LEARNING ENVIRONMENTAL LESSONS FROM INDEGENOUS AMMATOA KAJANG TO PRESERVE THE FOREST

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Abstract. The existence of Kajang indigenous community of Bulukumba Regency in Indonesia has been recognized before the 1918s and conflicted in many ways under atavism and modern perspective of political powers around the area. However, the decision and the commitment of the community members with Ammatoa to preserve the nature and environment amidst onslaught prevailing civilization and current socio-political and developments is a survival phase in gaining respected indigenous rights. Implementing concepts of ‘cukup-enough’ and ‘Pasang-Advices’ as lessons to communicate with the environment and surrounding forests is eventually recognized and respected. Though, the indigenous community is still continually experiencing difficult alluring occurrences in maintaining the tribal concept till now.

Keywords: Kajang community, Ammatoa, ‘cukup’, ‘Pasang’, environmental communication.

Introduction

The community of Kajang is an indigenous community who reside in Tana Toa Village, the subdistrict of Bulukumba Regency in Indonesia. Similar to other indigenous communities and lands within the country, the existence of this ethnic community and its rights has been conflicted in many ways under atavism and modern perspectives which eventually recognised politically and formally by the government (Duile, 2020; Tyson, 2009) eventually apprised within the constitution of Indonesia (Anugrah Pratama, 2020).

The community is led by a spiritual and social leader known as Ammatoa. The community member has a social value system to obey Ammatoa who believed to be the reincarnation or inherited from the God (tu rie A’ra’na), traditional advices-pasang ri Kajang, the afterlife - allo riboko, and fate-toto’ (Saputra, 2019). Through the Ammatoa, this indigenous community continue to hold traditional values. Right now, there are two community Ammatoas located in two locations of Tana Kamase-masea and Tana Kuasayya. Unlike the community who live in Tana Kuasayya, those who reside in Tana Kamase-masea still maintain cultural value system as a hereditary from ancestors affecting them to reluctantly accept new or modern developments and out-side technologies. This is also because they implement teachings of Kajang value that the whole activities in life are simply meaningful within the afterlife.

The above thought is reflected in everyday life and activities. Thus, they prefer to live in a simple way like staying within unfurnished stilt houses and avoiding expensive piece of stuff. Their houses model and type are built in similar shape one to each other making it
difficult for an outsider to find a certain house or the Ammatoa’s. To express the simplicity in life and fashion, the Ammatoa and the community members normally wear ordinary black clothes (Hijjang et al., 2019; Maarif, 2012). The community of Kajang is known in their traditional way of life to be unpretentious life which has been done and expected to be implemented by future generations. The most remarkable way of life is described in the way to protect the environment and forests (Bedner & Arizona, 2019; Dhiaulhaq & McCarthy, 2020; Fisher & van der Muur, 2020; Surtikanti et al., 2017; W. Van der Muur & Bedner, 2016).

Life within Modernization

The Village of the indigenous Ammatoa and Kajang community is located in Tana Towa Village, Kajang Subdistrict, Bulukumba. The gate to enter the community is symbolized as the boundary between the modern and traditional life of the Kajangese. The Ammatoa and the community members decided to avoid to be involved in machinery technological type of equipments as part of their life rule (Abdullah & Cangara, 2016; Conference ‘Adat Law 100 Years on: Towards a New Interpretation?,’ 2017). Therefore, it is difficult to find any electronic devices within the area. Mechanized vehicles such as cars and motorcycles are also prohibited to enter the traditional village site.

The houses of most members are shaped in elongated houses made in the wooden platforms (Erawati et al., 2016). The shape of one house to another is almost similar facing to the same direction describing the frame of cultural perspectives in the matter of housing (Robinson, 1997). It also shows that the decision to take the action is they way to form a fortress in protecting local wisdom of Ammatoa and Kajang traditional society from outside massive attacks of communication and information evolutions. By this, they can concentrate to their decisions and life solutions in protecting local values and principles. Their daily concepts of life adhere to various myths in the frame to build and maintain people's behaviour in line with harmonious life with nature (Brosius et al., 1998; Ellen, 1986; Li, 2000).

