

Influence of Socio-Cultural and Religious Rules to the Behaviour of Isolated Community in Managing Their Environment (Case Study of To Pembuni Tribe in Mamuju West Sulawesi Province, Indonesia)

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Abstract: This study focuses on isolated communities, especially the tribal forest like To Pembuni can be viewed not only as the economic resources but also as a cosmos in which there is an interaction among the natural dimensions of the profane, the supernatural and the religion. The inability of planning identifies the characteristics of socio-culture and dimension of socio-religious of the isolated community. It is one weakness of resettlement programme which has implemented in some regions. Cultural and religious dimension as a reference to see To Pembuni's activities is their system of knowledge and belief in relation to resettlement pattern and natural resources management. To Pembuni is closely related to nature, so their experience and cultural background that they use as the adaptive strategy to manage their environment.

Key words: Isolated community, social, culture, religion and environment, manage

INTRODUCTION

In connection with the intensive announcement of the important natural conservation globally, the problem of isolated communities has got the attention from different sides and then it becomes one priority of the national policies. The important role of the tropical forest as the lung of the world will degrade because the large areas of these forests have decreased seriously. This case can cause the dangerous impact on human beings and other organisms. In fact there were many factors which caused the degradation of tropical forest areas, namely, the overexploitation of forests done by the entrepreneurs who have forest concession, the clearance of forest for farming, transmigrants settlements and housing, illegal logging and so on.

The people who are often accused to damage forests are isolated communities who have a nomadic way of life as the actors who destroys environment they almost always are included in the report of the Department of Transmigration and Settlement as forest destroyers (MTR, 1993). The forest damage in the Repelita VI or Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun VI (The 5 year Development Plan VI) had larger areas than the damage before and a part of them was destroyed by the isolated communities. In the meantime according to Director of Forestation and controlling unirrigated agriculture, the critical lands are larger in Indonesia, a part of them is caused by the shifting cultivators whose number is more than one million families. The other critical lands are caused by

other activities such as transmigration, exploitation by forest concession holders. While The Land Rehabilitation and Conservation of the IX South Sulawesi Regional Office explained that the condition of forest resources in South Sulawesi nowadays have degraded caused by illegal logging, fire forest, shifting cultivation and forest destroyers.

The isolated community or nomadic society was accused to make a mistake in destroying forest because they do shifting cultivation which caused the land erosion and forest burning. Moreover, their staple food production was lower compared to the larger areas they worked. So, the shifting cultivation that they do is not efficient. In this case, the forest resources which are exploited by the government resulted in foreign exchanges were more beneficial for national development than shifting cultivators did. The premises mentioned above places the isolated communities in the weak position. Their marginal position caused their rights as traditional societies have been less acknowledged. This case has been reflected in some government regulations on the basic stipulation of forestry concerning the government regulation in HPH and HPPHH which does not give exact decision of law for the isolated communities to manage their environmental settlement. As the act of despising of their rights, possibly there will arise the conflict that can cause the social unrest at large outside their community borders.

The opinion that reflected the evaluation of normative judgement to the isolated community makes not

only suffer their losses but also constraints their integration in the national development. So, in this case, it should be made an effort to persuade them to support the sustainable development. The normative assumption caused the government programs which aimed to handle the isolated communities tended to be homogeneous, monotonous and incomplete planning. As the results, the government programs of resettlement or non-resettlement are not successful. The planners could not identify the socio-cultural characteristics and socio-religious dimensions of the resettlements which had been implemented in some regions in the past.

The isolated society regards the forest not only as the economic resources but also as the cosmos in which there is an interaction among the profane, the magic and the religion. In other words, forest is an area where they have the possibilities to do shifting cultivation for their source of living which directly connect with magic and religious dimensions that is why, forest for them is very important. So, they try to create the value system which is support the harmonious interaction between human beings and nature.

They believe in micro-cosmos and they are aware of the important function of forest for their community. So in connection with it they have the environmental wisdom. In this relation, Dove (1997) explained that generally, the native society who live in and around the forest as the shifting cultivators, hunters and food gatherers have the high wisdom in relation to the environment.

So, the socio-cultural characteristics and the different ecosystem types which cause the isolated societies have different variants to one another in developing their pattern of adaptation to their environment.

