

MANGROVE AND AKIT TRIBE: DESCRIPTION OF VALUE ORIENTATION AND NATURAL CONSERVATION EFFORT

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Abstrak

Mangrove dan kehidupan Suku Akit memiliki relasi yang erat sebagai sumber penghidupan. Namun, sejak dua dekade terakhir ketersediaan mangrove berkurang akibat aktivitas manusia dan faktor alam sehingga menyebabkan terjadinya abrasi. Tulisan ini menjelaskan praktik pelestarian dan orientasi nilai Suku Akit pada butan mangrove. Kami menggunakan kualitatif melakukan wawancara dan observasi serta menganalisis secara deskriptif. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa sampai saat ini Suku Akit masih memanfaatkan mangrove untuk kehidupan mereka, misalnya dalam bentuk kayu bakar, cerocok atau kayu fondasi rumah, pancang, maupun arang. Tetapi, pemanfaatan mangrove ini tidak dilakukan dalam jumlah yang besar, hal ini disebabkan karena adanya himbauan untuk mengurangi penebangan mangrove sebagai upaya mencegah abrasi. Beberapa orang mengikuti anjuran tersebut bahkan mereka sudah mulai bergerak mencari sumber penghidupan lain selain dari mangrove. Sebagian yang lain masih bekerja pada industri mangrove baik sebagai pelaku utama maupun pekerja. Temuan ini memberikan penekanan bahwa alternatif sumber penghidupan berkelanjutan selain bergantung pada mangrove sangat diperlukan untuk kehidupan Suku Akit. Orientasi nilai mereka terhadap mangrove memiliki keterkaitan yang erat pada kondisi kehidupan mereka, sehingga diperlukan pemahaman serta alternatif pekerjaan lain agar tidak lagi memanfaatkan mangrove meskipun dalam jumlah yang kecil.

Kata Kunci: *Orientasi Nilai, Suku Akit, Hutan Mangrove, Indigenous People.*

Abstract

Mangroves and the life of the Akit Tribe have a close relationship as a source of life. However, since the last two decades, the availability of mangroves has decreased because of human activities and other natural factors that caused the abrasion. This study describes the conservation practices and value orientation of the Akit Tribe in mangrove forests. It was qualitative with interviews, observation, and analyzed descriptively. The results of the study indicated that until now the Akit Tribe still uses mangroves for their lives, for example, firewood, cigars or house foundation wood, stakes, and charcoal. However, the use of mangroves was not carried out in large numbers, this is because of an appeal to reduce mangrove cutting as an effort to prevent abrasion. Some people followed the advice and started to look for other sources of life apart from mangroves. The other people are still working in the mangrove industry, both as main actors and as workers. The result emphasizes that alternative sources of sustainable life apart from mangroves are essential for the life of the Akit Tribe. Their value orientation towards mangroves has a close relationship with their condition, needs to understand and other alternative works are needed so that they no longer use mangroves even in small quantities.

Keywords: *Value Orientation, Akit Tribe, Mangrove Forest, Indigenous People.*

INTRODUCTION

The Akit Tribe is one of the indigenous tribes in Riau, The majority are in the Bengkalis area and Meranti Islands. They live on and utilize nature (Madjid et al., 2021) as a source of daily life with several special jobs such as hunting, gathering, fishing, farming, raising livestock, and farming on a shift basis (Suroyo, 2018). Historically, the Akit tribe lived in raft houses (Sidiq et al., 2021) they used the raft to move from one place to another, for example between beaches, rivers, and the sea so that they

were very familiar with the coastal environment, especially as a source of household live (Rosaliza, 2018b).

This group is also known actively use mangrove forests since the 1960s even long before that, whether they were managed directly for charcoal (Genta et al., 2018) or a place for them to look for fish and other jobs. In the past, every house of Akit Tribe had one kitchen which was used to process mangrove wood as charcoal (Nur'aisyah, 2017). The processed mangrove wood into charcoal by the Akit Tribe is

usually being personal consumption and sell it. Nowadays only some of them still have charcoal kitchens. This is because the use of mangroves for charcoal by the household scale has decreased and it is only carried out on an industrial scale with large capital owners (Risdayati & Rosaliza, 2022). Mangroves and the life of the Akit Tribe have a strong relationship (Limben, 2011) so that it is not only a tool to meet household economic needs but it has produced a culture and various local wisdom to care for, love, and protect the mangrove forest. The Akit people think that nature is a balanced part of their lives so they exactly do not want to dominate nature too much. In the practice, the Akit Tribe only cut mangroves that were old enough by using traditional tools such as axes, ropes, and canoes made of mangrove roots to transport mangrove trees that they had cut down using a cooperation system and bound to a certain consensus within their group (Indrawati et al., 2021).

