

Local Wisdom of Samin Community in Tradition and Modernization Frame

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Abstract: Geographical location and cultural isolation cause Samin community develops specific traditions that become a major factor in maintaining the existence of their community until now. This research attempted to explore their various local wisdom in maintaining tradition, particularly in facing modernization, included the potential conflict in Samin vs. Semen phenomenon. The purpose of this study are: (1) to describe the situation and cultural conditions of Samin community with their ethnographic background; (2) to describe and analyze the modernization process that occurs and enters Samin community life, and how their responses. The research approach used is qualitative-ethnographic model of Spradley with progressive step forward gradually. The research findings are: (1) Samin doctrine (Saminism) is derived from Samin Surosentiko doctrine which teaches “Sedulur Sikep”, where they rekindle the spirit of resistance against the Dutch without violence. They isolated themselves and until in 1970s, they had just known Indonesia had independence. They are scattered on several places in Central and East Java, with the largest concentrations are in Blora and Bojonegoro, Kendeng Mountains region. Outsiders often regard them as an innocent group which do not like to steal, refuse to pay taxes, and often become jokes. The point of Samin doctrine centers on five teachings, i.e.: not going to school; not wearing a cap, but wearing “iket”, which is a kind of cloth tied to the head; not polygamy; not wearing trousers, but only knee-length; not trading and rejecting capitalism. (2) Modernization has entered the life of Samin community quite swiftly. They respond the arisen influences intelligently and wisely. Their tradition becomes a key factor for their survival, especially when it comes into contact with industrialism that creates social conflicts with outside communities.

1 INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has diverse cultural communities. Some diversities occur due to the physical environment such as mountain, beach, savannah, steppe, climate and vegetation in general, which influence the character formation and the color of cultural community. In addition, diversity is also influenced by historical development of the community concerned, especially when in contact with other communities. There are many phenomena's of socio-cultural life that arise as a form of ecological adaptation of community in maintaining their existence to survive from time to time.

Studies of Samin community have been done by several researchers and writers, such as Benda, Dekker, and Castles. The studies were conducted very long time ago, there has not been many other studies

on the Samin community, and those studies are less comprehensive. There is one more recent study by Mukodi and Afid Burhanuddin (2016) which states that the Saminism is a nationalist movement of the Abangan Islamist group to oppose Dutch colonial government. Samin community has local wisdom in preserving environment, especially on water sources (Sumarmi, 2015). In recent years there is some studies about Samin community related to their wisdom of preserving natural environment on North Kendeng Mountains, especially in Sukolilo-Pati (Endrat, 2017).

The emergence of cultural change can occur as a result of internal factor influences, from dynamics that grow in the life of society itself or outside. Theory about society evolution from traditional to industrial must be traversed through changes in structure, function and complexity of organizations, in line with the basic assumptions of modernization

concepts presented by School (1980), who assumes that modernization is a transformation process, a society change in all its aspects. While Marzali (2007) looks at the core of modernization theory as an institutional development effort (social structures engineering through the establishment of new institutions) and mentality development (cultural engineering).

There are several characteristics of modern man as stated by Dube (1988). Modern man is determined by the values of structure, institution, attitude and change on personal, social, and cultural. Modern society is able to accept and generate new innovation, build joint strength, and improve its ability to solve problems. Therefore modernization really requires a harmonious relationship between personality and socio-cultural system. The most important characteristic of modernization is rationality. Rational thinking ability is highly demanded in modernization process, and becomes very important in explaining various existed social phenomena's. It is in line with School who stated that the concept of plural society is identical with modern society. Plural society is a society that has undergone social structure changing.

Modernization also arises as a direct effect of cultural contact, specifically as a result of improved relationships between centers (city), which represents modern style, with periphery (village), which represents traditional pattern (Pahmi, 2010). Current interaction happens continuously not only two-way, between city and village, but also with surrounding villages also increasingly intensive. Logical consequence of that condition is the entry of external knowledge. Knowledge and experience of living in the city was soon adopted by those who had gone or wandered into the city. Mobilization of rural communities to city or vice versa, has influenced the patterns of association, speech, lifestyle, and technological possibilities that can be used.

Various technical skills generated through formal education process, such as the ability to reading, writing, and participation in following mass media development, is a factor that accelerate the occurrence of socio-cultural dynamics. To build modern man, the most important key factor is education. Pahmi also argues that in almost all studies this issue arose and showed that the level of modernity will increase as education improves. It encompasses all layers and institutions in society (Lerner, 1983). The essence of this change is a shift in how to convey ideas and attitudes, because what modernization does is dissemination of a clear description to society about a new way of life,

openness and willingness to consider new ideas. The modernization process is now felt like an ongoing match. In every modernization process, of course there is conflict between two sides which supports or resists the change. As the process is in progress, it has spawned fun and sadness caused by the effort to modernize the society. Some people want to sweep themselves in modernization flow, but always hampered by unsupported environment. This drifting people are branded out of tradition because it is different with surrounding community conditions.

