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Indigenous Peoples, Poverty and the Role of Social Workers

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Abstract

Indigenous peoples were placed as second-class citizens, that have fallen behind in all aspects of life than any other citizen. In fact, indigenous people in any country has gained international legal protection through 'the United Nations Declaration the Right of Indigenous People' since 2007. In the entity, within the indigenous peoples, including women and children. The form of response to the declaration, each country develop policies in the form of regulation and followed by action programs targeting indigenous peoples. It has been over 10 years of the declaration proclaimed, but the indigenous peoples still face a lot of problems in the social, cultural, economic, political, legal, land and natural resources; not even the women and their children. This situation requires the presence of a social work profession, in which the role of professional help to acquire rights, improve the quality of life and well-being of indigenous peoples.

Key words: indigenous peoples, poverty, social worker

Introduction

Indigenous peoples as the guardian of some of the region's most biologically diverse in the world. They feel a responsibility for a large number of languages and cultural diversity of the world, and their traditional knowledge has been and continues to be an invaluable something that benefits for the human race (Zukang, 2009). They have the traditional ecological knowledge and contribute to the environmental management, biodiversity conservation and use of natural resources in a sustainable manner (Berkes. Colding and Folke, 2000; Mauro & Hardison, 2000; Sobrevila, 2008; FAO, 2010; Popova, 2013).

Indigenous peoples have knowledge of disaster mitigation based on the provisions of customary, traditional knowledge wisely in preventing disaster risk reduction and disaster resilience (& Jha Jha, 2011; Rumbach & Foley, 2014). They have indigenous knowledge and culture that includes a lot of material and nonmaterial values as traditional resource rights, as recognized in international law (Mauro & Hardison, 2000; IAIA. 2012; Berkert, Colding, and Folke, 2000). the description above shows the world that indigenous peoples have contributed and major role in human development and environmentally sustainable manner.

An irony, that indigenous peoples until now still continue to expect the country present among them, pay attention, respect and protection of their rights. In connection with that, they struggle commitment

towards these rights continues to be made by a variety of risks they have to face it. But they could not expect much to parliament that supposedly represents them. As reported in the publication of the United Nations (2012), that the indigenous peoples as social groups living in poverty always slighted or not considered important by politicians, service providers, and policymakers. This is due to the lack of sound political, financial and social capital; and hence experiencing social exclusion, discrimination and human rights violations happening to them (see UN, 2012).

Indigenous People scattered in 90 countries (UN, 2009), with a population of five (5) percent of the world's population, or about 300 million. Presented by Patrinos (2017) of the World Bank, the distribution of the population of indigenous peoples in the world: Southeast Asia amounting to 30 million (10%), in China amounted to 108 million (36%), South Asia 36 million (32%), Switzerland by 25 million (5%), Africa 21 million (7%), in Latin America amounted to 24 million (8%) and in the United States and Canada amounted to 3 million (1%).

Of these, an estimated 10-15 percent or 30 million - 45 million people live in poverty (Patrinos, 2017), and the poverty is already in the category of extreme poverty or chronic poverty. Besides the poverty, they face problems are relating to the rights that have not been getting attention, respect for and protection of the state. In this context, the presence of social workers highly anticipated to help them obtain their rights (UN, 2010; Gigler, 2009; Zukang, 2009; Velasques, 2007; Calma, 2008; Hulme, Moore & Shepherd, 2001; CPRC, 2007).

Concepts and Issues Indigenous Peoples

Social groups that occupy a certain area for generations in the same lineage (homogeneous), has a strong attachment to nature; customary provide very strong influence on the social system, economy, culture, and politics, and have a different way of life to the dominant community (Hamton & Toms, 2013; Anderson, Schneider & Kayseas 2008; Fekadu, 2007; UN 2004, 2009; ADB, 2002; 5Dowing .et.al, 2002); and geographically remote (Sudirman, 2018; Walker, Hamilton & Groth, 2014; Castillo, 2004; Coates, 2004); known as 'indigenous peoples.

In these discussions, used the term 'indigenous peoples', which is a term officially used by the United Nations, multilateral agencies and institutions as well as working groups in international forums. The United Nations itself does not impose these terms to member countries, does not give a clear definition of indigenous peoples, and give freedom to each country to construct the definition according to the needs and context of each country. In Indonesia used the term Indigenous Peoples Customary Law and Remote Indigenous Communities (Arizona, 2016; Kleden, 2017; SAFE and AIPP, 2017); Malaysia used the term Orang Asli (Abdullah, Borhan & Ahmad, 2015); Maori in New Zealand, Aboriginal Peoples in Canada (Cornell, 2006).

The existence of indigenous peoples has gained recognition in international law, namely in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), since 2007. Since the UNDRIP had been proclaimed by various states to enact such regulations in an effort to provide formal recognition by law to the existence of indigenous peoples. Various programs launched by the government and multilateral agencies, such as in education, health, shelter, clean water and economic enterprises (Feiring, 2008; Melendes & Loenzo, 2014; Islam & Carlsen, 2015; Morley, 2015).

