

Makna sungai praktek pengelolaan lingkungan melalui pendekatan budaya

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Abstrak

River is one of many natural resources supporting the life of all living creatures. The development of human and their cultures is inseparable from rivers. They function as, providers of water and food for both animals and plants living in and around them. Rivers also have other functions ? they provide means of transportation, places to settle and even centers for urban people development and centers of administration. Interactions between people and the environment have effects on the quality of the river ecosystems and the quality of human life. Affected human-river environment balance will lead to conflicts. People living on river banks try to cope with arising problems by establishing institutions through which they manage the use of water as well as institutions which improve environmental management and quality of life of the people living alongside these rivers. This research aims at analyzing the values of rivers and riversides for people living alongside them; analyzing environmental management daily practiced by these people; analyzing how ?Merti Code? cultural event can be used as an approach to improve people?s awareness of proper environmental management.

For the purpose of this research, a qualitative approach is used as well as detailed ethnographical method and history of changes. Data were collected from observations, interviews and documents, and analyzed using descriptive and etnoscientific methods.

People do not manage river environments because they simply want to but because they understand that rivers can provide vital life support and benefits that these people can actually enjoy. It is also awareness of the significance of the environment that moves them to keep rivers from further destruction. A cultural approach in preserving rivers is a way of gathering communities of different economic and cultural backgrounds to take part in a common environmental preservation activity. Involving a larger number of people living on river banks, Merci code is a combined environmental, art and cultural event where people work together to clean rivers and riverside settlements and take part in art and cultural festivities.

Results of the research point toward the following conclusions: (1) Environmental changes will affect the relations established between human and rivers through values which people observe and live on. Functions that these rivers play and which people benefit from make them a valuable social capital for the use of water resources and the preservation of rivers; (2) Tirta Kencana, a collective effort of managing water resources can improve people?s awareness that preserving functions of a river, particularly that of providing water to support their life, is crucial.

The successful effort to manager these water resources has led to the establishment of Forum Masyarakat Code Utara (FMCU) or North Code Community Forum ? an institution established and organized by the

people for environmental improvement programs: managing waste and upgrading river bank areas as paths and public open space to prevent people from throwing waste into the rivers; (3) Merti Code is a cultural strategy to develop the river of Code that has given numerous benefits to people living alongside it. Merti Code is more than a celebration of cultures that exists merely as an idea and a concept; rather, it is actually put into practice by encouraging people to take active part in improving the settlements and areas around the river.

Merti Code is not a one-way (monolog) program that only positions communities as an object of the awareness-increasing effort; it sees people as the subject that plays active part in the ritual of understanding the significant importance of water and rivers. With Merti Code, water is not only perceived in economic terms but also seen, through sanctification, as the communities' life support.

The following are recommended: (1) Environmental management practiced by the people should be connected more closely to Merti Code. Giving water high values through social processes can serve as an approach to encourage people to take more active part in environmental improvement efforts, particularly in river bank areas; (2) Empowerment of people living on river banks should consider their close ties with the river which supports their life.

The government and institutions engaged in the management of social environment of people living in river banks should be able to make these people connected to the place they live; (3) Cultural events relating to environmental management will sustain should it become something that people need and as it is performed because they can benefit from it. As a community ritual, Merti Code will be increasingly susceptible if it is only performed as a tourist attraction. If this is the case, participation and involvement of the people will greatly depend on tourists as provider of benefits.</i>