



# Uplifting Local Culture and Wisdom in Soil and Water Conservation Systems

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## ABSTRACT

Environmental conditions greatly affect the quality of life of humans and other living things, so it is necessary to pay attention to the conditions of environmental protection and management that are strong and consistent by all stakeholders. Various principles are used in environmental protection and management. One of these principles is culture and local wisdom. Local wisdom is the noble values that apply in the order of community life to, among other things, protect and manage the environment sustainably. Environmental protection and management must also pay attention to the noble values that apply in the order of community life. The occurrence of a water crisis caused by reduced water sources and weak living conditions of living things is due to a lack of attention to existing local wisdom rules. Various efforts have been made in the context of land and water conservation by both the government and environmental observers. Management of water and land resources is not only the responsibility of the government as outlined in various written policies, but also the responsibility of the local community which is evident in the knowledge and experience of the community in carrying out various water and land management activities.

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## INTRODUCTION

Maintaining environmental quality is an effort to realize and improve the life and quality of life of living things naturally and sustainably. Environmental management for individuals or groups of people nationally adheres to regulations that have been agreed upon together. These regulations are packaged in various ways, through laws that must be understood and obeyed together.

The Indonesian government has established regulations on environmental protection and management in the form of national laws and government regulations. At the regional level, these regulations are described in regional regulations. Meanwhile, specific issues are specifically regulated in Ministerial Decrees or Ministerial Regulations that deal with issues from the specific sector.

Laws and Government Regulations on the environment and development, including: Law on Provisions. Main Provisions for Environmental Management in 1982; Law No. 23 of 1997 concerning Environmental Management; and Law No. 32 of 2009 concerning Environmental Protection and Management.

The implementation of laws and government regulations in the field is supported by positive habits that have nuances of protecting and preserving the environment. These positive habits can be done individually or by groups of people in certain areas that are local in nature. These habits are then known as local wisdom.

Local wisdom is one of the things that must be considered in environmental protection and management activities. This is stated in Law No. 32 of 2009 that environmental protection and management include planning, utilization, control, maintenance, supervision, and law enforcement where all activities related to environmental protection and management must pay attention to several things including: (1) diversity of ecological characters and functions; (2) population distribution; (3) distribution of potential natural resources; (4) local wisdom; (5) community aspirations; and (6) climate change.

One of the problems that is currently a concern in Indonesia is the water crisis, so that land and water conservation efforts are needed. According to Sulastriyono (2009), water is a natural resource that is absolutely necessary for living things. There is not a single creature on this earth that does not need water. John (2013) added that the existence of water is very important in the sustainability and balance of life. The existence of water as the main source on earth is under threat as indicated by the occurrence of a water crisis. The water crisis is generally caused by climate change, poor land use systems, damage to the ecosystem of rainwater catchment areas, and the increasing need for water consumption (Sancyaningsih et al, 2013). The water crisis can be in the form of threats to water shortages in the dry season, flooding in the rainy season and water pollution. Water sources can be springs, groundwater, rivers, lakes, ponds, and so on so that the quality of soil and water is absolutely necessary in efforts to conserve soil and water.

Several problems that threaten water security in Indonesia according to the Directorate of Social and Cultural Studies (2013) include: Increasing the area of critical land (13.1 million ha in 1992 and 18.5 million ha in 2009). Reducing water catchment areas due to being converted into urban and industrial areas (conversion of agricultural land by 35,000 ha/year threatens food security and water crisis). High use of groundwater (in several large cities, 73% of the population uses groundwater). Increased water use due to population growth and improved quality of life. Pollution of water sources (rivers, lakes, groundwater) due to the lack of wastewater treatment facilities in urban areas. Global warming/sea level rise that causes disturbances to fish farms, abrasion, and worsens flooding problems in coastal cities (threatening 450,000 ha of fish farms, 10,666 coastal villages with 16 million residents living in coastal areas). The lack of integration of authority and responsibility programs between institutions/ministries in terms of land and water management (Ministry of Forestry, Public Works, Agriculture, Environment, Energy and Mineral Resources/Water, and Home Affairs).

