

# Educational Value in the *Amat Rhang Manyang* Legend as Literacy Material for Elementary School

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## ABSTRACT

The people of Aceh have many legends. These legends are passed on orally from generation to generation. This is because the legend is full of educational values for all ages, so it is very feasible for literacy learning for children in elementary schools. The purpose of this study is to find the content of educational values in the Acehnese legend which can be used as literacy reading material for children in elementary schools. The study uses a descriptive analysis method. The data source used in the study was the legend text *Amat Rhang Manyang* which was obtained from informants. The data collection used a note-taking technique. Data analysis was carried out by reading the entire contents of the legend which had been translated into Indonesian, filtered, grouped, analysed, interpreted, and concluded. Based on the data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that the folk legend *Amat Rhang Manyang* has educational values that are religious, moral, social, and cultural.

**Keywords:** *Educational values, legends, literacy material*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education plays an important role in shaping the character of the nation. Various problems continue to cloud today's education in Indonesia. The moral crisis befell the nation's buds and students of the nation right in the centre of it. Television and print media continue to broadcast various events occurring in everyday life. Various violations are often committed by students such as skipping classes, lying to teachers, cheating, stealing, and disrespecting their parents.

The above problems require problem-solving. More specifically, problem-solving through the cultivation of educational values. The educational values are often found in folk legends spread in every region of Indonesia. By instilling educational values through folk legends, it is expected to foster noble values of Indonesian culture in order to develop the personality of the younger generation. Young generation has a national identity and is not uprooted from their cultural roots.

Aceh is one of the regions in Indonesia which is at the very end of the archipelago. The people of Aceh are one of the groups of people who have legends. Demren (2017, p. 2262) stated "legend is a source that can inform the culture of the area they were born in". Furthermore, Constantine (2018) also explained that

legend is a traditional story that is popularly considered a historical event. This is because legend usually has existed for thousands of years, legends) can form the basis of religious beliefs, value systems, and maintain the universe and interactions with other living things. These legends continue to exist and flourish in the life of the Acehnese people, especially in the past. In Acehnese literature, the term legend is known as a very popular form of *haba jameun* (the news of the times).

Legend is an oral tradition containing educational values that people have forgotten today. Therefore, research on legends is considered very important to do to enrich the repertoire of literary learning media in schools, especially for schools in areas where the legends originate. Moreover, this study aims to find the educational values contained in an Aceh legend that can be used as literacy reading material for children in elementary schools.

Legends usually reflect the life and culture of a society. They are usually worldly in nature, the stories take place in an earlier time, and they occur in real life. Legend is very close to the history of past lives, although the degree of truth is often questioned. Legends can contain mythological details, especially when they are related to the supernatural and are sometimes indistinguishable from myths. Brunvand

(1994) classified legends into four groups, namely: (1) religious legends, (2) supernatural legends, (3) personal legends, and (4) local legends.

1) Religious legends.

Usually, these legends tell us about saints in Christianity or legends about pious people.

2) Supernatural legends.

These legends usually tell us about what actually happened and was experienced by someone. Legends like this serve to strengthen the truth (superstition) or people's beliefs. Usually, this type of legend is based on someone's personal experience.

3) Personal legends.

These legends usually tell us about certain characters who are considered by the owner of the story to be real. There are many legends like this in Indonesia.

4) Local legends.

This kind of legend talk about a story related to a place, the name of a place, topographical form, and so on. There are many legends associated with the name of a place, such as the origin of Tapak Tuan (Tuan Tapa) In South Aceh.

Generally, literature is a product of life hence it contains social values, religious philosophy, and so on. The educational values have positive content that is based on inheritance as well as the goal of national and universal perceptions. The educational values are expected to help eliminate violence, superstition, and things that are against norms (Singh, 2011).

Nurgiyantoro (2002) argued that educational values are related to life and its problems. In general, life and its problems can be divided into three important issues. They include 1) the relationship between humans and themselves, 2) human relations with other humans in the social sphere including their relationship with the natural environment, 3) the relationship between man and God. These educational values are the basic values in social life. These basic values in human life can be passed on from one generation to the next. Furthermore, Sukardi (1997) stated that the values contained in a literary work are moral, religious, social, and cultural values.

