

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION IN LOCAL CULTURAL TRADITIONS AS A FORM OF MITIGATION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

by

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ABSTRACT

The increasing number of the world's population, especially in Indonesia, has led to an increase in the need for clothing and shelter. In order to fulfill these needs, communities carry out massive exploitation of forest resources. This exploitation action is in the form of changing or converting forest land into food land or residential land for the community. This activity results in reduced carbon absorption land and an increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere or well known as climate change. So, it is necessary to protect and manage the environment, one of which is through environmental communication in local cultural traditions. In this case, communication is believed to provide a platform that is able to facilitate the process of exchanging information, knowledge, and wisdom. The good synergy between the government, environmentalists, as well as local cultural traditions that have long been developed and preserved in the community is expected to be an action to mitigate global climate change. This study was used qualitative research methods and data collection was done through interviews, observations, and documentation. The results showed that the local cultural tradition known as *sidekah turun ton* is a tradition carried out by the Karang Bayan indigenous community once every 8 years in order to maintain the harmonization of nature and humans. The tradition of preserving the forest is one way to communicate the importance of protecting the environment for the survival of the community in the future.

Keywords: environmental communication, local cultural traditions, mitigation

Introduction

The results of the Population Census (SP2020) in September 2020 recorded a population of 270.20 million people. The population of the SP2020 results shows an increase in the population of 32.56 million people compared to the results of the SP2010. With this additional population, it means that Indonesia has an increase in population by 1.25 percent per year (BPS, 2020). This situation will have an impact on the need for food, clothing, and shelter.

The increasing demand for food will encourage an increase in food production. This increase in food production can be done through intensification and extensification efforts. Recently, the policy of increasing food production has been carried out through an extensification program, which means the expansion of the cultivation area. The expansion of the cultivation area encourages land conversion efforts, both potential land and marginal land which has been an ecological buffer area into agricultural land. Many forest lands have been converted to agricultural land both legally and illegally (*Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia, 2018*).

In addition to the need for food, the rate of population growth will also encourage efforts to provide land for settlements and housing. This increase will result in changes or conversion of forest land into residential land for the community. Subsequent land conversion activities will result in reduced land for carbon absorption and an increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere or what is known as climate change. According to data for the last 30 years (1981-2010) the increase in temperature in Indonesia has occurred, namely 0.5 degrees (*BMKG, 2020*). The increase in the temperature of the earth's surface, if allowed to continue, will result in natural disasters such as rising sea levels, reduced rainfall and so on which will affect all life in nature.

To prevent the damage from continuing, the community needs to take precautions and protect nature so that the damage can be stopped. This effort has been carried out for a long time by indigenous peoples in North Lombok Regency. One of them is through environmental communication in local cultural traditions. The important role of communication in preserving the environment is to provide a platform that is able to facilitate the process of exchanging information, knowledge, and wisdom. The good synergy between the government, environmentalists, as well as local cultural traditions that have long been developed and preserved in the community is expected to be an action to mitigate global climate change. The question is how environmental communication in the cultural traditions of local communities in North Lombok Regency can be an effort to mitigate environmental damage. This paper presents environmental communication that is practiced in the cultural procession of the community in the *sidekah turun ton* event.

To reduce the impact of climate change so that it does not get worse, so climate change mitigation is carried out. Mitigation of climate change can be done in various ways, one of which is the restoration of forest functions. In the province of NTB, especially Lombok Island, in North Lombok Regency there is a village that mitigates climate change through a local tradition. This tradition is still preserved until now by the Bayan village community, so this tradition needs to be revitalized and strengthened so that the mitigation function of the ritual can be improved and preserved.

Research Method

This literature review study used a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis methods. The literature review contains reviews, summaries, and thoughts on several library sources (articles, books, slides, information from the internet) according to the topics discussed. This paper is also accompanied by the results of in-depth interviews with key stakeholders to obtain confirmation and validation of the information contained in the literature that has been searched and reviewed.

Results and Discussion

1. Environmental Communications

Many of the worst environmental problems that occur in countries are regarding high levels of pollution in urban areas, large-scale land degradation, high population growth, and wild natural areas such as forests being destroyed rapidly. According to (Hamid Hendrawati, 2018) the environment is an important component of society and needs to be included in an integrated approach to community development. This approach applies to the natural environment.

