



EDUCATION IN INDONESIAN: A REVIEW FROM THE COLONIAL ERA TO THE REFORM ERA FROM A LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

PENDIDIKAN DI INDONESIA: TINJAUAN DARI MASA KOLONI HINGGA MASA REFORMASI DALAM PERSPEKTIF HUKUM

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the development of education in Indonesia from the colonial era through the reform period, analyzed within the framework of legal foundations. The method employed in this article is library research, which serves to elaborate on the discussion of Indonesian education during the colonial period and the post-independence era up to the reform era, viewed from a legal perspective. The findings indicate that education in the colonial period was politically driven, primarily serving Dutch interests in exploiting Indonesia's natural resources and economy. In contrast, during the post-independence period through the reform era, education was implemented in a structured manner and underwent several refinements, beginning with the 1947 curriculum and continuing through 1952, 1964, 1968, 1975, 1984, 1994, 2004, 2006, 2013, and culminating in the Merdeka Curriculum. In the post-independence era, education was oriented toward shaping individuals based on the principles of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution.

Keywords : Education, Colonial Era, Reform, Legal Framework.

Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini yaitu untuk mengetahui perkembangan Pendidikan di Indonesia dari masa kolonial sampai dengan masa reformasi yang ditinjau berdasarkan landasan hukum. Metode yang digunakan dalam penulisan artikel ini menggunakan metode kepustakaan (library research). Studi pustaka atau jenis penelitian kepustakaan digunakan untuk menguraikan pembahasan dalam artikel ini mengenai Pendidikan Indonesia pada masa kolonial dan pada masa pasca kemerdekaan sampai dengan reformasi yang ditinjau berdasarkan perspektif hukum. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Pendidikan pada masa kolonial masih bersifat politis dengan memperhatikan kepentingan Belanda



untuk menguasai hasil bumi dan ekonomi bangsa Indonesia. Selanjutnya pada masa kemerdekaan sampai dengan reformasi pelaksanaan Pendidikan berlangsung secara terstruktur dan beberapa kali mengalami mengalami penyempurnaan mulai dari kurikulum 1947, 1952, 1964, 1968, 1975, 1984, 1994, 2004, 2006, 2013 dan Kurikulum Merdeka. Pada masa psaca kemerdekaan pelaksanaan Pendidikan dioorientasikan untuk membangun manusia yang berdasar pada Pancasila dan UUD 1945.

Kata Kunci : Pendidikan, Kolonial, Reformasi, Hukum.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is every human being's right to enhance their dignity and worth (Bendriyanti et al., 2019). Education is also crucial as a benchmark for a nation's progress and the quality of its human resources. The delivery of education in a country is also influenced by several factors, both internal and external ("Key Natl. Educ. Indic.," 2012). The emergence of the education system was not the result of comprehensive planning but rather a step-by-step experiment driven by the actual needs of the times. From the education received by a country's people, we can see the history of a nation and how the history of education in the past has nurtured highly intellectual individuals who have served as the foundation of Indonesian nationalism.

Not all reforms have been successful, particularly in terms of outcomes and their impact on students. The goals were bold and ambitious, and the problems were clear, but the proposed solutions did not live up to expectations. It is possible that the previous regime used the "disruptions" of autocracy (Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009) to maintain its power. Similarly, current reforms may be blinded by the "wrong drivers" or infected by "GERM"—the Global Education Reform Movement (Sahlberg, 2011)—which calls for standardization, an increased focus on core subjects, a prescribed curriculum, and the adoption of market-oriented reform ideas, as well as high-stakes accountability and control. This can hinder instructional practices that develop higher-order thinking skills and foster virtues and values (Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009).

