

Local Wisdom of the Community in Conserving Forests And Land in Meranti Islands Regency, Riau Province

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ABSTRACT

The research was conducted in March 2018 in the Meranti Islands Regency using the survey method. The study aims to analyze the local wisdom of the community in conserving forests and land in the Meranti Islands Regency as well as their socio-cultural, economic and ecological impacts. The results of the study showed that the local wisdom of the community in conserving the forest by planting sago and bele kampung tradition.

Keywords: local wisdom, sago plants, bele kampung.

PRELIMINARY

Forest and land fires in Indonesia are currently in the spotlight and a hot topic in the midst of communities and various parties including the mass media, because the smoke pollution caused by forest and land fires is not only local but has also become a regional issue and even internationally (Aiken, 2004; Jones, 2006, and Litta, 2012). Riau Province is one of the areas that has almost every year the potential for forest and land fires. The smoke disaster that has occurred in Riau Province due to forest and land fires has an impact on all aspects of life.

The fires that occurred in Riau Province were mostly located in the forest and peatland areas, one of which was in the forest area in the Meranti Islands Regency. Peat soil in Meranti Islands Regency is a type of trophic peat soil formed by ancient plant residues that are layered up to a thickness of more than 30 cm. Organic matter that forms peat soil generally has a thickness above 75 cm, even in some locations its thickness is more than 3 m (Meranti-Bapeda RTRW, 2011-2013).

Various studies to prevent forest and land fires have been carried out, but not much progress has been made to overcome this problem, especially fires in forests and peatlands. Meranti Islands Regency has local wisdom that has existed since the Kingdom of Siak. Therefore, research was conducted to analyze the local wisdom owned by the community that was able to protect the forests and land in the Meranti Islands Regency, Riau Province.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research has been carried out in eight villages in five districts within the territory of Meranti Islands Regency - Riau Province, namely Bagan Melibur Village and Mekar Sari Village in Merbau District, Mengkirau Village and Mengkopot Village in Tasik Putri Puyu District, Pangkalan Balai Village and Renak Dungun Village in the District Merbau Island, Kundur Village in Tebing Tinggi Barat District, and Alahair Village in Tebing Tinggi District.

This study has used a qualitative approach with survey methods. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews with informants to find out the local wisdom in the Meranti Islands Regency community. Maleong (2010) describes the research subject as an informant, meaning that people in the research setting are used to provide information about the situation and background conditions of the study.

The selection of informants is done by using purposive sampling method, with the following criteria:

1. Having expertise or academically mastering the field under study.
2. Having a reputation for position or position and as an expert in the field under study.
3. Having experience in the field of study under study.
4. Key informants to be interviewed were: Kepulauan Meranti District Forestry Service Head, Village Head, BPD Head, Customary Leaders and Community Leaders.

Data analysis techniques used in analyzing the local wisdom owned by the community in conserving forests and land in the Kepulauan Meranti Regency of Riau Province are as follows: the data obtained is written in the form of reports or detailed data. Reports prepared based on the data obtained are reduced, summarized, selected key points, focused on important matters. Data resulting from the reading and sorting out based on a particular concept, theme and category will provide a sharper picture of the results of the observation, making it easier for researchers to search for additional data on previous data obtained if needed.

Data analysis uses the Milles and Huberman models. Data analysis activities include data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing / verification. Reducing data means summarizing, choosing key things, focusing on important things, and looking

for patterns. After the data is reduced, the next step displays. Data is presented in narrative form, tables and pictures. The next step is to verify and draw conclusions. An interactive analysis model is presented in Figure 1.

The data collected has been recapitulated. In connection with the data collected in part qualitative, the analysis used is "content analysis" approach. The data obtained are categorized according to the subject matter and are made in the form of a matrix so that it makes it easier for researchers to see patterns of relationship between one data and other data.

From the previous activities, the next step is to conclude and verify the data that has been processed or transferred into forms that are in accordance with the pattern of problem solving. Researchers must arrive at conclusions and verify, both in terms of meaning and truth of the conclusions agreed upon at the place where the research was carried out. The meaning formulated by researchers from the data must be tested for its truth, suitability and robustness. Researchers must realize that in seeking meaning, must use the emic approach, namely from the eyes of the key informants, and not the interpretation of meaning in the view of the researcher (ethical view).