The research approach used was qualitative-ethnographic model of Spradley with progressive step forward gradually, which includes determination of research subjects or informant, interview, ethnographic note, descriptive question, interview analysis, domain analysis, structural questions, taxonomic analysis, contrast questions, component analysis, and cultural theme findings (Spradley, 2010). Research subjects or informants were the leaders of Samin community in Kediren Village, Ngraho, (Bojonegoro), Klopoduwur, Randublatung (Blora), Pati, Rembang, and also some selected communities based on purposive sampling.

Data collecting process was done by observation and in-depth interviews using Spradley model, and documentation study about the existence of Samin community along with its doctrines, modernization process and Samin community response to it. Data analysis was done by Spradley model and interactive analysis model developed by Miles and Huberman (2002), which include data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. To achieve data validity, there was also done extension participation, in-depth interviews and some triangulation techniques.

2 DATA EXPOSURE AND INTERPRETATION

2.1 Situation and Cultural Conditions of Samin Community with Their Ethnographic Backgrounds

Samín community is mostly settled in border area between East and Central Java Provinces. Almost all of them live as farmers in Kendeng Mountains.

2.1.1 Background of Samin Community Existence

Samin community is the descendant of Samin Surosentiko followers, who's real name is Raden Kohar who was born on Ploso Kedhiren Village, Randublatung in 1859, and died while being exiled to Padang in 1914. He fought against Dutch colonial government by fueling the spirit of nonviolent resistance, such as refuse to pay taxes, fix roads, night guards, forced labor, and so on.

This Samin community often confused both Dutch and Japanese Occupation Government because of that attitude, an attitude that is now considered annoying by outside groups. Samin Surosentiko doctrines first spread in Klopoduwur, Blora, Central Java. In 1890 Samin movement developed in two forest villages of Randublatung region, Blora, Central Java. This movement quickly spread to other villages, starting from northern coast of Java to the surrounding forests in the North and South Kendeng Mountains, which is around the border of Central Java and East Java province. The presence of Abangan Islamic character for this nationalist Samin group caused the members become numerous quickly. This is as stated by Mukodi and A. Burhanuddin (2016).

Samin community also isolated themselves until 1970s. They had just known that Indonesia has been independent. Their members are not many. They prefer to be called as "Sedulur Sikep" because the word of Samin for them contains a negative meaning. Outsiders of Samin often assume them as an innocent group, do not like stealing, refuse to pay taxes, and often become a joke, especially among Bojonegoro people.

2.1.2 Samin Doctrines

Samin community has some important doctrines, such as: (1) not going to school; (2) not wearing caps but wearing "iket", a kind of cloth tied to the head like ancient Javanese; (3) not polygamized; (4) not wearing trousers and only knee-length pants; (5) not trading and rejecting capitalism. Besides, they believe that religion is a weapon or guide of life. Samin teachings does not discriminate religion, therefore Samin people never deny or hate religion. The important thing is implementing religion in life. They do not like to bother people, quarrel, be jealousy, and take others property. They are always being patient and not arrogant. Living man must understand his own life because life is same as soul and only one, so it will be brought eternally forever. This value

becomes Javanese life image, as an ideal value (Suseno, 2003). When speaking, they must be able to keep the mouth, be honest and have mutual respect. Trading for Samin people is prohibited because there is "dishonesty" element. They also do not be allowed to accept donations in the form of money.

Founder of Samin in Tapelan village left important books called "Serat Jamuskalimosodo" which consists of several books. One of them is "Uri-Uri Pambudi Fiber" book which contains about the maintenance of virtuous human behavior. It is most likely that Samin Surosentiko doctrines is about "manunggaling kawulo Gusti". Samin men usually wear black long-sleeved shirt without collar, accompanied with headbands, while women wear long-sleeves kebaya, limited to the kneecap or above the ankle.

Samin name has connotation as "wong cilik" or poor people. In its development, the followers of this doctrine prefer to be called as "Sedulur Sikep". This is due in 19th century Samin people had a bad image in Javanese society and considered as people who are too innocent so seem stupid and naive. While "Sedulur Sikep" is defined as good and honest people. Samin society teachings on environment is very positive, they take natural resources (i.e. wood) just enough and never exploit them. This is in accordance with Samin people mind which is quite simple, not excessive and as it is. For them land is like a mother who gives livelihood to them. As traditional farmers, they treat land as well as possible. In land processing (what plants to be planted) they only base on seasons, which are rain and dry seasons. Samin society realize that the contents and wealth of natural resources, will be depleted or not, are very dependent on the user. Here is their wisdom in maintaining the preservation of the natural environment, especially water resources. This condition is similar with Osing community in Banyuwangi (Sumarmi, 2015).

