



The Local Wisdom of *Pamali* Culture and Environment Conservation in *Kampung Kuta*, Kecamatan Tambaksari, Kabupaten Ciamis

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Abstract: Environmental conservation is a crucial issue, especially for the continuation of human life. Today, climate change that occurs on the surface of the earth is accelerating. This cannot be separated from human activities, either directly or indirectly, that damage the preservation of nature. On the other hand, a traditional community group still exists in the Kabupaten Ciamis area, namely Kampung Kuta, which still preserves their customs through pamali culture. The pamali culture in Kampung Kuta has much influence on preserving nature in Kampung Kuta itself. Here the author tries to connect the local wisdom with efforts to preserve the environment.

Keywords: Environmental conservation, *kampung kuta*, local wisdom, *pamali*

Introduction

Change in society happens, which is accompanied by changes in thinking from theologise, rationalism to positive thinking. Likewise, philosophical thought from naturalism changed to anthropocentrism. When humans are still simple, human life depends a lot on the universe (geographical determinism), but when humans have developed, their abilities turn into anthropocentrism, that humans determine nature.

After the colonial era, natural exploitation was carried out excessively to achieve high prosperity, coupled with modern thinking, namely anthropocentric, that humans determine nature, natural resources are exploited and managed economically, which produces added value; as a result, nature is damaged. Industry produces waste, human economic needs are unlimited, as long as nature provides, and satisfaction never stops.

New thinkers aware of the importance of the continuation of human life on earth have made suggestions; return to a simple traditional life and limit the desire to exploit nature. In managing and utilizing the environment to meet their needs, many local communities in Indonesia have guidelines about their cultural values. Likewise, with the management and utilization of the environment in the people of *Kampung Kuta* as a traditional community located in Ciamis Regency, West Java Province, which still firmly holds and carries out traditions with the supervision of the *kuncen* and traditional leaders. Communities obey the law as a form of respecting the rules in their customs includes of taboos or *pamali* that must be obeyed and believed.

Local wisdom in *Kampung Kuta* is still being implemented today because it is an ancestral mandate that must be implemented following existing regulations. The form of local wisdom related to the management of natural resources (especially water resources) and those related to daily life is a rule or norm that binds and regulates people's lives (Hilman, 2014).

One form of local wisdom of the *Kampung Kuta* community that relates to natural resource management includes a life slogan that is always socialized from generation to generation, namely "*leuweung ruksak, cai beak, manusia balangsak*" (damaged forest, running out of water, miserable people)". This slogan serves as a guideline in preserving the environment, especially forest conservation. The preservation of the sacred forest called "*leuweung gede*" for



indigenous peoples is the lifeblood that can ensure the sustainability of the life of the community as well as a symbol of the sustainability of the cultural development of the community concerned. The preservation of the sacred forest "*leuweung gede*" is clear evidence that shows the culture of the people of *Kampung Kuta* built by the ancestors is still growing in the influence of the times until now.

Some of the customary rules inherited from ancestral teachings that the people of *Kampung Kuta* still obey have succeeded in: preserving traditional houses, conserving forests and animals, conserving water sources, preserving local arts and ceremonies. The ancestral traditions still being carried out are believed by them if they are not implemented or violate customary rules. The community believes that they will get sanctions from *karuhun* or ancestors. The sanctions can be in the form of illness, attack of plant pests; earthquake; landslide; and even death that can hit the entire village area (Hilman, 2014).

The success of the people of *Kampung Kuta* in maintaining local wisdom through the *pamali* cultural tradition as a social institution that can still grow and develop in today's influences has positive implications in their lives, including the success of preserving traditional houses, conserving forests, and animals, conserving natural resources. Springs, preserving arts, and preserving traditional ceremonies. Local wisdom that has prevailed in a society whose nature is hereditary and is closely related to environmental sustainability needs to be preserved. By understanding local wisdom, it will be increasingly evident that local wisdom is an essential capital in natural resource management and environmental conservation.

Methods

In this study, we use the type/approach of research in the form of Library Research. A literature study is a study that is used to collect information and data with the help of various materials in the library such as documents, books, magazines, historical stories, etc.

Literature studies can also study various reference books and similar previous research results useful for obtaining a theoretical basis on the problem to be studied (Sarwono, 2006). Literature study also means data collection techniques by reviewing books, literature, notes, and various reports related to the problem (Nazir, 1988). Meanwhile, according to other experts, library research



is a theoretical study, references, and other scientific literature related to culture, values , and norms that develop in the social situation under study (Sugiyono, 2012).