Environmental issues sometimes are very important to raise awareness of the community as a whole and become a catalyst for community action. The community-based approach to global climate change adaptation planning is very possible to do (Eraku, SS and Koem, S, 2018) because participatory activities should be carried out starting from the local level. The activities that can be carried out are to raise public awareness.

According to (Santoso edi, 2018) the main communicators in environmental communication are the government and indigenous peoples who are committed to environmental management. The pattern of environmental communication to raise public awareness and participation in managing forest resources is dialogical, which is more common in group communication. Environmental communication and environmental policy have a mutually influencing relationship because environmental communication does not only inform linearly or bottom-up on environmental issues but rather on sharing environmental information in a dialogical manner to all stakeholders in a particular environment (Wahyudin.U, 2017). In addition, the environmental communication function conveys the demands (policy demands) of the community in arch management, especially forest environmental problems.

One form of communication media is through indigenous peoples. The *Bayan* indigenous community is a communication forum that always carries out environmental communication processes to develop forest sustainability (Ch. Herutomo1, S. Bekti Istiyanto2, 2021). These indigenous peoples have their own way of carrying out forest conservation, namely through cultural traditions carried out by traditional ritual activities. Through this traditional activity, it is hoped that it will be able to raise awareness of the importance of forest sustainability. So that the environmental communication in an effective way is required in order to foster the hope or desire of the community that is more oriented towards on the future. In order to the importance of the ecological function and economic function of the forest for the whole community. The model for carrying out environmental communication in an effective communication effort to prevent the effects of climate change can be described as follows:



Figure 1. Environmental Communication Model

Figure 1 describes the environmental communication model that can be applied in the local cultural traditions of the *Bayan* indigenous people as a form of climate change mitigation. Figure 1 shows that it is very important to know the habits of indigenous peoples in responding to climate change. One of the attitudes taken is to carry out the tradition of *sidekah turun ton* event. The implementation of this tradition has been preserved from generation to generation by indigenous

peoples by assuming that nature and culture work hand in hand in evolution. So placing local cultural traditions as a guide for mitigation actions is the right thing (Flor & Cangara, 2018). Next, knowing the potential environmental impacts is also important.

Indigenous peoples as natural guardians in their villages are obliged to know about the use of forest resources and they also understand all the potential for environmental damage due to forest exploitation. With the deep understanding possessed by indigenous peoples, information related to mitigation can be communicated to environmentalists. Furthermore, this information is expected to be used as a reference for formulating policies related to climate change mitigation in relation to the local traditions of indigenous peoples.

2. Environmental Communication in Local Cultural Traditions

Communication is a form of communication that is used as an action to prevent and repair environmental damage that occurs. Environmental communication is also a form of communication with fellow humans and natural interactions. According to (Awi et al. 2016) environmental communication is not only the responsibility of a group of parties but also the responsibility of all parties because everyone is involved in it. It is also added that environmental communication is very important to be implemented. Environmental communication aims to make the audience aware of protecting the environment through various communication channels. Another purpose of environmental communication is to communicate various forms of environmental damage and how to save them.

Environmental communication experts, (Robert Cox, 2010) revealed that environmental communication is a pragmatic and constitutive means to provide an understanding of the environment to the community. The same as the relationship between humans and nature, where indigenous peoples respond to these relationships by dealing with all environmental problems that occur by applying traditional traditions through rituals. Basically, environmental communication is to fosters public awareness and community participation in managing the environment.

According to (Ariesani, et al. 2020) The development of culture in the era of globalization has become one of the trends that cannot be separated from the development of society. Culture develops through a variety of global media that can be accessed by many people at any time. In this context, culture can be used as a way to communicate the importance of maintaining and preserving long-standing local traditions. Local traditions have many roles in people's lives, one of which is to maintain the relationship between nature and humans. In the context of community development, especially as a form of adaptation to climate change, cultural development has four important components (Jim Ife. 2002). among others:

The first component is to preserve and respect the local traditional culture. As an effort to instill a sense of community and help give them a sense of identity. These traditions include local history and heritage, locally-based crafts, local traditional rituals, or those related to certain indigenous communities. All these cultural elements are an important part that cannot be separated from the development of society. Not only as community identity but tradition is also used as a way to communicate the environment. Tradition can be used as a reference by the community in carrying out various activities related to environmental conservation.