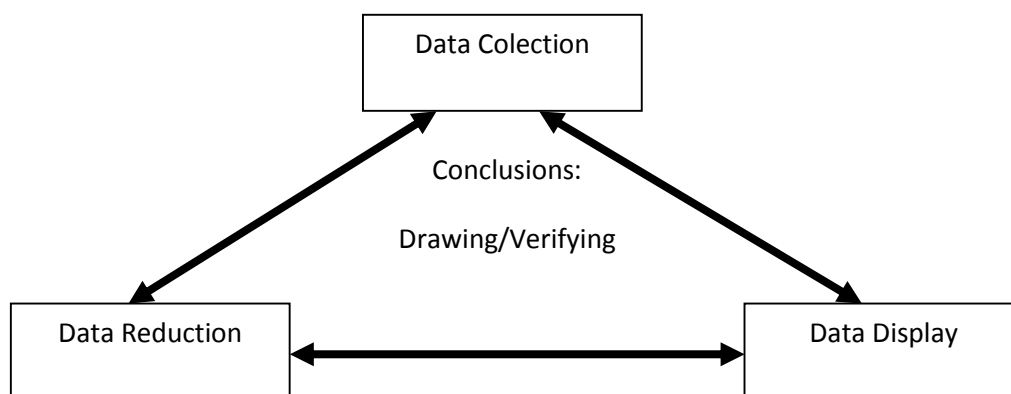


Figure 1. Components in Qualitative Data Analysis

(Miles and Huberman in Sugiyono, 2005)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Cultivation of Sago Plants

One of the nicknames / titles of the Meranti Islands Regency is Meranti as Sagu City. This is not excessive because almost every district in this regency has a sago plantation area. Sago or in scientific language called *Metroxylon sagu* is also one of the raw materials for processed food products that are interested in the Meranti Islands Regency.

The environmental conditions of an area cannot be separated from the pattern of life or culture of the community. Traditions or customs that are very determined by the conditions of the environment that creates the values of life in the environment which

is known as local wisdom. Sago has a cultural function that regulates and binds its community through various cultural mechanisms that are formed based on long experience and understanding and interpretation of society towards its environment. The cultural functions of sago plants include social, economic, political and ecological functions.

The culture of eating sago noodles, or sago rendang has fused with the people in the Meranti Islands Regency. Therefore, efforts to develop sago processed products in order to verify sago-based food will not have a major problem in the Meranti Islands Regency. Some peasant communities depend their lives on the sago business. This shows that sago has a role in sustaining the economy of the community. From the ecological aspect, sago has a role as a reservoir of water, buffer in coastal areas, and CO₂ absorption. This ecological function is very important for island district areas such as Meranti. .

Based on the collaboration between the government of Meranti Islands Regency and Balitpalma Manado, the certificate of release of sago variety has been issued with the name Selatpanjang Meranti variety.

1. Socio-cultural aspects

The cultivation of local communities in Meranti Islands Regency is planting sago. Sago is a local wisdom plant that has been cultivated by the people since the Kingdom of Siak. Sago plants do not require high cultivation technology, maintenance is light and accommodates a lot of labor. Sago plants can no longer be separated from the lives of people in Meranti Islands Regency as well as supporting food security as well as providing employment opportunities for people in Meranti Islands Regency. In line with Hariyanto's research (2011) stated that the processing of the sago will be able to accommodate the workforce and is expected to drive other economies. In order for sago added value to increase and sago tree raw material prices also increase, the products produced are not only sago starch but in the form of vermicelli or functional food that functions as health food.

2. Economic aspects

Besides being superior to its functional properties as a buffer for food security, sago also has a fairly good economic value. Sago plants as food security in terms of family food security based on local wisdom in the region will enrich Indonesian food commodities while at the same time encouraging food independence at the local and national levels in the future. Sago plants in Meranti Islands Regency have a price that promises the price of sago trees per lumber (tual) is calculated based on the sago lumber obtained. One tree only contains 5-7 tual sizes of 80-100 cm. One sago lumber at the location of the sago plant is only valued at Rp. 40,000 / tual dirty or Rp. 25,000 / tual clean. Price of Rp. 40,000 / tual dirty includes harvesting and lifting up to the sago factory. Sago stem collection activities for sale can be seen in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Activities of collecting sago stems for sale.

The results of this study are also consistent with research (Rahayu et.al, 2013), explaining that sago plants are food security for local communities, diverse and productivity problems with habitat. Sago plants in Padang Island grow and develop in peat habitats, sweet refinery habitats, clay habitats and brackish swamps and while these habitats are increasingly pressed due to land conversion into a variety of purposes for example residential development and plantation crops. Also in line with the results of the study (Kanro, et.al., 2003) states that sago has an important social, economic and cultural role in Papua Province, because it is a staple food for people, especially those living in coastal areas. Sago produktivity is increasingly depressed as a result of competition with other types of sago and exploitation to meet food needs. Without rehabilitation or cultivation activities, productive sago threatened with extinction. There are 20 types of sago were identified in Santani and 60 types of sago in Jayapura, Manokwari, Sorong and Mareuke.

