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Modern Means Of Communication And The Process Of National Integration At The Rural Level In Indonesia

By

S Budhisantoso
MODERN MEANS OF COMMUNICATION AND THE PROCESS OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION AT THE RURAL LEVEL IN INDONESIA

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The complexity of the Indonesian society has been expressed frequently as a great number of nation tribes, possessing various cultures which have developed in being the existence of the adaptation design of the inhabitants in the Indonesian Archipelago which are spreaded between two large oceans and the continents. The experience in history and the openheartedness of the different environments have caused the development of the cultures of the nation tribes together with their qualities of character. There are some cultures which have experienced a fast growing development but on the other hand there are also some cultures which are slow in developing. Therefore, besides the society that has lived with industrial economy and is supported by modern technology, there also exists an Indonesian society who are still living as hunters and material collectors, using tools made of store and are isolated from more extensive culture touches.

Besides the categorisation which is based on tribalism, the complexity of the Indonesian people can also be seen from their stay in the centre of the towns or in the rural districts. So far it is estimated that 72% of the inhabitants in Indonesia are
still living in rural districts. Therefore only a small number of the inhabitants of Indonesia has experienced several of life in the cities. This reality has bought about various problems in endeavouring to strengthen the society and the unity of the nation, besides the efforts to improve their life prosperity.

In general the rural districts in Indonesia, especially outside Java and Bali are spreaded far away from the centre of town and are still having a simple communication network. Highways that are built by the state in order to connect the provinces during the long term construction in the first 25 years must be continued with the construction of roads in the provinces and in the residences. Further on, each residence has to construct a road network that is connecting each district whereas each district has to develop the road network in the rural district. To the people and the government in Jawa and in Bali, the road construction that will connect the villages in not so difficult. However the construction of villages roads on the other islands are not as such easy. Except for its geographical mountaineous situation and steep valleys, the swamps and either big or small rivers, the spreading out of the inhabitants is not equal. There are remote villages which are inhabited only by 50 persons but there are also villages near the city that are densely populated. The expansion of the road network that has to connect the villages outside the islands in Java and Bali is therefore sometimes delayed. This has caused that the mobility of the people, above all the social mobility that could give the
opportunity to the inhabitants in the villages to be directly involved in national activities is very minim.

To withstand geographical and physical estrangement, long distance communication facilities are most necessary. In this connection, the development of the electronic mass medium that is supported by modern technology is very useful for taking care of the consciousness of forming a nation and for waken up the spirit to participate in the development.

The expansion of the electronic mass medium broadcasting network, mainly for the last 25 years has succeeded to open the estrangement of the population/inhabitants everywhere in the country. As know already, the alienation of the inhabitants in the villages with regard to the national activities is not only because the geographical setting. The education level from most of the inhabitants in the villages is still very low. The number of inhabitants that is illiterate is approximately 17% while the others haven’t finished their elementary school (6 years). Therefore we can imagine that the printing medium that had to be taken away to the villages with great difficulty is not certain that it will be useful because of the low interest in reading from the people in the rural districts. In case they show interest in reading, is is not certain yet that they are able to put aside a part of their income in order to buy reading books because of their low income average. A test result of the influence of the television broadcast in the rural districts has
shown how the people are more fond of listening to the radio or watching broadcast instead of reading newspaper or magazines.

Besides the low capacity in education and the poverty of the people in the village, their interest in searching for news that is not directly connected to their daily life is still low. The people in the village normally living in small homogene and closed communities. Their interest is limited to fill in their daily needs for their family. Their necessities in general can be fulfilled with the yield that they have obtained each day. Only because of the traders who have become very active in selling household articles and the expansion of the electric network and the intensity to collect tax the requirement for money by the people of the villages in Indonesia becomes more and more important. There involvement which is more intensif in the economic activities of the market has influenced the inhabitants to expand their environment outside their villages.

In former times, when kings are still ruling, the people in the villages honourable and their social status will be raised if they could be involved in the activities which are centralized in the palace. They will become respected citizens if they can supply the harvest crop in meeting the requirement of the kings and their family. During the revolution it was the chance for the people in the villages to expand their social network and to improve their social situation by becoming involved in their fight for freedom. Many of these inhabitants of the rural district have succeeded in freeing themselves from their ties
with the village community and to join the armed national units. We can admit here that the war for independence has succeeded in opening the uncommunicativeness in the village and to expand the social-political firmament of the inhabitants into the direction of the national integration.