2.2 Modernization Process Occurs and Enters Samin Community Life, and How Their Responses

Since 1960s educational facilities had entered Samin community. Until now there have been several educational institutions. Their offspring are also not anti-school anymore. Many Samin young generations who were born after 1980's have followed formal education. Usually their parents also support formal education for their children. In addition various life tools resulting from development and advancement of technology, such as transportation, radio, television,

hand phone, and agricultural tools, are used by them intensively in daily life.

Indeed in Dutch colonial period, Samin society refused to go to school. They assume that school creates elitist who will be the henchman of Dutch and not again become "kawula" ("wong cilik" or poor people) anymore. Samin leaders are now still advocating their young generation to not be ashamed called as a Samin, because they actually have very noble cultural treasures with their simple lives. They always live friendly and peaceful. Their principles of lives are helpful and not want to bother others. It is a very noble attitude and always passed down from generation to generation. They still maintain their identity in the middle of changing period. Samin or saminitism is a doctrine of idealism or worldview.

In their beliefs "Samin" comes from the word "sami-sami" which means being together. Until now there are still many areas inhabited by Samin people in Randublatung. The sense of kinship and harmony with each other is still very strong. A concrete example is their attitude when there was a fire at oil drilling mine in Cepu. The petroleum company provided compensation funds to the affected areas, but all Samin people who live in that area did not want to receive the funds. They just say, "Opo tega, sedulure kena musibah, malah awake dewe nrimo bantuan seko mereka, justru awake dewe kudu mbantu sedulur sing lagi susah" ("Do we have the heart, our brother was hit by a disaster, even we received help from them, in fact we have to help brother who is in trouble"). Surviving in the middle of modernization for the sake of a tradition is not easy, but Samin community is one of tribes who are able to defend themselves and carry out their ancestors doctrines.

The results of documentary studies, interviews with Samin figures and observations show that the changing times also affect Samin community tradition. Now they use tractors and chemical fertilizers in agriculture. Household appliances from plastic, aluminium, and even electronic devices have touched their lives. Impression as an isolated community from outside world has been vanished. After electricity entered Samin region in 1987, development of people lives becomes faster. Now society has been acculturated like community in general.

Positive values in Samin society are expected not be destroyed by modernization, such as their honesty and wisdom in utilizing natural resources and high spirit of mutual help. When their neighbors have events, then without prompting, they will be voluntary and together to help until finish. Even for

working on rice fields, there is still much to do with mutual help system. Besides honesty and mutual cooperation, Samin community is outstanding for their high simplicity and work ethic. Their houses are very simple, made of bamboo walls, and roofs of teak leaves. Spatial arrangement is very simple and still traditional, consists of spacious living room, bedroom and kitchen. Living room is usually also used as dining and family room. Bathroom and well are located some distance from house and usually used by some families. The shape of the house is "bekok lulang" ("Limasan Kampung").

Samin community settlements usually group in a row of houses to make them easier to communicate. In Klopoduwur village, the community farming of "Sedulur Sikep" is better known "Karang Pace". About 30s families of Sedulur Sikep lived there in the past. Their ethic of work is very high. Usually they will go to farm, rice field, or forest in early hours, and come back at near dusk. In daylight the silence will surround their settlements because each of them is busy to work in fields. For them daylight is time to work as well as possible.

Samin society teachings on environment is also very positive. They usually take natural resources (i.e. wood) just enough, and never exploit nature. Instead they perform a lot of rituals, specifically they dedicate to nature preservation. This is in harmony with their simple mindset, not excessive and as it is. Social conflicts arise when their physical surroundings on the slopes of Kendeng Mountains, which become catalysts for their existence, as it related to water resources that they need for agriculture. This happens when cement plant enters their area of life. Their rebellious instinct as a descendant of fighters emerged when their existence was threatened.

3 CONCLUSIONS

Samin doctrine (Saminism) is derived from Samin Surosentiko who inspired spirit resistance to against Dutch without violence. They isolated themselves and until in 1970s, they had just known Indonesia had independence. They are scattered on several places in Central and East Java, with the largest concentrations are in Blora and Bojonegoro, Kendeng Mountains region. Outsiders often regard them as an innocent group that do not like to steal, refuse to pay taxes, and often become jokes. The point of Samin doctrine centers on five teachings, i.e.: (1) not going to school; (2) not wearing a cap, but wearing "iket", a kind of cloth tied to the head; (3) not polygamy; (4) not wearing trousers, but only knee-length; (5) not

trading and rejecting capitalism. Modernization has entered the life of Samin community quite swiftly. They respond the arisen influences intelligently and wisely. Their tradition is a key factor for their survival, particularly when they comes into contact with industrialism that create social conflict with outside communities, especially when they have to deal with a large corporation, in this case the Cement Plant.

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