Given its complexity, it is not easy to clearly define what the model for educational change in Indonesia looks like. However, the emergence of contradictions can raise awareness and build resilience to take conscious action. It can be said that Indonesia is currently experiencing the phenomena of post-colonialism, post-centralization, and post-standardization. During the difficult years of colonial rule, in 1922, Ki Hajar Dewantara established the first national education system as a means of enculturating the independent Indonesian nation. His inspiring work helped awaken the nation (Riyanti et al., 2021). As the turn of the millennium approached, widespread demonstrations demanded the overthrow of the authoritarian regime. It is also possible that this has driven the decentralization of education. A similar situation occurred when school autonomy was undermined by the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) and an alliance of teachers and parents took the practices of marketization and standardization to court (Sahlberg, 2011). Ultimately, current teacher reforms must be carefully evaluated to determine whether they have re-professionalized or deprofessionalized the teaching profession.

Since the days of Dutch colonial rule in the Dutch East Indies, several schools have been built. In 1817, a public school—or grammar school—for Europeans, the *Lager Onderwijs en Lagere Scholen voor Europeanen*, was established in Batavia; this was the precursor to the ELS, or *Europeesche Lagere School*. Nevertheless, the implementation of education for indigenous communities could only begin after the King of the Netherlands ratified Certificate of Law No. 95 on September 30, 1848. Under this Certificate, the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies was authorized to allocate 25,000 florins per year for education. By 1849, there were 20 indigenous schools in each provincial capital (Heru, et al., 2014).

The purpose of this education was to accelerate the implementation of the *Cultuur Stelsel*. Enrollment was limited to the children of nobles and officials. Instruction was provided in the local language and covered reading, writing, and arithmetic. The curriculum consisted of standard material



on regional literature, as well as some courses on geology, agriculture, and aerial surveying (Kawitama 2013). At that time, the school had already been producing cadastral surveyors and agricultural surveyors. This was particularly important because agricultural land requires a high degree of precision.

In 1852, the Kweekschool ("Teacher Training School") was established in Surakarta, followed by schools in other regions such as Bukittinggi, Tapanuli, Tondano, Ambon, Probolinggo, Banjarmasin, Makassar, and Padang Sidempuan. In 1860, the Koning Willem III Gymnasium (KW-drie) was established in Batavia (now located in front of the National Library Building in Salemba), followed by the establishment of the SMA Lager Onderwijs en Lagere Scholen voor Europeanen. The program lasted three years. In 186, the school was divided into two tracks: one lasting five years and the other three years. The goal was to encourage students to continue their studies in order to advance in military schools, as civil servants (*ambtenaar*), or in commerce and crafts education in Delft, the Netherlands. This school was later developed into the HBS (Hogere Burger School). Indigenous residents were finally allowed to attend this school in 1874 (Suratminto, 2013).

During this period, the education system in Indonesia was structured into several levels that built upon the levels established during the Dutch colonial era. The education system in Indonesia at that time can be described as a formative period. After independence, education in Indonesia was tasked with teaching and applying the values of Pancasila. To carry out this mission, the Ministry of Education and Culture developed a curriculum that incorporated the fundamental principles of Pancasila. The implementation of this mission began with curriculum changes at every level of education. Through the elementary school curriculum, basic education is expected to deliver content that enhances moral character, strengthens religious faith, and improves intelligence and skills. Meanwhile, the junior high school curriculum includes the formation of Pancasila values development groups, basic knowledge development groups, and specialized skills development groups. The high school curriculum was also refined with the goals of shaping individuals who truly embody the principles of Pancasila, preparing students for college, and teaching skills aligned with their interests and talents. Increased government revenue from oil sales enabled the government to allocate a larger budget for education (Djumhur and Danasuparta, 1974).

Education development policies in Indonesia have been in place for a long time. The government's role in regulating the implementation of education is outlined in the draft law on nine years of compulsory basic education. Priority in education was increasingly emphasized during the independence era, enabling the achievement of the nine-year compulsory education target (Prapti, 2021). Efforts to improve the quality of and participation in education continue to this day. With the advent of democracy, education and teaching aim to shape competent, ethical individuals and democratic citizens who are responsible for the welfare of society and the nation (Putri et al., 2020).