During the time after the war, the national consciousness of the people in the villages which was realized because of their equal feelings of fate and war which should be taken care of. The activities of the information officer up to the districts level are considered not sufficient to fulfill the needs for cherishing the national consciousness of the inhabitants in the rural districts which are quite numerous and are having a very extensive spreading. Therefore, the radio broadcasting service (RRI) has become the main mass communication facility in the rural districts before the construction of the satellite communication network.

At the beginning of the first Television station in Jakarta and Yogyakarta (19..), only a few inhabitants were in reach by its broadcast. Besides of technical limitation, only a few persons could afford to buy a Television set. However, the side effect of the TV broadcast has brought up the consciousness of the public and the government with regard to the great advantage of having audio visual broadcast. During the commencement of the first 25 years long term Development, there were built an earth station and be followed by the launching of a communication satellite.
being the backbone of the electronic mass medium that is connecting the whole Indonesian Archipelago.

The expanding effect of the TV Broadcasting Network being the audio visual mass medium towards social life, culture, politics and economy is very large. Nothing for nothing if the first communication satellite is called "Palapa" which is taken from the oath that has been expressed by Mahapatih Gajah Mada who has struggled to unite the inhabitants the whole Indonesian Archipelago. The TV broadcasting service that can obtain the whole Indonesian Archipelago is not only functioning as entertainment facility and information service, but it would be more important as a national integration facility.

The inhabitants in the rural districts which are forming the majority of the Indonesian population have started to follow news services which are expressing the life of the nation and country as being a reality. If verba, broadcast via radio is giving opportunity to the inhabitants to translate informations by using a sketch of the forms of the respective cultures with all its distortions, then the audio visual broadcast via Television has made it easy for the inhabitants in the villages to understand directly realize the situation and the national condition as well as the various social cultural backgrounds that formerly has a great influence on the people to understand verbal broadcast via radio broadcast, and now can be overcome with illustrated broadcasting system.
The idea, steering into the direction of understanding the national news has a very important meaning in taking care the consciousness of becoming social beings the forming of a nation and a country for a compleen society like Indonesia. The participation of the inhabitants in the process of the national development is very much depending on their consciousness as being one nation. This participation can be taken care of by investing the consciousness that they are a part of the Indonesian society. Broadcasting concerning political ceremonies, sport competitions and other national events on TV that can be followed by the inhabitants everywhere, are forming most important facilities to the cherishing of their consciousness as being a part of a more extensive national society. As far as in ancient times the Hindu and Budha religious which where religious that were adhered to by the Javanese Kings and were the facilities to attract the inhabitants as being the vow of the kingdom because of the prestige that they have obtained, and as far in the golden era, the Moslem kingdoms which were adhering religious and were supporting the Moslem culture in Indonesia had become the power that have united the inhabitants because of the Islamic dominant culture, therefore now are needed facilities and prefacilities that can awaken the pride and consciousness of the inhabitants in the rural districts as being one independent nation. In this connection, the mass medium broadcast, especially the electronic medium has succeeded in becoming the facility
invest and to consolidate the national system which can attain the entire complexed layer of population, especially the people in the rural districts. The speciality of the electronic mass medium broadcast as being the national integration and information facility has been strengthened with the establishment of a group of radio broadcast listeners and TV viewers (KELOMPECAPIR) who have found a place in the heart of the people with direct involvement of the officials of the district as well as those of national level, including the President in person himself. Direct involvement concerning information activities and national communication is very important in order to consolidate the system concerning the government, the economy and other institutions with national aspects and having the function of consolidating national integration. Without the attached feelings that have aroused a spirit which is participating in national activities, the efforts of the government in the other national life sectors does not mean much. If there is a weakness in audio visual electronic mass medium broadcast, it can be considered that there is a tendency that will accelerate literary tradition shifting which development has just been cleared up, steering to post literary tradition. However, the tendency with its universal aspects does not mean that the very active electronic mass medium development should be annulled but on the contrary just to increase the efforts of school education in order to prepare the people in facing era globalization on information and communication.