However, in advanced times, there are several changes related to the social, cultural, and lifestyle of the Akit Tribe. There is a tendency that they are no longer nomadic or move from one place to another. It's already a settled settlement pattern with the most dominant occupation being in the natural use sector such as farming or taking timber products. However, there are still other jobs, such as fishing, hunting, and weaving. With the use of mangroves, the current pressures of life with limited access to other economic resources make past habits and advice less attention (Hasbullah, 2018). It means that not all local wisdom practices are currently used, especially by those who are still young. Meanwhile, parents understand well the the situation that occurs in their environment and the vulnerability of their economic resources currently. This situation was responded to by various positive behaviors such as cultivating mangroves. Every spare time some people collect mangrove seeds to plant in small bottles behind the house. When it's time to plant them loosely, they will plant them on their land in the sea, or the beach. In addition to maintaining the availability of mangroves, it can ensure the availability of economic resources from mangroves in the future.

The research problem will be approached using the concept of cultural value orientation by Kluckhohn an anthropologist from America. The

cultural value system according to Kluckhohn's view has a close relationship and it is related to basic problems in life (Mair & Seelos, 2021) and also determines the orientation of human cultural values (Yusliyanto, 2019). These cultural values consist of 5 (five) forms, namely concerning the relationship between humans and God, human relations with nature, human relations with society, human relationships with other people, and human relationships with oneself (Asriwandari, 2016). The value system, according to Kluckhohn, encourages individuals to behave as they are determined (Bagit, 2017). Although the value system is believed and practiced by some communities, including the object of this study, its dynamic nature can be influenced by various things from the external and internal environment. The situation has implications for changes in perspective in viewing life problems from various aspects. At this point, it is part of the focus that we want to reveal using the theoretical framework described above.

METHOD

This research was conducted in Teluk Belitung Village which has an area of 6,043.46 hectares consisting of a land area of 5,666.91 hectares and a body of water covering an area of 376.55 hectares. In terms of ethnicity, based on local monograph data, there are at least 9 ethnic groups in Teluk Belitung Village, which can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Population Distribution by Tribe in Teluk Belitung Village

No	Tribe	Total	Percentage
1	Malay	4.957	65,41%
2	Javanese	349	4,60%
3	Chinese	771	10,17%
4	Bugis	115	1,51%
5	Batak	263	3,47%
6	Minang	389	5,13%
7	Anak Dalam/Akit	677	8,93%
8	Sembawa	30	0,39%
9	Nias	27	0,35%

There are 677 residents of the Akit Tribe group who referred to the administration documents as Anak dalam. However, in this context, Anak Dalam is not a tribe known by indigenous tribes in Jambi Province. Another term commonly spoken by the local community is the Indigenous Tribe. A qualitative method using ethnography was chosen as the main approach to answer research problems. In particular, the ethnographic method has the character of involving the full participation of the author, exploring culture, and the depth of data exposure (Bakry, 2017). Data were obtained by in-depth interviews with formal leaders and local community leaders, supported by observations related to the research theme to be analyzed according to the qualitative character, namely compiling categories, making category labels, and drawing conclusions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The settlement pattern of the Akit Tribe in Teluk Belitung Village

The settlement pattern of the Akit Tribe in the study does not focus on one point, in the sense that it has spread. Some of the distances between residents' houses are close, but some are quite far. Their house models are generally semi-permanent with wooden walls and tin including thatched roofs. The material used to build this house partially takes up mangrove wood because it is considered very strong, sturdy, and durable. The walls are bought and some look for them. Mothers as wives who do various household tasks a role play in building privately owned settlements, such as weaving thatched roofs. Besides being used alone, they also provide services for thatched with prices starting at 2,000 rupiahs depending on size and workmanship.