Another unwillingness to use modernized lifestyle (Nursalam, 2016) is seen in the Tana Towa village community of Kajang that children attending elementary school located in front of the village gate. Instead of using white-red as general an elementary school students uniform in Indonesia, they wear white-black uniforms as an observation to use compulsorily white shirt uniform. The children support this black-uniform habit as they believe that the black colour is philosophically symbolizing the darkness, that human beings are created from the place of darkness in the mother's womb and are leading to another darkness place of the graveyard when died (Maarif, 2012). This black fashion is normally consisting of sarong, shirt and headgear.

Nowadays, the Ammatoa and Kajang community of Tana Towa have to struggle more in facing the technological transformation of communication and information as the other Kajang community who lived Tana Kuasayya has slowly opened themselves to technological developments shown in the dissemination of motorized vehicles within the area.

Efforts to be Respected

The community of Kajang has a long history in its effort to be respected in maintaining traditional values within the community. Customary legal standpoint has been initiated to preserve their rights and cultural values since 2008, but it does not give successfull result until an optimistic disposition within the Constitutional Court Decree of
1999 has granted a recognition that customary traditional forests are excluded from state-owned forests (Paino, 2013). Thus, interminable government-community clashes then arose when 331.17 hectares of Kajang Community’s customary forest was claimed to be included as state-owned under the Minister of Forestry Decree No. 504/1997 (Putri et al., 2020; W. Van der Muur & Bedner, 2016). Another law that weakened the community’s rights of managing the traditional forest was the Law No. 5/1979, making efforts to win the rights in legal standpoint still strived for.

The weakened status of community ownership on the customary land and forest by the situation was also seen within the conflict between the community and third parties. Though, through Indonesian recognition on rights of nine various indigenous communities of the country in December 2016, the Kajang community still has a strong point (Conference ‘Adat Law 100 Years on: Towards a New Interpretation?,’ 2017).

The vigorous problem of Kajang Community to earn the ownership of the land and the protection of its environment has started since the 1918s when the Ammatoa regions turned to be a complex land dispute between a local farmer and a rubber plantation company, PT London Sumatera (PT Lonsum) (Fisher & van der Muur, 2020; Putri et al., 2020; W. Van der Muur & Bedner, 2016). Within several decades of dispute, the association of customary law, economy, social and human rights issues have complicated the case (Fisher & van der Muur, 2020; W. Van der Muur & Bedner, 2016).

Although farmer groups and NGOs supports have raised the case to the issue of customary law to exaggerate their claim (W. Van der Muur & Bedner, 2016), the disputing company has mobilized military officers (Maarif, 2012; W. E. van der Muur, 2019; Tyson, 2010; W. Van der Muur & Bedner, 2016) who did not hesitate to shoot several Ammatoans and those who refused to leave the site (Davidson & Henley, 2007:275). Subsequently, died and injured farmers while others fled and hid in the forest have escalated the case to a human rights issue. Also, the development of disputes in recent years shows that some people who hold the status of Ammatoa, also have positions in government and politics, including those who carry out individual missions and mere political position, have joined farmer organizations in rallies and demonstrations to claim more in the land ownership. (Van der Muur & Bedner, 2016).

Environmental Communication in Preserving the Forest

The community of Ammatoa Kajang believes that the forest is the source of life. It is expressed as ‘anjor boronga angkotai bosia’ – it is the forest summons rains. The forest is called as the rain caller. By this, they have been guarding and maintaining the ecosystem of the forest seriously. They explain that the area of the forest is believed to be the most important organ of the earth that balancing rainy season and dry seasons. What they mean is that if the number of forest decreases, the amount of rain will decrease which eventually causing dry (Dassir, 2008). This perspective is mentioned in Pasang as ‘Punna nitabbangi kajua ri boronga Ang’re bos, appatanrei tumbusu - if the wood in the forest area is cut down, it reduces rain and negates springs.

Generally, the community members divided the forest areas into thatch areas, not to be touched, and pantarang areas which is allowed to be exploited by the members. Based on this, they divide the Ammatoa forest into three zones:
1. Sacred Forest (Borong Karama’), the area which is forbidden (kasipalli) to enter or disturbing floras and faunas in it. It is also said that they avoid entering the forests to prevent disturbing their ancestors who turned to be the monkey (Riley & Priston, 2010). The Borong
Karama’ could only be entered by the Ammatoa and adat members in time of traditional ceremonies such as the inauguration of Ammatoa-Pa'nganroang. The Borong Karama’ contains eight zones: Borong Pa'rasangang Iraja, Borong Pa’rasangang Ila', Borong Tappalang, Borong Tombolo, Borong Karanjang, Borong Tunikeke, Torong Erasaya, and Borong Pandingiang. These areas are considered sacred as they believed that if an outsider enters the areas, could not get out alive (Lex Suprema et al., 2009).

