

Perception of Karo People towards Local Wisdom of Folklore “Si Beru Dayang” in Sugihen Village

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Abstract: “*Si Beru Dayang*” myth folklore is one of cultural heritage of Sumatera Utara, specifically in Karo regency. A research of Karo people perception toward “*Si Beru Dayang*” is conducted to avoid cultural extinction of Karonese which could be a conceivable capital of regional development of Sumatera Utara. In particular, this study aims at describing Karo people perception toward values of local wisdom found in “*Si Beru Dayang*” myth folklore. This research makes use of descriptive qualitative method with observation and interview technic. Recording and keeping note from informants are applied in data collection. Sociology of literature approach is used in analysing data. The approach concerns on several concepts of myth and folklore found in “*Si Beru Dayang*”. Sociology of literature deals with a strategy of understanding social life as a complex, interconnected, interdependence, and meaningful network. Social life is also regarded as a construction of social reality owned by a group members, community or society. The research result shows that based on Karo people perception, myth of folklore “*Si Beru Dayang*” comprises of two categories namely a group of people who believe the myth and those who do not.

1 INTRODUCTION

Folklore is part of traditional literature (Barone, 2011). In folklore there is certainly a myth. That is, between folklore and myths related to each other. Myth also serves as part of a complex global system, which involves energy, problems, and interacting ideas (Glottfelty, 1996). People’s perception of Karo myth folklore ‘*Si Beru Dayang*’ is still believed to grow and live in Karo District. However, the existence of folklore may gradually decline if the mythical functions of folklore are regarded as merely superstitions. Excavation of the public perception of the role of folklore ‘*Si Beru Dayang*’ as a local wisdom is one way to know the existence of the folklore and can be one of the cultural documents that are expected to be one of the main sources that lived or held by someone or society that furthermore form mental attitude or mindset.

Humans live with myths that restrict all its actions. Fear and courage for something is determined by the myths around it. But according to Te Lin (2000) with the rise of rationalism in 19th century, myths only become a weird story about the Gods, a false belief, and symbolic stories. In fact, the

myth is not just stories about gods and others. A myth is created to explain the disharmony of nature, though there is also a myth that is born not to explain anything. Therefore, many myths keep the local wisdom that is able to harmonize human and life. According to Sibarani (2012: 112), local wisdom is the original wisdom or knowledge of a society derived from the noble values of cultural traditions to regulate the order of community life.

Some myths in Karo folklore have been booked by Z. Pangaduan Lubis with the title of *Folklore of Karo*. The mythical stories include Mr. Bagunda Raja and *Manuk in Nanggur Dawa*, The Origin of Rice, Princess Ginting Pase, and others. These stories have myths that contain wisdom values like the story of Origin of Rice. In another version, the story is titled ‘*Si Beru Dayang*’. The myths in the story about a fruit that is embodiment of a child named Beru Dayang. The fruit is cut into pieces and planted and maintained properly until it grows like rice. The myth taught humans not to quarrel in fighting for fruit and how to take care of good rice, how to crushing and cooking it.

Karo society perception analysis on Karo folklore is doing in order to Karo’s people especially

young generation do not lose confidence to the culture that gave birth and bring up their character. Thomas Lickona said, "When we think about the kind of character we want for our children, it's clear that we want them to be able to judge what is right, care deeply about what is right, and than do what they believe to be right, even in the face of pressure from without and temptation from within" (Abourjilie, 2002). People of good character are individuals who have polite attitude and behavior, peace love, and so on. Therefore, folklore in general must contain the values of wisdom. Susilo and friends (2017) in *International Journal For Innovative Research in Multi discilpinary Field* vol. 3, page 84-89, ISSN: 2455-0620 with the title "Local Wisdom of The Karo Batak's Manuk Sidanggur Dawa-Dawa Folkore" concluded that in the folklore there are values of local wisdom such as religious values, social values, and the value of cooperation.

2 METHODS

Data collected through initial observation, record and noted, and interviews with ethnic Karo informant from Karo District. The approach used in the study using descriptive qualitative methods. Bogdan and Taylor (in Moleong, 1998: 3) states that qualitative procedures produce research that reveals qualitative data with an approach directed at the background and the individual as a whole or seen as a whole. According to Karl and Miller (1986: 9) qualitative research is a particular tradition in social science that is fundamentally dependent on the observation of human in its own region and the relation of the field of social sciences and humanity with activity which is based on scientific discipline to collect data, clarify, analyze and interpret facts and the relation between the facts of nature, society, behavior, and spiritual of human to discover the principles of new knowledge and methods.

The approach of sociology of literature is also used in this study because the approach of sociology of literature focuses on a number of folklore and mythical concepts in *Si Beru Dayang* folklore. In the sociology of literature, there are strategies related to the understanding of social action by considering the life of society as a complex, interconnected, dependent and meaningful, the construction of social reality owned by every member of the group, community and society.

