

# English Language Influences on the Sociocultural Heritage of Indonesia for Socioeconomic Growth and Sustainable Development

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**Abstract**—The paper examined the Influence of English Languages on the Sociocultural Heritage of Indonesia and its potential for Sustainable Growth and Sustainable Development. In addition, it highlighted the nexus between the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Agenda (UN-SDGs) and dynamics of Indonesia's diverse sociocultural heritage. The findings suggest that differences in cultures are manifested in terms of Values, Rituals, Heroes and Symbols. Furthermore, culture can be observed to be the heart of the process, ideas, policies, and stakeholder actions required for fostering socioeconomic growth. Therefore, embracing cultural heritage and multicultural diversity will help achieve the UN SDGs. Furthermore, multiculturalism and social diversity in Indonesia provides platform for the dissemination of ideas, policies and strategies. This is based on the premise that culture, heritage and social diversity significantly influence socioeconomic growth and sustainable development as described in UN SDG goals. Furthermore, the importance of harmonious existence between individuals and the ideas, policies and strategies of national governments is vital to Indonesia's socioeconomic development. In conclusion, the study finds that the English language influences the sociocultural heritage of diverse societies like Indonesia and can be a unifying factor if harnessed properly.

**Keywords**—Cultural Heritage; Social Diversity; Sustainable; Development; Indonesia.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is the world's largest archipelago located between the Indian and Pacific Oceans on the geographic coordinates 5 00 S, 120 00 E in Southeast Asia. The country is made up of over 18,000 islands covering a total area of 1, 904, 569 sq km with borders next to Timor Leste, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea. The tropical climate of Indonesia is typically dominated by hot, humid and moderate conditions influenced by its proximity to coastal lowlands, island terrains and interior mountains [1-3].

The nation has an estimated population of 256 million people comprising various ethnic and religious groups. The ethnic groups comprise Javanese 40.1%, Sundanese 15.5%, Malay 3.7%, Batak 3.6%,

Madurese 3%, Betawi 2.9%, Minangkabau 2.7%, Buginese 2.7%, Bantenese 2%, Banjarese 1.7%, Balinese 1.7%, Acehese 1.4%, Dayak 1.4%, Sasak 1.3%, Chinese 1.2%, while other groups make up 15% of the population. Based on religious diversity, the population comprises 87.2% Muslims, 9.9% Christians, 1.7% Hindu, while Buddhists and Confucians make up 0.9%. Consequently, Indonesia is home to the largest population of Muslims in the world [4].

Economically, Indonesia is the largest economy in Southeast Asia with Gross Domestic Product (GDP Purchasing Power Parity) of \$2.84 trillion based on 4.7% real growth rate. The economy dominated by activities in agriculture (13.6%), industry (42.8%) and services (43.6%) [1, 5]. Consequently, Indonesia is a major exporter of commodities and industrial products such as palm oil, rubber products, cocoa, coffee, petroleum and natural gas amounting to over \$150 billion annually which makes the nation heavily dependent on commodities trading [6]. However, the global financial crises has slowed growth over the years resulting in the end of the commodities boom and widespread economic problems. In addition, Indonesia is plagued by poverty, unemployment, poor infrastructure, and other socioeconomic and environmental trials. Consequently, these factors along with other historical and cultural dynamics have resulted in increased social tensions [7-9].

However the diverse ethnic, religious and cultural dynamics of Indonesia can be channeled into positive outcomes especially as the nation strives to become one of the world's major economies. At the heart of this endeavour is the need to foster harmonious social, ethnic and cultural coexistence among its citizens. This view is corroborated by the by United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ratified in September 2015. According to the charter, understanding cultural heritage and social diversity is a fundamental feature for long term socioeconomic growth and sustainable development. In addition, this can play a fundamental role in alleviating poverty and stimulating comprehensive human-centred development of the country [10-12].