It has been over 10 years of UNDRIP is implemented, but until now the indigenous people's in all over the world still face the problems in social, cultural, economic, legal, political, natural resources and land. Here are some examples of the reality of the condition of indigenous peoples in some country after proclaimed UNDRIP. Amnesty International (2014) found violence against women in Canada; and discrimination and injustice by most governments in Asia (AIPP, IWGIA and Forum Asia, 2019), including in the Philippines and Indonesia (Rutten, 2016). Access to health services, education and limited employment; and the indicators show, that access to and use of these services remains well below the national average in most countries.

Women and children of indigenous peoples are often victims of discrimination (ILO, 2011); and victims of violence (Kuokkanen.R 2012). In Mexican, women suffer from dilapidated health quality due to a lack of education, poverty and inadequate medical staff (Loewenberg, 2010); in Bolivia girls and boys are most vulnerable to unqualified education performance and high dropout rate (Jimenez, & Vera, 2010); and in Peru forced and early marriage, gender-based violence, unwanted pregnancies, and public health services are inadequate (Astrid & Girard, 2008). In Mexico a higher level of deprivation in social rights for indigenous peoples than for non-indigenous peoples community (Canedo, 2017).

Attention to indigenous peoples, should not be based on their population alone. More than that, that they as citizens of a sovereign state, and has the human rights protected by international law. Attention also needs to be given exclusively for women and children (see UNDRIP, 2007; UNICEF, 2003). This means, that the discussion of indigenous peoples, including the groups of women and children; and this will have implications for social work services are needed.

Complex issues on indigenous peoples show a portrait of the failure of countries to integrate their national program with the rights of indigenous peoples. The Global development paradigm that declared by 189 countries in 2000 is known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - ended in 2015; does not have a significant impact on problem-solving related to indigenous peoples. Therefore, a rethinking of the concept of development is needed to be aimed at indigenous peoples (UN, 2015; Christie, 2015). Subsequently, in 2015 until 2030 the global agenda was declared by 193 countries, known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The academics community needs to oversee the implementation of the agenda firsthand how SDGs with 17 objectives, to bring the significant impacts for the living conditions of indigenous peoples everywhere.

Indigenous Peoples and Poverty

Poverty is a fundamental problem related to indigenous peoples all over the countries. An estimated, 10-15 percent of indigenous peoples are categorized as poor and very poor (Patrinos, 2017; UNDP, 2010; 2017; UN, 2009; ADB, 2002). On indigenous peoples' poverty is already in the category of extreme poverty (UN, 2010; Gigler, 2009; Zukang, 2009; Velasques, 2007); or chronic poverty is the poverty has been transmitted between generations, and tend to be relatively intractable (Hulme, Moore & Shepherd, 2001); living under the poverty, feelings the loss of multi-dimension priority aspects in life, such as income, health and education, low levels of social or political material and the marginal assets that last for years in the whole period of the life cycle, or continuous from generation to generation (CPRC, 2007) .

To measure extreme poverty, Velsques (2007) determined several variables there are demography, level of education, remoteness, and market, employment status of the head of household, land ownership, livestock, socio-ethnicity, migration and regional development. Indigenous peoples poverty characterized by low health status, low level of education, slums environment and the risk of hunger, which can be explained as follows:

- i. Poor health status has a greater risk of affected throat cancer, malnutrition, and high morbidity and mortality (Vera, 2007; FAO, 2010; Hall & Petranos, 2011; 2015; Dhir, 2015). Poor health status, especially on women, children, and adolescents. This is due to the limited indigenous peoples accessing health services, such as goods and others health facilities, including medicines, clean water, sanitation, and inadequate the number of health workers trained (Calma, 2008; Islam and Sheikh, 2010; Heineke & Edward, 2012; UN, 2014; Valeggia & Snodgrass, 2015; Reading & Wein, 2013).
- ii. Lower educational status, in general, the head of household has less than four years of schooling, and less than three percent of the total population has a training outside the high school (World Bank in Agostini, Brown & Roman, 2008). This happens because they are very difficult to access the education (Eversole & Cimadamore, 2005). Low skills and education have an impact on the scale of income, employment, health, housing and other poverty indices (Henson.et.al in Cornell, 2006).

- iii. Slums or Poor environmental conditions, has affected by climate change, all of which affect the resilience of the foods that cause them to experience hunger. They also lost their traditional lands and livelihoods as a result of the damaged environment (Clarke, 2001; Macchi.eds 2008; Gigler, 2009; Davis, 2010; FAO, 2010; Hall & Petranos 2011; IWGA, 2015; Dhir, 2015; Patrinos, 2017).

Poverty is forced by indigenous peoples, not only caused by internal factors are the limited skills (life skills), beside that the external factor also has a big impact such a geographically where the location of settlements from indigenous peoples are classified as a minimal access or remote. (Sudirman, 2018; Suradi.et.al, 2007, 2013); there are injustices and discrimination in the social, economic, and political fields (May & Aikman, 2003; Freeman & Fox, 2005; Agostini, Brown & Roman, 2008; Gigler, 2009; Burridge, Whalan & Vaughan, 2012; Gordon & White, 2014).

