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Submission date: 28-May-2018 01:29PM (UTC+0700)

Submission ID: 969438402

File name: rimunjawa_Community_for_Strengthening_the_Social_Integration.pdf (67.58K)

Word count: 2294

Character count: 12933



A Study on Marine Folklore of Karimunjawa Community for Strengthening the Social Integration

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This article is based on a research study entitled: A Study on Marine Folklore of Karimunjawa Community for Strengthening the Social Integration. This research is a qualitative research that studies a relation between marine folklore and social integration in Karimunjawa community. As a marine archipelago, Indonesian community has a lot of folklores related to marine life and culture. The marine life has created marine culture. The marine culture creates the ideas, behavior/activities, and physical infrastructure used by marine community to cultivate the natural resources for their lives. Folklore, for the community, especially the young generation, is understood as illogical past stories and considered unimportant and has no relationship to the present life. It should be understood that folklore, especially the marine folklore is created because of the dynamics of social activities related to geographical factor, social interaction, social culture and historical dynamics. Marine folklore has an important role in tightening the social relationship among social groups and as a national defense. In addition to have the beauty of nature, Karimunjawa also has a lot of ethnics such as Javanese, Bajo, Bugis, Madurese, Flores, Mandar and Buton. The dominant ethnics in Karimunjawa are Javanese, Bajo, Bugis and Madurese who can get along peacefully and harmoniously. There are some factors that make the ethnics live peacefully and harmoniously, one of them is marine folklore. In Karimunjawa, marine folklore that comprises legends of figures, places, flora, fauna, traditional ceremonies, philosophies and advises contains goodness values for creating harmony and strong social integration in Karimunjawa community.

Keywords: Folklore, Marine, Social and Cultural Integration, Karimunjawa.

1. INTRODUCTION

Every ethnic in Indonesia possesses unique culture and tradition that bring forth various folktales. Folklore is an important record of human activities that has sacred values and is believed by the community members. Folklore contains matters related to the dynamics of social activities, traditions, and advises inherited from generation to generation through either oral or written tradition.¹

As a big marine country, Indonesia needs culture base, strong marine values and the local wisdom found in folklore that has been developed long time ago to be understood by the community as a control to avoid the exploitation of marine resources.²

Indonesia has built marine community with decent marine culture. Marine folklore is created because of the dynamic social activities related to geographical factor, social interaction, culture and historical dynamics. Marine folklore has important role to strengthen the social relationship among the social group and as a national defense fortification.

2. METHOD

Data collection method conducted by literature study and fieldwork. Literature study conducted by reviewing printed and or written materials, such as books, journal articles, unpublished research results, and mass media articles. Fieldwork emphasized by in-depth interviews applying oral history method. It is conducted among local residents and community in Karimunjawa, consisted of Javanese, Bugis, Madurese, and Bajo ethnic groups. The selection of informants is conducted by taking into account representation of ethnic groups, religion, occupation, and economic level as well as education. In addition, it is also collected by applying Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

The data presentation is narratively done by compiling information that allows the conclusion and verification. Meanwhile, this research using content and comparative analysis method. Content analysis used to examine contents of folklore especially related to socio-cultural integration. Beside comparative analysis used to make typologically comparison between one and another folklore, so it can be tracked on the differentiation characteristic between one and another ethnic groups in Karimunjawa.

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3. RESULT

3.1. Folklores in Karimunjawa

As one of maritime territories in Indonesia, Karimunjawa has social and cultural particularity. As a marine community, Karimunjawa has uniqueness as plural community with various ethnics such as Javanese, Bugis, Bajo, Madurese, Buton, Mandar, Flores and others. There are three major ethnics in Karimunjawa, namely Javanese, Madurese and Bugis. Although each ethnic brings culture from their original region, they could interact harmoniously in their social lives.

Marine folklore developed in Karimunjawa contains social values and culture that can produce mutual understanding, relationship and bond of the ethnic. Marine folklore in Karimunjawa may serve as the bond between the ethnics to strengthen integration in the community.