The handling of the isolated societies has been given more attention to conserve their environment than to their socio-cultural and economic dimensions that cause them still in poor condition. The incomplete planning used to develop the isolated community will never solve their problems and it causes them to experience the poverty and they still become under developed society behind the developing and developed societies (Sani, 1996).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research concerns with the socio-cultural and religious rules that influence the behavior of the isolated community in managing their environment, the case study of To Pembuni tribe in Mamuju. This study is qualitative and the results will be written in the 'thick description'. That is why the researcher as the main instrument will decide to make a successful research. Interpretation model will be done based on the standardized rule, either in

esoteric interpretation or in the exoteric interpretation. The direct interpretation will also be done after performing depth interview and observing the behaviour of the isolated society in the field research (Carne and Guggehim, 1993).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Short history of to Pembuni community: No one knows when To Pembuni began to live in the forest and where they came from and what tribes they are. When the words To Pembuni is translated, 'To' means 'Man' and Pembuni 'to hide'. So, to Pembuni means 'the people who hide (membuni), Mamuju native language. According to the story of the people who live in surroundings of the To Pembuni settlement and To Pembuni themselves they always hide in the forest because they are afraid to the Dutchmen and they do not want to meet the Dutchmen. Thus, it can be concluded that they began to hide in the forest when the Dutch began to colonize Indonesia (especially Sulawesi). To Pembuni did not want to be governed by the Dutch. So, they would be pleased to live in the forest.

Those who run away from home to the forest met one another in the forest where they united themselves to form a community. These people multiplied themselves by marrying each other according to the customary law (adat). So long time, they lived in the forest without the relationship to the outside world. Their activities united themselves with the nature. So, they live from what the nature provides for them including their clothes are made from the bark of trees.

According to their parent's message to their children that when you meet the tall men who have the white skin and brown hair in the forest that is the Dutchmen, kill them because the Dutchmen will always want to kill us. Based on their assumption from their parent's message all people who live outside their community are the Dutchmen. Since they have lived in the forest they never meet any person and also never go outside their community. So, they believe that there are not anymore people who are alive except the people live in their community. They regard that an airplane which is flying above their community is Allah Ta'ala (God) (Thufail, 1993).

As the result of the suspicion that they do to outside world, especially, to the people who are not from their community make their activities and behaviour are rarely seen, even the place where they hide themselves is not easy to find. When any people come from outside their community to look for rattan they control these people from far away. So, they are not seen by the outsider. But

they will see what the outsider does. When these people are unlucky, unfortunately they will not return to their home because they will be killed by To Pembuni who uses the blow pipe (sumpit) with the poisonous bullet. To Pembuni threat the outsiders like that because they regard all outsiders are Dutchmen.

The dangerous treatment of To Pembuni to outsiders began to stop in about 1990's. Since that time there were some people who come from the village outside their community to look for rattan in their community forest. To Pembuni controlled these people from far and near distance. The person who controlled them was the community head called "Pak Sadar". Since that time, To Pembuni began to investigate and to compare the body, the skin colour, the hair of the outside people who came to look for rattan in their forest with the To Pembuni itself. To Pembuni began to be aware and to correct themselves, why the people from outside of their community are similar with them? Because according to their parents, Dutchmen are tall, big, white skin and brown hair. To Pembuni began to frighten the outsiders by throwing anything near to them or to the outsiders without showing themselves. When the outsiders came to their forest seeking the rattan, To Pembuni began to show themselves and communicate with the outsiders but the languages used by both sides were not understandable. Both of them spoke different languages or each side used their own language. The outsiders knew the name of the language used by To Pembuni that is, the Toraja language. Then, one of the outsiders who can speak Toraja language communicates with them by using Toraja language (Moran, 1989).

Actually, To Pembuni people came from different regions or tribes, namely, Kanebu tribe came from Central Sulawesi, Seko tribe from Luwu, Toraja tribe from Toraja and Mamuju tribe itself came from Mamuju. And then they met each other in the forest where they formed a community called To Pembuni that is the people who always hide themselves in the forest.

Settlement pattern: If To Pembuni's young man wants to marry one young girl his parents will visit the house of the young girl to speak directly to her parents. When her parents approved, the young man's family will look for a bark of tree which is put in front of the girl's house. When the bark is not returned to the young man's family, it means that the young girl's family members have approved the young men's proposal (Hiona'mi) and both sides agree to decide the day of the arrangement of the marriage. The marriage will last for some hours, after that,

the bride and bridegroom may not go to anywhere for seven nights. After seven days, chicken will be slaughtered.