2. Border Forest (Borong Battasayya), the area available for Ammatoa and community members to enter Borong Karama’ in time of community rituals. The area of Borong Battasayya is located within the area of Iraja Pa'rasangeng Forest, where the Ammatoa and the community members are allowed to take and collect woods in certain conditions.

3. Outside Forest (Borong Luarayya), is a community forest that not been encumbered by the ownership rights. This forest is located around the Ammatoan community farms. Hence, the community can have their needs of woods under the same rights. The philosophical base of Kajang Environmental protection tool is based on the Concept of cukup-Enough and Pasang-Advices.

**The concept of 'enough'**

The concept of cukup-enough is a concept to feel merely 'sufficient' in fulfilling the needs in life. In everyday life, the concept can be seen in how the community members present their fashion, food and shelter. The community members have set clear boundaries in determining that the black colour in fashion is philosophically showing the equality among others and by this choice, there will be no intention to be burden by any wish to have valued and priced fashions. To meet daily food needs, this concept is teaching the community by the stating that ‘if there is a fish to be consumed at any time, it is sufficient enough for food' because fish is only supplementary to rice that available from farms or gardens. Similarly, in the matter of farms and gardens, they have no intention to increase the amount or size of the areas.

The concept of enough is also applied to the need and form of housing. The house of the indigenous Ammatoa is built similar to the shape of others. The inside formation of the house contains front part of the house deliberately facing the kitchen, aiming to show guests items owned by the host reflected on things within the kitchen. The enough concept is also teaching them to openly showing that no hidden households. The form of the house roof, anjong, is shaped as rooster's tail copying the symbol of the Gowa kingdom to tie one house to another.

In term of environmental perspective, the concept of 'enough' is teaching the community member to understand the signs of natural ‘messages’. The message is considered to be understood as pieces of advice, hints, or rules to stabilise the nature with the statement of Pasang. Macro and microcosmos of nature is established to be harmony in the way of ‘good’, ‘bad’, or ‘allowed’. These wisdom are considered keys the survive of nature and farms. This statement also teaches that the existence of forests is a source of life buffering to balance human life with the natural environment. They consider if the forest damages, their lives is also damage. By this, they only consume sources from the nature and forest limited to ‘enough’ needed. To answer the question on how do parents teach children and young generation on the concept, the form of dialect non-media communication process is conducted automatically within interpersonally or groups communication under the community principle known ‘kamase-masea’ (Musi & Fitriana, 2019)
**Pasang ri Kajang**

Pasang ri Kajang means bits of advice in Kajang containing set of advices and messages that is believed to be the holy book inherited and from ancestors of Ammatoan (Amin, 2020). It refers to advice and teachings to be used in daily activities. The messages are oral advice from the Adat stakeholders and traditionally transmitted among members of the community. Therefore, it is difficult to scientifically find the forest sources of messages included in the Pasang. Ammatoans usually mentioned that according to the Pasang says without explaining the beginning of the message or advice. Thus, Pasang ri Kajang is considered as a set of traditional pieces of knowledges and references to be used as the rule of conduct. It contains all kinds of advice, ideas and practices concerning history, politic, social, culture, economic, or religious thoughts (Maarif, 2012). The management of the environment and the forest has also mentioned the Pasang to preserve the stability and continuity of harmonious life between human being and nature.

In carrying out Pasang as Kajang Customary law, the community has a customary implementation rule called Patuntung. This rule is used in to manage and maintain forest functions as part of community activities. Patuntung was first known in the time of the first Ammatoa existence appearing among the people. Patuntung is also considered a doctrine, saviour, social control, and community unifier within the Kajang Dalam community. It is essentially used to connect and integrate Islamic law with community values so they remain preserved and available to face the current of globalization.

The first note of the pasang is ‘Jagai linoa lolong bonena kammayya tomopa langika siagang rupa taua siagang boronga nikasipallangkan ni ammanra’-manrakia borong’- as nature is divided into the upper continent or the sky (boting langi), middle continent or the place to live, and the lower continent or the ocean (parathi), they should be seen as a united system connection.

The second note is ‘Anjo boronga, akkio bosiya nasaba iaminjo boronga nikua pangairang’ asserting the meaning that the forest is the rain caller functioning to keep and stabilize the water.

