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The Spiritual Interpretation and Sustainability Concept of Rice Plants Cultivation Activities in Rural Areas

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Abstract

This research explained the interpretation of spiritual existence by rural farming community in conducting meaningful agricultural action. The concept of sustainable agriculture can be manifested by preserving local values as basic knowledge in agricultural cultivation. Agriculture cultivation was done by rural society from pre-planting to harvest. These actions were have deep meaning behind it. This is a qualitative research. The key informants were selected by snowball sampling method. The study results found that all local knowledge-based actions in rural communities has spiritual interpretation. One cultivation techniques done by farmers were to communicate with plants. The touches given are to establish communication with plants that believed to have spirits. Good treatment makes plants will also respond with good yield. This comprehension strengthen relationship between farmers and cultivated crops to produce yield to brings life prosperity.

Keywords : spiritual interpretation, sustainability concept, plant cultivation, rural areas

Introduction

The farmer's household should manage the assets by adapting to spiritual and rational actions according to their thinking (Irmayani, 2015). This spirituality study is the basis to deal vulnerability to overcome long struggles and to resist the desire to act unfairly. It is very rare to find a Sustainable Agriculture Study involving the community or farmers who base their spiritual actions to manage their resources in social interactions in order to sustain in future. The spiritualism has the characteristic that every system of thought confirms the existence of immaterial reality and invisible senses in order capable to become path of light and resolving any vulnerability. It is certainly interesting to examine the benefits of natural resources by involving the meaning behind actions that are not able to be quantified and rooted, strongly internalized in soul of someone to be responsible for human behavior. Spiritualism has an important meaning to support a more harmonious and modest life to manage God's natural resources (Mukbar, Deni, 2001).

Nature can be seen as a "living" creature with the right of existence, worthy to respect and gets protection and maintenance. This maintenance and protection is the manifestation of humans role as caliphs on earth. Hossein (1990) found that presenting God in every aspect of human activities was interpreted as a concept of thinking and acting connected with "the Unseen" that creates and regulates both humans and nature. God, Man, and nature have a unified relationship in the function and position. The intertwined relationships are loud calls to awaken from dangers of human science and ego in conquering nature. This relationship can bring humanity on right path to harmony with nature. Capra (1999) confirms that paradigm of spirituality is a necessary paradigm to interpret actions so that they become a truth and not just mysticism. This explanation shows the condition of Bone-Bone people who believe that principle to manage nature is a part of spiritual which contains life, death, change from one form to another, beauty, awesomeness, strength and foster a sense of spirituality of Creator's omnipotence. Humans that deprived of their ability to live on how nature works and wise way to use it, waste their lives are belong to not grateful people. Natural resource management elaborated with dignified social actions in concept of sustainable agriculture become a strategy to build a sustainable agricultural system.

Bone-Bone is the last village and is located on slopes of Latimojong Mountain. This village is very famous as a smoke-free in Enrekang Regency even at national level. This village once won achievements as a National Healthy Village in 2012. The anti-smoking atmosphere was felt when entering to the village. Smoking ban sign was immediately displayed on a large 4x4 m2 billboard at Bone-Bone Village entrance. A number of boards containing smoking bans and health live also fill corners of village. The night gathering, which is usually attended by young men and fathers, continues even though without a cigarette smoke. They only wear a sarong to keep warm while sipping hot coffee served with bananas.

The daily lives of Bone-Bone Villager are farming, farm labourers, cattle and goat farmers, construction workers and others. The most plant commodities are rice, coffee, and patchouli. These become the main source of income for Bone-Bone Villagers. The 80% of Bone-Bone Village area is an agricultural land around a large road and in a hilly area. The population of Bone-Bone Village in 2012 was 825 people, 467 men and 358 women. Most residents become farmers. The most natural products are coffee, rice and patchouli.

The economy and transportation Bone-Bone Village are relatively smooth. Transportation facilities and infrastructure are adequate, but farming activities often experience obstacles caused by lack to connect the agriculture location with large roads, as well as government affairs from Bone-Bone Village to sub-district office.

The distance that must be travelled to get to Capital District is 18.00 Km for 1.5 hours using two-wheeled vehicles. The distance to district capital is 59 km for 3 hours travelling. The road to connect Bone-Bone village and Latimojong village at eastern end of Enrekang district is the only circular road, approximately 7 km away. This road is very rarely travelled by people because the terrain is heavy and people use this road just to go to market in Latimojong Village.

Researchers investigate the Bone-Bone village. It is located in foot of Mount Latimojong, but at eastern end there are no more settlements and distance to city. Bone-Bone is an isolated area from outside world. The village head stated that this village is currently visited by many people from abroad and Java, especially from Jakarta or Makassar after the Bone-Bone Village was declared smoke-free (Mappeaty, N. 2013) and won title of National Health Village in 2012, making the village more recognized at national and international levels.

Method

The research location is Bone-Bone Village, Enrekang Regency. This study refers to Postpositivism paradigm. This study does not only rely on ability of direct observation to object under study, but also looks at other perspectives that are meaningful (spiritual) from various gestures of respondents. Data analysis uses a phenomenology approach with triangulation method, namely using various methods, data sources, researcher observations and theories to get saturated data. Epistemologically, Gunawan (2013) explains that relationship between an observer and researcher with an object or reality under study cannot be separated, differ with Positivism method. One side of Postpositivism agrees with Positivism that reality does indeed exist according to natural law. But on other hand, Postpositivism argues that humans cannot get the truth from reality when researchers distance themselves from reality or indirectly involved with reality. Therefore, researchers must be directly involved in realities in field.

