

Mount bromo will take care of us: Tenggerese religious-ecological knowledge, challenge of modern reason, and disaster mitigation in postcolonial times

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Abstrak

This article aims to discuss the religious-ecological knowledge of the Tenggerese community on the slope of Mount Bromo, Probolinggo (East Java, Indonesia) and its contribution to disaster mitigation. Within the framework of traditional ecological knowledge, we will analyze field data from 2011 until 2016. The results of this study show that many Tenggerese people believe Mount Bromo to be the axis of religion and its surrounding area to be a sacred place. They also believe in and practice several religious-ecological customs in understanding volcanic eruptions and various natural signs. For them, an eruption is a supernatural process involving gods and goddesses that takes place to improve living conditions. However, living in postcolonial times with modern cultures and capitalistic agricultural practices has made some Tenggerese people question and challenge religious authorities when they experience the economic damage caused by volcanic eruptions. Religious authorities can handle the challenge by invoking the concept of communal harmony. Further, we argue, government agencies may incorporate Tenggerese religious-ecological knowledge into disaster mitigation practices. They can combine modern mitigation mechanisms with such wisdom. This hybrid mitigation model may facilitate the coordination of government agencies with traditional leaders to prepare strategically before a disaster strikes as well as implement tactical actions when a disaster occurs.