In addition, it is important to provide appropriate reading material with the language level of elementary school students. Appropriate reading material for elementary school students is usually those that please them. School Literacy Movement in elementary schools can use legends as a source of learning material. This is because these legends have various contents, some of which tell of heroism, honesty, and loyalty. In addition, the stories should also educate, entertain, and be able to provide good educational value for students. As stated

by Jantahluck and Ounjit (2002, p. 219), "the positive attitude expected of children and adolescents by studying these stories is being able to change the way they think and behave. Moreover, telling stories will give them mental stimulation as well as teach them morals so that they become good people in society". This was supported by Danandjaja (2007, p. 4) who stated, "the functions of legend are as an educational tool, solace, social processes, and the projection of hidden desires".

"In this case, the teacher must choose literature in accordance with children's nature, namely literature that places students as the main observer and the owner of the need to gain experience and develop fantasies" (Ampera, 2010). Ampera (2010, p. 9) further stated, "... children live in a period of rapid development, especially physical, and mental development." To support children's physical and mental development, literature can be used as a means of support, because literature can provide high values for children's language, cognitive, personality, and social development processes.

In addition, literacy in reading legends needs to pay attention to the characteristics of the literacy context. Reading literacy that focuses on reading comprehension includes four main studies, namely: (1) reading skills; (2) application, training, and determination of reading; (3) reading process; and (4) the text used in reading (UNESCO, 2005).

There are various studies regarding educational values in folklore. Hijriah (2017) conducted research on folklore and the findings indicated that the moral values found in the two legends are divided into three values, namely individual, social, and religious moral values. There are three values contained in the folklore "*Legenda Tapak Tuan*", namely 1) individual moral values including hospitality, fairness and wisdom, as well as respect and appreciation; 2) Social moral values including being helpful, compassionate, helpful, and caring; 3) Religious moral values including devotion to God. On the other hand, folklore "*Legenda Batu Becanang*" also contained three values, namely 1) individual moral values, namely obedience; 2) Social moral values, namely cooperation and love; 3) Religious moral values, namely believing in and submitting to God.

Another study was conducted by Dahlia (2017) to investigate the educational structure and values in the folklore '*Si Pahit Lidah*'. The results of this study indicated that some values are found in the folklore, including the values of moral education, cultural education, religion/religious education, history/historical education, and character education.

In addition, La Ode (2015) also investigated the values of a folklore in Sulawesi and found that some

values were found in the folklore including the values of love, cooperation/help, freedom, and curiosity. Furthermore, Kamelia's (2016) study found that two main values are found in the legend of Lipan Island: educational values and moral values.

## 2. METHOD

This study used a descriptive-analytical method accompanied by an in-depth analysis of the educational values contained in the *Amat Rhang Manyang* story by analysing the characters. Bogdan and Taylor (1992, pp. 21-22) explained that qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of speech or writing and the behaviour of the people being observed. Furthermore, Ratna (2004, p. 39) defined a descriptive method of analysis as analysing and elaborating to describe the state of the object of study.

The data were collected from parents who can provide complete and accurate information regarding the legend *Amat Rhang Manyang* in Aceh Besar district. The informants selected in this study were the indigenous people of Aceh Besar who not only understood the legend, but also understood things related to local culture and fulfilled the requirements as informants. The data collection technique in this study was a note-taking technique. The note-taking technique is a technique of collecting data by recording the informant's speech when they were recounting the legend. The data analysis was carried out by reading the entire contents of the legend which had been translated into Indonesian, filtered, grouped, analysed, interpreted, and concluded. The conclusions were then described.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The legend *Amat Rhang Manyang* talks about the life of a child named Amat who had been an orphan since childhood. He lived alone with his mother. Even as a kid, Amat often helped his mother gathering firewood in the forest. One day, he wanted to find work outside the village. He asked permission from his mother to migrate to another country. When he returned, he was already rich and married to a beautiful girl, the daughter of a rich person. One day, Amat's mother heard the news that her son had come home. The very poor and hunchback mother struggled to cook Amat's favorite rice in a hurry and brought it to Kuala.