The symbolic interaction perspective seeks to understand culture through human behavior reflected in communication (Blumer, 1969). Symbolic interaction places more emphasis on the interpretation of cultural interaction in a community. The essential meaning will be reflected through cultural communication between local residents. The communication displays a lot of meaningful symbols. The task of researchers is to find that meaning.

Research Result and Discussion

A very religious life in this area shows characteristic that Islamic spirituality is internalized both in every citizen, simplicity in life, togetherness and hospitality of its people in a beautiful and wonderful harmony of nature. This further strengthens and deepens the spirituality of anyone who sees and feels its natural beauty. Islamic life greatly influences their behavior, from young children to elderly. One spiritual practice in rice cultivation is to cultivate the plants with interactions of touch, speech, and caution. Rice plants cultivation is carried out almost every day. If it does not coincide with other important activities, farmers will choose to take care of their plants. Plants are considered as creatures that are also the same as other creatures, namely responding to what is treated to them. Rice plants are also considered a trust that must be maintained, and cared for, if you want good yield. This is done by praying and a sense of responsibility to gives birth to real maintenance actions. It is not possible plants will grow well and produce good harvests without wise treatments from farmers themselves. An informant, Hk (61 years), said that maintenance of rice plants began by prioritizing the right side when starting to enter and other activities on rice that began to grow. Maintaining rice must pass through rice fields and should not step on paddy fields that have been overgrown with rice. That is "*Pamali* (forbidden)", even if there is something that must be done in rice field area, it is better to use a tool to make it easier so that it does not hurt the rice plants. If you cannot avoid to enter the rice fields and have to dock in fields then don't forget to ask permission as you silently say excuse me that they replace with word "*tabe*" or can be interpreted excuse me. "Interaction with plants must be accompanied by good expectations in heart, even sometimes I listen in a small voice as if the plant knows what I am saying" (the informant bends and nods his head).

Farmers do not need many maintenance technique input because they believe that God gift of fertile land for Bone-Bone villages can grow their plants well and produce good crops. This belief also makes them always treat land, plants, and all the elements around them wisely and controllable. Maintaining plants and entering rice fields while looking at green expanse of rice fields and soothing, the heart shows admiration and will always say *basmalah* (in the name of God) and also accompanied by greetings when entering the rice fields. Farmers interact with plants carefully. The treat the land and plants that grow on as live creatures and also have a life that will respond to the farmers reactions and expectations. They should not be treated arbitrarily. This can be seen when the farmers clean their rice fields, they always accompany by actions that are full of wisdom among fellow creatures.

Farmers will never step over the plants whether they have to step on them. The symbolic of interactionism perspective means that rice is a food source that will support life. It is not merely a plant, but more than that, it is a creature of Allah that has life from growing one by one until to form a one unity. They like life in a house,

consisting of parents and children; they will strengthen their lives with obstacles in front of it, the wind that blows hard, rain or sun. The plants enthusiasm and perseverance create agile roots taking the food from ground and farmer care made him able to survive among the challenge to strengthen themselves to form panicles to give birth to grains of rice that would be welcomed with a happy smile by farmers who care them. It is great relationship that farmers glorify their presence with wise treatments, until finally there is a strong interaction to give each other the best, there is a reciprocal relationship among farmers and plant itself to both benefit the people who sense them. Progressive conquest of nature was possible together with development of scientific methods in 16th and 17th centuries which had proceeded according to laws determined not by humans but by nature. The development of modern natural science has a uniform effect for all people who experience it for two reasons. First, it relates to technology used as a war supporter for the country. No independent country can ignore the need for modernization. Second, modern natural science causes uniformity in possibilities of production economically (Fukuyama, 1992b: 6).

It is also very good to clean rice fields from weeds disturbances as a way to prevent plants compete to get nutrients from soil. Plants will be difficult to grow along with weeds. The field often is dominated by grass because they have to compete for food and will have an impact on plants performance. The grasses have a strong life force, and easily grow more weed to inhibit rice plants growth. The grass it should be cleaned to make the rice plants can absorb nutrients optimally. Likewise, maintaining plants using organic fertilizers from fermented rice straw mixed with decomposing bacteria and composted a few days ago was applied. This compost fertilizer gives plants nutrients essential for initial growth of namely Nitrogen, phosphorus and calcium. The three nutrients helps plants to grow rice panicles, helps to extend the roots to absorb food extracts in soil, and is also able to help sturdy plants grow from these branches or rice panicles. A good start to give compost is at age 3 until 3.5 months. It will help the rice plants produce panicles that contain good grains, and creating good obtain quality and quantity. This deep meaning exploration will bring better social change in rural areas as one silent movements towards the rural revolution which began be eroded by modern values in this era. Salman (2012) understands that revolution as a social change not always create a class conflict, especially a bloody one, such as when the change requires a regime to be overthrown, or when the bourgeois financiers are removed. Revolution as social change can take place quietly and not always because of class conflicts or social movements.

Conclusion

The Plants cultivation requires interaction with touch, speech, and caution in agricultural practices. This is done by interpretation that plants are not just green plants but more than that, plants are the same as humans who also have spirits and feel the stimulation given. Good things will also be responded rightly. The rice plants will grow and produce good yield because they are cared in a good way.

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