The continuity of education in Indonesia has always been intertwined with government intervention through the laws enacted. In particular, specific interests underlay the implementation of education during the colonial era. From the era of independence to the present, education has become increasingly structured with the development of educational curricula oriented toward building student competencies. Thus, the objectives of this study are, first, to examine the development of education in Indonesia from the colonial era through the reform era; and second, to identify the legal foundations for the implementation of education from the colonial era through the reform era.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in writing this article is library research. Literature review, or library research, can be defined as a series of activities related to the collection of library data, reading, note-taking, and processing research materials (Zed, 2008). The research materials in this article consist of secondary sources or data derived from previous studies on education policy from the colonial era through the reform era. It is supported by various literature sources, including research findings and reports on the development of education in Indonesia from international and national sources, as well



as various theoretical references from journals and books. Specifically, a literature review limits its activities solely to book collections without requiring field research (Zed, 2008).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1) Education in Indonesia During the Colonial Period

It began with the implementation of the forced cultivation system (1830–1870), which drew criticism from various groups. One example was a pastor who later became a member of parliament, Baron van Hoevell, who defended the Dutch East Indies and believed that the colonial government must fulfill and take into account the interests of the indigenous population (Daliman, 2012). Furthermore, liberal policies (1870–1900) led to widespread poverty in the Dutch East Indies, as the influx of foreign companies dashed the people's hopes for prosperity (Kusmayadi, 2018).

The expansion of political administration, the growth of the economy, and the declining welfare of the indigenous population—these three factors formed the basis for the emergence of Van Deventer's "ethical politics" or Snouck Hurgronje's "association politics" on the eve of the 20th century. The essence of this political approach was to reap the benefits of Western civilization without becoming European or Western. This was highly beneficial for the development of education and technology among the indigenous population (Karsiwan & Sari, 2021).

For all proponents of ethical politics, education played a central role. This was reflected in the colonial government's "trilogy"—education, irrigation, and emigration (*educatie, irrigatie, emigratie*). Dutch was used as the language of instruction, and under this system, the upper-class indigenous elite and the children of pro-Dutch officials were the ones who benefited (Afandi et al., 2020).

Education policy was the most important policy enacted by the Dutch colonial government. That is why it is often said that education policy was not merely a part of colonial policy but constituted the very core of colonial policy (Nasution, 2011). The Dutch colonial government's need to provide education in the colonies was driven more by the spirit of colonialism itself—that is, a form of education serving as a pillar of colonial political power (Zed, 2012).

Efforts to provide education began not through programs officially organized by the colonial government, but through private initiatives. Students were selected from the children of local dignitaries, and classes were typically held in the residence of the regent, so that lessons took place in the afternoon after office hours. The teacher was a European official from the regency administration.

Some general characteristics of Dutch colonial education policy are as follows: 1. An extraordinary degree of gradualism in providing education for Indonesian children; 2. A dual education system that emphasized a sharp distinction between Dutch and indigenous education; 3. Strong central control; 4. The limited objectives of indigenous schools, and the role of schools in producing civil servants as a key factor in educational development; 5. The principle of concordance, which resulted in schools in the Dutch East Indies being modeled after those in the Netherlands; and 6. The absence of systematic educational planning for the education of indigenous children (Nasution, 2011; Imadudin, 2015).

The goals of education during the colonial period were never explicitly stated, but it can be concluded that the goals of education included meeting the demand for unskilled labor for the benefit of the Dutch capitalist class, while some were trained and educated to become administrative, technical, and agricultural personnel, among others, who were appointed as second- or third-class workers (Afandi et al., 2020). The demand for labor continued to rise in line with the growth of Dutch industry, which was expanding over time; consequently, the colonial government required an educated workforce to fill positions within the colonial civil service.