The third note of pasang is ‘Punna natabbangi kajua riborongnga, nunipappirangnga Anging posire timbusu’ stressing that woods production from the forest should not be over-exploiting as it causing floods, dry in water sources, or damaging to the ecosystem balance.

The fourth note is ‘nari kaloro battu riboronga, narie’ timbusu battu rikajua na battu ri kalelengnga’ describes the hydrological function of the forest as a regulator of the water system. Although this note was made in simple language, the Ammatoa and the community members state that sustainable forests will bring rain and keep flowing springs.

The fifth and sixth notes are similar as, ‘boronga parallui nitallassi, erea battu ri kaloro lupayya’ and ‘iyamintu akkiyo bosiy eangenna ereya nipake a’lamung pare, ba’do appa’re timbusia’ emphasizing that forests must remain alive as it is linking stored rainwater to the land.

The seventh note states orders of the Ammatoa to community members in forest conservations. The note says ‘Anjo tugasa’na Ammatoa nalarangngi annabbang kaju ri boronga’ stressing that the cutting wood prohibition is the authority of Ammatoa to make and therefore the protection of the forest is formed also under the policy of the Ammatoa.

The eighth note is ‘Iyaminjo nikua, boronga kunne talakkullei nisambei kajua, kaju timboa talakkullei nitambai nanorong karak borong, nilarangngi taurwa lamung riboronna bae nastu tau rume’ confirms that the land of the Ammatoa community becomes an irreplaceable heirloom to plant and the sacred Ammatoa forest remains Ammatoa’s responsibility. By this,
logging or planting in the customary forests of Borong Karama’ is not allowed resulting trees are growing naturally.

By the expressions of above Pasang ri Kajang, the government control on the kajang land is not merely arbitrary realizing the community emotional bonds that important for the social harmonisation. For this reason, Pasang ri Kajang reminds respected and the government institutions are expected to support in various ways.

As Pasang ri Kajang is merely pieces of advice on preserving the environment, it needs to be implemented in detailed don’t and yes actions. Therefore, the Ammatoa is making the kamase-masea principles known as Tide ri Kajang to reinforce those prohibitions within the forest such as:

1. Prohibition to take forest products from the Borong Karama-the sacred forest. It is even forbidden (kasipalli) to pull the grass out from the soil or taking dried fallen woods. This prohibition is not applied in Borong Battasayya forest, however, the wood cutting initiations must be approved by the Ammatoa.

2. Prohibition to hunt wild animals within the forest unless those animals entering housing areas, rice fields, or community farms.

3. Prohibition to disturb bees (bani, manu’-manu ’) although nested within a part of the house. According to Amma Galla of ammatoa, nested bees is protected because it is considered as a forest ranger protecting the forest from human disturbance. Bees is believed to be diligent and honest animal as they work hard to collect honey and only consume fine materials. Also, bees are described only attack when disturbed.

On the other hand, as it is permissible to take wood in the Border Forest (Borong Battasayya) under the permission of Ammatoa, the type and size of wood are also determined under the permission. Timber extraction in Borong Battasayya is only allowed for public facilities such as schools, traditional adat house, or houses of worship. It is also permissible to take woods to build a house of unfortunate people. Taking the permissible wood from the forest has to obey the rule on the process of planting two growing similar trees for each taken tree before carried out. The replant location is determined by the by Ammatoa for each collection of one tree. The whole process of re-plantation and wood extraction is witnessed by Amma Galla (Galla Puto) and Galla Lombo to ensure no violations occurred.

Another customary requirement on the extraction of the wood is that tools used to cut the wood must be in the form of a traditional tool such as the axe (pangkulul’) or machetes. It is forbidden to use a modern chained-saw machine as it is considered against the habit. Similarly, no machine transportation allowed to bring or to withdraw the wood as they must be carried or removed from the forest using human’s power. The violation of the process will affect adat sanctions. Generally, the procedure to extract wood in Borong Battasayya is that woods deeded person proposes to Galla Puto; the Galla Puto report to Ammatoa. The approval then decided by Ammatoa considering the purpose, amount, size, and type of wood requested. Based o the obtained permission, Galla Puto and Galla Lombo check the designated location and the availability of wood continued by the process of logging.

