

Conservation of Folk Dance in the Era of Cultural Tourism

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Abstract—This study aims to examine the conservation strategy of folk dance in supporting the growth of cultural tourism, where the case study was conducted in Tanon village, Semarang Regency. Tanon was officially inaugurated as a Tourism Village, especially for the folk dance (*Desa Wisata Menari*) in 2012, for this reason, a conservation strategy is needed so that the folk dance in Tanon is maintained. The research uses qualitative method through ethnochoreology approach. The data collection is done through observation, interviews, and documentation. The analysis of data uses the Miles and Hubberman model. The results of this study indicate the nature of the conservation strategy of four agents, namely the actors, the supporting community, the government, and the private sector. Each agent performs its role in supporting conservation efforts. The art conservation strategy to support tourism is done by classifying ‘art for art’ and ‘art for mart’. The conclusion of this research is that folk dance will be able to adapt to the development of the era including the tourism era if the actors, the community, and the government work together. The advice given is that the actors and the community are able to put traditional dance in accordance with its function, so it can take an important position in the hearts of the people who enjoy it.

Keywords—conservation, folk dance, cultural tourism

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the launch of the Independent Tourism Community Empowerment program through Tourism Village based on the Culture and Tourism Minister's Regulation Number M.26 / UM.001 / MKP / 2010, the potential development in villages continues to be optimized. Through the concept of tourism village, tourists will be invited to enjoy the traditional atmosphere in the village [2]. Tanon Hamlet becomes one of the potential villages in Semarang to become tourism villages for several reasons, namely the potential of folk arts, the richness of natural resources in a mountainous area, and the majority of the population are farmers and cattle farmers where their processed products can be used as home industries which are able to improve people's economy. At that time, Sutrisno was the only village youth who got an undergraduate degree in the university. He has pioneered and tried to optimize the potential in his village since 2009, until finally in 2013 Tanon was inaugurated as a Dancing Tourism Village (*Desa Wisata Menari*) by Dra. Hj. Rustriningsih, M.Sc as the Deputy Governor of Central Java.

Cultural tourism involves performing arts as one of its tourism potentials. The presence of performing arts in a region cannot be separated from certain intentions and purposes that are expected to meet human needs and benefit the society. Traditional dances that grow and develop in Tanon are Topeng Ayu, Warok Bocah, and Geculan Bocah. Among the dances, Topeng Ayu Dance is a dance that appears first. This dance was originally performed as entertainment for celebrations as well as national holidays such as the *Saparan* tradition. The presence of Topeng Ayu Dance in the midst of important events in the community proves that the dance has its own position in society. Arnold Hauser in his book *The Sociology of Art* explains that art as a product of society is divided into several groups, namely (1) the art of cultural elite, which is art that emerges among the elite society; (2) folk art, is art which grows among the folk; (3) popular art, is an art that appears in urban society; (4) mass art, which is art that is exhibited through the media and there is usually an element of tourism [3].

Topeng Ayu Dance which was originally appeared as a folk art has been able to adapt to the interests of tourism. Topeng Ayu then functions as a welcoming dance for tourists visiting Tanon [4]. The characteristics of tourism art includes 1) imitation of the original art; (2) compact or short; (3) full of variety; (4) abandonment of its sacred, magical and symbolic values; and (5) inexpensive in price. The characteristics of tourist art try to be applied by the actors of Topeng Ayu Dance [5]. The inclusion of cultural tourism in Tanon makes the conservation strategies needed, this is so that the folk dances are maintained. Therefore, the problem in this study is how the folk dance conservation strategy carried out by the community in the era of cultural tourism.

Conservation means preservation or protection. Socio-cultural conservation is an effort to care for the nation's socio-cultural wealth in the form of local wisdom, namely the noble values that are applied in people's lives to protect and conserve [6]. However, the protection of performing arts is not like the protection of an object in a museum. Performing arts involve humans as actors, where humans have nature to always change. Therefore, the conservation of art is more in the effort of developing and performing arts while maintaining the uniqueness or characteristic of the tradition.

Cultural conservation, especially performing arts, requires stakeholders. Stakeholders of art no longer consist only of elements of the local community but also the local

government, educational institutions, and religion and economic institutions. In other words, life and death, straight and bent art is actually the result and form of the relationship between the people who own the art and other stakeholders [7].

Tourism has many positive impacts on the growth and development of art in society. Strategies for developing tourism through art can be done by classifying arts-core, art with applied art (peripherals), as well as providing vacation and non-holiday packages. Tourists in an audience could be classified according to whether arts-core or arts peripheral and holiday or non-holiday. Strategies for attracting each may well differ [8]. This is because not all tourists have the main purpose to enjoy the performing arts. Some tourists are actually more interested in natural tourism, as well as heritage tourism. Therefore, there must be a pure art form with aesthetic value (art for art) and art that changes form and has a market value (art for mart).