Therefore this paper seeks to identify, examine and highlight the influence of English Language on the sociocultural heritage and diversity of Indonesia and

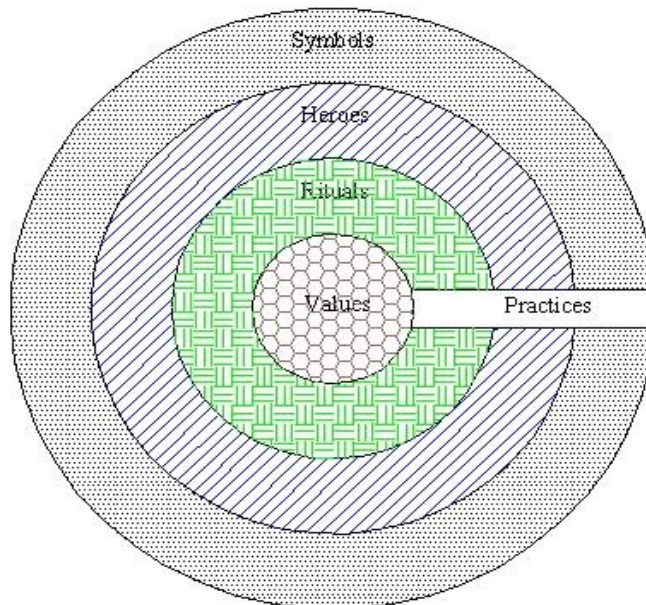
its effects on the socioeconomic growth and sustainable development for the future. The paper will highlight the nexus between the dynamics of the nation's diverse sociocultural heritage and its role the realization of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Agenda.

## II. CULTURE, HERITAGE AND SOCIAL DIVERSITY

Culture can be defined as the collection of knowledge, experiences, beliefs, values, religion and ways to life of a people. It can also mean the knowledge systems, modes of communication, and cultivated behaviours shared by a group of people across generations. Sociologists opine that culture consist of implicit or explicit patterns of social

behaviour communicated through symbols, artefacts and traditional ideologies [13].

However, one of the most widely accepted definitions of culture was proposed by the British anthropologist *Edward Tylor* who described culture as a "set of different activities distinctive of all human societies" [14]. Over the years, his disposition has helped shape the modern concepts and comprehension of culture in different societies around the globe. The differences in cultures can be understood in terms of four ways typically termed manifestations; *Values, Rituals, Heroes* and *Symbols* as depicted in Figure 1[13].



**Figure 1:** Different Levels of Cultural Manifestation [13].

The *Symbols* are demonstrated in the form of words, gestures, objects or artefacts in the culture of the people. The *Heroes* refer to individuals in the past or present whose peculiar attributes or actions have significantly influenced the people and culture. In contrast, *Rituals* represent the collective activities essential to the social welfare of the culture. Lastly, the *Values* form the fundamental basis of the culture of any people. Therefore the collection of all the physical and non-physical attributes that define the way of life or culture of people in any society.

The heritage of a people refers to all the physical artefacts or attributes of any people or society passed down from previous generations for preservation of their cultures. It can be divided into two parts namely; tangible and intangible heritage. The tangible heritage comprises the structures, monuments, backgrounds, literary and artistic artefacts whereas the intangible heritage comprises the myths, legends, traditions, and language [15]. It stands to reason that culture and heritage are one and the same concepts. However, according to the *UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health*, social diversity refers to the varied range of

interests, backgrounds and experiences among groups of people or individuals in a society. The variations are typically based on their ethnicity, race, religion, gender, language or other sociological metrics [16].

According to the United Nations (UN), the principle of culture, heritage and social diversity is at the heart of policies and investments aimed securing successful global development [17]. Therefore, the inclusion of culture in the global roadmap paves way for the socioeconomic growth and sustainable development. This will significantly aid the attainment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDGs) aimed safeguarding the future of citizens of developing countries like Indonesia. Furthermore, it will stimulate long term investments in education, infrastructure, health, environment, as well as peaceful and inclusive societies of the future [17, 18]. Similarly the World Commission on Culture and Development (WCCD) opines the contribution of culture is strategic to sustainable development. Furthermore, the WCCD states that, "there is an intrinsic value of culture to a society, irrespective of its

place in the human development index (HDI), which is apparent to everyone and which makes it a development outcome in itself". Therefore, culture is considered to be the source of progress of creativity required for growth and development. Consequently, developing countries like Indonesia with over 300 ethnic groups are encouraged to embrace its diverse languages, folk music, arts and literature of its peoples as yardstick for future development [17].

### III. SOCIOCULTURAL HERITAGE AND SDGS

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) refers to a set of policy objectives drafted and ratified by the United Nations (UN) and world leaders at the Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015. The objectives of the SDGs initiative, also termed the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" is to eliminate global poverty, inequality and injustice, and climate change by 2030 [10]. Consequently, the seventeen (17) goals of the SDGs and its associated 169 targets have been integrated into the United

Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Strategic Plan Focus areas. These include; sustainable development, democratic governance and peacebuilding, and climate and disaster resilience.

