KNOWLEDGE PRESERVATION OF TUAK AS BATAK TOBA SOCIAL COMMUNITY CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

Tuak is a distinctive traditional drink of the Batak Toba community culture that has been running for years and becoming a daily form of consumption. The purpose of this research is to identify the process of creating tuak and to analyse the values and the role it possessed in the life of the Batak Toba community. This study was conducted using qualitative research. This study showed previous research which discusses different things related to the role of Tuak as a culture in the Batak Toba community. Previous research showed that there are pros and cons concerning cultural preservation which is only limited to the scope of the Batak Toba community. However, of course this culture has its own value for the Batak Toba community, so the community still preserves the socio-cultural values possessed by Tuak.

KEYWORDS: Batak Toba, Tuak, Indigenous Knowledge, Indonesia, Knowledge Preservation

INTRODUCTION

Indigenous knowledge is the local knowledge, which is unique to a given culture or society. Usually, IK contrasts with international knowledge system generated by universities, research institutions and private firms (Warren, 1991). For Indigenous Knowledge itself, usually refers to the knowledge and practices which have been accumulated over the years and used by the first peoples or natives of a given territory, and would normally be based on the indigenous people’s interaction between themselves and the interaction with fauna and flora (Le Roux, 2001). On other hands, IK also refers to uniquely tacit knowledge to a specific culture and society as a basis for local decision-making in agriculture, health, natural resource management and others activities (Agrifoglio and Metallo, 2015).

Tuak is a culture that is inherent in the life of the Batak Toba people and its surroundings, and is a characteristic of the community. Thus, tuak is positioned as a typical Batak Toba drink because in that community, although there are Muslims who do not drink alcoholic beverages, most of them the community is a Christian who does not oppose liquor. For the tuak culture itself, there is still not much research that alludes to this. An example is, the research of an Ethnologist from Japan, Shuji Yoshida, examines how the technique of tuak production (Yoshida, 1991: 1992) but does not touch on the meaning of tuak from the Batak Toba community. There are also several studies, such as the social function of Lapo (tavern) tuak in daily life research (Ginzel, 1984; Marpaung, 1989; Sirait and Sihotang, 1986). Therefore, this research will try to explain the meaning of Tuak, the function of Tuak in social aspects and how
the preservation of knowledge about making palm wine.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study uses qualitative research methods with a literature study approach. In this study, the concept used is a deductive perspective analysis and writing approach and uses information contained in library research.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Tuak is a lead taken from the palm or palm sugar (Arenga pinnata). In Indonesian, leads from palm or palm are called sap. Nira herself has a sweet taste, and for tuak itself, there are two types that are adapted to the recipe, which is sweet and tastes bitter (has an alcohol content). This is clearly explained by research carried out by an agricultural engineer, Hatta Sunanto (1983: 17), where the palm trees can grow well and be able to produce in areas with fertile soils at an altitude of 500-800m above sea level, although they can grow in areas that have a height of less than 500m and more than 800m. However, he stated that the height factor of the area where sugar palm grows can affect the quality of production, which can then affect the quality of palm wine.

In the Toba community, palm or palm trees are named bagot in their language, which mostly grows in an altitude of about 900m above sea level, and this bagot is used to tap tuak. For certain areas, you can use tappings from coconut trees, even after processing with different ingredients, it is still considered as tuak in the Batak Toba community. To understand Tuak’s role on Batak Toba community daily basis, Gaol (2013) have found important things about Tuak among Batak Toba community, such as:

- **Tuak as a part of culture of Batak Toba Community**
  Tuak is part of the culture of the Batak Toba community that is still preserved because it is part of the means of familiarity in daily life and customary activities.

- **Tuak is misinterpreted as Alcohol**
  Tuak is not Non-alcoholic drink because it is considered to have an adverse effect because the Batak Toba community believes that tuak has a positive impact on health and through lapo tuak, tuak is also considered to unite the activities of these community groups.

- **Tuak consumption is not related with social status**
  Batak Toba people assume that everyone is free to consume palm wine regardless of social economic status of the community itself, because it upholds a high sense of brotherhood.

- **Tuak as part of traditional ceremony**
  Tuak as part of custom is where tuak is considered an honor drink made with certain ingredients that have been prepared and in traditional ceremonies, tuak must be given and poured first to older people. If someone drinks and pours wine for himself, then that person is deemed not to be appropriate.

- **Tuak is consumable by womens who recently gave birth.**
There is an assumption that Tuak is safe for consumption by women who have just given birth, where Tuak is considered to be able to smooth milk and remove waste through sweat. However, over time, this perspective is rarely done, because most young people now consider it to be bad, where the elderly still routinely give tuak to their wives.