Regarding the subjects taught, there were four required subjects: reading, writing, language (Dutch was required), and arithmetic. According to Mudyaharjo (2006), the school system during the Dutch colonial era in the 20th century consisted of three levels of education, namely:

**Table 1. The School System During the Dutch Colonial Period**

No.	Level	Description
1	Elementary Education (Lagere Onderwijs)	• The Europeesche Lagere School (ELS) had a program lasting approximately seven years, with instruction conducted in Dutch. • The Hollandsch-Inlandsche School (HIS) had a program lasting seven years. This school was intended for Indonesians of noble descent and the descendants of prominent figures. Instruction was conducted in Dutch.
2	Secondary Education (Middlebaar Onderwijs)	• The Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs (MULO) is equivalent to junior high school (SMP). In the MULO, Dutch was still used as the language of instruction. The course of study in the MULO was divided into two parts: three years for ELS graduates and four years for non-ELS graduates, as the latter required a one-year preparatory period. • The Algemeene Middelbare School (AMS) was the general secondary school, or SMU, during the Dutch East Indies period. The AMS level was above the MULO, with a three-year program.
3	Higher Education (Hooger Onderwijs)	The Hoogere Burgerschool (HBS) was a lower secondary school for Dutch, European, Chinese, and prominent Indonesian students. The program at the HBS lasted five years. Typically, the students who attended the HBS were highly intelligent.

It can therefore be concluded that each level of education has a different curriculum. Elementary education has a uniform curriculum in terms of the subjects taught, namely reading, writing, language, and arithmetic. Meanwhile, the Middle Education (Middlebaar Onderwijs) curriculum includes physics, chemistry, mathematics, geography, biology, cosmography, line drawing, freehand drawing, German, French, Dutch, English, botany, geometry, arithmetic, algebra, and bookkeeping (offered only at AMS and HBS; not taught at MULO). The curriculum for Higher Education includes the



subjects of natural sciences, agriculture, land surveying (cadastral surveying), botany, biology, ethnology, and drawing (copying pictures) (Hartono, 2017).

The key elements associated with the Dutch colonial education system were economics and colonization. Because of these interests, those who formulated educational concepts could not separate themselves from the social, economic, and political conditions of the central government in the Netherlands. It was therefore only natural that the education system administered by the government was always oriented toward Dutch colonial interests (Umamah, 1997).

Significant developments in education, particularly in the expansion of schooling in Indonesia, enabled the colonial government to accelerate the growth of institutions that could be tailored to local needs. Broadly speaking, the Dutch colonial school system was a complex one, as it featured numerous classifications that reflected the discriminatory nature of the educational system.

The education system implemented by the Dutch East Indies government toward the Indonesian people—particularly the Javanese—clearly demonstrated differential treatment, whether toward European or Chinese children or toward the indigenous population itself. This was evident in the distinction made regarding access to schooling between the upper class (nobility) and the lower class (common people). Admission to certain schools was further complicated by onerous regulations, compounded by extremely high tuition fees. This was deliberately done by the government to prevent the common people from entering schools reserved exclusively for European children, so that the indigenous population—especially the common people—could only attend schools at the lower levels. Meanwhile, members of the upper class or nobility could continue on to higher levels of education, all the way through college (Rahmawati, 2016).

2) Education in Indonesia from Independence to the Reform Era

With reference to the national educational goals as stipulated in Law No. 20 of 2003—namely, to develop Indonesian citizens who are devout toward God Almighty, possess noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible, these objectives can be achieved through the development and implementation of the curriculum at the educational institution level, ranging from kindergarten (TK), elementary school (SD), and junior high school (SMP) to senior high school (SMA) and vocational high school (SMK) levels (Republic of Indonesia, 2003). Therefore, the development and implementation of the curriculum must be carried out consistently and effectively.

As one of the key components of the education system, the curriculum is not only formulated as a set of goals to be achieved—thereby clarifying the direction of education—but also provides an understanding of the learning experiences that students must acquire. Therefore, it is only natural that a curriculum must be continuously reviewed and adapted to the needs and developments of the times. To grasp the ideas behind a curriculum, we need to know the history of the curricula that have been implemented in our country. This knowledge is extremely helpful in understanding the essence of the curriculum changes that have taken place in Indonesia (Ritonga, 2018).