The second component, namely preserving and respecting the culture of indigenous people, is a central issue for community development. While it is argued that indigenous culture is only a particular case in local culture as discussed above, the different dynamics that surround indigenous culture mean that these indigenous cultures are treated as separate things. There are two main reasons behind it. First, namely, the privileged claims that indigenous people have to land/areas and to traditional community structures that developed in harmony with the land/area over a much longer period of time than recent colonization. Community is important for the survival of culture and spiritual life in this important sense, the preservation of traditional culture is a more important need for indigenous people than for the average person. The second reason, namely that many harms have been done, and in many cases are still being carried out at the expense of indigenous people in the name of Community development (Chambers.R.1993) Not infrequently, community development is a

euphemism for oppression, domination, colonialism, racism, and imposition of western cultural values and traditions at the expense of indigenous peoples' values and traditions.

The third component is the existence of a multicultural society. For some people, this situation occurs because of wealth, diversity, and finding new opportunities as a cultural experience, while for others it occurs because of fear and cultural tension. Multicultural policy issues and politics are complex, but diversity in cultural backgrounds is a reality for many societies and so it is an important aspect of community cultural development.

The fourth component is indicated by the participatory culture, which is a cultural activity with a focus on community identity, participation, social interaction, and community development. One way to encourage people to take care of the environment is to encourage broad participation in cultural activities. So that it makes them as actors in cultural activities but not as spectators. It has been the focus of many community cultural development programs, cultural participation is seen as an important way to build social capital, strengthen communities and assert identity. The activities that may be carried out will differ depending on the location and local culture.

Local culture in society is a heritage that is preserved in their respective regions and carried out from generation to generation by community groups in the area itself. Local culture is often associated with indigenous communities. The existence of indigenous peoples is an important part of the implementation of cultural traditions. Indigenous peoples understand the importance of forests as a place to earn a living, provide resources, conservation areas, provide water, and other functions. If there are indigenous peoples who violate or disobey traditions that have been mutually agreed upon, sanctions and fines will be given to those found guilty. The tradition carried out by indigenous peoples, namely *sedekah turun ton* is a local tradition that aims to preserve the forest and protect all living things.

Customs is a system of view of life that is eternal, fresh, and actual based on the provisions contained in the real world and also on positive values, good examples and developing conditions, togetherness in the sense of one person for the common interest and mutual interest for someone, equitable prosperity, consideration of contradictions, namely conflicts are faced in real terms by consensus based on plots and decisions, putting things in their place and taking the middle way, adjusting to reality and everything that is useful according to place, time and circumstances (Soekanto, Soerjono. 2020).

Traditions are various customs in a country that follow the ups and downs of society. This custom is generally related to demonstrations of the arts and culture of the community. so traditions or customs in people's lives can be interpreted as follows:

- a) A group of people who live with certain traditions and cultures, pre-existing customs, which are not affected by the times because they feel enough with life.
- b) People whose lives are still held firmly by their old customs. In other words, the custom in question is a standard rule that includes all cultural concepts in which there are rules for human behavior and actions in living life.

The communication channel used in local cultural traditions is group communication between communities and indigenous communities. Traditional leaders use group communication channels involving many community leaders to provide socialization about the importance of traditional traditions as a form of adaptation to global climate change.

3. *Sidekah Turun Ron* Traditional Cultural Traditions

Cultural approaches and local wisdom can be one way to preserve the environment. The role of local wisdom in preserving nature helps to prevent the development of environmental damage. Local wisdom in the form of culture and tradition was developed from generation to generation by the Indonesian people. Local wisdom in the form of tradition is used by the younger generations to survive according to belief systems, norms, and culture. Based on the opinions of several experts, it can be concluded that local wisdom is an idea that arises and develops continuously in a community, while the functions of local wisdom are as follows:

1. First, as a special marker of the identity of a community

2. Second, as an adhesive element (cohesive aspect) across the community. people, religions, and beliefs.
3. Third, local wisdom provides a color of togetherness for a community.
4. Fourth, changes the mindset and reciprocal relationships of individuals and groups by placing them on the common ground/culture they have.
5. Fifth, encourage the establishment of togetherness, appreciation as well as a common mechanism to ward off various possibilities that reduce, and even destroy, communal solidarity which is believed to originate and grow on a shared consciousness, from an integrated community.