3 DISCUSSION

3.1 Karo People's Perception toward Local Wisdom of the Myth of Folklore "Si Beru Dayang"

Myth of folklore 'Si Beru Dayang' is about a child who transformed into a fruit, then the fruit is cut into pieces and planted and maintained properly so that it grows like rice. People believe that if they together maintain the *Beru Dayang* then the rice will flourish and giving the good results for the community. The same story about the myth of rice fertility is also found in the Javanese society, the folklore *Dewi Sri*. The figure of Dewi Sri is considered a goddess who gives fertility to the planting of rice. It is told that the grave of Dewi Sri brought out fertile plants such as rice, coconut, banana, etc.

The myths in the folklore of *Dewi Sri* and *Si Beru Dayang* is about the occurrence of plants, especially rice, are found in some areas of Indonesia. The core of myth is almost all the same, that is, plants come from a human body. This story theme are interesting because they relate to the worship of fertility also reflects the figures sacrificed as a symbol of the seed of plant. Seeds of plants must be broken or destroyed first, then will grow young shoots.

People's perception of myths of folklore *Si Beru Dayang* departed become two perception, that are a group that is still believing the folklore and group which is not believing the story. Those groups, is group based on age categories and group based on background of education. Group of age consists of old and young ages.

The education groups departed into some class, that who are not school, graduate of elementary, graduate of junior high school, graduate of senior high school, and graduate from college.

3.2 Groups Which Believing in Folklore "Si Beru Dayang"

The perception from the old ages, is still believes there's a story of *Si Beru Dayang*. The old ages still consider folklores like *Si Beru Dayang* must keep the eternal so that human keep appreciating rice plants and not throwing rice or another food.

The perception of Karo people who still believe in the local wisdom of the myth of "Si Beru Dayang" is evidenced by Karo people still convinced that Karo people can live prosperous with the staple food of fruits and tubers. The belief is

recognized by people based on one story of folklore, namely "*Si Beru Dayang*".

The beginning of the story of *Si Beru Dayang* when the welfare karo people suddenly dim. Never imagined before the darkness will overshadow the life of the Karo tribe. The prolonged dry season does not end. The soil is so dry that the trees wither away before it can bear fruit. As a result, almost all the inhabitants of the region suffer from hunger. However, the King who led the moment did not remain silent. He ordered his people to perform various rituals. Like the ceremony *Mindo Udan* (ask for rain) and ceremony *Erpangkir Ngarkari* (cleaning up to get rid of bad luck). However, all efforts are not always bringing results.

The drought continues to infect the entire region. The catastrophe became more and more so that citizens were getting weaker and emaciated. Based on the story, the people of Karo, especially the elderly people believe that the calamity that comes in a village could be due to human activity itself who likes to do evil. Therefore, they always teach their children to always do good so that disaster does not come in Karo village.

Then the story continues when a child dies then transforms into a fruit then the fruit is cut into pieces and planted and maintained properly so that it grows like rice. The community believes that if they together take care of *Si Beru Dayang* then the rice will flourish and produce results for the community. In keeping "*Beru Dayang*", Karo people are working hard again, reaping, and planting the seeds of rice. They believe that "*Beru Dayang*" must always be protected". Karo community gives betel offerings to *Beraspati Taneh* as a thanks. All rituals must be done with all the heart and sincerity.

Furthermore, the Karo tribe people cooperate to hold *Merdang* ceremony (sowing seed). The ceremony is believed to be a ritual or appeal to *Beraspati Taneh* (God of Land Rulers) to deign to keep the rice planted so that the rice grows fertile and ready to be harvested with abundant yields. Such is the belief of the people of Sugihen Village, especially the elderly who still believe in the local wisdom of *Si Beru Dayang* story. They argue that in the story of *Si Beru Dayang* there are values of unity, cooperation, and sincerity in doing a job.

In addition to the old age group, community groups that do not go to school until graduate junior high school is also still many who believe with the power of the character "*Si Beru Dayang*" that can fertilize rice crops. One of the causes of this group believes that stories are obtained orally from mouth to mouth and spread from one generation to another

through verbal communication. Stories are delivered in an interesting and memorable way so that people also tend to convey to others.

The function of folklore is seen from the cultural function, that is (1) the children and grandchildren know the origin of their ancestors that the ancestors always tried to tell *Si Beru Dayang* story to the grandchildren so as not to be forgotten until in the future, and (2) people can take experience and appreciate the services of previous figures. People of Karo appreciation for *Beru Dayang* services that create rice is to maintain the condition by still telling the same thing over and over again.

3.3 Societies That Do Not Believe in Folklore "*Si Beru Dayang*"

Community groups that do not believe in local wisdom in the *Si Beru Dayang* folklore are from the young age group. They do not trust the myth of folklore "*Si Beru Dayang*". Young people think that the folklore of "*Si Beru Dayang*" is a mere story that does not really happen because impossible human can transform into rice. It is impossible that there is a God of soil fertility so there must be a ritual in such a way as to ask for something.