As the times develop, the function of performing arts will change based on the context of space and time that accompanies the development of art itself. Development in the context of art presentation is a logical consequence of changing its function. The coming of folk art in tourism brought significant changes to the pattern of presentation of folk art. Therefore conservation of art becomes an important part as an effort to protect the preservation of folk art in the middle of the tourism era.

II. METHODOLOGY

Based on the research problem, the method used is qualitative research referring to Milles and Huberman's theory covering 1) research approach, 2) location and research objectives, 3) data collection techniques, which include interviews, observation techniques, and documentation, 4) data validity test, 5) data analysis which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing [9].

The approach used is ethnochoreology approach. The research location is located in Tanon Hamlet, Ngrawan Village, Getasan District, Semarang Regency. Data collection techniques use observation, interviews, and documentation. Direct observations were made to observe the socio-cultural conditions of the community. Interviews were conducted semi-structured to several speakers, namely 1) Sutrisno, as the driving figure of Tanon Tourism Village, 2) Yon and Ayu, as dancer coordinator, 3) Lungguh W, as the head of Ngrawan Village. The documentation uses researcher and research documentation through photos, videos, archives, and printed or online media that contains Tanon Tourism Village. Data validity test technique uses triangulation technique. Data analysis techniques use the Milles and Huberman model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing..

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Folk dances in Tanon are Topeng Ayu Dance, Warok Bocah and the Geculan Bocah. The researcher focus on the discussion of Topeng Ayu Dance because it is the most performed dance and it is performed in a variety of events. As a folk art, Topeng Ayu Dance has experienced quite long dynamics adjusting the needs of the community. Local arts

that are traditional has been fragmented since they are adjusted to the time and the pockets of tourists [10].

The theme of Topeng Ayu Dance is the struggle of society against invaders by camouflaging (non-dramatic). Although called Topeng Ayu, where Topeng means "mask" and Ayu means "beautiful", this dance is not performed using a mask. However, fantasy makeup used on the eyes is shaped like a mask. Topeng Ayu dancers on average are students from grade 5 elementary school to junior high school. Topeng Ayu dancers are dominated by girls because boys are more interested in dancing Warok and Geculan Bocah. There is no special requirement to become a Topeng Ayu dancer, the most important thing is that the children are eager to practice.

The variety of Topeng Ayu movements consists of 7 movement varieties and 1 variety of connecting movement. It consists of various types of *atur sugeng*, *atur pambagyo*, *minang*, *pemuda Indonesia*, *pemuda Dusun Tanon*, *perang*, and *prokonco*. Among the various movements, there is a connecting movement. Variety of connecting movement consists of *mententeng* and walking movements. Connecting movement is used as a marker and a transition from one movement to the next.

The Topeng Ayu Dance movements are centered on strong foot movements because it expresses the struggle of the Ngrawan Village community against the Dutch invaders. Some of the movements also were inspired by the results of the actors' appreciation when watching art from other regions. One dance that is the source of inspiration is Topeng Ireng Dance. This shows that there are elements of external culture that are absorbed because they are considered better or interesting. This shows the presence of external cultural elements absorbed in this art. Every artist actually creates art based on traditional works in his community and outside his community. A work of art is born in the form of a collection of quotations and borrowings from a number of works of art whose values are admired by the creator based on existing traditions [11].

Topeng Ayu Dance uses fantasy makeup that resembles a mask, but still gives the impression of beauty or *ayu* (Javanese). This is the background of why this dance named as Topeng Ayu. The choice of makeup that resembles a mask is also a symbol of disguise when the Ngrawan villagers fight the invaders. Desmond Morris divides the clothing signals into three, namely clothing for comfort, clothing for modesty, and clothing for display [12]. Clothing for the performance of the Topeng Ayu is included in the costume for performance category (costume for display). Topeng Ayu clothing consists of *kuluk*, *iket*, vest, black shirt, *gombyok*, *krincing*, *rapek*, black pants, shoes, and socks. *Krincing* is placed on the foot and it functions as an internal music accompaniment because it produces sound.

The floor pattern used is in the form of a straight and symmetrical line, in accordance with the characteristics of folk art which tends to be simple in the pattern of the floor. The simplicity of the pattern, repetition, and compactness are the three things that characterize folk traditional dance (folk art). The floor pattern of Topeng Ayu is flexible because it is adjusted to the number of dancers and the size of the place to perform. For every perform they always make an agreement about the floor pattern, if a change is needed then they make a new formation.

