

The Local Wisdom of the Kajang Community

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This study aims to determine the local knowledge of communities to preserve the environment in Kajang South Sulawesi. This research utilised a qualitative research approach. Data collection was completed through the methods of interview, field observations, documentation, and library research, which compared what is obtained in the field with what was written by previous researchers. The variable of this study was the local wisdom of the indigenous peoples of Kajang. The data analysis involved a descriptive analysis of the results that were obtained from the interviews. The results highlighted several findings. Firstly, according to the local wisdom of the Kajang, they believe in *Pasang* as customary law that must be respected and upheld by the Kajang communities in relation to environmental protection, and in particular, with respect to forest resources. Secondly, the local wisdom of the Kajang community is known as *Ambuang Balla*, which is a form of community cooperation, if there are community members who want to build houses. Thirdly, the local wisdom of the Kajang community is *Tallase kamase-mase*, which is part of the *Pasang* that commands the Kajang people to live simply and modestly, and reject everything that has a technological smell. Finally, the local wisdom of the Kajang community is Magig Power, *Anttunu Panroli*, to test the honesty of the people suspected of stealing.

Keywords: *Local wisdom, Kajang, community.*

INTRODUCTION

The Indigenous community of Kajang is one of the communities that still maintains local wisdom to this day. Their area is located in South Sulawesi, which is approximately 200 kilometres east of the City of Makassar. This community inhabits the Kajang Sub-district, within the Bulukumba District. The Kajang Sub-district consists of two regions, namely

Kajang outer, and the *Ammatoa* traditional area, which is led by the customary head called the 'Ammtoa'. The *Ammatoa* customary community believes that the Kajang area is an area of 'tana kamase-masea' (a region full of simplicity).

Mihen et al. (2015) said the Kajang community groups in South Sulawesi interact with their specific environment and led by their traditional leaders, who were given the title of *Ammatoa*, as traditional community leaders and also as the forest protection leaders. They live in nature and to preserve the environment. As an example, cutting timber is not arbitrarily done; they must go through rigorous customary practices, and even for the use of other natural resources, the society must first gain permission from the *Ammatoa*. Although they live in the midst of modern society, within the areas that they control that they call 'Kajang Dalam', they retain their traditional life patterns and are not affected by the patterns of modern life.

Disnawati, (2013), explained that the Kajang community has its own discipline in regulating its relationship with God and humans. This order is the basis of life and fosters social life in accordance with God's command. Broadly speaking, there are two pathways that underlie their behaviour, which are vertically and horizontally. Vertically, the intention is to regulate the behaviour of the Kajang community with the creator, while horizontally, it is intended to regulate the relationship between the Kajang community and other human beings. The Kajang community strongly believes that running life as a social creature cannot be separated from fulfilling the rights to others and obligations to other human beings as well. In social life, they believe that human relations must be based on mutual benefit and goodness. Furthermore, other obligations will follow, especially with regard to relationships with the universe. Therefore, human nature is not released from the universe, which is a place to look for the fulfillment of all life's needs. Through these rules, they believe that humans and nature have a mutual relationship. Humans need nature as a producer for all their needs, while nature needs humans to keep it sustainable. Therefore, in this case, nature and humans must have a symbiotic relationship of mutualism. In carrying out daily activities, the Kajang community continues to uphold all norms of life or local wisdom that have been maintained since ancient times and until the present day.

Pawarti (2012) states that traditional wisdom or local wisdom is one of the cultural heritages that exists in the traditional community and has been carried down for generations by the community concerned. Traditional wisdom generally contains teachings for maintaining and utilising natural resources, such as forests, land, and water, in a sustainable manner. From the environmental side, the existence of traditional wisdom is very beneficial because directly or indirectly, it is very helpful in protecting the environment and preventing environmental damage.

According to the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 32 of 2009 concerning environmental protection and management, local wisdom is often conceived as local

knowledge, local intelligence (local genius), and local policy (local wisdom), which is interpreted as noble values that apply in the way of community life, and which among others, are used to protect and manage the environment in a sustainable manner.