Those who graduate from high school to college begin to have no belief in such a story, because in this group their mindset is advance and modern, so no longer believe things that do not make sense. This group also already know the religion. Therefore, they believe that the power is from God, not from humans or any creatures.

Among the younger generation is less interested in the myth of folklore because it is considered irrelevant to the development of the era in the era of globalization is all-modern and modern. In ancient times, folklore has experienced a period of greatness so greatly affect the mindset of society. However, now the folklore has begun to be abandoned or has lost prestige in the midst of society. One of the causes of young people are no longer interested in folklore is recognized by the public because of the story line and figures are considered outdated. Even, the younger generation has lost interest in reading and listening to folklore commonly tells with forests, animals and the imaginary world. Young people seem to be not so happy when they see characters playing in the forest, but they are more interested in life in a frenzied metropolis, full of crowds. The younger generation actually feels funny when reading a folktale with a figure who has supernatural powers or can change shape.

According to people who do not believe the myths in folklore, to get local wisdom does not have to go through the stories of gods and stories that make no sense because it will cause people to trust about the gods and something that is not acceptable sense. To this faction, folklore is only entertaining and not mandatory to be passed on down to generations. However, as one cultural asset, there is no harm to be documented. Modern society must be forward-thinking and modern by using logic and technology. young people already do not believe the myth of folklore “*Si Beru Dayang*”, the community recognizes if there are values that can be taken through the story such as the value of mutual cooperation which is the work ethic of Indonesian society.

Various public perceptions of the mythical folklore “*Si Beru Dayang*” indicate that the existence of folklore myths is only believed in the old and the educated community who are not in school and only junior high school graduates. This cultural heritage still exists because there are still many youth in rural areas who do not continue their education so that they indirectly become agents of local cultural heritage, especially the Karo culture in the form of folklore.

The myth of folklore “*Si Beru Dayang*” contains many values of local wisdom that can be realized in the daily life of the people of Indonesia. The values of local wisdom in the mythical folklore such as (1) the leadership of the King in collaboration with his people, (2) the belief of the people to their King, (3) the importance of keeping the mandate, and (4) the cooperative nature that must be preserved as character of Indonesian nation and state. In addition, the local wisdom of this myth reminds us to restore the identity of the Indonesian nation on the agricultural economy that leads to prosperity and prosperity of the people of Indonesia.

In addition, traditional rituals such as *Merdang* ceremony which are the cultural treasures of the Karo people, may awaken us all about the hard work, efforts, and efforts that farmers have in such a way as to produce an abundant and good rice harvest. As an agrarian society, of course we should be more appreciative of rice as staple food of the people of Indonesia, especially domestically made rice. By loving home-made rice, and cultivating rice crops, meaning we appreciate the efforts of the farmers, and participate in maintaining soil fertility in our country, Indonesia.

Various perceptions of society to the myth of folklore *Si Beru Dayang* shows that the existence of folklore myth is only trusted in the old class and

society of educational background is not attended school and only who graduated from junior high school. This cultural heritage still exists because there are still many teenagers in rural areas who do not continue their education and indirectly become agents of local cultural heritage, especially the culture of Karo in this case is folklore.

The perception of Karo people towards *Si Beru Dayang*’s folklore can be seen in the following chart:

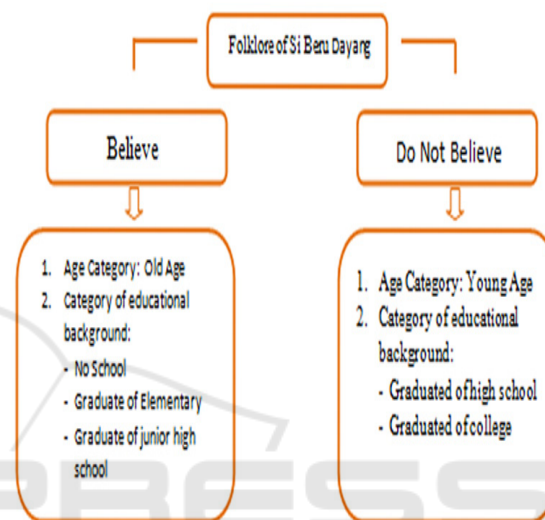


Figure 1: Chart of Karo people’s perception in the story of “*Si Beru Dayang*”.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The results show that based on the perception of Karo people, the myth of *Si Beru Dayang* folklore is a group that still believes and the group that has not trusted the story of *Si Beru Dayang*. This group is divided into two groups anymore, that are groups based on age and group based on educational background. The reason for the perception of the group which still believe in this story, are (1) still assume that the folk tales must be preserved, (2) that humans appreciate rice and not waste food, (3) stories are obtained orally from mouth to mouth and continue from one generation to another through verbal communication, and (4) the story is delivered in an interesting and memorable way. The reason for the perception of people who do not believe this story, are (1) the notion that this story is a mere story that does not really happen because it is impossible for human turned into rice, (2) their mindset is

advanced or modern, and (3) already know religion and believe in God.

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