Philosophical Concepts in Building Citizen Awareness on Environmental Preservation

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to discuss the philosophical concepts in building citizen awareness on environmental preservation. The methodology used in the study is qualitative approach, which is a research process to understand and investigate the social or human problem based on the traditions of a particular research methodology. The conclusion from this study, the philosophical concept in building environmental awareness should be done through the development of self-awareness towards moral and legal awareness both individually and collectively; encouraging awareness that is anomalous, heteronomous, sosionomous towards autonomous awareness; encouraging the change from anthropocentrism awareness paradigm towards biocentrism and ecocentrism - through systematic and planned environment education.

Key words: citizen awareness, sustainability, environmental

Introduction

Awareness on environment is related to human concern on the environment. Low awareness also leads to lower care for environment. Such concern is a mental ability to observe and maintain the nature of the environment according to its function. Thus the human awareness of the environment is a psychological element that can arise from within which is then applied in actions for environmental conservation. Knowledge about the nature and balance of nature and one's experiences will bring up thoughts, attitudes and good behaviors on the environment and life in general.

This low awareness is in reality caused by the negative image of the public on the environment. Such negative image exists mainly because most people do not understand the importance of environment preservation for survival and life, then they likely to be indifferent to their environment. When this happens, according to Soemarwoto (1994), it will cause many environmental problems that will lead to the environmental crisis. Therefore, human awareness is a necessity to understand the function of the environment for our life. This understanding is based on the knowledge possessed by a person or groups acquired through experiences as well as information about the environment (Freire, 1999).

Efforts to build environmental awareness can be done with three approaches: psycho-pedagogical development (environment-based education), socio-cultural development (cultural wisdom), socio-political intervention (government intervention through laws and enforcement). Environmental awareness is a potential for someone or a group that includes aspects of knowledge, attitudes and behaviors towards the environment. Therefore, the presence of a person's awareness of the environment is visible from the attitude and behavior, and each person has a different level of understanding. As noted by N.Y. Bull cited in Djahiri (1985) that awareness can be anomalous (an awareness with vague basis and orientation), heteronomous (awareness based on basis/orientation of diverse and changing motivation), sosionomous (awareness oriented towards general pursuit), autonomous (best awareness that is based on a concept or an existing foundation within oneself). Of the hierarchy, the autonomous awareness is expected to be formed in the preservation of the environment. But of course, awareness is not something that is created automatically. To achieve the required level of awareness, the process of learning (education) and a variety of experiences both formal and non-formal are necessary.

The process of education to provide knowledge and experience in shaping the aforementioned autonomous awareness, is to change the paradigm of human interaction with natural environment, especially the understanding of technology optimism (Hilmanto, 2010) which explains that human can determine and control the nature with the progress of technology. Thus, a systematic and sustainable environment education is expected to change the paradigm of "technological optimism" to the paradigm of "Divine Belief", which is the highest awareness that utilization of nature with the technological advances must be accompanied by aspects of faith and devotion to God, that nature is God's creation, and is intended for humans to be used in proportion to its function.

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Methodology:

The present study employs a qualitative approach, which is a research process to understand and investigate the social or human problem based on the traditions of a particular research methodology. The research tradition used is grounded theory. According to Creswell (1998), this tradition is a theory derived inductively from the study of phenomena that it describes. The use of grounded theory is to find or develop a theory formulated and proved through systematic data collection and data analysis related to the phenomenon under investigation. Data collection, data analysis, and theory that are found or developed is examined to be interrelated in mutual relations. As noted by Strauss and Corbin (2003), a researcher did not start the investigation with a foundation of a particular theory, but with a reference to some fields of study and matters related to the research study. In the present study, data and information collection technique being used is the literature study, interviews, and documentation study.

Result and Discussion

The concept of Local Wisdom and Environmental Management Paradigm:

The alarming environmental crisis nowadays requires a paradigm shift from anthropocentrism to biocentrism and ecocentrism paradigm. To build awareness of protecting the environment requires the efforts to build value orientation of the individual on the environment. Stern et. al. (Stern, 2000) explains that there are three value orientations that may affect beliefs about the environment and behavior, which is called egoistic value (a value that focuses on engagement and disengagement of a person or a group in environmental conservation activities. Individuals will engage in environmental conservation activities if those activities give benefits for them), altruistic social value (a value that reflects attention to the welfare of the group), and the biospheric (biospheric value orientations is related to the assessment of a person on environmental issues by basing itself on the costs and benefits of the overall ecosystem or the biosphere).