The house shape, the materials used, and the roof are not different from the Akit Tribe on Rukat Island. The house is made of wood, the front is usually an umbra which can also be interpreted as a terrace that serves as a place to relax or rest for family members and guests. The form of the existing houses is only part of the house on stilts and some do not depend on the position or distance from the sea to avoid the house being submerged.

Livelihood System

Even now, the work that used to be done is still being carried out, for example, fishing or

farming. In the past, the utilization model for nature was not in direct contact with the processing of mangrove wood into derivative products, such as charcoal. In the mangrove forest, they look for types of animals that are subsistence. However, in the past few decades, the pattern of utilizing mangrove wood has shifted to derivative processing such as mangrove charcoal. When the wood charcoal industry was not developed, the management was carried out in their homes for their consumption or sale.

Women not only act being wives and take care of the household but also play a role in earning money for household needs. The work done by women is the type of work that is not too difficult. When their husbands go fishing in the river or the sea, after finishing household work, some of the women are productive by growing vegetables or other things in the yard. Not only that, but the women also play an economic role by farming. Men provide space for women to work, some are directly involved, for example looking for typical mangrove animals for consumption, as well as processing the catch brought by their husbands.

The other job is processing mangrove wood or selling mangrove wood in various forms, such as chimneys and raw materials for firewood and charcoal. It was done long before 3-4 decades ago, with the system evolving from self-management in the charcoal kitchens of each house to being a large industrial one. The history of charcoal kitchens in their lives is so well attached. It becomes a feature that distinguishes the lifestyle from other coastal tribes.

The Meaning of Mangroves for the Akit Tribe

There is a close relationship between their lives in mangroves, especially mangrove wood. long time ago, even long before they were born. Parents used to use mangroves as a source of livelihood either directly or indirectly. Mangroves do not only mean an economic resource, behind the thick mangrove forest there is an ancestral message that they must protect. The denser the mangrove forest means the advices are still being implemented. On the other hand, when the availability of mangroves is running low, it means that some people have ignored the advice of their ancestors to protect mangroves.

The relationship encouraged the existence of a socio-cultural system such as local wisdom

that is inherent in the life of the Akit Tribe. These patterns of local wisdom are very striking, even now the behavior of preserving mangroves is starting to emerge and it is carried out by the elderly group. They collect the mangrove seeds and sow them behind the house using plastic bottles and others to collect the water and seeds. When it grows, it will usually be planted in their land or yard that has a wet texture. Such efforts have not been widely carried out, but for those who do, there is an assumption that these actions are an effort to save their lives. Mangroves are not maintained cause the land to be easily eroded by

seawater, so efforts to replant according to some people include ways to minimize environmental damage.

Overview of the Cultural Values Orientation in the Akit Tribe Community

We use a value orientation framework to look at the views of the Akit Tribe community on the five basic issues of life. Indicating how orientation to the basic problems of life is important for us to see thoughts, attitudes, and actions, as well as responses to situations experienced by their household and external situations.

Table 2. Cultural Values Orientation in the Akit Tribe Community

Basic Life Problem	Cultural value orientation
The essence of life	Mainly, A person's life was determined by his efforts. Life is bad, but such conditions can be changed with a variety of efforts. People who work hard can change their lives better, and the other way when someone does not work then he will survive in difficult living conditions and even get worse.
The essence of work	The time you have is for work. Every job is functions to meet the necessities of life within the minimum limits, for example, the need for food. There is no orientation to seeking awards or reaching a point of achievement. There is a view of working in a wider sector such as wandering, but this kind of thinking tends to be shared by young people.
Human Perception about time	The past is a very important part of life. They live a life based on advice or past lessons from their ancestors. The practice of life both in terms of work and relationships tends to lead to past experiences. For example, Nowadays they still carry out religious rituals to respect nature or the sea. Rituals are not only limited to one session, the practice of traditional medicine is more dominant than medical treatment. However, young people even though they are aware of these traditional practices, who do not participate in any activities that are carried out especially if they are sick, have started to trust the medical.
Human perception towards nature	Nature is a place to work, a source of livelihood for households. The pattern of using nature to find sources of livelihood such as fishing, hunting, or extracting products from the mangroves is the reason why nature needs to be protected. However, in this context, even though they have a sense of submission to nature, most of them have a different tendency, namely to only think of taking anything from nature without preservation. The group is dominated by young people, while parents balance conservation efforts by cultivating mangrove seeds behind the house to be planted on the seaside or areas prone to abrasion.
The essence of relationship among human	The tendency that arises is to respect and respect others because in the context of their lives they still need others. On the economic side, some people choose not to depend on others, they cultivate their land. However, some people open up the possibility to work for other people even in a different place from where they live. It was the association has given an open mind, especially in terms of the economy around young people.