Since Indonesia gained independence in 1945, the country has undergone at least ten curriculum changes. These include the curricula of 1947, 1952, 1964, 1968, 1975, 1984, 1994, the competency-based curriculum of 2004, the KTSP of 2006, and the 2013 curriculum. Indonesia has learned a great deal from these curricula. Based on their nature, these ten curricula can be divided into three categories: 1) curricula as lesson plans (1947–1968 curricula), 2) goal-oriented curricula (1975–1994 curricula), and 3) competency-based curricula (2004–2013 curricula) (Ananda & Hudaidah, 2021). The following table provides a brief overview of curriculum reforms in Indonesia:

Table 2. Curriculum Reforms in Indonesia

Year	Historical Background	Basis for Reform	Reform	Implications of the Reform for Learning
1947	The 1947 Curriculum was the first curriculum	Known as the 1947	Key areas of emphasis: Civic	While it downplayed the



	created by the Indonesian people based on the legal framework in force in Indonesia, namely the 1945 Constitution (Ritonga, 2018).	Curriculum. Indonesia's independence served as the foundation for reform, with the aim of fostering a spirit of nationalism among the Indonesian people and shaping the character of a free society.	and social awareness. A focus on the arts and physical education.	cognitive aspect of the students' learning, the curriculum was linked to the context of daily life in Indonesian society at that time.
1952	The legal basis for the 1952 Detailed Lesson Plan curriculum was not significantly different from that of the 1947 Lesson Plan. Its ideological foundation is Pancasila, as stated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution, while its constitutional foundation is the 1945 Constitution. The operational foundation of the 1952 Detailed Lesson Plan curriculum is Law No. 4 of 1950 (Alhamuddin, 2014).	Known as the 1952 Detailed Lesson Plan. The basis for the reform was still rooted in the spirit of Indonesian independence, coupled with the public's need for employment opportunities.	The subjects taught in the Detailed Lesson Plan cover moral, intellectual, emotional, skill-based, and physical aspects.	Teachers taught a single subject. In addition to the six-year public school system, community classes were also offered for students who did not continue on to junior high school. These community classes covered practical skills such as agriculture and carpentry.
1964	The 1964 Curriculum was a tool for shaping Indonesian socialist "pacasialis" individuals, with characteristics as outlined in MPRS Decree No. II of 1960. It is important to understand that, up until the 1960s, the goals of national education were as outlined in Law No. 4 of 1950, Law No. 12 of	Society's need to produce graduates who are capable of solving problems and are creative.	From an academic perspective, this curriculum follows a subject-centered approach, in which each subject stands on its own. It is known as the "Pancawardhana" curriculum because it encompasses five aspects of life: morality,	In addition to the emphasis on academics, there is also "Hari Krida" on Saturdays. This is a day when students can develop their potential in areas of their interest, such as culture and sports.



	1954, and, during the era of Guided Democracy, in presidential decrees (Ananda & Hudaidah, 2021).		emotional intelligence, skills, and physical well-being.	
1968	The legal basis for the 1968 curriculum is MPRS Decree No. XXVII/MPRS/1966 on religion, education, and culture. The 1968 curriculum embodies a shift in orientation toward the pure and consistent implementation of the 1945 Constitution (Herbimo, 2016).	To develop individuals who embody the principles of Pancasila—physically healthy, intelligent, and religious.	Emphasizing the organization of course material into groups covering Pancasila education, basic knowledge, and specific skills.	The implementation of a correlated curriculum, in which there is a connection between the subjects taught at one educational level and those at another, means that the subjects are taught in a more theoretical rather than practical manner.
1975	The 1975 curriculum was based on the philosophy of education as enshrined in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution and subsequently articulated in the State Development Guidelines (GBHN). “The goal of national education is to shape true Pancasila-based individuals in accordance with the provisions set forth in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution and the text of the 1945 Constitution (MPRS Decree No. XXVII/MPRS/1966).” (Taqiyuddin, 2020)	Graduates are expected to meet the needs of society, particularly in the fields of science and technology.	The teaching and learning process places greater emphasis on the effective use of time and learning methods in order to achieve learning objectives.	Teachers play a dominant role in the classroom, conducting drills so that educational outcomes can be easily measured quantitatively.
1984	The 1984 curriculum was developed as a	Technological advancements	The learning process is based	The learning process is based