In human life, value plays a role as a standard that directs human behavior. Value guides the individual to enter into a situation and how the individual behaves in that situation. Value is the criterion held by individuals in choosing and deciding something. Value gives direction to the attitudes, beliefs and behaviors, and provides guidelines for selecting the desired behavior in each individual. Hence, value affects human behaviors as a result of the formation of attitudes and beliefs, so it can be said that value is a determinant factor in a variety of social behaviors. Value is a component that plays a role in behavior and changes in the value may lead to changes in behavior. In addition, the spirituality of religion is considered to be able to invite all parties to unite, inspire, and provide existential reinforcement (Soelarto, 2009). Humans occupy a very special position in the overall cosmic order of the universe. For this reason, human have been granted the right to manage the nature (Sirodj, 2006).

With its spirituality dimension, religion has five basic recipes to save the earth: 1) a reference or belief that may be obtained from texts (scriptures) and the faith they have respectively; 2) respect for all living things that are taught by religion as a creature of God; 3) restrain, which is the ability to manage and control things so that the usage is not wasteful; 4) redistribution, the ability to spread the wealth; joy and togetherness through generous measures, for example zakat and infak in Islam; 5) Responsibility, being responsible in caring for the earth and environmental conditions. In this case, concern for the earth is very dependent on how the religious aspects are presented and explored with ecologically modern language and idioms.

Purwasasmita (2010) offers three basic principles for environmental management that ensures sustainability: natural linkage paradigm (ecosystem), biodiversity linkage (diversity), and human linkage (welfare). These three basic principles need to be understood correctly, completely and sincerely at all levels, but the mastery of skills and their applications will vary according to the ability and scale of interactions. Basically these three basic principles are the (Sundanese) local wisdom to maintain the sustainability of its civilization: siliasih (love), siliasah (teach), and siliasuh (care for). Its management refers to the continuous mindset that pays attention to the structure ecosystems to develop natural and infrastructure and its derivation, the evolution of value culturalism, and institutional development of its implementation efforts.

Questioning about the importance of local wisdom, Keraf (2002) says that the traditional wisdom is that all forms of knowledge, belief, understanding, and insight as well as customs or ethical that demand human behavior in life in an ecological community. All of these traditional wisdoms are lived, practiced, taught, and passed on from one generation to the next. The wisdom also forms the pattern of everyday human behavior, both towards fellow human beings and to the nature of the unseen.

Now, before it's too late, it is proper that we as Sundanese (West Java specific) re-apply the concepts of ecology of karuhun-karuhunurang (our ancestor) who were very friendly with nature (enviro friendly). Indigenous wisdom of nature can still be encountered in Kasepuhan or Baduy community in the area of the Halimun Mountain ecosystems (Sundalana, 2007). In the midst of the threat of environmental destruction by the irresponsible parties, indigenous Baduy are very well known for maintaining traditional knowledge and proven
to save the natural surroundings. Baduy society have some understanding that the forest is life, and is classified in three classes, namely leuweungtitipan (ancestral forest/entrusted forest), leuweungtutupan (forbidden forest), and leuweunggarapan (open/productive forest).

Leuweung titipan (leuweung kalot or centuries-old forest, leuweung larangan or protected forest, leuweung sirah cai or watershed forest) or ancestral/entrusted forest is a forest area that absolutely should not be awaited by the people. The word "titipan" (entrusted) is a mandate from God Almighty (Gusti Nu Kawasa) and the ancestors (Karuhun) to be kept intact. It should not be contested and must be maintained from any efforts and threats from outsiders. Entrusted forest is usually located in the upper or top of the mountain.

Leuweungtutupan or forbidden forest is a reserved forest that at a given time can be used if necessary (leuweungawian). The word "tutupan" means just like a door which is opened and closed as needed according to the understanding of this community. Inside this forest there is kabendon (kualat) or damned when the rules are broken. People are allowed to enter it only with the purpose of harvesting non-timber products such as rattan, resin, honey, fruits, tubers, medicine, and others. Any single felling of tree in this kind of forest must be replaced with one new tree.

LeuweungGarapan (leuweungbaladaheun, leuweungsampalan, leuweunglembur) is an open forest to cultivate land by the public for farming. Cultivation of field for dry rice cultivation or field cultivation is done behind the rotation in at least 3 years. This kind of forest is usually located in a relatively flat area at the foot of the mountain.

Changing the lifestyle of the people who have ingrained is not easy, indeed. However, as the proverb says, "cikaracakannganggatun laun-launjadilegok" (literally: water drops onto stone, slowly creates a hole on the stone) which means that with persistence, any difficult problem can certainly be dealt with (Hidayat, 2005:208), thus it will not hurt us to try it with patience and persistence.