After meeting Amat, she was not recognized by her own beloved son. The poor mother received only scorn from him. Because of her heartache, Amat's mother begged Allah "...O Allah, the child I love is now a defiant child. Turn him into something, O Allah." After that, a great storm appeared. The passengers on the ship began to get nervous and Amat finally became a rock in the Kurend Raya Sea. Amat's mother also became a stone in the end.

According to the data analysis of *Amat Rhang Manyang*, several educational values are obtained. The educational values in *Amat Rhang Manyang* are reflected in the behavior of the characters in the story. The values can be described as follows.

### 3.1. Moral Values

#### 1) Devotion to parents

As a child, Amat is similar to children in general, a child who likes to help their parents. This can be seen in the following excerpt.

*Since he was a child, Amat had been an orphan. He lived alone with his mother. Even as a kid, Amat often helped his mother gathering firewood in the forest.*

In the above excerpt, it can be seen how much love Amat has for his mother. He always helps his mother searching firewood in the forest. That was all he could do as a form of devotion to the mother he loved so dearly.

#### 2) Ungratefulness

Virtuous people always repay those who have contributed. They will definitely not forget someone's services, let alone mistreating them. In the following excerpt, it can be seen that Amat does not return the favor of her mother who raised her.

*Then Amat's mother called out to her child, "My son, this is your mother, I am your mother, even though I am old and crooked, eyes full of dirt, but I am still your mother, the one who raised you, my son." But still, Amat disregarded the woman. Then the woman proceeded to give a packet of rice to her child, then she said, "this is a packet of rice, half an egg, and Moringa leaf salad, your favourite dish, son, eat a little."*

According to the text above, it can be seen that Amat is an ungrateful child who disregards his mother's love. The one who gave birth and raised him with great difficulty. Sacrificed for the prestige of his wife and friends, he did not want to acknowledge his mother.

### 3.2. Religious Values

#### 1) Faith in God

A form of faith is embodied when Amat's mother pleads to God when his son has exhausted her patience through his defiance towards her. This can be seen in the following excerpt.

*Then Amat's mother prayed to Allah, O Allah, the child I love now has become a defiant child. Turn him into something, O Allah. After that, please be there comes a great storm. The passengers on the ship began to get restless and Amat finally turned into rocks in the*

*ocean of Krueng Raya. Then Amat's mother became stone as well.*

In the excerpt above, Amat's mother pleads to Allah because her child has forgotten her. The mother asked God to turn her and her son into a rock in the sea. Finally, God granted her plea and they became the rocks in the sea.

### **3.3. Social Values**

#### 1) Deep love towards her child

It is only natural for a mother to love her child. As in the case of Amat's mother towards him. She really loves Amat because he is her only hope. She does not want to be separated from her child. This can be seen in the following excerpt.

*Amat's mother then cried at the words of her son. After that, the mother said, "If that's what you want, go look for your fortune, but be safe in a land of people."*

According to the text above, it can be seen that Amat's mother was not willing to allow Amat to leave the village. However, due to the persistence of her child that she loved so much, she finally but reluctantly gave him permission.

#### 2) Missing one's child

Because Amat's mother had not seen her child she missed so much for a long time, she was very happy when she heard the news that his son had returned home. This can be seen in the following excerpt.

*One day she heard that her son Amat had come home, the pauper and crooked mother went to find some eggs, some moringa leaves, and cooked rice for her child. After that, she wrapped the cooked rice in a hurry and brought it to the anchorage.*

According to the text above, it can be seen how great a mother's love and affection for her child is. Amat's mother expresses her happy feelings by preparing Amat's favorite dish; an egg and Moringa leaves salad because that was all that she could do for him to express her fondness.

### **3.4. Cultural Values**

#### 1) Going away from the village

What a person wants or aspires to will never be achieved without the willingness and hard work. This is done by Amat. He did not give up on persuading his mother to give him permission to work away from the village. This can be seen in the following excerpt.

*Amat continued to ask his mother's permission, but his mother did not allow him to go, because then Amat will be far away from her. Even so, Amat never gave up asking for her permission "Please, allow me to seek a*

*proper living so that our lives will change, I do not want to always live a poor life. I want to find a living away from the village. I promise I will visit you once I found what I'm looking for.*

According to the text above, it can be seen that Amat has made various attempts to convince his mother. Finally, his mother was convinced and allowed him to go away from the village.