3. Ecological aspects

Sago plants can maintain the surrounding water system. Several facts on the ground show that many in rural areas have water sources in the form of showers and around them are sago plants. As much as 60% of the Meranti Islands are peatland areas, the peatland in Meranti Islands Regency is quite wide the chance of sago land fires is large enough if it is supported by a long dry season. Therefore we need plants that can store water, namely sago plants. On Meranti Islands, there is sea water intrusion (entry or movement of salt water to freshwater aquifers that can contaminate drinking water / fresh water) and sago plants are able to survive at certain salt levels. The condition of the sago plantation in the Meranti Islands Regency can be seen in Figure 3.



Figure 3. State of the Sago Plantation Community of Meranti Islands Regency

Based on the results of in-depth interviews with informants that planting sago in the Meranti Islands Regency has existed since a long time ago but the world is growing, sago plants also get influence, at the beginning of sago become a mainstay business but the end becomes left behind from other plant commodities, in other words sago over time will be abandoned by the community, especially in the Meranti Islands Regency. Based on the results of interviews with informants, the problem of sago plants in the Meranti Islands Regency is the local government has not been seriously committed to maintaining the sustainability of sago plants, capital support for businesses does not yet exist, renovating old sago refineries to increase production, and look for sago marketing solutions both in the Meranti Islands Regency and other areas.

B. Bele Kampung Tradition

Bele Kampung tradition in the Meranti Islands District has practiced almost every village but with the passage of time there has been no village activity with a variety of factors, including parents who are happy with this tradition that there is no successor. But different from Dedap Village, Tasik Putripuyu District, the village tradition cannot be forgotten, but it is still carried out by the Dedap Village community despite its limitations but does not reduce the wisdom of the event. Starting from the journey of a man named Datuk Andin who came from the Banjar of South Kalimantan. Datuk Andin, a religious scholar who traveled abroad, used a boat in a village of Dedap, Tasik Putripuyu District, Meranti Islands Regency. The sea side of Dedap Village is

inhabited by Malay people / Bukit Batu. Dedap Village Datuk Andin did a village tradition because Datuk Andin assumed that every new place consisting of marine forests, rivers and lakes had creatures that could not be seen with the naked eye of ordinary people. Therefore Datuk Andin made a heart-healthy relationship with spirits in order to ask not to disturb the existing beings.

After Datuk Andin passed away, Bele Kampung tradition was continued by a man named Mr. Abdul Rasyid, with the passage of time Mr. Abdul Rasyid passed away and was replaced by Mr. Zulkifli until now. Bele Kampung tradition in Dedap Village, Tasik Putripuyu District, Meranti Islands Regency agreed upon by all communities carried out every 3 years in every month of the moth of Islam (Muharram). The last was held in 2016 and the next plan is in 2019. While the implementation preparation starts from deliberation and division of work for approximately one week and all this takes place at Wasi / imam's house or the house of Mr. Zulkifli.

As a traditional condition, an animal is cut off like a goat at least one tail and can be more. The treatment of these animals must be followed in accordance with the rules of the tradition, that is before the goat slaughtered / slaughtered must be laid bare, powdered and so on. After the goat slaughter there are certain parts that must be taken, especially the goat's senses such as nails, ears, lips, tongue and skin. At least 40 kinds of cakes, including yellow pulut, ring cakes and cake, must be in this tradition.

The activities of Bele Kampung tradition carried out by Dedap Village, Tasik Putripuyu District, has prohibitions which are not permitted, including: (a) waving, killing the existing timber trees for 3 days. (b) intentionally killing animals for 3 days.

As for the constraints for the Bele Kampung tradition are as follows:

- a. Bele Kampung tradition is almost extinct or nothing else is done by villages in the Meranti Islands Regency.
- b. Bele Kampung tradition has not yet become the 2016-2021 Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMD) of the Meranti Islands Regency in the field of tourism on traditional ceremonies such as the Netau Kampung tradition located in Banglas Village, Tebing Tinggi District and other traditional ceremonies.

1. Socio-cultural aspects

The simple life owned by the people in Dedap Village makes the togetherness and harmony in the implementation of Bele Kampung tradition reflect how much the the people in Dedap Village Tasik Putripuyu District pay attention to the environment contained in the values of local wisdom that values the balance between humans and the environment for the long-term interests. People in Dedap Village believe that there are fates and limitations of both humans as social and environmental beings, simplicity and togetherness.