Marine folklore in Karimunjawa has the same characteristic with other folklores in general, it has been delivered orally from generation to generation, becomes tradition, with various content, anonymous, becomes law and natural phenomena, has important function in the life of its community, irrational, belongs to the community, and simple in characteristic.¹ Marine folklore in Karimunjawa can be identified as follows.

3.1.1. Legend of the Origin of the Names of Karimunjawa, Legon Lele, Legon Bajak, Nyamplungan Village

Karimunjawa cannot be separated from Amir Hasan, a muslim theologian who came to Karimunjawa for the first time. The name Karimunjawa is derived because the island looked like blurred if it is seen from Jawa (Jepara).³

The name of Legon Lele is attached to Amir Hasan. When he came to Karimunjawa, he was attacked by pirates but the pirates could be defeated and became muslim. To commemorate this matter, the name of the places is called Legon Bajak. Then the name of Legon Lele comes from the legend of a dish called *lele* (catfish) given by his mother to Amir Hasan. The name of Nyamplungan Village is also attached to Amir Hasan. He brings Nyamplungan tree to Karimunjawa and it grows well.⁴

3.1.2. Folklore Related to Flora and Fauna in Karimunjawa

Specific animal found Karimunjawa is Malayan ground pit viper. Based on the folklore, this snake has been cursed blind by Amir Hasan while biting him. Until now this snake becomes a specific animal in Karimunjawa. Dewandaru, Kalimasada, Setigi are also specific trees found in Karimunjawa. These trees are believed to have specific use as medicine and to throw satan.

3.1.3. Traditional Ceremonies in Karimunjawa: Lomban, Barikan, Sedekah Bumi

The three traditional ceremonies above generally were carried out by the fisherman community, including Karimunjawa fisherman. Lomban, Barikan, and Sedekah Bumi are carried out by fisherman to thank God for His blessing in the form of fish, crops, and other sustenance every year. These ceremonies are intended to reject disaster and to strengthen the relationship among Karimunjawa community.

3.1.4. Philosophy and Advises Executed Among the Ethnics

Javanese is the dominant ethnic living in Karimunjawa. An advise that are still performed by the Javanese is to maintain harmony with other ethnics in Karimunjawa, among others:

- (1) *ajining diri soko lathi, ajining rogo soko busono* (self-esteem is reflected in words, a body is reflected in fashion),
- (2) *urip iku urup* (life is flame),
- (3) *aja kuminter mundak keblinger, aja cidra mundak cilaka* (do not feel smart as you will be misdirected, do not break the promise as you will be lost),
- (4) *aja adigang, adigung, adiguno* (never abuse power),
- (5) *dadio banyu, ojo dadi watu* (be water, never be stone).

Bajo ethnic has already settled in Karimunjawa for a long time. At this time the number of Bajo ethnic settled in Karimunjawa was less than 20 families. The others have married to other ethnic. Formerly, Bajo ethnic lived on a boat and their everyday activities were done on a boat including women who gave birth. The new born children were bathed using seawater and drink seawater too. These activities are performed so that their children have a strong relation close to the sea. When a member of family gets sick, they bath him/her using seawater. They strongly believe that seawater give them sustenance, health, and welfare.⁵ Bajo ethnic also has a philosophy about the secret of the sea as seen in an expression of "*papu manak ita lino bake isi-isina, kitanaja manusia mamikirna bhatangga kolekna mangelolana*" (God has given the world with its contents; human beings think how to get and use it).