Forest Management to Social Implementations

The Ammatoa ri Kajang community life in protecting the environment and forests is accompanied by various restrictions and pamali’ under the commitment that the Pasang is true and needs to be guarded socially. Therefore, restrictions and pemalis are applied in prohibiting the wood cutting, rattan and ropes harvesting, shrimp and fish catch, animals
hunting, or disturbing children within the *Borong Karama*. These restrictions are accompanied by customary sanctions and shreds of evidence fact-finding process such as:

1. Whipping, consist of a. *Babbala*, a whipping in the forms of three levels: *poko’ babbala-* whipping in the hand and *cappa’ babbala-* whipping in the edge of the hand. *Poko’ babbala* is applied to acts of serious violation while applying fines as much as 12 Saudi Arabian Riyal or 24 ohang (currency known in the time of Dutch colonisation time). It is equivalent to Rp.1,200,000. Cutting down trees without *Ammatoa’s* permission is an example of a serious offence, cutting trees more than allowed is categorized as moderate, and cutting down trees without consuming them is a light offence. The trial is attended by Adat stakeholders and government representatives. Fines collected from the perpetrators are distributed to everyone present.

2. *Attunu Panroli*-Burning Crowbar is a process of to find a perpetrator in the matter of violation or crime acts. The ceremony to burn a crowbar to red is made to reveal the honesty among community members. On a doubted case, revealing the real perpetrator within difficult or complicated cases is solved by asking the whole members to hold the burned crowbar. It is believed that those innocents will not feel the heat. Conversely, the dishonest perpetrator will eventually be known as he will feel the heat.

3. *Attunu Passau*-Burning Passau is initiated in the matter of known violation perpetrator(s) are not present during the trial in a way to avoid the punishment. In order to prevent the perpetrator to flee to other regions, the *Ammatoa* along with other adat stakeholders conduct the *attunu passau*. The *passau* is taken from a beehive, stored in *Ammatoa’s* house for 5 days before being burned for being spelt. It is believed that the burned *passau* effect will last for three months since the passau was burned. They believe that as long as the *passau* still being blown by the wind, the hiding perpetrator could not stay relax anywhere. The community members assure that the true result of the passau making them afraid to conduct violations, especially in the matter of the forest.

The customary sanctions applied in the *ammatoa* community is affecting the way the members’ forest utilization and the use of wood in their life. Whether full respectful on *ammatoa’s* rules concerning the forest or the environmental preservation awareness, to build houses or fulfil community members’ needs on wood for households, the members prefer to bring or buy woods from the outside areas of Kajang’s sacred forest. They let the forest remains sacred as they only use the forest to hold traditional ritual ceremonies. The Sacred Forest (*Borong Karama*) is believed to been adhered by sacred spells to protect it or any matter of curse narratives (Riley & Priston, 2010).

However, for those members who do not have woods in their farms or could not afford to buy the timber may propose to the adat stakeholder and *Ammatoa* to take timbers from *Borong Battasayya*. A village government representative mentioned that the reason to have this way of utilization is based on traumas on forest condition as almost the entire forests around the community were cultivated to be the farm under permission of the Forestry Service of Bulukumba Regency Government. Another reason for this concern is that the number of populations who need woods is increasing affecting worried traditional members and the *Ammatoa* to carefully pay attention to the forest exploitation.

**Closing Mark**

The conflict between indigenous communities and the modernisation can be symbolised as conflicts between minorities and majorities that continually occur in dynamic developments around Indonesia. The most influential factors triggering those conflicts are
mostly in the form of political and social matters. Also, differences in ethnicity, religion, or groups are still undoubtedly prompting colloquial conflicts caused by economy influences. Therefore, the point of environmental preservation concerns by the Kajang community can be considered survive as the idea are still being respected although the community has to sacrifice the willingness to have and to be involved in tempting modernisation that forcibly striking their lives.

On the other hand, the matter of education lack ness by the generation Kajang is not being touched nor the aspect of cognitive abilities and social intelligence are not being concerned about by the government (Muaddab, 2020). This might lead to the choice of whether keeping to stay with the life environmental concepts and ignoring the future social-economic matters or allowing changes occurred in their life to modernisation and having their forest being interfered b the consequence of it. Hence what van der Muur mentioned that that representation of Kajang as harmonious forest communities governed by communal tenure is misleading as similar policiesadvocacy elsewhere serves further obscure lingering land insecurity of rural Indonesians (Fisher & van der Muur, 2020).

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