Figure 2 presents charter of the SDGs which seeks to address global issues of poverty, Food, Health, Environment, Gender equality, Women, Water, Energy, Economy, Infrastructure, Habitation, Consumption, Climate, Marine ecosystems, Ecosystems, Institutions, and Sustainability [10]. Based on the ratified resolution, the United Nations (UN) has organised an integrated programme to support progress in the realization of the goals crucial to sustainable development around the globe [10-12]. As part of the objectives of this paper, the nexus between the SDGs and Indonesia's cultural heritage will be examined as a yardstick for socioeconomic growth and sustainable development.



**Figure 2:** Sustainable Development Goals charter [12].

To this effect, the UN has envisioned supporting developing countries achieve the global goals by developing the three pronged MAPS approach of *mainstreaming*, *acceleration* and *policy* support. Therefore, the UN plans to provide the framework, resources and capacity to aid national governments implement their developmental plans in line with the global agenda on SDG.

Crucial to this is the need for didactic, debates, and dialogue amongst national stakeholders comprising the diverse ethnic, religious and social groups within the country. This will help strengthen global as well as national partnerships for policy implementation. However this raises fundamental questions. How can national policies and social dynamics like culture

contribute to socioeconomic growth in developing countries? How will developing countries like Indonesia tackle socioeconomic problems and achieve the goals of SDGs by 2030? What is the role and level of participating of national governments in the quest for sustainable development?

#### A. Role of National Policies

The role of national policies and social dynamics like culture in fostering socioeconomic growth in developing countries is multifaceted. Firstly, the culture and heritage of individuals in a society provides a basis for identifying, examining and highlighting its socioeconomic and geopolitical challenges. Therefore, policy makers often seek to

consult all stakeholders within the sociocultural realm of their societies when drafting and implementing national policies with human impacts. Furthermore, cultural heritage and by extension the social diversity within societies plays a fundamental economic base for trade, investments, growth and development.

In addition, the WCCD posits that culture presents multicultural societies like Indonesia with the economic base for development. This is particularly evident in the provision of green jobs, poverty reduction schemes, and sustainable cities, low carbon materials technologies [19], preserving land [20], oceans and forests [21-23]. Furthermore, thorough understanding of cultures can improve and strengthen the resilience of communities towards natural disasters and environmental hazards [24, 25]. This based on the premise that culture is at the heart of the UN SDG strategy and powerful driving factor for enabling sustainable development in developing countries [11, 17].

#### B. Role of National Governments

The role of national governments in the quest for sustainable development can be through stakeholder participation, supervising and implementing policy. The social diversity of nations like Indonesia provides multicultural platform for the dissemination of ideas, policies and strategies for socioeconomic growth and sustainable development. Therefore, the government has sort to development the nation's vast solid minerals, forest, maritime resources as well as strategic investments in national infrastructure. To this effect, the government has earmarked over USD\$22 billion, the largest in Indonesia's history, for infrastructural development in the country. The funds will be expended on the expansion of roads, railways, development of airports and seaports, in addition to agricultural and irrigation programmes [26].

In general, the role of culture, heritage and social diversity in socioeconomic growth and sustainable development can be linked to the SDG goals. For example the SDG goals 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16 all relate to direct human interaction with the socioeconomic growth and sustainable development. In addition, the goals highlight the importance of harmonious existence between individuals within a society and the ideas, policies and strategies of national governments.

According to Van der Kroef [27] the removal of sociocultural obstacles can potential improve Indonesia's path to socioeconomic development in the future. Therefore, the general consensus among policy analysts and social commentators is that the cultural heritage of individuals in multicultural societies can be a unifying factor if properly harnessed [28-30]. The social diversity amongst such groups can be directed at niche development and strategic management of the natural, human and mineral resources in various communities.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The paper examined the influence of English language on the sociocultural heritage and diversity of Indonesian society. In addition, it highlighted its influence on socioeconomic growth and sustainable development of Indonesia for the future. The nexus between the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Agenda and dynamics of Indonesia's diverse sociocultural heritage was established. The findings suggest that culture is at the heart of the process, ideas, policies, and stakeholder actions required for development. Hence the government of the country must embrace its cultural heritage and multicultural diversity to establish future gains from the UN SDGs.

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