	refinement of the 1975 curriculum based on three considerations. The first was a change in political policy with the enactment of MPR Decree No. II/MPR/1983, which stipulated the need for “Education on the Nation’s Struggle” as a required subject at all levels of education. The development of the 1984 curriculum was also based on the national educational objectives outlined in MPR Decrees No. IV/MPR/1978 and No. II/MPR/1983 (Rahma Putri, 2019).	and public needs related to science and technology.	on CBSA (student-centered active learning). Students are expected to participate actively, both physically and non-physically.	on CBSA (student-centered active learning). Students are expected to participate actively, both physically and non-physically.
1994	The 1994 curriculum was developed as an improvement on the 1984 curriculum and was implemented in accordance with Law No. 2 of 1989 on the National Education System (Saffina et al., 2020).	It is a revision of the 1984 curriculum.	Students gain a better understanding of the material and are assessed promptly, enabling them to absorb new knowledge. The curriculum is known for its complex and extensive content. The local content curriculum is being introduced.	The academic year is divided into four quarters.
2004	The revision of the 2004 curriculum aims to develop students into well-rounded Indonesian citizens, as mandated by the following laws and regulations: (1) The Fourth Amendment to Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution regarding Education; (2) MPR Decree No.	Focus on achieving the expected competencies appropriate for their educational level.	Emphasizing mastery of subject matter and competencies based on UNESCO’s “learning to know, learning to do, learning to live” paradigm Emphasizing mastery of subject matter and	Process-skills learning methods give rise to PAKEM (effective, active, and enjoyable) and CTL (contextual teaching and learning) approaches



	IV/MPR/1999 on the Broad Outlines of State Policy; (3) Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System; (4) Law No. 22 of 1999 on Regional Autonomy; and (5) Government Regulation No. 25 of 2000 on the Authority of the Central Government and the Authority of Provinces as Autonomous Regions (Ritonga, 2018).		competencies based on UNESCO's "learning to know, learning to do, learning to live" paradigm	
2006	The legal basis for the development of the 2006 School-Based Curriculum (KTSP) consists of: (1) the 1945 Constitution; (2) Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System (Sisdiknas); (3) Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 on National Education Standards; (4) Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 24 of 2006; (5) Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 22 of 2003 on Content Standards for Elementary and Secondary Educational Units; (6) Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 23 of 2003 on Graduate Competency Standards for Elementary and Secondary Educational Units; (7) Ministry of National Education Regulation No. 24 of 2003 on the	An operational educational curriculum developed by and implemented at each educational institution in Indonesia.	With reference to the Curriculum Standards and Graduate Competency Standards	Lifelong learning is focused on the process of developing, nurturing, and empowering learners throughout their lives.



	Implementation of Ministerial Regulations No. 22 and 23 of 2003; (8) Ministry of National Education Regulation No. 03 of 2007 amending Ministry of National Education Regulation No. 24 of 2003 (Hakim, 2017).			
2013	The legal basis for the 2013 curriculum is as follows: (1) the 1945 Constitution; (2) Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System; (3) Government Regulation No. 32 of 2013 Amending Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 on National Education Standards; (4) Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia No. 21 of 2016 on Content Standards for Elementary and Secondary Education; (5) Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia No. 22 of 2016 concerning Standards for the Educational Process in Primary and Secondary Education; (6) Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia No. 23 of 2016 concerning Educational Assessment Standards; (7) Regulation of the	Internal challenges related to the eight educational standards and external challenges related to globalization and current global issues.	To foster a balance between spiritual and social attitudes, curiosity, creativity, and cooperation, along with intellectual and psychomotor skills.	Learning is student-centered, interactive, network-based, and active.



	Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia No. 24 of 2016 concerning Core Competencies and Basic Competencies for Subjects in the 2013 Curriculum (Mulyasa, 2013).			
Merdeka Curriculum	The legal basis for the “Merdeka” curriculum is as follows: (1) the 1945 Constitution; (2) Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System; (3) Government Regulation No. 4 of 2022 on Amendments to Government Regulation No. 57 of 2021 on National Education Standards; (4) Presidential Regulation No. 18 of 2020 on the 2020–2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan; (5) Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation No. 13 of 2022; (6) Decision of the Minister of Research, Technology, and Higher Education No. 56 of 2022 on Guidelines for Curriculum Implementation in Support of Learning Recovery (Yenti, Hefrita & Fadriati, 2024)	The curriculum update was implemented in response to the evaluation of the 2013 Curriculum, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and advancements in science and technology that call for the strengthening of 21st-century competencies. Through Merdeka Belajar, the curriculum has been simplified to foster deeper and more meaningful learning, while also shaping students who are critical thinkers, creative, collaborative, communicative, and of good character in accordance with the Pancasila Student Profile.	Focusing on curriculum simplification, learning flexibility, character building through the Pancasila Student Profile, and competency-based learning (Marlin, Farhan & Dewi, 2025).	Teachers serve as facilitators who design learner-centered, contextual, and differentiated instruction that fosters meaningful learning experiences (Marlin, Farhan & Dewi, 2025).

Based on an overview of the curriculum reform initiatives that have been and are currently being implemented in Indonesia, it is evident that every curriculum change is rooted in a need for reform



stemming from issues within society. These changes are intended as innovations in education to produce high-quality graduates who are capable of competing in the future.

Currently, the curriculum implemented in Indonesia is the “Merdeka” curriculum, which has been adapted to cultural, social, and technological aspects, taking local needs into account and aligning the education system with global developments (Nurjannah, 2024). The “Merdeka” curriculum was developed using a flexible approach that grants teachers freedom in the learning process based on students’ needs and contexts (Pahrudin, 2019). This “Merdeka” curriculum centers on the Pancasila learner profile, emphasizing students’ personal abilities such as creativity, critical thinking, and independence (Komalasari, 2023). By focusing on the development of the Pancasila learner profile, it is hoped that students will become competitive in the global marketplace, adaptable to change, and innovative.

4. CONCLUSION

The administration of Dutch colonial education in Indonesia from 1900 to 1942 was indeed inseparable from the forms and types of schools during the Dutch colonial era, which consisted of Elementary Education (Lager Onderwijs)—divided into two categories: Dutch-language elementary schools (ELS, HCS, and HIS) and schools using regional or local languages (second-class native schools, village schools, and transitional schools); Secondary Education (Middlebaar Onderwijs), which consisted of general secondary schools (MULO and AMS) and higher schools for citizens (HBS); and Higher Education (GHS, RHS, and THS). Dutch colonial policies were implemented consistently because, until the early twentieth century, the Netherlands continued to prioritize the interests of its government; even after the emergence of the “ethical policy,” it was still evident that the interests of the indigenous people were not a priority for them. Since Indonesia gained independence in 1945, the country’s curriculum has undergone at least ten revisions. These include the curricula of 1947, 1952, 1964, 1968, 1975, 1984, 1994, the competency-based curriculum of 2004, the KTSP of 2006, and the 2013 curriculum. Indonesia has learned a great deal from these curricula. Based on their type, these eleven curricula can be divided into three categories: 1) the curriculum as a lesson plan (1947–1968 curriculum), 2) the goal-based curriculum (1975–1994 curriculum), and 3) the competency-based curriculum (2004 curriculum – Merdeka Curriculum).

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