Various efforts have been made by the government and environmental observers to implement soil and water conservation programs. These efforts include through existing laws and regulations, one of which is Law Number 37 of 2014 concerning Soil and Water Conservation. Law Number 37 of 2014 Article 2 states that the implementation of soil and water conservation is based on several principles, namely: (1) participatory; integration; (2) balance; (3) justice; (4) benefit; (5) local wisdom; and (6) sustainability. Furthermore, Article 46 states that the community has an equal opportunity to participate in the implementation of Soil and Water Conservation carried out by the Government and/or Regional Government in accordance with their authority. The implementation of community participation is carried out by paying attention to local wisdom which can be done in the preparation of planning, funding, supervision, and/or filing of representative/group lawsuits.

The Directorate of Social and Cultural Studies (2013) stated that the national water management system policy must be directed at realizing the provision of water for all Indonesian people fairly and evenly, both for daily needs (domestic) and to support national development (agriculture, production, energy, etc.). One of the strategies carried out to realize this policy is to build the mindset of the community and all stakeholders, that water is not an unlimited natural resource. Therefore, water resources need to be managed properly and responsibly through several efforts that involve the community and pay attention to local wisdom that has developed in the community.

According to Aulia and Dharmawan (2010), water resource management must be adjusted to local conditions and local wisdom in each region because each region has different characteristics. Local wisdom related to natural resource management as a local regulatory system that has existed since the past with a long history and adaptation can be found in several specific communities in Indonesia. Synergistic and harmonious integration in the management of land and water resources between the government, environmentalists, and local wisdom and culture that apply in the community is expected to be an effective strategy for land and water conservation.

Thus, the Simaninggir village community, Padang Bolak Tenggara District, received government assistance for the flow of water from the hills to the village in order to obtain clean water, with the government's assistance the community can also participate in maintaining the natural environment that is still beautiful. The community always teaches the children of the Simaninggir community to maintain the sustainability of the nature where they live.

### RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method. Qualitative descriptive methods are used to describe and interpret written data in the form of story units that are manifested in monologues or character dialogues, all of which are found in data sources, so this study is not in the form of numbers but rather language descriptions. This study uses a qualitative method. Qualitative methods are related to data analysis that does not use statistical calculations, but in the form of words (Endraswara, 2013:51).

Qualitative research methods as a whole utilize interpretation methods by presenting them in the form of descriptions. Therefore, researchers use qualitative descriptive methods to describe the form of local wisdom and local wisdom values of the Batang Angkola community culture found in Simaninggir Village, Padang Bolak Tenggara District, North Padang Lawas Regency. Data Sources and Research Data Data Sources Data sources are the research subjects from which the data is obtained. The data source for this study is the natural conditions of Simaninggir Village, Padang Bolak Tenggara District, North Padang Lawas Regency

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The local wisdom empowerment approach is expected to cause basic changes in social behavior related to water and soil conservation behavior. These changes can only be implemented if they are fully based on the awareness, sincerity, and earnestness of all parties (stakeholders) in the social mobilization process. Changes in behavior and social structure in this case are related to values, norms, and institutions that are the breath of community life towards a better and more permanent direction (Stanis, 2005). Local wisdom, culture, and religious norms that are embraced and obeyed by the community must be maintained and preserved. Several things that can be done to maintain it according to Siswadi, et al. (2011) include: (1) strengthening the spirit of indigenous and religious communities through various driving forces such as government, environmental experts, and religious figures; (2) increasing awareness, understanding, concern, and community participation towards an environmentally wise society; and (3) providing a legal umbrella. Maridi (2012) in his research results added several efforts to empower communities in water and soil conservation, including increasing community participation by building dialogue and agreements with government agencies and related parties and providing outreach, assistance and training to communities in the use and preservation of water and soil resources.

### CONCLUSION

Management and preservation of natural resources and the environment, including land and water conservation, are important issues because problems regarding these issues threaten the survival of humans and other living things. Various efforts have been made at all levels, from the central government to the regional governments. The community has the same rights and opportunities to play an active role in environmental protection and management activities and the conservation of

water, land, and biodiversity in Indonesia. One of the roles of the community is to develop and maintain local culture and wisdom in order to preserve environmental functions. Various practices of local wisdom and ancestral culture that are still maintained by the Indonesian people can be one strategy for environmental protection and management. Preserving local wisdom values and religious teachings related to the protection of natural resources and the environment is one form of traditional conservation carried out by the community. Local wisdom values and religious teachings are important to be sown and disseminated, so that humans feel that protecting nature and the environment is part of religious teachings so that nature can provide its wealth for the prosperity of humanity who are willing to make efforts to protect and respect the rights of nature.

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