The validation of marriage is indicated by taking a plate of rice and an egg cut into two parts and each part is given to the bride and the bridegroom and a plate of rice is eaten together by both of them. After eating, the bridegroom's hands are cleaned or washed by the bride. On the other hand, the bride's hands also cleaned by the bridegroom. When this arrangement has finished, the chicken are slaughtered for eating together with the guests. After this eating together, the marriage is valid (Siara'mi To Pembuni language).

According to To Pembuni's belief, persons who have just married may not go to anywhere, especially, to go into the forest because the spirit who lives in the forest will disturb the persons who have just married. If this case has happened, it can cause both of them will be suffering from long illness. After marriage, the couple can live patrilocal residence or matrilocal residence. It depends on their willingness where they want to live. They also can build a house in the new local or a neolocal residence.

Conflict and integration: The rules in the To Pembuni community are implemented by the inhabitants so firmly. This matter can be understood because the conflict rarely happens among the members of the society. All the members of the society obey the rules and they are loyal to their leader (Tomatoa). The leader (Tomatoa) has role as the policy maker to implement the governmental policy and also as the leader of religion. In any ceremonies, for example, the clearance of forest, building new house, marriage, death, conflict solution, all of them must be handled by the leader (Tomatoa) (Hawley, 1986).

All the members of the community obey the rules which cause the solid integration of the community. For example, any persons who fight each other, both of them should be sentenced. If anyone is killed his enemy should also be killed whoever his parents are. The killer is killed by the way called "Dikere'-kere'" in order that he will not feel the long pain.

The rule about the social intercourse of the youth is also very strict. When a young man wants to visit any house and there is no any man in the house or there are only women in it, the man as the visitor cannot step up to enter the house. If a wife whose husband is absent at home she cannot get down from her house, she only shouts loudly without showing herself to the visitor. When this rule is violated by both of them they will be killed or Dikere'-kere' means to torture and to kill because this case is regarded "Sina" (a sexual act outside of marriage) because he was not her husband or her brother. If a man laugh and there is a woman who smiles instead this is "Sina". It also forbidden to touch woman's heel

when a woman and another man meet on the street and walk together or there is a woman who turn a head and smile to another man, it also regarded as “Sina”.

The social and cultural rules in the To Pembuni community are so strict, so the conflict among the inhabitants is so rare to happen and according to Pak Sadar as the leader (Tomatoa) of the community there have never happened the conflict among his people. The members of the society obey their rules and they are loyal to their leader (Tomatoa). In the election of the leader (Tomatoa) they elect the man based on his experience, age and charisma suitable to the terms and condition of To Pembuni rules.

Religion and belief: The religion of To Pembuni, it seems that it has the relation to the religion of Toraja or the religion of Bugis native tribe who live in Sidenreng-Rappang regency called “Towani Tolotang”. It is said so because they believe that the highest position called “Allata’ala”, The Creator who has no children and lives above there. While the others are the spirits who live around them, for example, to Pembuni believe that Tonleru is the saint as the reincarnation of their ancestors. They regard that Tonleru can bring them the good fate for their children and grandchildren and to protect them. They also believe that in the forest there is a guard called “Pue Hutan”. This Pue Hutan guards the forest and the new clearance of forest for agricultural field. The people should hold the ceremony and pray to Allata’ala and Pue Hutan for their blessing to their activities. When they do the clearance of forest for gardening, building a house, the ceremonies will be held and they pray to Allata’ala, Tonleru and Pue Hutan in order that they give their blessing to their activities. The biggest ceremony that they usually hold called “Keruman” that is, the safety ceremony which is hold in the adat (traditional) house attended by all the community members in the afternoon. And this ceremony is held once in a year or once in 2 years.

Knowledge and belief on settlement pattern: To Pembuni isolated community is in Batu Parigi village, spreading in groups in hill slopes and in the areas of Budong-Budong river course near their unirrigated agricultural fields. They have these fields and live there because they regard these locations belong to their ancestors which is need to guard and conserve. To Pembuni settlement patterns consist of many groups and each group has a long house as the adat house (traditional house) that is the place where they held a meeting to discuss the problems from their group. Near the long house, people build their houses in rows.

Their settlements are temporary, only for one harvest time and then they move to another place where they build a new settlement and new agricultural field.

Preparation for housing: To Pembuni like to settle near the river at the sloping land and they take logs for the house pillars, palm leaves for roofs, rattan leaves also for roofs, bamboo for floor areca trees and trunk of bila trees also for walls and rattan also used as the ropes to bind the pillars.