By keeping the educational values contained in *Amat Rhang Manyang* in mind, this legend is suitable to be used as reading material in Elementary Schools. This is because this legend can provide the truth of life that can be used as an example for the students not to behave like the protagonist in the legend.

Legend is a literary work that is very close to students because many of them exist and circulate in the community so that it is easily enjoyed by students. However, the values implied in legend is not always easy for children to accept and understand. This is where the teacher's role is needed. If students have any problems reading and understanding the legend, they can ask the teacher. This is because every action of the characters in the legend has a meaning that is beneficial for children's psychology, cognition, and social development. The value of moral education must be possessed by every child so that they can become dignified individuals. This is what differentiates us from other creatures in this universe. This value is usually based on all good behavior in humans that is in accordance with religious norms, legal norms, and societal norms.

In this legend, there is also a religious value concerning the relationship between man and God. Religious values are exposed to children from an early age through the stories they read.

Besides that, the legend *Amat Rhang Manyang* also has social values. Social values are human guidelines for their behaviour, and they determine whether someone is good or bad in both action and thought. Social values are very basic values, a guide that becomes the goal of action to maintains and develop human life.

Human beings expect good and valuable things to help them in distinguishing between good and bad, making it a reference for everyone in carrying out their actions.

Finally, cultural value, which is one of the value systems that has the highest and most abstract level of customs. The cultural values between one area are of course different from others. From an early age, students should be stimulated to read a lot of legends, especially legends around where they live. This is because they love and want to preserve the legacy of their ancestors.

It sounds very strange if children have never heard, let alone read the legends in their area. They are more familiar with legends in other people's areas that are so far from where they live. From now on, it is expected that teachers will introduce their own regional legends by having them read at school and at home.

This is because legends, which are a form of literary work, are very suitable for elementary school students. Because legends have a large number of values to shape students' personalities from an early age. In addition, moral messages are possessed through characters who are taken as examples of life. In legends, there are many examples of human characters that are described as hardworking, forgiving, cheerful, arrogant, and so on. In addition, by reading legends, students can find out the local cultural values.

Through good literacy skills, students will become the next generation of good quality human resources. They are not only intellectually intelligent but also emotionally and spiritually intelligent. The ability to read is one of the foundations for the development of other literacy skills. From an early age, students need to instil as much interest in reading as possible so that their literacy can also increase.

With the development of students' reading interest, the values contained in the legends will indirectly be absorbed by the students along with their reading habits. Cultivating literacy skills will be successful if all parties are involved together in realizing children's literacy skills. This is supported by the 2013 curriculum through the School Literacy Movement launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture which compels elementary school students to read books, both fiction and non-fiction. However, the provision of local fiction reading material is one of the government's considerations in organizing literacy cultivation for students. Due to the use of local fiction (legends) as reading material for elementary school students, it is indirectly a form of preservation and also local culture for future generations from generation to generation. It is expected that by including the local culture in every student's reading, students will feel they belong to that culture.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Folklore is a story that still needs to be preserved because the values contained in folklore can be applied to all age groups. Based on the data analysis and discussion, it can be generally concluded that the educational values contained in *Amat Rhang Manyang* folklore are religious, moral, social, and cultural values. This religious value can be seen when Amat's mother pleaded to God so that Amat is turned into something because he disobeyed the mother who gave birth to him. The moral value in this legend can be seen when Amat was a child who always helped his mother. In addition,

moral values can also be seen when Amat is already successful and rich, but he does not acknowledge the mother who gave birth to him. Meanwhile, the social values in this legend can also be seen when Amat wants to go away from the village. In the end, Amat's mother gave up and let her child go. In addition, social values can also be seen when Amat returns to his village. How happy Amat's mother was when she hears the news of the return of her beloved child. Finally, cultural values are also contained in this legend. The cultural value in this legend is Amat's strong desire to go away from the village to change his fate.

The legend *Amat Rhang Manyang* is worthy to be used as reading literacy material in elementary schools. It is expected through reading this legend that children can apply educational values in their daily life. From an early age, they are taught to have more respect for the mother who gave birth to them. It is impossible for them to be born into this world without their mother. Teaching children to respect and love their mother who gave birth and took great pains to educate and raise us.

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