

Maintaining the Tradition of *Asokanas* a Media of Informal Education in Village Communities

(Case Study of Pematang Ganjang Village Sei Rampah District)

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ABSTRACT

The village community has a basic concept of living together that is full of awareness and a sense of responsibility. People live in groups. Life in groups causes a close relationship with one another, so that mutual help is an obligation and a necessity for society itself. The purpose of this study is the reasons for maintaining the tradition of *asokan* as a medium of informal education in the community of Pematang Ganjang village, Sei Rampah sub-district, and the meaning of informal education in maintaining the *asokan* tradition. This research is a descriptive qualitative study using an ethnographic approach. Data were collected through direct observation and in-depth interviews. The results of this study can be seen that informal education plays an important role in maintaining local traditions in society. This can be seen from the many people in Pematang Ganjang Village who still apply the *asokan* tradition in helping each other. This tradition is believed to make fraternal relations between communities stronger and foster a form of concern for the community among others. Therefore, informal education in which the family played an important role, to told the children to continue to preserve this *asokan* tradition.

Keywords: *tradition, asokan, informal education*

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has cultural diversity that is still maintained. Horizontally, it is marked by the fact that there are units based on differences in ethnicity, differences in religion, customs and regional differences. Vertically, the structure of the society is marked by sharp vertical differences between the upper and lower layers [1]. The diversity of tribes, customs and cultures that exist in the State of Indonesia, makes Indonesia a rich national culture, especially many people who maintain this culture that was passed on by their ancestors. Culture is a way of life that is developed and shared by a group of people and is passed down from generation to generation. Culture is the overall knowledge of humans as social creatures that they use to understand their experiences and serve as a framework for the realization of behavior [2].

Society and culture are two things that are inseparable from each other, there is no society without culture, and culture only exists in society. The characteristics of the village community describe the village community as a traditional society (*Gemeinschaft*) which recognizes the characteristics of a community related to feelings of affection, love, loyalty and intimacy manifested in an attitude of mutual help

without strings attached, and sympathy for the calamities suffered by others.

The village community has a basic concept of living together that is full of awareness and a sense of responsibility. Life in groups leads to closer relationships with each other, so that mutual help is an obligation and a necessity. Even with all means, the village community will help if any of them experience problems or difficulties in their life.

According to the treasury of the Indonesian language, tradition means everything such as customs, habits, teachings, and so on, which are passed down from generation to generation. There are also those who inform that tradition comes from the word *tradition*, which is everything that is transmitted passed on from the past to the present. Based on these two sources, it is clear that tradition, in essence, is the legacy of the past which is preserved, carried out and believed to the present. These traditions or customs can be in the form of values, social norms, patterns of behavior and other customs which are manifestations of various aspects of life.

To maintain this tradition, informal education is needed in which the family plays an important role in carrying out informal education. Informal education

plays an important role in the inheritance of cultural values and education in society. The informal education is a lifelong process in which a person acquires and collects knowledge, skills, attitudes and views from experiences and exposure to the environment at home, work place, play place, from examples of behavior and attitudes of family and friends, from travel [3].

Informal learning is any activity involving the pursuit of understanding, knowledge or skill which occurs without the presence of externally imposed curricular criteria. Informal learning may occur in any context outside the pre-established curricula of educative institutions. The basic terms of informal learning (e.g. objectives, content, means and processes of acquisition, duration, evaluation of outcomes, applications) are determined by the individuals and groups that choose to engage in it. Self-directed or collective informal learning is undertaken on our own. Informal education or training is distinguished from such self-directed informal learning only by the presence of some form of institutionally-recognized instructor [4]. Informal education is a life process in which every individual acquires skills, attitudes and knowledge, from daily experiences in the family, environment, mass media, at work and even when he plays.

The pattern of community life in Pematang Ganjang Village is very intimate between one individual and another, various traditions and social activities are carried out together. One of the social activities that are still carried out by the community is a social activity known as *asokan*. Activities *asokan* are a form of cooperation between one community and another. *Asokan* activity is defined as an activity that is carried out alternately in providing groceries to meet party needs. The *asokan* activity is one of the most positive and helpful activities for each other. Based on the above background, the authors are interested in knowing and getting an overview of the meaning and ways of maintaining the *asokan* tradition as an informal education medium in the Pematang Ganjang Village community, Sei Rampah District [5].

2. METHOD

This study uses qualitative research using an ethnographic approach. Qualitative research was chosen because this research is useful for revealing the process of events in detail, so that it is known the dynamics of a social reality and the mutual influence of social reality [6]. An ethnographic approach with qualitative research procedures to describe, analyze, and interpret the elements of a cultural group such as behavior patterns, beliefs, and language that develop over time [7].

Data collection was carried out by participant observation and in-depth interviews with informants who know the meaning and ways of maintaining the tradition of *asokan* as a medium for informal education in society. The research location is in Pematang Ganjang Village, Sei Rampah District, Serdang Bedagai Regency. This location was chosen because there are still many people in Pematang Ganjang Village who maintain the *asokan* tradition and pass the *asokan*

tradition to their children. After the data was collected from observations in the field, data analysis techniques were carried out by making ethnographic notes, conducting ethnographic interview analysis, and writing ethnography [8].

