on the tug-of-war of various instincts in man's inner struggle. A virtuous person is one who is able to win noble ethics and suppress and defeat his instincts. Second, morals that come from human effort (*muktasabah*). If 'morals' and words with their roots (*al-khuluq*) are found in the Qur'an, the word 'adab' is not found in the Qur'an. Adab in Arabic civilization was first used in the sense of literature, which relates to the beauty of language (Nizar et al. 2023).

In relation to the condition of poverty and the deterioration of social character, in the context of Indonesian society, character building and community empowerment are the focus of the public and are considered as one of the appropriate approaches in overcoming social problems, especially poverty. Community empowerment is also carried out by various elements ranging from the government, the business world and the community through Civil Society Organizations. Although with different perspectives and theoretical foundations, the empowerment program has the same goal, namely as an effort to solve or at least reduce the impact of social problems (Hartini 2017). The implementation of community empowerment is not the same between one community context and another. In general, the government organizes community empowerment through policies and various kinds of empowerment and social protection programs; business world with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) with grassroots activities as explained in the figure below.

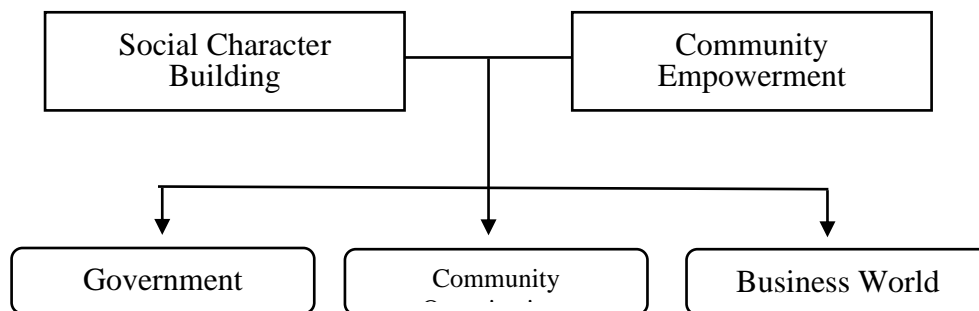


Figure 1. Government Programs in Community Empowerment.

The next generation of the nation with high quality and social character who will be prepared to welcome and become development actors in the era of globalization is required to improve the quality of their religion (in understanding, living, and practicing religion that still relies on Faith and *Aqidah*). To realize quality Indonesian people and society, steps are established in fostering religious education, especially Islam, that is:

*First*, Improve and harmonize the development of religious universities with public universities, from primary to university education, so that religious universities play an active role in the development of science and technology.

*Second*, Religious education in public universities from elementary to university will be further strengthened so that students become people who believe and devote themselves to Almighty God and role-playing religious education active role in the development of science and technology.

*Third*, Higher religious education and institutions for training scientists and experts in the field of religion will be further developed to play a greater role in developing the scientific mind to understand, live and have can interpret religious teachings appropriately and in harmony with people's lives.

Furthermore, society basically has the potential to develop if we empower it. As explained by (Anwar and Salim 2019) the operating ability of human thinking is determined by the ability of that human to assimilate or adapt the environment in his mind. In other terms, the ability to think of man is determined by two components: first, his ability to perceive symptoms, second, his ability to conceptualize symptoms into a general sense (Ghofur 2017). But that potential doesn't develop if people don't take advantage of the opportunity. In the effort to enhance the potential of the community, it can be divided into three directions:

*First*, efforts to empower community potential must start from empowering family education. The concept of "brain development" explains that the system of speech of the human brain is largely determined by human contact in the first three years of life on earth. The more natural symptoms that children can catch in the first three years of their age, it will stimulate the growth of the brain fiber system, this means that it will have a great impact on children's intelligence later on. Therefore, the empowerment of the potential of the ummah must be carried out from the beginning of birth. In addition, parents must be responsible for proportional

nutritional behavior, and also condition the child to experience a proportional development process.

*Second*, educational institutions are the direction of empowering the next potential of the community after the family. It is the responsibility of the school in terms of further child growth both physical, intellectual intelligence, creativity and emotional intelligence development, even the growth of spiritual intelligence optimally. Even though our education has not been able to carry out this task. For this reason, it is time for educational institutions to make various innovation efforts on the basis that empowering community potential needs to minimize the role of the growth of linear thinking (which is still a pressure on education now), why is that because the earth and its contents always experience rapid changes that are always not linear, as well as the concept of Islamic education. This means that the empowerment of community potential must always be directed to the development of community creativity. In order for this goal to be achieved, skills and arts must be an integral part of the Education curriculum (Taufik 2020).

According to the author, the Islamic Education Institute is time to make innovation efforts in the field of education, not patchily but thoroughly and fundamentally. We need a revolution in education, and a shift and change the wrong paradigm. The wrong and fundamental paradigm is that "learning for school is not for living", must be changed to "learning not for school (nonscholae) but learning to live (sed vitae discimus)". The curriculum in schools must have a close relationship with life in the community so that students will better understand the conditions of the community. Schools should not be isolated from society, what is learned should be useful for the lives of students in society and based on community problems. Thus students will be more harmoniously prepared as community citizens.

*Third*, Strengthen community knowledge and capacity to solve problems and meet their needs. Empowerment must be able to develop all the capacities and confidence of the community to support its independence. Counseling is one of the examples of non-formal education whose material discussion is very, counseling is applied to the adult education system with the target being people who already have a lot of experience in their fields.

## **CONCLUSION**

Human resource empowerment involves many aspects, namely mental attitude aspects, behavior aspects, ability aspects, intelligence aspects, religious aspects, legal aspects, health

aspects, etc. All these aspects are two potentials that each individual possesses, which are physical and mental. It cannot be denied that the material aspect is always determined by the spiritual aspect, which plays a role in motivating people. To have quality human resources, the most important thing is actually to improve the potential of people themselves, we can take this as an example because people's compliance with the law is determined by the spiritual aspect. This. In this case, Islamic education plays an important role in achieving this.

It is the basis for the next important thought, about the need for the thought of a planned, mature, community empowerment process by Muslims towards Muslims themselves. Because Islamic education in general cannot be considered to have participated adequately in instilling or empowering people with religious moral values. This seems to be a social anxiety, because the process is dominated by the process of intellectual empowerment. Educational institutions that use the community as a source of lessons provide ample opportunities to get to know the real life of the community.

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