Hamidy (2001) explains that local wisdom is knowledge, understanding, and habits that direct human life within people's lives in ecological communities. Local life is useful, both as living knowledge and as human behaviour, in preserving the environment. Moreover, Keraf (2010) states that local wisdom is all forms of knowledge, beliefs, and customs or ethics that guide human behaviour in life in the ecological community. Thus, this local wisdom is not only concerned with the knowledge and understanding of indigenous people about humans and determines good relations between humans, but it also concerns the knowledge, understanding and customs about humans, nature, and how the relationships among all the inhabitants of this ecological community must be built.

Sartini (2004) also explained that local wisdom is a value that is considered good and right so that it can last for a long time and even be institutionalised. Customary habits are basically tested naturally and undoubtedly possess good value because these habits are repetitive and reinforced social actions. If an action is not considered good by the community, then it will not experience continuous reinforcement. Movement naturally occurs voluntarily because it is considered good or contains goodness. Customary wisdom is understood as everything that is based on knowledge and is recognised by reason and is considered good by the provisions of religion.

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to determine the local knowledge of communities to preserve the environment in Kajang within South Sulawesi. This research was conducted using a qualitative research approach that compares what is obtained in the field with what was written by previous researchers. The data collection was completed using the methods of interview, field observations, documentation, and library research. The variable of this study was the local wisdom of the indigenous peoples of the Kajang community. The data analysis involved a descriptive analysis of the results, which were obtained from the interviews.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Local wisdom preserves the forest

Based on the results of interviews with the Village Head of Tana Toa Kajang, it was revealed that the local wisdom of the Kajang community is to preserve the environment. This is also called, '*Pasang*', which is a customary law that must be respected and upheld by the Kajang community in relation to environmental preservation, and especially forest resources. This local wisdom is articulated through traditional media, such as myths, rituals, and ancestral messages that actually contain ecological knowledge, especially concerning knowledge

regarding the function of forests to protect ecosystems. A breach of *Pasang* results in customary sanctions that apply for life and are even believed to be also applied in the afterlife. One of the messages conveyed by the ancestors via *Pasang* is: “*Anjo boronga anre nakkulle nipanraki. Punna nipanraki boronga, nupanraki kalennu*”, which means “*the forest must not be destroyed. If you damage the forest, it is the same as destroying yourself*”. Another message conveyed in pairs proclaimed: “*Anjo natahang ri boronga karena pasang. Rettopi tanayya rettoi ada*”, which means “*forests can be sustainable because they are protected by adat. When the earth is destroyed, then also custom is destroyed*”. Head of Tana Toa Kajang further explained that the *Ammatoa*, as the traditional leader, divided the forest into three groups. Firstly, *Borong Karamaka* (Sacred Forest), which is a forest area that is prohibited for all types of activities, except activities or ritual events. There is no logging, measurement of the area, planting of trees or visits other than ritual activities which may be prohibited, including prohibitions on disturbing the flora and fauna contained therein. Secondly, *Borong Batasayya* (Border Forest), which is a forest that is permitted to take timber, if the timber supply is still available and occurs with the permission of the *Ammatoa*, as the adat leader. Thus, the final decision as to whether the community can take wood in this forest depends upon the *Ammatoa*. Thirdly, *Borong Luara* (Community Forest), which is a forest that can be managed by the community. Although most of this type of forest is controlled by the people, customary rules regarding forest management in this area still apply. It is not permissible to abuse the use of community forests.

Local wisdom builds houses

In an interview with a traditional stakeholder, who was given the title, ‘*Galla Puto*’, he explained that there was a community custom which included local wisdom in building houses, called ‘*Ambuang Balla*’. It is a form of community cooperation, if there are community members who want to build a house. He further explained that in relation to the traditional home orientation, which in Kajang is called ‘*Panjolang*’, all homes facing West are reinforced by statements or by the term ‘*Se’reji Panggolong*’, *addalle’ nrail’ ngasengngi*’, which means only one direction, all facing west. Therefore, all the houses in the area of the indigenous community are uniformly oriented, namely facing west.