The concept of Ecological Citizenship in Building Environmental Awareness in Indonesia:

The effort to build environmental awareness is not independent of socio-cultural construct of the citizens. In the context of education, building public awareness for environmental conservation can be seen from the purpose of education, which should also be seen from PKN educational purposes. The objective of civic education in essence is "to be a good and smart citizenship". In particular, the national mission is contained in the explanation of Section 37 subsection 1 (Law No.20 Year of 2003 on National Education System) which asserts that, "Civic education is intended to develop learners into humans who have a sense of nationalism and patriotism." Within this context, citizenship education is the education of nationality or national character education to foster "civic intelligence, civic participation and civic responsibility". Education for the development of nation's character is a complex process that takes a long time and will never finish. As noted by Craig Renolds (cited in Sapriya, 2006), "the nation is a building that will never be finished". Also, in the context of Indonesia, according to Anthony Reid (cited in Sapriya, 2006) that the development of this nation's character as "the discontinuities that have challenged historians again and again to capture the whole picture wheter of state or nation." Therefore, the character development of this nation requires participation from various components of the nation and the educational component at all levels and types, as well as the participation from Indonesian people as a whole.

Civic education takes on a mission of national development on the character of the nation that must be built through the corridors of "value-based education'. This value-based education is a true substantive of the educational process as a whole, as it refers to the national education goals, "... for the development of learners' potential in order to become a man who is faithful and devoted to God Almighty, with noble character, healthy, knowledgeable, creative, independent, and become citizens of a democratic and responsible" (Law No. 20 Year of 2003, section 3). A good citizen behaves and acts in accordance with the noble values of Pancasila. Therefore, Pancasila is the foundation of Indonesia whose elaboration of its implementation or application of its values in the environmental aspects of development cannot be separated. Men, society and environment are interrelated, that should always be nurtured and developed in order to remain in harmony and dynamic balance (Hardjasoemantri, 2000).

Awareness values that should be fostered in developing harmony and balance with nature is the application of the five noble values of Pancasila principles: the Belief in God Almighty, just and civilized humanity, the unity of Indonesia, Democracy guided by wisdom in Wisdom deliberation/representation, social justice for all Indonesian people.

Government Policy in Building Efforts for Citizen Awareness of Environmental Conservation:

Building citizens' awareness on environment preservation requires a socio-political intervention in politics or government intervention. This can be done by creating some environment-oriented government's laws and policies. One of the products associated with this law is Law No. 32 Year of 2009 on the Environmental
Management and Protection. Ramdhani and Santosa (2012) determinant aspect which becomes attention in the social and politic aspect in environmental recovery shows that government’s support.

A development that is oriented to economic growth tends to be exploitative in the New Order era has ignored the rules of preservation, conservation, and sustainability. Consequences of these negative impacts of natural resource degradation and environmental pollution are serious as in the various regions in Indonesia. This condition requires law improvement that permanently supports development with its economic growth orientation based on environmental sustainability, in particular covering aspects of insight, orientation and legal instruments that ensure environmental sustainability, decentralized, accommodating the institutional strengthening of local and indigenous communities.

Aware of such various environmental problems, there are several alternative solutions that can be implemented as follows:

Firstly, change in the perspective of nature in a philosophical and thorough way. It is recognized that ethics anthropocentrism and the nature of capitalism have made merely a means of satisfying, merely an object of exploitation of man, and apparently this caused the damage. Therefore, Keraf (2002) calls for a thorough radical change in modern society in addressing the environmental crisis. Anthropocentrism ethics should be changed to ecocentrism and biocentrism ethics. However, this new ethics cannot be realized by modern humans who are "tainted" to the old paradigm which is anthropocentric. Thus it needs fundamental change and actualized in the form of joint movements to build a new culture ecosophy, the collective motion of the earth as a care home to make it a comfortable place for all life. This is where the urgency of environmental ethics should be based on the high spirituality.

Secondly, environmental politics that is based on environmental ethics. Global political commitment has been agreed in the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro as a paradigm of sustainable development should also be followed up with a paradigm of ecological sustainability. Because if it is only focused on the sustainable development paradigm, it is feared that the world would again gets stuck in a developmental ethical grounds which is proved to be a very exploitative development. Therefore, this is where the urgency of environmental politics based on the right ideology and the broad paradigm of ecological sustainability as an alternative to the concept of sustainable development.

Thirdly, good governance is necessary, in addition to the enforcement of environmental laws. If the substance of the legislation does not guarantee the interests of the environment and is not pro-people, there will be a defiance of the people (Civil Disobedience) in complying with these laws and regulations.

Conclusion:

Philosophical concept in building environmental awareness should be done through the development of self-awareness towards moral and legal awareness both individually and collectively; encouraging awareness that is anomous, heteronomous,sosiononomous towards autonomous awareness; encouraging the change from anthropocentrism awareness paradigm towards biocentrism and ecocentrism - through systematic and planned environment education. Awareness and values that should be fostered in developing harmony and balance with nature that is the application of the local wisdom value.

Recommendation of the research for religious/traditional leaders/community/environmental activist, religious values and motivations affect the formation of citizen awareness of the environment. Thus we require the integration of religious arguments, advices from the elder, in a traditional conservation efforts to strengthen indigenous communities that already exist and to defend it

References