The accompaniment used is a set of *slendro pelog* gamelan and bassdrum. The combination of musical instruments coupled with the sound of *krincing* makes the show more dynamic. The accompaniment in Topeng Ayu Dance serves as an accompanist and atmosphere giver. The atmosphere built is an atmosphere of joy and enthusiasm. Song lyrics in Topeng Ayu Dance have the spirit meaning of the youth of Tanon.

Conservation of traditional dance in Tanon cannot be done only with the support of the actors/perpetrators, but also with the role of other agents such as the community, government and external agents (private sector).

A. Actor's Role

The actors in Topeng Ayu Dance includes dancers, escorts, trainers, and art supporters. They are members of the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis). Some of the efforts made by the perpetrators/actors include the development of dance form, dance inheritance, and management improvement.

B. Development of Dance Forms

The effort to develop the Topeng Ayu dance was done to increase the attraction of the performance. Development of performance forms includes 1) changes in performance patterns, 2) the flexibility in presentation duration, 3) variations in floor patterns. Changes in the pattern of performances for tourism are done by reducing the repetition of motion. Topeng Ayu dance movements for tourism usually eliminates the range of movement. The final part of the show plus improvised motion to invite tourists to dance together. This concept clearly attracts tourists, because basically, tourists want to get an unusual or unique experience. The flexibility of presentation duration is done so that the Topeng Ayu dance can be performed at various events. The Topeng Ayu dance, which is performed for tourists, lasts 10-15 minutes, while for community entertainment, the duration is around 30 minutes.

The next development is the variation of the floor pattern. Initially, the floor pattern was still simple, only a straight lines and circular line. Then, it develops into more varied such as zig-zag and diagonal. If there is any addition or reduction in the number of dancers, the floor pattern is immediately adjusted.

C. Dance Inheritance

The pattern of inheritance of traditional arts is not only the form but also includes the values adhered by the supporting community [13]. The transmission of culture is done through vertical and horizontal patterns [14]. Vertical pattern is inheritance pattern that occurs through genetic factors (*keturunan*). This inheritance can be done by parents to children to their grandchildren. Horizontal pattern is a system of inheritance that occurs in educational institutions both formal, informal and non-formal. Based on the results of research, the pattern of inheritance of Topeng Ayu uses a combination of vertical and horizontal patterns.

Vertical pattern is a pattern of inheritance that involves families in the inheritance process. It usually occurs in people who still have a biological transmission, where a person's ability in the field of artistic expertise occurs due to natural talent (biological transmission). Vertical inheritance occurs in Ayu Fitri NA (16 years) as a Topeng Ayu dancer. Art talent that appears in Ayu can be categorized as a

natural talent, seen from her grandparents as a puppeteer and a *sinden*. Since childhood, Ayu enjoyed dancing if she listened to the gamelan she liked to dance spontaneously. Ayu practiced Topeng Ayu Dance by watching videos, watching during training and when there is Topeng Ayu performance. The artistic talent possessed by Ayu made her feel quick to memorize and imitate the dance movements she saw. From the age of elementary school, she started to take dance training with more senior dancers.

In addition to natural talent, family education is also influential. Mrs. Yanti as a senior dancer (first generation) supports her child to dance because dancing in front of many people makes children practice self-confidence (attitude values). Inheritance of movements and music accompaniment are easier to learn through vertical patterns. Children who already have talent and often appreciated, tend to like and can immediately imitate the dancing mask of Topeng Ayu (skill value). Therefore, it can be drawn that the vertical pattern bequeaths values such as attitudes and skills. The attitude values inherited by the senior generation in the form of independence and self-confidence. And the value of the skill of Topeng Ayu is in the ability to dance along the music accompaniment.

The inheritance also occurs horizontally through the process of enculturation and training routines. The process of enculturation is carried out from generation to generation with a system known as *kedok tular*, a Javanese term means to transmit the ability from one to another. The process of enculturation takes place because of behavior that begins with children's interest in Topeng Ayu Dance. Before a person adopts a new behavior, a sequential process occurs starting from awareness, interest, weighing whether or not it is good, trying, and adapting according to his knowledge and attitude towards the stimulus [6]. That stimulus emerges from the older generation who often invite children to watch the practice and performance of Topeng Ayu Dance. So that children are accustomed to observing, like, and finally interested in participating to dance. The *kedok tular* system can also be done between friends (peer). Children are able to pass on the dance to their friends between their activities together. Cultural transmission can perpetuate its behavioral features among subsequent generations employing teaching and learning mechanisms.

Cultural inheritance including art can be done by the older generation to the younger generation through the teaching and learning process. The awareness of senior generation is high enough to transmit the dance to the younger generation, with the hope that the Topeng Ayu Dance will remain eternal. They realize that the more they age, the more women have a lot of trouble working at home. If there are younger generations who can dance, then they are calmer because there are successors.