There are different value orientations in several aspects between young people and the parent. Especially on how to change lives, various other views of work emerged from the minds of young people. Even though in education, they are still lacking, socializing and interacting both directly and virtually opens up a wide space of thought. Young people are not so concerned with past experiences, they are submissive but less participate in ritual activities and prayers of respect for nature or certain situations such as illness. The figure that has been described above is partly a direct implication of the existence of mass media and virtual interactions. In addition, It was a positive impact on perspective but a negative impact on the erosion of several cultural aspects.

Value orientation is related to the situations and the conditions that occur and are experienced by a community. These situations and conditions can be a stimulus for a person or group of people to do something in a positive or negative context(Iyai, 2016). The five frameworks presented by Kluckhohn(Dermawan & Sholikhati, 2021), showed how far the Akit Tribe Community in the study area has a perspective on the basic problems of their lives and what efforts on improving their lives or solving problems that arise. Life is a dynamic condition, although some of them are born into limited life conditions, there is still a view that life can be changed if they are willing to work. This means a person becomes an actor in his own life. He can change life for the better and next.

Based on their perception, Changing lives can be done by working. Cultivating nature and utilizing rural economic resources both from mangroves and others is a way of survival (Syukron, 2021). Not only the husband as the head of the family but his wife and children also tend to do the same thing, working to meet the needs of household life. Involvement of wife and children to work as a solution for optimal income. Although it is not crucial, household conditions with a very limited life are the main reasons for wives and children to be involved in work activities. This collaboration is a concept of how to change lives better.

In addition, the protection effort of nature as a source of life. The life experiences and previous parents' suggestions passed down from generation to generation become their guidelines

in protecting nature and preserving the environment(Mair & Seelos, 2021). Mangroves, as local commodities that have been inherent in their activities as a coastal community, are guarded and preserved with local knowledge and wisdom(Rosaliza, 2018a). However, the development of an increasingly advanced era in management practices and natural use had an unfavorable influence(Maynard & Chaudhary, 2020) contributing to an attitude of disrespect by some people from their community to utilize mangroves without compromising conservation. This tendency arises from the increasing pressure of life, especially to meet basic needs such as food. In various studies, the existence of neglect and the waning of local cultural values is not impossible. The pace of globalization and the progress of the times have a contrary influence on the condition of the waning of local wisdom values, especially for the younger generation(Bahrudin & Zurohman, 2021). Although the value of local wisdom is not as close as previously used to be, especially in protecting nature, until now respect for nature such as prayers or rituals still exists and some people take action on certain days. When sick or when the conditions of the sea and the surrounding nature are not friendly, usually these prayers and rituals are carried out. Globalization does not change all aspects of their knowledge and behinfluential in several actions, especially using mangrovesavior but is quite as a source of livelihood.

CONCLUSION

The Akit Tribe Community has local wisdom in protecting nature as a source of life, including the practice of sorting mangroves based on age and the existence of prayers and rituals in responding to natural situations. Even now they still have a close relationship with mangroves as a source of life. However, the association and movement of the times have implications for the mindset opening, especially for young people, they can look for other jobs outside of processing mangroves. Some migrate and work outside the area where they live. On the other hand, there are still people who work using mangroves. For environmental conservation practices, some people carry out mangrove seed nurseries to be planted by the sea or around areas that experience abrasion. As a consequence of the globalization

movement with the increasing demand for households, not everyone who uses mangroves balances it with conservation. Even the work of taking a chimney from a young wood is still being carried out today. In fact, according to the advice the mangroves taken should be old or not small in size.

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