- How Young generations saw Tuak Culture

For young people, Tuak is an important drink that is presented in various moments, both relaxing moments, parties, childbirth, grieving, deliberation and also as medicine. Young people also believe that by drinking tuak, they can speak more fluently and express their feelings with open heart. Even children can consume Tuak along with their parents and there is no strict rules about that.

For tuak production process itself, Ikegami (1997), has examined how a palm wine can be produced and distributed in the Batak Toba community. The process itself is using tuak tappers, called paragat, which comes from agat, from the Batak Toba language, which is a kind of knife used when tapping tuak. In the process, the tuak itself must go through the process of beating the bunches over and over again with a tool from wood called balbal-balbal for several weeks, and afterwards cut the bulk portion.

Then, proceed with the process of wrapping the end of the bunch with medicine, which is in the form of whiting or taro pounded for two to three days. With this procedure, the water starts to flow smoothly. In this process, a paragat taps tuak twice a day, namely morning and evening. After that, the tuak which is collected in the morning is collected in the paragat house. After carrying out a trial for the taste, a paragat inserted into a tub of palm wine a kind of bark called raru to match the taste and alcohol. This raru which causes fermentation in the tapping process of palm wine.

For preservation of the process of making the palm wine, usually through the recipe for making which is said to always vary the way it is made depends on the way the paragat works is believed to do tapping tuak. However, for each of these recipes, it is considered a "company secret", and therefore not all can become a paragat.

For the prescription process, it is usually passed down from parent to child, and most of them are men. This is because the daily paragat activities are going down to the ravine, climbing bagot trees and carrying tuak which is accommodated to the village, which is very hard for women. Some paragats open their own tuak shop, but in general most paragats sell tuak to the tavern or tuak agent. With the declaration of paragat getting cash every day, the paragat standard of living is high.

Tuak itself is a drink that has positive and negative effects in the community. Although tuak is considered to have a purpose to strengthen brotherhood, there is still an assumption that tuak is dangerous because it is an alcoholic beverage and must be dealt with because it is feared to be a criminal means. That’s why preservation of tuak is limited only to more like Batak Toba communities.

DISCUSSION

From various sources of previous research about the Tuak culture which was used as a reference for this study, it can be seen that the Tuak culture has a unique manufacturing process
and has a socio-cultural meaning that is closely embedded in this Batak Toba community. This is supported by various data from several previous studies that suggest that Tuak is a typical drink that is always attached to the identity of the Batak Toba community, which is distinctive with kinship and brotherhood.

The perspective on Tuak in the Batak Toba community itself varies how each sees it. Gaol and Husin (2013) suggested that tuak into a hereditary drink was used as a typical drink for traditional Batak Toba parties and events. There are also studies that state that tuak is a unifying variety of generations, ranging from the older to the younger generation. And there is also a perception where Tuak is a drink that is safe from alcohol, which is where women can also consume these drinks.

If viewed from the process of making palm wine in the Batak Toba community, we can assume that for the process of decreasing the recipe for Tuak drinks which even said it could vary from each maker, or commonly called "Paragat", it is knowledge that is only passed down on a family basis, because of the presumption that the recipe that is owned is a "company secret" and not all can be paragat, because in addition to the long and heavy manufacturing process, it certainly must have the expected dedication and ability (in this case, women are not recommended as paragat, because they are considered unable to face the rigors of the process of taking palm wine and its manufacture).

Although the existence of tuak itself is something that can be accepted by the Batak Toba community, although not all are Christians (in this case, there are a majority who are Muslims, where they cannot tolerate liquor), there is an assumption that Tuak itself must be eradicated because it is considered bad habits, namely the dependence of these drinks and Tuak itself have a negative effect on health, although many think that Tuak is a good thing because it can unite community members and increase solidarity among communities, and Tuak has a good effect, which can prevent disease kidney and urinary stones, because of the mineral content contained in Tuak itself, so it is recommended for people with diabetes or diabetes to consume Tuak, especially for women, which where tuak can facilitate milk and remove dirt from the body through sweat for women who have give birth.

CONCLUSION

There is still much that can be discussed from this tuak actually, but with limited access to communication with Batak Toba elders and the lack of research discussing Tuak, we can conclude that Tuak has its own method of preservation and how the drink has its own value in the Batak Toba community. This can be seen from the role of Tuak as a component of socio-cultural interaction in parties or traditions, especially with the presence of a special shop that can provide easy access to Tuak consumption in the Batak Toba community, both young and old. Especially for communities that are still not familiar with the existence of Tuak, but can be introduced to the Batak Toba community.
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