3. THEORETICAL REVIEW

In traditional society, exchange with barter system is known. Meanwhile, the changing characteristics of exchange in a traditional economy and dealing with a commercial exchange system give rise to the term reciprocity. The reciprocity theory was first put forward by Malinowski regarding a trading system between the inhabitants of the Trobriand Islands or *Boyowa* which is located in the southeast of Papua New Guinea. Objects that are traded by way of exchange (barter) are in the form of various kinds of foodstuffs, handicraft materials, and fishing tools, plantations, and households, but besides that, in each transaction there is an exchange of two kinds of jewelry which are considered to have a very high value, namely shell necklaces (*sulava*) that circulate in one direction following the clockwise direction, and shell rings (*mwali*) that circulate in the opposite direction. This trading system by the people of the Trobriand Islands is called the kula system [9]. The trade or economic system is intertwined with other cultural elements such as beliefs, kinship systems and social organizations that apply to society.

Basically there are no free gifts. All forms of giving are always accompanied by a return or reward. Malinowski shows that all forms of transactions are in a continuous relationship line, where the poles of giving are pure without compensation, and at the other poles are patterns of gifts that must be reciprocated [10].

Reciprocity is the idea of selfless giving. However, over time it became an act of self-interest and for the sake of an individually enjoyed use. Thus reciprocity based on individual feelings is able to create strength of solidarity in society. Therefore, the values and traditions that exist in it can survive. For example, donating donations for weddings, circumcisions, births, and deaths, can be in the mutual cooperation or giving gifts to each other in celebration.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Maintaining the tradition of *asokan* as a medium for informal education in the community in Pematang Ganjang Village, Sei Rampah District is one way to prevent the *asokan* tradition from being lost or displaced by the changing times. The tradition *asokan* is a form of cooperation between one community and another. *Asokan* is an activity carried out by the community consciously by providing assistance in the form of groceries and money that is given when one of them is going to hold a party or event in turn. This association is carried out by emphasizing the social awareness of the people in the village and aims to maintain fraternity relations.

The tradition *asokan* in Pematang Ganjang Village, Sei Rampah District is done when any of them will have a party, both a wedding, a circumcision party, and

others. This is done because the activities of *asokan* can help the community when they are going to hold a party so that they can forge closer brotherly relationships and foster a form of high community care among each other. The tradition *asokan* in Pematang Ganjang Village Sei Rampah District can be seen from the high sense of cooperation and mutual trust between the person who picks up and the person who is being pickled. The form of trust is defined as a form of mutual trust between communities through social interaction in carrying out activities *asokan* which are based on the existence of fraternity ties, mutual giving, and on the basis of mutual agreement so that it is mutually beneficial both in terms of morally and materially.

The value and meaning of the activity *asokan* is where there is a sense of unity, help, and mutual cooperation which they uphold and are in in the tradition *asokan*. The tradition *asokan* is one of the old traditions of Javanese society which is still being applied today. *Asokan* is performed at the wedding ceremony, circumcision or bellows (legalization of the newborn child). If the supplier gives the groceries, the supplier is obliged to return or return the groceries according to their nominal value or weight to the supplier when the supplier is going to have a party too.

However, if the supplier has not held any such event or party, then it becomes a debt for the one who is being receive supplies, the supplier and the receiver are required to have a note (book) that contains written items on groceries or money that have been supplied and that have not been supply. Not only groceries but there are also supplies of money. But here is supply money The system is almost the same as the arisan, namely by removing the number that has been written by the person in charge, and paying the predetermined nominal amount of money.

When this tradition of *asokan* is carried out by the community and it turns out that one of them has died and leaves a debt of supply, the child or heir is obliged to continue the supply of his parents. This is what makes the tradition *asokan* can be passed down from one generation to the next and is still being practiced today by the people of Pematang Ganjang Village, Sei Rampah District. This is where the role of parents or family as informal educational media that teaches or instills understanding in their children to continue this tradition in order to maintain the fraternity relationship that has been cultivated so far. Since childhood, children have known and seen tradition *asokan* so they have a sense of responsibility to continue tradition *asokan*. Because informal education itself is a process of living to everyday experiences in the family environment. The essence of maintaining the tradition *asokan* is mutual trust.

The formation of mutual trust between one another is established because of the bonds of siblings and the bonds between the village communities that are formed because of the social interactions between them. There is a tradition of *ulem-ulem* (giving verbally) which is carried out when having a party can create a mutual agreement in terms of providing assistance. In addition,

mutual trust also grows because of the importance of the feelings of others, the harmonious nature and communicating with each other in carrying out any activities *asokan* carried out collectively, and the existence of mutual respect and honesty in carrying out activities *asokan*.

5. CONCLUSION

The *asokan* tradition is carried out by the community in Pematang Ganjang Village, Sei Rampah District, Serdang Bedagai Regency. It is defined as a gift that is made alternately in providing assistance in the form of groceries such as rice, noodles, onions, eggs, chilies and so on or it can be in the form of material assistance in the form of money. This *asokan* tradition is usually carried out by the community in Pematang Ganjang Village, Sei Rampah District when preparing for a party. The role of parents or families as informal educational media that teaches or instills understanding in their children to continue this tradition in order to maintain the fraternal relationship that has been fostered so far. Since childhood, children have known and seen this *asokan* tradition so they have a sense of responsibility to continue this *asokan* tradition. Therefore, in some families there are those who practice this *asokan* together, the mother follows the *asokan* and the child also follows the *asokan*. Here we can see the role of the family in instilling cultural values in their children. Because, informal education itself is process of living to everyday experiences in the family environment. The essence of maintaining the *asokan* tradition is mutual trust.

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