Indigenous peoples become victims of large-scale development impacts (Mommott, Stacy, Chambers & Keys, 2001); and cannot escape being a victim of ethnocide from government policies that seek to promote a uniform national culture, and are affected by the deterioration of social order and political stability (Clarke, 2001). They are evicted or rejected when accessing the natural resources for survival, give the stereotype of the "backward", "uncivilized", "primitive" and "uncivilized" or "pillory state" (ACHPR, 2006; UN, 2009).

Role of Social Workers

At the international level, the social work profession occupies a very important position on the concept of human rights (Reichert, 2001); and therefore the social worker defined as human rights workers (Calma, 2008). Social work based human rights is important in all work performed, but perhaps more so for indigenous peoples. They are generally low in a number of social indicators, so they need to start from a base where they do not have the same chance of living as non-indigenous peoples (Calma, 2008).

The Code of Ethics asserts the main principles and values of social work are human dignity and social justice. Self-esteem or human dignity means that social workers respect the dignity that inherits in everyone, and respect for human rights that assert in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Social justice includes the satisfaction of basic needs; fair access to services and potential development, as well as the recognition of individuals and community rights (Calma, 2008).

As a human rights worker, social worker with indigenous peoples need to understand the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which was proclaimed the United Nations in 2007. The UNDRIP is seen and placed by the member of countries as international law, and as a framework for empowering indigenous peoples. This becomes important because in UNDRIP the rights of indigenous peoples, including women and children, on them are arranged clearly and unequivocally - were duly gain recognition, respect, and protection by the state.

The role that can be done be performed by social workers in helping indigenous peoples to faced the problems are:

- i. Social workers who work in advocacy involved in the protection and defense of indigenous peoples. Rights of indigenous peoples need defense and protection, such as rights to land, natural resources, civil and political rights, security, justice and non-discrimination. in these advocates role, social workers will deal and face with the state (bureaucracy), and the stakeholders who have power in order to distribute the power to indigenous peoples.
- ii. Facilitators, social workers help indigenous peoples to access social services and basic social needs. Such as services: education, health care, clean water, housing, income and social security. The sources of these services not only on government institutions but also in the business community, NGOs and the public community. The role of the faciilitator, social

workers will deal with the state (bureaucracy), and stakeholders who have resources in order to distribute the proposal to indigenous peoples.

- iii. Educators, social workers are involved in the process of change of indigenous peoples through capacity building. On behalf developing of this capacity, social learn together to understand the problems, potential, and their needs; so that they are able to make a plan, make rational decisions, and carry out productive activities. Relating to self-determination, indigenous peoples have the ability to control programs that have a direct impact on them, and participate directly in the social, cultural, environmental and political (developed from Calma, 2008).

These various roles will be implemented optimally when social workers have adequate knowledge, practical experience, and demonstrated their competence. According to the Aboriginal Community Social Work (2013), the competence of social worker with indigenous peoples, as follows:

- i. Traditional knowledge lies in the native culture.
- ii. Knowledge and understanding of the native language associated with the context, values, and relationships.
- iii. Knowledge of the values in practice in community service: reciprocity, interdependence, interrelation, and participation.
- iv. Awareness of the knowledge and expertise that is not appropriate, or contrary to the theory and social work approach.
- v. Participation in cultural activities.
- vi. Knowledge of various levels and kinship systems.
- vii. Knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework for social work with indigenous peoples.
- viii. Knowledge of psychology and religion, social theory, policy and legal, education and research.
- ix. Quick response to various services that indigenous peoples' needs.

Regard to culture, according to Weafer (1999) it necessary to include cultural issues as an important factor in the process of assistance in social work with indigenous peoples. According to the literature, now social work has moved from cultural sensitivity (*cultural sensitivity*) to cultural competence (*Cultural competence*), which is an ability to integrate cultural knowledge and sensitivity with the skills for the help process that is more effective and culturally appropriate (see NASW, 2001).

The importance of this cultural competence put forward by Vinkle (2012), throughout the education that followed in the field of social work, had learned about the importance of cultural competence as it relates to the profession of helping and working with Aboriginal communities. It was stated, when social work practice, they recognize that cultural competence in working with Aboriginal communities is a necessity. It will be able to explain that the actions taken by the social workers are aimed to achieving the goals.

Conclusion

Indigenous peoples in any country as a minority, second-class citizens and based on this situation, they have to face a lot of limitation for survival. They live in isolation in accordance with social, cultural and geographical, victims of injustice, discrimination, and deprivation of land and natural resources; causing them y to be poor in the category of extreme poverty or poverty cronies.

The presence of a social worker is highly anticipated by indigenous peoples to help find solutions to the problems they face. The role of social workers as an advocate, facilitator, and educator; expected to be able to bring the country and stakeholders to provide recognition, respect, and protection of their human rights. As like as other citizens, indigenous peoples have easy access to various of services such as education, health, water, housing, land, and capital; so that their standard of living will get better.

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