Process of house building: To build a house, firstly they choose suitable logs for pillars by cutting their branches. Secondly, the props are picked up and bound to the pillars with rattan. Further step is to make the frames of roofs and then they continue to install the roofs which are made of palm fiber or rattan leaves.

After finish the three steps, the further work is to make the frames of wall whose materials consist of bila trees and then, set the materials of wall that is, palm leaves. When the setting of the wall has finished, the further work is to set the floor whose materials consist of bamboos which are bound with rattan in order that the floor is strong and long duration of use. The last work is to make a ladder whose materials consist of wood and bamboo bound with rattan (FDCS, 1990).

House warming ceremony: The house warming ceremony is held when the house has already been built. In this ceremony, the chicken are slaughtered. After that, the tribal head steps up and enter the house followed by the house owner with his family members based on their age stages. According to To Pembuni’s knowledge of house building they should choose the sloping land as the place where they will build a house, such as hill slopes or mountain slopes because it is easy to flow the water into the house from the mountain or the hill by connecting bamboo to the source of water in the hill or mountain, in order that they are not tired to take water. Also, the leaves which fall into the land which become the rubbish do not stay at home because the leaves directly fall down through the sloping land, so the house is still clean.

They choose the fertile land for a house building near to their garden because the good land is the land where there are many tall trees growing and their leaves are green. The colour of the land is black. This kind of land is suitable to their knowledge which they regard as the fertile land. To Pembuni usually live in the settlement for one harvest season and then they move to another place based on their knowledge of shifting cultivation. If anyone of the community members dies they directly leave that place without waiting for the harvest time. In this such case they regard that there is a bad thing that is,

the illness will come or the calamity for the family members or the inhabitants who will be left when they do not leave their settlement quickly. To Pembuni settle in the house on stilts and the house has no rooms but when they have children they set the screen for the girl and for the boy. The boy cannot enter the girl's screen and so, the girl cannot also enter the boy's screen. The long house on stilts was built in the central settlement called Adat house, where they hold Keruman ceremony attended by all the community members.

Knowledge and belief on the use of forest resources: The natural resources are everything in natural environment which have the values to fulfill the human needs. So, the people should optimally use and conserve the resources for the next generation. The existence of human beings in a certain place either as an individual or as a group, he or they will use and manage the natural resources to fulfill their needs, either for food or housing and other needs. In this case they directly or indirectly, quickly or slowly decide the condition, the form and the existence of the natural resources concerned (Mangunrai, 1992).

To Pembuni who live in the mountain slopes and the areas of river course in To Badak IV and To Batu Parigi areas settle in group and spread out over a large area. They are isolated geographically from the public society in that village. They have limited knowledge concerning the resources in the environment. So, they manage the forest resource simply and wisely.

To Pembuni manage the forest resources for their needs by shifting cultivation and hunting animals (including birds) which become the main means of living. They do not know business transaction about selling and buying goods. So, all of their production is to meet their needs. If they have remainder they will distribute these things to the family who has lack of food. If they need land for agricultural field, firstly they decide the location of the forest that they want to clear under the leadership of the tribal head. When they clear the forest, the trees near the settlement will be burnt. When the colour of the soil is black and the leaves of the trees are green it means that the soil is fertile. Based on their knowledge of agriculture, when the two conditions have been met they begin to cut down the trees for agricultural field led by the tribal head. The process of forest clearance for shifting cultivation begins with holding the ritual ceremony led by the tribal head as follows:

- Preparing the betels (tinongo) which aims to influence the spirits who live in the location in order that they will leave the location to another place because the land will be used for agriculture. The betel are put on the leaf or in the plate kept near the big tree and then the tribal head reads the spells

- Mappasoro mokko puannangala (means, "please move from that place")

The prohibitions which cannot be done in the forest in order that the agricultural products will be beneficial are as follows:

- It is forbidden to take the harvest, by other persons except the family or the relatives
- Cooking rice and that rice falling into the fire
- Chopping down the big tree
- Woman who has just given birth cannot enter the kitchen
- It is forbidden to sound the music instrument which is made of the rice stalks, when it is still at the time of planning or it is not the time of taking the harvest yet because the plant disease can come to damage the plants

When the ritual ceremony was over they can begin to work the land and scatter paddy seeds. Besides paddy they also plant cucumber, corn and potato. The beginning of the seasonal planting is in the full moon they cannot plant any seeds in the dark period because at that time, animals are wild. They hunt all kinds of animals and birds and they use sumpit (blowpipe) with poisonous bullet to kill animals such as Anoa (dwarf buffalo from Sulawesi), deer, manu (chicken) and all kinds of birds. They eat the hunting results together.