The results of this study are also consistent with the research of Tianotak (2010) and Mulyadi (2013), which states that empowerment by strengthening the potential of

indigenous peoples. Therefore it is necessary to get legal protection, especially in the form of laws and regulations from the State. Assurance of the implementation of the functions and roles of indigenous peoples in the management of forest resources will have a positive impact on environmental sustainability. Community participation will foster a sense of responsibility for environmental sustainability by reorientation, social movements, institutional development and capacity. The government and society can take a stand against community empowerment programs. Social movements carried out by local communities need local institutions that function not solely as an organization, but as social institutions.

In accordance with the local wisdom of the Pakraman Village, Tenganan Pegringsingan District greatly contributes to the sustainability of the forest in the village area. In the current era of globalization and modernization the existence of local wisdom is increasingly fading in various community groups, the local wisdom of the community in the form of awig-awig that governs forest management still exists today. The existence of local wisdom is inseparable from conservation efforts to maintain existence in people's lives. This can be seen in the articles governing forest management, namely clause 3,8,14, 37, 54,55 and 61. According to the local community this is because at the time of rewriting the awig-awig book, it was only based on people's memories (Saputro, 2012) Furthermore, according to Wijarnako (2013) A simple lifestyle and togetherness are the values of local wisdom that show social wisdom. In addition, the character of environmental care is implied in the values of local wisdom, namely: respecting balance, realizing limitations, and carrying out obligations and being responsible for maintaining the natural environment for the benefit of the present and the future. bond with nature as a source of life, so that the mandate is maintained because it has functioned to maintain its existence in the natural environment and social environment. They are not fatalistic, but are aware of the fate, destiny, and shortcomings and limitations, both of which are owned by humans and the environment. Simple and peaceful life is a harmony in the social and natural environment.

2. Economic Aspects

The tradition of village growth can have an effect on the economy in Dedap Village if the community can carry out the rules that have been approved in the tradition. The economy of the community increases if the surrounding environment is well maintained so that people can work according to their work. Based on the results of in-depth interviews with informants that in the Meranti Islands Regency there are activities of traditional traditions that are likely to preserve the environment, but the traditional tradition has almost faded. Many of the factors that cause traditional traditions to fade from generation to generation include large costs, the village's indigenous people have diminished, the mixing of communities between indigenous people and immigrants and many others.

Based on in-depth interviews with informants can illustrate that the Meranti Islands Regency has local wisdom, namely Bele Kampung tradition. Most villages no longer

make Bele Kampung tradition a routine tradition because of some obstacles and most people in Meranti Islands Regency consider this tradition no longer in line with the present. But there is one village, Dedap Village, Tasik Putri Puyu District, which still carries out the traditional tradition of Bele Kampung which is carried out at least once every 3 years. Hopefully other villages that understand the Bele Kampung tradition can carry it out and the parties from the Regional Government can bridge these activities.

3. Ecological Aspects

Bele Kampung tradition in Dedap Village, Tasik Putripuyu District, provides learning to protect the environment. The Dedap Village community has first guarded irregularities in environmental management. Bele Kampung tradition dwelling first played a role in preserving the environment, Bele Kampung tradition dwelling a routine ritual in which there were restrictions and rules in the treatment of the environment. Local indigenous communities have proven to be able to support life in the management of their natural resources. In accordance with the research of Wibowo et. al. (2012) stated that environment is very influential for human life. The environment can change its function due to various factors, one of which is due to the global era. The impact of environmental problems can be felt by all inhabitants of the earth in the presence of natural symptoms that indicate their irregularities. Environmental problems turned out to be closely related to local wisdom. This can be seen that the existence of local wisdom actually first plays a role in preserving the environment before environmental care movements emerge. Even in certain cases local wisdom plays a role in safeguarding the ecosystem rather than the laws set in regulating the pattern of society. The existence of myths, rituals, and noble directors who are closely related to nature are able to regulate the community in such a way as it relates to the surrounding environment.

Furthermore Wibowo et. al. (2012) that indigenous territories whose natural resource management is managed autonomously by various indigenous communities has been able to preserve sustainability. Such reality is a sign that the future of the environment is in the hands of sovereign communities to maintain their local wisdom and natural resource management practices. Some of the indigenous peoples have proven to be able to support life and safety as a community and at the same time support natural socio-ecological services for the needs of all beings, including humans.

CONCLUSION

Prevention of forest and land fires in Meranti Islands Regency can be done by striving for the community to cultivate sago which is local wisdom and preserving traditions that are related to the environment such as Bele Kampung.

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