At present, Bajo ethnic is no longer living on a boat. They have already built stilt houses on the water or on the sea shore.⁶ A proverb that frequently heard among the Bajo ethnic is, "*di lao' denakangku*" (the sea is my brother). Sea is where people live and look for lives that must be maintained and honoured. Their close relationship with sea can be seen in the proverb "*pinde kulintang kadare, bone pinde sama kadare*" meaning removal of Bajo ethnic from sea to the mainland is the same with moving the turtle from sea to the mainland, which is very difficult thing. Even, many of them feel dizzy and get headache when they do not hear the thundering waves (*pidi tikolo 'na lamomong nggai makale le goya*). Bajo tradition possesses conservation value that becomes a local wisdom of Bajo ethnic, among others is the ceremony of *Duata Sangal, Parika, Pamali, and Maduhai Pinah*.⁷

Bugis ethnic in Karimunjawa lives in Batulawang, Legon Gede and Tlogo kemojan village. Many Bugis ethnic build their houses imitating Bugis traditional house, but lower. In building the house, Bugis ethnic groups still follow the rules of Bugis architecture. Their house still has *rakkeang, ale-bola* and *awasao*.⁸

Bugis philosophy inherited up till now from their ancestors related to harmonious life style with other ethnics, among others:

- (1) philosophy related to *siri* (pride),
- (2) philosophy related to *ia sempugikku rekkua de'na siri'na, engka messa pessena* (solidarity and profound empathy for the suffering fellow Bugis wherever they are),
- (3) *sipakainga, sipakatau, sipakalebbi* (success cannot be achieved without the help and interact with others),
- (4) *malilu sipakainge, mali siparappe, rebba sipatokkang* (mutual help each other to achieve success and never each other down),
- (5) *taro ada taro gau* (can be trusted).

Madura ethnic in Karimunjawa lives in some various areas such as in Karimunjawa district, Parang and Nyamuk Islands. Madura philosophy related to inter-ethnic harmony among others:⁹

- (1) *etembang pote mata lebih bagus pote tolang* (rather than live with shame, it is better to die);
- (2) *oreng andhi'tatakrama reya padha bi' pesse Singgapur eka-balanja'a e dhimma bai paju* (people are well-mannered as the Singapore dollar, which sold well everywhere);
- (3) *nyama se sae paneka kodu esare gu-onggu, kodu eparlowagi panyareepon lebbiyagi parlo pole dhari panyareepon kasogiyan* (good name should take precedence over the search for riches).

3.2. The Relation Between Karimunjawa Marine Folklore with Social Integration

From the folklore about the origin of Karimunjawa, Legon Lele, Legon Bajak and Nyamplungan village, we can imply the role of Amir Hasan (Sunan Nyamplungan) who contributed to spread Islam in Karimunjawa. The figure of Sunan Nyamplungan is considered as unifying figure and a creator who created social integration in Karimunjawa community. The uniqueness of *lele and keong* (catfish and snails) found in Karimunjawa is that they do not have poisonous fin and snails with hollow back, implying adaptation towards the environment.

The legend becomes a symbol that the Karimunjawa community from the outside of Karimunjawa should be able to adapt the natural, social, and cultural environment. The environmental adaptation performed by each ethnic creates good social integration in the environment of Karimunjawa community.

In a traditional ceremony of Lomban, Barikan and Sedekah Bumi in Karimunjawa, they show that the spirit of togetherness, cooperation and brotherhood is very strong. Traditional ceremonies can be a means of social integration, because the whole community participate in it, starting from the preparation of the ceremony infrastructure, financing, dishes and the attractions.

Proverbs or advice in the Javanese, Bajo, Bugis and Madurese ethnic can be the bases for creating a harmonious inter ethnic relations.

4. CONCLUSION

The cultural values of marine folklore spread among Karimunjawa people, it is related to the tribute of Amir Hasan that spreads Islam in Karimunjawa. It reveals gratitude to God. Values of togetherness and brotherhood can be seen in traditional ceremonies carried out by Karimunjawa community. Proverbs and advises found in Karimunjawa ethnics show good values related to nature and culture preservation, effort to respect nature and culture and to one another and the maintenance of social harmony in the environment.

The whole values of goodness exist in folklore of Karimunjawa community can be used as element to strengthen the social integration. Values exist in folklore about Sunan Nyamplungan is a universal religious value because he is considered as a unifying figure of Karimunjawa community.

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Received: 7 November 2016. Accepted: 27 December 2016.

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