Land tenure: It is known that To Pembuni tribe as a whole are the people who do shifting cultivation, so their settlement also moves to the new location where they build the new settlement and clear the forest for the land of cultivation in a certain time. The land tenure by each cultivator depends on the land he works for his living together with his family members. The possession of land that each cultivator works has not any right yet which is validated by both the tribal head or by the local government. The large location of housing area and agricultural fields are indicated by the border signs of the land possessed by the owner.

As the sign of land possession in which the cultivator has worked the land is the sign left in the land as the proof that he has already worked the land. If the cultivator has not worked the land anymore, his right of the land has also ended. If any member of the society will work the land, the former owner should be informed in a family atmosphere. When the right of working the land has already been given to another person, the long life plants still belong to the former owner who planted them.

Although, someone has already possessed the agricultural fields, he can still add the possession of land which is not owned by any person, either for the settlement or for agricultural fields. If any land is free, it can be known that the land is still possessed by other person, indicated with some signs showing that anyone who has ever worked the land. When there is a conflict concerning the land tenure the adat head (Tomatoa) of the social group will solve the problem, in accordance with the rules but they have not got the valid proofs of the land possession yet because they have no rincik tanah or the letter of land tenure that the land owner uses to pay the land tax. To Pembuni say that this land is not theirs, it is God's possession, so anyone can use it. How long somebody can use the land, it depends on how long he has lived there and cultivated the land. When the land owner has moved to another place and clear the forest for the new agricultural field, his right of the former land has ended and this land becomes the possession of the society. The transfer of the land tenure among the society members depends on the agreement of both sides who do transaction because they have not known business transaction of buying and selling goods yet. In this case, these people have access to sufficient land for subsistence (Rappaport, 1967).

Socio-cultural and socio-religious dimension: The adat head also has the function as the religious head, so he has double functions to do his role in the forest clearance for the new agricultural fields and in the new house building to lead the ceremony of each activity. Thus, the adat head knows all matters concerning the activities in relation to the magic world as follows:

- Tonleru is holy people that reincarnated from their ancestors
- Allata'ala is the God
- Pue Hutan is the guardian of the forest

For example, in the forest clearance for agricultural field, the adat head puts betels and chalk under the big and tall tree around forest land which will be cleared and then he reads the spell. Also, in the house warming ceremony, the adat head reads spell and chicken are provided as the tribute. They hold the adat karuman ceremony in the adat house in the afternoon and they provide the eggs and rice which are placed in the bark. This adat karuman ceremony is attended by all society members in order that they are safe and this ceremony is also held, when they plant paddy (Jochim, 1981).

To Pembuni plant sago (tabaro), rice (onje), maize (goa) and banana (loka) as their staple food by using the

simple tool called noo (chopping knife). They catch all kinds of bird for their food by using blowpipe (sumpit) with poisonous bullet and spear (tombak). For the new settlement and agricultural fields they always seek fertile land whose colour is black and big trees whose leaves are green which grow in the land. They regard that the red and yellow land is not fertile. Besides they plant staple food they also plant vegetables such as, cucumber, carrot and so on (Ellen, 1982).

CONCLUSION

Cultural and religious dimension used as a reference to view the activities of To Pembuni. These two dimensions contain the system of knowledge and belief which they use to build their settlement and manage their natural resources. To Pembuni people are closely related to nature, so their experience and cultural background become their adaptive strategy. They have knowledge and belief concerning their environment, for example, the good settlement pattern is the sloping land, the fertile land is the black colour and all trees which grow in the land have green leaves on the other hand they believe that land which has the red colour and all trees which grow in this land have yellow leaves is not fertile.

In the full moon, people do not go to farm because animals are greedy and they eat anything and in the dark, it is also forbidden to go to farm because animals cannot see anything, so they can hit anything. Seen from their religious dimension they believe when clearing forest for settlement, housing and agricultural fields they should hold ceremonies in order that they are safe and successful. Also, they believe if any member of society dies they should leave their settlement, even though the harvest time has not arrived yet. To Pembuni's behavior or activities are closely related to their socio-cultural and socio-religious dimension, so, in this case, all their activities depend on the natural condition and they have not been able to exploit the nature yet. Even so, their life has influenced too much on their behaviour.

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