The establishment of a harmonious relationship between nature, tradition, and belief has indirectly shaped mitigation behavior in the community, especially the people in Karang Bajo Village, Bayan. This relationship is manifested in the form of the implementation of traditional community rituals. This traditional ritual is a rule of life that must be understood and practiced by the parrot community. There are at least three basic elements (*wetutelu*) that the Bayan people must understand and practice in carrying out their lives, namely creating harmony between fellow humans, humans and nature, and humans and God. To foster harmony with these three elements, the Bayan community often performs several rituals with different goals and different times.

One of the rituals carried out is known as the *sidekah turun ton* ritual. The implementation of this ritual is in line with the basic elements to maintain the harmonization of human life with nature. The ritual *Sidekah Turun Ton* lasts for four days with several series of events as follows:

A. First Day (*Gundem* or Discussion)

An activity cannot just go on and of course, requires careful planning as well as preparation for the *ritual turun ton* before the *malokaq* (traditional elders)) gather for *gundem* or deliberation with several traditional officials who have an interest in the ritual such as: *Pembekel* (leader and person in charge), *Pande*, *walingumi* (ritual controller), *guru basa* (spokesperson) and several traditional institutions to discuss the timing of the ritual and prepare all the ritual needs. *Gundem* is usually carried out in the traditional Karang Bajo house or the house of traditional officials. After there is an agreement, the implementation of the ritual then begins to collect tools and materials that will be used in the ritual, generally starting to collect food to be processed such as: rice, sorghum, seeds, and spices.

B. Day Two (processing)

After all the materials needed are collected, the *pande* and will then check *walingumi* if it is deemed complete, it will be processed into food ingredients and the person in charge of processing it is the *inenpedangan* assisted by several selected people.

In addition to making some food or offerings for everyone involved in the *ritual turun ton*, at night there will be a sacred activity, namely special *meninghajat* (oil making) or thousand-oil which will be used to clean or purify heirlooms in the *ritual turun ton*. The person in charge of making special oil is the *panjeleng* (oil maker) who has been mandated by the *pembekel*. Apart from that, a *panjeleng* must come from a family that has always had expertise in making special oil. In the process *menjeleng* only used two coconuts special options given by *Malokaq Torean Lauk* and *menjeleng* usually carried out at dawn. After the processed oil is finished, it will be stored at *Inenmeniq's* house.

C. Third Day (*Menjojo* or *Kirap*) First Karang Bajo – Gedeng Daya (Bayan traditional forest)

Menjojo performed twice, the first is *Menjojo* starting from Karang Bajo to the Bangket Bayan customary forest. Before carrying out the *Menjojo*, the *pembekel* with *Pande* and *Walingumi* arranges the line of participants who will join *Menjojo*. As for the form of the line, which is made in the form of a single line that is elongated and cannot be broken, the line is composed of several traditional officers who have different tasks, such as those at the front who are *Pengontas* (pacesetter) who carry an heirloom object in the form of a machete, followed by *Mandalika* (guide) who also carries a

special heirloom that is not shown to just anyone, behind him is followed by *Guru basa* (spokesperson), *pejamuan* (carrier of food) who symbolically carries betel nut, *penguban* (*protector*) who carries a large umbrella, *pelembah* (bearer) who is in charge of carrying oil specifically to be used to clean up heirlooms at the destination, namely *Gedeng Daya* in the *Bangkit Bayan* customary forest, *Nyaka Mantri* (representatives from each supply area), *Kyai* (religious leaders) next in the last row may be filled by the general public on the condition that they must be Muslim and of legal age over 10 years.

The journey usually starts in the afternoon and arrives at the *Gedeng Daya* traditional forest of *Bangkit Bayan* at midnight and then a ritual will be carried out starting with the reading of a prayer by *Perumbaq Daya* as the ritual leader because the ritual is carried out in a supervised area covering the customary forest to the mountain where the prayer or praise is praising using a special language which is then translated into the *Bayan* language. The prayer that is said contains a request that the people of the world be given salvation and the nature in which they live is blessed by God. Furthermore, the cleaning of heirlooms in *Gedeng Daya* is carried out as the final goal of the *Menjojo* first. After all the series of rituals are completed, the participants will immediately return to their initial place, namely *Kampu Karang Bajo*, and on the return journey, participants of *Menjojo* uses an inverted row arrangement where the front row is filled by the general public and traditional institutions such as *pembekel*, *pengontas*, *mandalika* and several traditional institutions that are present. In the front row when leaving to escort people on their way home. This is all done as a symbol and to remind each other that in the life of the *Karang Bajo Bayan* indigenous people, humans should not be selfish and must help and guide each other and also to remind the people of the world that where humans come from, they will end up there too.