What is explained by *Galla Puto* above, and which is supported by research conducted by Alwi (2013), he explains that the position of houses in the *Ammatoa* customary area is built on the land of each community facing West, with the intention that the house is considered *Musholah*, so that whatever activities are in the house are considered to worship to receive mercy from Tu Rie ‘*A’ra’na* (God), both in the world and in the hereafter. The building is in the form of a uniform house on stilts with 16 poles (four poles in four rows) that are made of wood (*Na’nasa*) with three bulkheads and nine rooms consisting of one window in the front, two side windows (one room has a window), a roof created from sago leaves, and bamboo flooring.

Based on observations, it is observed that the settlement patterns in the *Ammatoa* Adat area are generally in groups, which show the characteristics of the settlement of the ancients. The indigenous people recognise the division of land based on their function and position, so that it is divided into three parts or functions. First, the top zone is used as a conservation zone, in which there are sacred forests that cannot be used for fields. Usually, in this forest there is a protected beehive. Both the hillside zone, and this zone are used for the purposes of agriculture and settlement. The three foothill zones or valleys note this zone is the outer zone of the *Ammatoa* Indigenous Zone.

The size of the existing house in the customary area is 12 metres by seven metres, with a roof height of four metres, a house height of two-and-a-half metres, an under the house height of two-and-a-half metres, and a depth of wood embedded in the land of one metre, with the meaning that humans must always relate land as the ‘mother’ of humans. The *Ammatoa* traditional community house is divided into three parts. This relates to people’s belief in the unseen, namely *Tau Rie’a A’ra’na* (God), *Tau Mariolo* (spirits of the ancestors), and the spirits that inhabit certain places. Subsequently, in the vertical direction, the house is representative of the macrocosm, namely the upper world, the middle world, and the underworld. It is implemented in the form of a microcosm, so that the vertical part of the house consists of: 1) *Siring* (underworld) or under the house, as a place to raise livestock, to pound rice, and weave; 2) *Kale bola* (middle world) or body of the house, as a place to do daily activities; and 3) *Para bola* (upper world) or attic or *rakkeang*, as a place to store food supplies, as well as ritual equipment for the worship of ancestral spirits. In addition to the concept of microcosm, the house is also a form of personification. That is, the house is likened to a human body that has legs, a body, and a head. *Siring* symbolises the foot, *Kale bola* symbolises the body, and *Para bola* symbolises the head. To obtain a close look at the type of traditional house that is built within the Kajang community, see Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Traditional house of the Kajang community



Source: Research results

The structure material of the Kajang traditional house is made of wood and bamboo found around the traditional villages, which are maintained in accordance with the traditional rules (*Pasang*), as described above. The roof material is taken from sago palm leaves and is woven before being used as the roof of the house, as shown below in Figure 2.

Figure 2. The Kajang community weaves the sago palm leaves for the roof of a house



Source: Research results

The floor of the house, which is a representation of the middle world where humans move, is made of bamboo that is installed in such a way that the flow of air from under the floor still flows into the house. This type of structural material comes from nature, and when the occupants move above the house, the air is very cool, even though the outside air is hot. This occurs because of the combination of the roof, which can absorb solar radiation, and the bamboo floor, which is not tight, so that there are gaps through the air. This is in addition to openings that exist in the window to enable a gentle breeze into the house, adding to the coolness and comfort of the occupants inside. It is a local wisdom to build a house that blends with the natural tropical climate, so that this architectural product can be categorised as an archipelago tropical concept of architecture that has been tested and can be used as a reference for modern architectural designers to reduce the use of electrical energy and save natural resources. The intended floor model can be seen in the following Figure 3.

