



Uplifting Local Wisdom in Soil and Water Conservation System

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ABSTRACT

The environmental conditions significantly influence the quality of life for humans and other living beings, thus requiring attention to robust and consistent environmental protection and management conditions by all stakeholders. Various principles are utilized in environmental protection and management, and one of these principles is culture and local wisdom. Local wisdom comprises noble values applied in the community's way of life, including, among other things, sustainable protection and management of the environment. Protection and management of the environment must also consider the noble values prevailing in the community's way of life. The occurrence of a water crisis resulting from the reduction of water sources and the weakened conditions of living organisms is due to the insufficient attention to the rules of local wisdom. Various efforts have been made for soil and water conservation, both by the government and environmentalists. The management of water and soil resources is not only the responsibility of the government outlined in various written policies but also the responsibility of the local community evident in the knowledge and experience of the community in carrying out various water and soil management activities.

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INTRODUCTION

The condition of the environment significantly influences the quality of life for both humans and other living beings. Therefore, it is essential to pay attention to the conditions of environmental protection and management that are robust and consistent among all stakeholders. Various principles are utilized in environmental protection and management, and one of these principles is culture and local wisdom. Local wisdom encompasses the noble values prevailing in the community's way of life, including the sustainable protection and management of the environment.

The protection and management of the environment must also consider the noble values inherent in the community's way of life. The occurrence of a water crisis,

resulting from diminished water sources and weak living conditions for living beings, is attributed to the insufficient attention to the rules of local wisdom. Efforts have been made for the conservation of land and water resources by both the government and environmentalists.

Water is declared by Sulastriyono (2009) as a vital natural resource essential for all living beings. No creature on Earth does not require water. The presence of water is crucial for life's sustainability and balance, but its existence is threatened by a water crisis. This crisis is generally caused by climate change, poor land use systems, ecosystem damage in rainwater catchment areas, and the ever-increasing demand for water consumption (Sancayaningsih et al., 2013).

Several issues threaten water resilience in Indonesia, such as an increase in critical land area, reduced water infiltration areas converted into urban and industrial areas, high groundwater usage, increased water usage due to population growth and improved quality of life, pollution of water sources, and the lack of coordination among ministries responsible for land and water management.

Conservation efforts for land and water have been stipulated in legislation, including Law Number 37 of 2014 concerning Conservation of Land and Water. The implementation of land and water conservation is based on several principles, including participatory, integration, balance, justice, utility, local wisdom, and sustainability. According to Article 46 of Law Number 37 of 2014, the community has an equal opportunity to participate in land and water conservation carried out by the Government and/or Regional Government according to their authority.

The national policy for water management should be directed towards ensuring fair and equitable water provision for all Indonesians, both for daily needs (domestic) and to support national development (agriculture, production, energy, etc.). The strategy to achieve this policy involves building the mindset of society and all stakeholders that water is not an unlimited natural resource. Therefore, responsible water resource management is necessary, involving community participation and considering the local wisdom that has developed within society.

The management of water resources, according to Aulia and Dharmawan (2010), must be adapted to local conditions and local wisdom in each region because each area has different characteristics. Local wisdom related to the management of natural resources is a local regulatory arrangement that has existed since the past with a long history and adaptation. This wisdom can be found in specific communities in Indonesia. A synergistic and harmonious integration in the management of land and water resources among the government, environmentalists, and local wisdom and culture prevailing in society is expected to be an effective strategy for land and water conservation.

In the village of Siamaninggir, Padang Bolak Tenggara Sub-district, the local community has received government assistance for channeling water from the hills to the village to obtain clean water. With this government assistance, the community can also participate in preserving the natural environment. The community consistently teaches its children to maintain the environmental sustainability of their pristine living space.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this research is the qualitative descriptive method. Qualitative descriptive method is employed to describe and interpret written data in the form of narrative units that manifest in monologues or dialogues of characters, all of which are present in the data source. Hence, this study does not take the form of numerical data but rather language descriptions. The current research utilizes a qualitative method. Qualitative research is related to data analysis that does not involve statistical calculations but is presented in words (Endraswara, 2013:51).

Qualitative research methods, in general, utilize interpretive approaches and present them in the form of descriptions. Therefore, the researcher employs the qualitative descriptive method to depict the forms of local wisdom and the values of cultural wisdom present in the community of Batang Angkola, specifically in Simaninggir Village, Padang Bolak Tenggara Sub-district, North Padang Lawas Regency.

Data Sources and Research Data Data sources refer to the research subjects from which the data are obtained. The data source for this study is the natural conditions of Simaninggir Village, Padang Bolak Tenggara Sub-district, North Padang Lawas Regency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The approach to empowering local wisdom is expected to induce fundamental changes in social behavior related to water and soil conservation. Such changes can only be fully realized when based on awareness, sincerity, and dedication from all stakeholders in the social mobilization process. Behavioral and social structure changes in this context involve values, norms, and institutions that breathe life into society towards a better and permanent direction (Stanis, 2005). Local wisdom, culture, and religious norms embraced and adhered to by the community must be safeguarded and preserved. Some measures that can be taken to maintain them, according to Siswadi et al. (2011), include: (1) strengthening the spirit of indigenous communities and religions through various driving forces such as the government, environmental experts, and religious leaders; (2) raising awareness, understanding, concern, and community participation towards an environmentally conscious society; and (3) providing legal

support. Maridi (2012), in his research findings, adds several community empowerment efforts in water and soil conservation, including enhancing community participation through building dialogue and agreements with government agencies and relevant parties, as well as conducting counseling, mentoring, and training for communities in utilizing and preserving water and soil resources.

CONCLUSION

The management and preservation of natural resources and the environment, including soil and water conservation, are crucial issues as problems related to these issues threaten the survival of humans and other living beings. Various efforts have been made at all levels, from the central government to local authorities. The community has equal rights and opportunities to actively participate in environmental protection and management activities, as well as the conservation of water, soil, and biodiversity in Indonesia. One role of the community is to develop and maintain local wisdom and culture for the preservation of environmental functions.

Various practices of ancestral wisdom and culture that are still preserved by the Indonesian people can be one of the strategies for environmental protection and management. Preserving the values of local wisdom and teachings of religion related to the protection of natural resources and the environment is one form of traditional conservation carried out by the community. The values of local wisdom and religious teachings are important to be cultivated and disseminated, so that people feel that preserving nature and the environment is part of religious teachings, allowing nature to provide its richness for the prosperity of humanity that is willing to make efforts to preserve and respect the rights of nature.

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