Library research methods. This research is used to research local wisdom in Kampung Kuta, closely related to environmental conservation. The steps in literature research, according to Kuhlthau (2002), are as follows:

1. Topic selection
2. Information exploration
3. Determine the research focus
4. Collection of data sources
5. Preparation of data presentation
6. Report preparation

Findings

Local wisdom is the attitude, view, and ability of a community in managing its spiritual and physical environment, which gives the community the endurance and power to grow in the area where the community is located. Local wisdom is a creative answer to local geopolitical, historical, and situational geographical situations. Local wisdom is a term related to the order of the cultural, moral values of a society (Saini, 2001)

Local wisdom or local knowledge accumulates the results of cultural activities in responding to and treating the environment (Ridwan, 2007). Substantially, local wisdom is the value that applies in a society. Values that are believed to be true and become a reference in the daily behavior of the local community. Therefore, it is very reasonable if Greertz says that local wisdom is an entity that significantly determines human dignity in his community. This means that local wisdom, which contains elements of creative intelligence and local knowledge from the elite and the community is what determines the development of the civilization of the community.

Local wisdom or often called local wisdom can be understood as a human effort by using his mind (cognition) to act and behave towards something, object, or event that occurs in a specific space (Ridwan, 2007).



Local wisdom is usually reflected in the long-standing habits of people's lives. The sustainability of local wisdom will be reflected in the values that apply to specific community groups. These values become the grip of particular community groups, which will usually become an inseparable part of life that can be observed through their daily attitudes and behavior (Ridwan, 2007).

Local wisdom is the result of a dialectical process between individuals and their environment. Local wisdom is an individual's response to environmental conditions. At the individual level, local wisdom emerges as a result of individual cognitive work processes in an effort to determine the choice of values that are considered the most appropriate for them. In groups, local wisdom is an effort to find shared values as a result of patterns of relationships (settings) that have been arranged in an environment (Ridwan, 2007). Local wisdom can be understood as local ideas that are wise, full of wisdom, of suitable value, which are embedded and followed by members of the community (Sartini, 2004).

The local wisdom of *pamali* culture in Kuta Village is passed down from generation to generation, namely from the older generation to the younger generation since they were small, carried out orally through stories told in fairy tales. The approach through social institutions (families, communities, community organizations) is an effective form of socialization to perpetuate *pamali* local wisdom that makes them cultured human beings.

Kampung Kuta is located in Karangpaningal Village, Tambaksari District, bordering Central Java and is known as the traditional village (Sukmayadi, 2018). The Kuta Traditional Village was established during the Galuh Kingdom. This traditional village is inhabited by a community-led by a customary head and family head that adheres to local wisdom of *pamali* culture (taboo), traditions, religion, and norms enforced and must be obeyed to maintain the balance of nature and the harmony of the social order of society.

The main principles in *adat* and *pamali* culture are considered traditional/local wisdom because they come from ancestral heritage passed down from generation to generation. In Kuta village, these traditional principles still apply as social institutions that can control human behaviour in interacting with nature or with each other. The main principles above are divided into two parts, namely the main principles related to natural resource management and principles related to daily life. The main principles in natural resource



management are the most important principles and are most emphasized by the people of *Kampung Kuta*, namely as follows:

1. *Teu kenging di sapatu atawa di sandal, Teu Kenging make emas, lamun rek asup ka tempat keramat* (You are not allowed to wear shoes or sandals, you are not allowed to use gold jewellery if you enter sacred places). This taboo contains the value that the people of Kuta village really respect simplicity, humble, togetherness and obedient attitudes towards prevailing social norms. They have a very high religious nature and respect the heritage of their ancestors, namely sacred places. The sacred place in question is a forest area inhabited by supernatural beings that control and guard the village of Kuta, where everyone who will enter the sacred forest area is not allowed to use shoes, sandals, and jewelry.
2. *Teu kenging nyiduh, kahampangan, kabeuratan di tempat keramat* (no spitting, urination, defecation in sacred places). This taboo is a form of upholding the values of cleanliness and courtesy. The maintenance of a harmonious and balanced relationship between nature and humans is reflected in this expression. If someone spits, urinate and even defecate, it will cause the natural environment to be polluted.
3. *Jalma nu maot teu kenging dipendem di Kuta* (Every person who died should not be buried in *Kampung Kuta*). This taboo reflects the belief of the people of *Kampung Kuta* in ancestral myths and respect for their ancestors. One of the people's *karubun* is Ki Bumi who is buried in Marga, so everyone who dies will be buried in Cibodas.
4. *Teu kenging ngadamel bumi ku tembok, suhunan teu kenging ku kenteng, tapi kedah ku kiray atanapi injuk* (You cannot build a house out of wall materials, you cannot use roof tiles, but you have to use reeds or fibres). This taboo shows a symbol if the materials come from the ground (walls and tiles) and the place exceeds the limits of the human head, the same means that humans feel in the ground or are buried. The meaning is the same as the dead, even though in this world, living humans should not be like the dead who are helpless. Another purpose of this taboo is also related to the unstable soil conditions of the Kuta village. In addition, if it is associated with the concept of the environment, red bricks and tiles are objects made from fertile soil.



Fertile soil will be more valuable if it is used for agricultural activities and also for growing other types of crops.

5. *Teu kenging ngadamel sumur jero* (Not allowed to make deep wells) This taboo is in the form of a recommendation as well as a prohibition that must be applied by the people of *Kampung Kuta* when they are going to make a well in their house. The wells made should not be too deep (Fajarini, 2019)

Local wisdom and also *pamali* culture in Kuta village are very supportive of environmental conservation, and no one dares to dig sand or soil for buildings, because there should be no wall buildings. If there is, it is believed that the earth will heat up. It is forbidden to dig wells (groundwater), water must be taken from springs by pipe, there is no danger of landslides, it is not allowed to take fish from the lake if you want to fish can only take from the river. The people of Kuta are fertile with springs. Therefore rice fields and ponds are characteristics of the people of Kuta. People consume fish from their respective ponds.

Pamali Culture and Environmental Sustainability

1. Water

Local wisdom in Kampung Kuta which is closely related to *pamali* culture is very helpful in preserving the environment around Kampung Kuta. The *pamali* culture in Kuta Village has not experienced fundamental changes and decay of local wisdom. However, there are early indications of modifications to the new values that have entered, such as the use of water pumping technology, modifications to the architectural styles, and public acceptance of the idea of tourism.

The prohibition of spitting, urinating, or defecating is a reflection of the clean life handed down by the ancestors of *Kampung Kuta*. The meaning of the prohibition on spitting and defecating in the forest is to protect the natural environment from being polluted and smelly and to avoid (prevent) the occurrence of diseases caused by dirt and garbage, such as diarrhoea, itching, and skin pain.

As for the customary rules that prohibit the construction of wells, this is also complied with because it aims to maintain the sanctity of the land of



Kampung Kuta. Residents do not build toilets (bath and wash toilets), but they choose to go to the river if they want to defecate and so on. The residents obeyed the prohibition on building wells or boreholes to avoid damage to the soil and damage to waterways in the ground. To meet their water needs, residents rely on springs from Ciasihan Springs (Hilman, 2018).

To drain water from springs to public baths, use plastic/paralon and bamboo hoses to shelters or public baths. Public baths and latrines are located above fish ponds so that the chain of life runs well. The people of *Kampung Kuta* believe that if the land is dug beyond the knees of adults, it will cause damage to various ancestral relics that were mandated to the indigenous people. This taboo contains community environmental wisdom related to unstable village land conditions. If the community builds bore wells that are deeper than ordinary wells, it is feared that it will cause the groundwater supply to be disrupted (Aulia, 2010).

The people of *Kampung Kuta* believe that if the land is dug beyond the knees of an adult, it will cause damage to various ancestral relics that are mandated by the indigenous people. This taboo contains community environmental wisdom related to unstable village land conditions. In addition, if the community builds boreholes that are deeper than ordinary wells, it is feared that the groundwater supply will be disrupted.

This local wisdom reflects that they highly uphold the values of cleanliness and courtesy. The maintenance of a harmonious and balanced relationship between nature and humans is also reflected in this expression. If people spit, urinate and even defecate, it will cause the natural environment to be polluted. The prohibition of spitting, urinating, or defecating is a reflection of the clean life handed down by the ancestors of *Kampung Kuta*. The meaning of the prohibition on spitting and defecating in the forest is to protect the natural environment from being polluted and smelly and to avoid (prevent) the occurrence of diseases caused by dirt and garbage, such as diarrhoea, itching, and skin pain. In an effort to meet the needs of water resources, there is a prohibition against making wells and digging soil.