Figure 3. The split bamboo floor of a house



Source: Research Results

Local wisdom in dressing and eating

Based on the results of an interview with Mansyur Embas, a Kajang community figure, he explained that the black symbol is a custom colour, such as ‘kajang’, which is thick of sacredness. Moreover, if we enter the *Ammatoa* area, our clothes must be black. The black colour has meaning for the *Ammatoa* community, as a form of equality in everything, including similarity in simplicity. There is no better black between each other, as all blacks are the same. Mansyur Embas of the Kajang tribe, in talking about the life ideology of the Kajang community, stated that it cannot be separated from a principle of life known as ‘*Tallase Kamase-mase*’. It was part of the tide that ordered the Kajang people to live simply and modestly, rejecting everything that smelled of technology. According to them, technological objects can have a negative impact on life.

Journalist, Aprilia (2017), said that the black colour, which is considered sacred by the Kajang tribe, is also a sign of equality for humans before God. Among these similarities, such as similarities in the form of birth, in addressing the environmental conditions, the preservation of the forests must be maintained in its authenticity and preservation because the forests are the source of human life. This opinion is also supported by the results of research by a culture expert, Amerikos (2017), who said that among the beliefs and special beliefs possessed by the Kajang tribe, including regarding black clothing, is a belief that human beings are essentially born from a dark room and then returned to the dark room. Moreover, that black is the symbol of darkness. In addition, by wearing black clothes together as a community, this serves as a symbol of togetherness and equality.

Figure 4. Several members of the Kajang Community in their black clothes



Source: Research results

In regard to the symbolism of the colour black, not only are their clothes black, but during traditional ceremonies, the rice that is prepared must also be black rice because they believe this type of rice was first planted by their ancestors.

Figure 5. Members of the Kajang Community with its black rice



Source: Research results

Magig Power Anttunu Panroli

The Kajang community is also famous for their supernatural abilities or magig powers, which they believe to be hereditary. If an outsider enters into the Kajang area, but does not ask permission and does things that are not natural, then they will be put on *doti*, which is a kind of spell that can cause death. Subsequently, if something is missing or there is a theft in the village and no one has confessed, then a ritual is performed. This ritual is carried out by involving the entire Kajang community, without exception, and is led directly by the Chairman of the *Ammatoa* Adat, which is also called ‘*anttunu panroli*’ (burning crowbar). The procession begins with the direction of the adat leader, and continues with burning the crowbar until it is red. The *Ammatoa*, who leads the ritual, also reminds the people who are

present that the crowbar will not feel hot if it is held by someone who is honest. However, if they are the least bit honest, then this hot crowbar will burn their hand. Hakim (2017) explained that one by one people who are suspected of being thieves will be asked to hold the hot crowbar that was originally held by the *Ammatoa*. If they do not do the crime, the hot crowbar held will feel cold without the slightest bit of heat being felt. However, conversely, if they are the culprit and do not confess, then it is certain that their hand will blister when the hot crowbar is held. If the perpetrator runs away from the sacred ceremony, the traditional elders will gather to chant the mantra addressed to the offender, who will experience illness and result in death.

This is why no one dares to violate or steal within the Kajang community. The community members are always reminded by the customary leaders to live with simplicity and preserve nature as well as possible. This is taught by the ancestors of the Kajang community, as well as to be honest, wherever they are. It is a local wisdom that is very unique and according to the author, is second to none in this world.

Figure 5. *Anttunu Panroli* within the Kajang Community Ritual



Source: Research results

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion above, it can be concluded that the local wisdom of the Kajang community, in general, can be distinguished into four categories. Firstly, according to the local wisdom of the Kajang community, the indigenous groups believe in *Pasang*, which is customary law that must be respected and upheld by the Kajang communities in relation to environmental protection, and in particular, with respect to forest resources. Secondly, the local wisdom of the Kajang community is *Ambuang Balla*, which is a form of community cooperation, if there are community members who want to build houses. Thirdly, the local wisdom of the Kajang community is *Tallase kamase-mase*, which is part of the tide that commands the Kajang people to live simply and modestly, and reject everything that has a technological smell. Finally, the local wisdom of the Kajang Community is Magig Power *Anttunu Panroli*, which is to test the honesty of the people suspected of stealing.



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