Inheritance is packaged in more organized training routines. Dance training is held every Saturday night where children are off for study. Mas Yon as the second generation who becomes the training coordinator tries to get the children to join the dance training. In the training process, there is form inheritance of dance, both in the form of movement, music accompaniment, and floor patterns. There are also values of knowledge and skills that are inherited. This activity also does not rule out the possibility to develop

creative ideas that bring up different variations in Topeng Ayu Dance, for example, modification of floor patterns.

Besides inheritance of form, training activities inherit discipline, responsibility, and sincerity. They must be disciplined in following the training schedule and discipline in their dance movements. They are also trained to have a sense of responsibility to dance well. No less important that they must be willing to take the time, mind and energy to practice. The training aims to improve skills, sense of togetherness (*guyub*), and compactness. They communicate and interact more in the social environment. This is the spirit of folk art.

Training activities have experienced ups and downs. Children are eager to exercise if there will be a performance, but if there is no performance, children tend to be less enthusiastic. Topeng Ayu dance was once studied by students of the 2013 Unnes Dance Education Program, who attended the Central Java Regional Dance lecture. They learned Topeng Ayu Dance directly at the Tanuwijoyo Dance Studio in Tanon. Training activities have a positive impact on the younger generation of Topeng Ayu to be more enthusiastic to practice. In addition, training activities can be a means to communicate, exchange information, as well as entertainment media for the community.

D. Management Improvement

Management improvements are carried out by Tourism Awareness Groups (*Pokdarwis*). *Pokdarwis* movement model is regulated more detail in the Regulation of the Minister of Culture and Tourism Number PM.04/UM.001/MKP/08 about Tourism Awareness. Management being carried is known as community-based management, but all management still rely on Sutrisno's role as the main pioneer. Therefore, regeneration is needed. In the case of performance art management, Sutrisno has made the management structure and its duties.

There are the persons in charge (PIC) of each training, dancers PIC, music PIC, costume PIC, and equipment PIC. In terms of promotion, *Pokdarwis* maximizes publications in printed media, television and online media (such as blogs and Facebook). This has proven effective in inviting tourists to visit. This became one of the keys to sustain performing arts, that is the citizens who have the will and passion to get involved, as well as the ability to do well and work together. There are not a few tourism villages which are dimmed due to lack of management.

E. Supporting Community

Community support ranging from parents, community leaders, and the art supporters are very important. The majority of parents have been supporting their children in art activities. The value of education to introduce children to arts has been implanted since childhood by inviting their children to watch art performances.

Support from community leaders, especially village elders, is also influential. They support and attend performing art activities. Support from the community such as the villagers who live near the dance studio that gave up their yard to be used as a training and performance site. Overmore, they would also provide drinks or food.

Art performing activities are carried out routinely both for tourism purposes, a commemoration of important events such as *Saparan*, celebration events, and

festivals. Art performing activities are one indicator of the existence of performing arts. Art performance is also proof that art is still functioned by the supporting community.

F. The Government's Role

Tanon was officially legalized as Dancing Village with the Topeng Ayu Mascot on February 17, 2013, by the Deputy Governor of Central Java, Dra. Hj. Rustringasih, M.Si. Since then, art activities have grown more and bigger. Topeng Ayu Dance is used as a mascot in the Dancing Tourism Village (Desa Wisata Menari). More tourists visit Tanon to enjoy the beauty of nature and traditional art. The Head of the Ngrawan Village, Mr. Lungguh, supports various programs in Tanon. The government acts as a facilitator, for example, they facilitated the road to Tanon so that access to Tanon becomes easier. Now, the bus can easily enter the village of Tanon.

G. External Agents' Role (Private Sector)

The existence of Topeng Ayu Dance to welcome tourists is supported by the cooperation with outside parties, including the *One Day Tour* agency led by Yossyadi BS. Almost every month, *One Day Tour* brings tourists to Tanon. In addition, Sutrisno also collaborated with PT.Astra Indonesia in the *Kampung Berseri Astra* program. Together they held the Telomoyo Slope Festival on 30 September - 1 October 2017. This activity was held by the initiative of Sutrisno in collaboration with PT. Astra Indonesia to develop a village that can improve the quality of life of its people.

The role of Higher Education Institutions such as Universitas Negeri Semarang in the KKN Program (Community Service Program) in 2018 also contributes to the improvement of dance skills and preservation of local wisdom in Tanon.

IV. CONCLUSION

The researcher concluded that the conservation strategy for folk dances in the era of cultural tourism carried out by agents who carried out their roles well. The spirit of folk art is on togetherness and cohesiveness. Each agent must work together to achieve the expected goals. The advice given is 1) the actors and the community are able to place traditional dance according to the context (art for art and art for mart), 2) always maintain the value of togetherness and kinship, avoid individuality.

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