2. Forest

Protected forest (*Leuweung Gede*), according to the people of Kuta, is a protected forest area (customary forest or sacred forest) that is sacred by the community and ancestors (ancestors) of *Kampung* Kuta. Kuta's customary forest covers an area of ±40 hectares and is located in the south of Kuta Village. A sacred forest is a natural forest that is still intact, and its authenticity is guaranteed (Hilman, 2018).

Forests have existed since ancient times, even since their ancestors first came to Kuta. The forest has been a communal property (shared property) of the Kuta people for generations, which has been recognized by other community groups in the vicinity. The forest was maintained by the ancestors and the people of Kuta because it serves as a buffer zone for the village from the Cijolang River. Forest management is carried out by the people of Kuta by respecting the traditions of their ancestors so that the integrity and sustainability of the forest are maintained.

The way and form of respect for the Kuta community for the forest is the imposition of a ban (*pamali*) for all communities, both local residents and guests who come to visit. People are prohibited from taking wood, twigs, plants, and animals from the forest, even if the tree has fallen or the animal has died. Trees that have fallen are allowed to blend into the soil and become organic fertilizer for living plants.

Indigenous forests are considered sacred and have religious values so that people make pilgrimages to sacred forests accompanied or guided by *Kuncen* (guardian locks/protected forest guides). Pilgrimages are carried out to ask for life safety, blessings, household harmony, easy mate, good at school, advanced efforts (job success), avoiding danger, recovering from disease, and peaceful life.

People are forbidden or taboo to make pilgrimages with bad intentions. Pilgrimages to the sacred forest can only be made on Mondays and Fridays from 08.00-16.00 WIB. Those who make a pilgrimage to the forest must comply with the prohibition, which is prohibited from wearing jewellery and footwear (shoes/sandals), not wearing black clothes and government uniforms (safari), not allowed to spit, and defecate (small/large). People who make pilgrimages are also prohibited



from disturbing flora and fauna (plants and animals) found in the forest and are not allowed to take them (Hilman, 2018). All of these provisions are environmental conservation practices, where these provisions apply not only to indigenous community members but to anyone who enters the sacred forest. So far, everyone has complied with these provisions. According to the Customary Chief that these provisions are for "*mupusti lain migusti*" (maintaining not deifying) (Suwarlan, 2020). This is believed to have contributed to the natural preservation of the sacred forest in which there are still many trees that are hundreds of years old.

Thus it can be concluded that these practices are a tangible manifestation of the values of local wisdom, which are understood as ideas and knowledge of the local community that is wise, full of wisdom, of suitable value, and virtuous which are owned, guided, and implemented by all members of the community to protect and manage the environment sustainably.

Conclusion

Kuta Village is one of the recognized traditional villages in Karangpaningal Village, Tambaksari District, Ciamis Regency, West Java Province. The form of local wisdom that develops in the people of *Kampung Kuta* is the form of *pamali* culture known. It has been a mandate carried out from generation to generation since hundreds of years ago. This local wisdom is a belief of the people of *Kampung Kuta* regarding spiritual belief in their ancestors and has developed into a norm that regulates the behaviour of the local community.

Local wisdom of *pamali* culture has an impact on the preservation of natural resources in Kuta Village. This is evidenced by the receipt of the Kalpataru award in terms of environmental conservation in 2002. This *pamali* local wisdom is implemented in the management of water resources for the sake of creating the preservation of natural resources. With the prohibition of making wells in Kuta Village, water resources are appropriately utilized and sustainably for the lives of the people of Kuta Village. The prohibition of digging these wells is to maintain the condition of underground water so that it is always good, clean, and maintain the soil in a precarious condition.

The water resources found in Kuta Village are used for two functions, namely to meet daily needs and for *nyipuh* traditional rituals in the Sacred Forest. This



water resource is taken from clean water sources from four springs: Cibungur, Ciasihan, Cinangka, and Cipanyipuhan. People only use this spring for their daily needs and are prohibited from digging their wells. Meanwhile, water sources from Ciasihan and Pamarakan are used in the Sacred Forest for traditional rituals.

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