In carrying out *sidekah turun ton* ritual, the participants must wear traditional *Bayan* clothes which have special meanings such as *londong abang* (red cloth/sarong) which is a special cloth that every *Bayan* community must have, *Sapuq putih* (headband) which means purity or clarity of mind, *Dodot* (binding cloth) as a symbol to distinguish identity and can be seen from the way it is used where ordinary people or (*Nyaka*) wear a *dodot* with a regular tie, different from special elements of society (*Mantri*) wearing a *dodot* in a sling. In the ritual, it is not allowed to use footwear as a symbol that humans must be at one with nature.

D. The second *Menjojo* of *Kampu Karang Bajo – Gedeng lauq (montong gedeng)*

Menjojo (kirap) on the second day is in the same implementation as the first day, except that the difference is that the ritual leader or prayer leader will be led by *perumbaq lauq* as a customary official who oversees the customary forest area until coastal area.

After the ritual of *sidekah turun ton* ends, the community begins to prepare all the necessities to start the planting season. In the same year or about 6 months later after the harvest season, a follow-up ritual will be held, namely the *sidekah turun balit* ritual which in language means alms, the descent of the dry season, the implementation of this ritual is almost the same as the previous ritual, only that the purpose is different where the ritual *sidekah turun balit* aims to express or convey gratitude to God for having been given abundant harvests and improved nature.

In addition, in its implementation more presents dishes from the harvest of society *Karang Bajo*, after both traditional rituals are done it will be closed with the last rites as closing the *Lohor* ritual implemented in the territory of the ancient mosque *Bayan* and be coordinated by two regions of *kepembekelan* namely *Pembekel loloan* and *Timuq Orong*.

This series of traditional rituals is an activity that is routinely carried out every 8 years, with the consideration that humans have done a lot of damage to the forest for 8 years. So it really needs to be updated. Traditional communities realize that forest renewal will maintain the harmony of life between humans and nature that has long coexisted. So that by maintaining harmony, the community will be able to utilize forest resources in a sustainable manner.

4. The Communication Meaning of *Sidekah Turun Ton* in Environmental Preservation

Climate change is not a situation whose impact can be felt directly by the community. However, the situation is feared to have an impact on future generations. Therefore, it is very important to prevent extreme climate change that can cause various risks such as floods, droughts, infectious diseases, etc. Risk is used to describe what is considered a recent phenomenon or something new. Good risk management (BNPB, 2016) depends on disaster mitigation efforts through good environmental communication as well.

According to *wardyaningrum. D, 2016*. Mitigation steps that need to be carried out related to communication risk are the existence of trust from information sources such as the government and traditional leaders. Credible sources of information will raise public awareness, so that mitigation will be easier to implement. Communicating mitigation activities can be done in many ways, one of which is by presenting local cultural traditions. In the tradition, there are traditional ritual activities that involve many people and through this activity, it can indirectly foster public trust. People will voluntarily follow without any orders.

As seen in the tradition of *sidekah turun ton*, the community collectively gathers and carries out this tradition. In activities whose implementation takes a special time, this tradition has been carried out and maintained in an effort to foster a sense of community ownership of nature, especially forests. Indigenous peoples in particular have a deep understanding of the importance of forests for life. The forest is the center of all life, if the forest does not exist, then the creatures in the world cannot live well. This quote is in line with the way indigenous peoples interpret forests. This deep meaning is implied in every step of the traditional *sidekah turun ton*.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the discussion, it is concluded that mitigation efforts in climate change through the implementation of local cultural traditions of alms have decreased by *Sidekah turun ton*. With the concept that humans can interact with nature through traditional stages which are carried out every 8 years for 4 days. In carrying out these local traditional activities, it is necessary to have environmental communication so that it can increase community awareness and participation in forest management. The existence of environmental communication is a means of coordination between customary institutions, environmental observers, and the government as well as institutions interested in environmental conservation efforts.

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