

Environmental Communication Policy and Religious Spirituality in Handling Waste Problems in Bintan Regency, Riau Islands

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ABSTRACT

The research discusses the policy of the Regional Government of Bintan Regency in tackling the waste problem through an environmental communication approach and ecology religious spirituality. This research is a case study type, and the data is obtained from the observation process and literature study related to the research theme. The results of the study concluded that the environmental communication approach by the Regional Government of Bintan Regency to deal with waste problems must be implemented as soon as possible by involving all components of policy makers, the community, and foreign and domestic private parties. Then, a new approach model is needed in the form of an ecology-based religious spirituality movement to make people aware that religious values also contain teachings about the virtues of protecting the surrounding environment. Religious leaders in collaboration with the local government have more responsibility to provide ecological spirituality content to the peoples.

Keywords: environmental communication, religious spirituality, waste, Bintan

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini membahas tentang kebijakan Pemerintah Daerah Kabupaten Bintan dalam menanggulangi masalah sampah melalui pendekatan komunikasi lingkungan dan spiritualitas religius ekologi. Penelitian ini berjenis studi kasus dan data diperoleh dari proses observasi dan studi literatur yang berkaitan dengan tema penelitian. Hasil penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa pendekatan komunikasi lingkungan yang dilakukan oleh Pemerintah Daerah Kabupaten Bintan untuk menangani permasalahan sampah harus segera diimplementasikan dengan melibatkan seluruh komponen pemangku kebijakan, masyarakat, dan pihak swasta luar dan dalam negeri. Kemudian, diperlukan model pendekatan baru berupa gerakan spiritualitas keagamaan berbasis ekologi untuk menyadarkan masyarakat bahwa nilai-nilai agama juga mengandung ajaran tentang keutamaan menjaga lingkungan sekitar. Para pemuka agama bekerja sama dengan pemerintah daerah memiliki tanggung jawab lebih untuk memberikan muatan spiritualitas ekologi kepada masyarakat.

Kata Kunci: komunikasi lingkungan, spiritualitas keagamaan, sampah, Bintan

INTRODUCTION

The province of the Riau Islands includes several islands, the largest of which is Bintan Island. Bintan Island is in a good spot near Singapore and Malaysia, the Riau Islands, and the mouth of the Strait of Malacca. Tanjungpinang City is located on Bintan Island. It serves as the provincial capital, the administrative hub of Riau Islands Province, and a portion of Bintan Regency. The population of Bintan Regency in 2021 was 162,561 people, with a male population of 83,761 and a female population of 78,800, as reported by the Central Bureau of Statistics in 2022. In Bintan Regency, the population density is on average 123 people per square kilometer (Dinas Komunikasi dan Informatika Kepulauan Riau, 2022).

However, waste issues pose a threat to the tourism industry on Bintan Island. According to Listyani, the amount of waste produced each day in Tanjungpinang City and other areas is not included in the 127 tons produced in the Bintan Regency alone. Domestic waste is frequently found piled up and scattered on the streets, yards, mangrove forests, under the houses of residents who are on the beach, and to the bottom of shallow waters due to the lack of public awareness regarding where to dispose of waste. A lack of adequate facilities, such as landfills that are still unavailable in some areas of the island, a weak management system and rules, and a lack of waste education, has compounded this issue. In some areas that do not provide waste collection services, residents continue to burn waste.

The people of Bintan Island, environmentalists, and the private sector have all made a number of efforts and initiatives, such as: managing a waste bank, conserving resources, and conducting waste cleanups that are arranged by the community or the private sector. To clean up land-based waste, the government has also made efforts through waste management socialization, waste recycling training, and the deployment of a cleaning task force. However, this is not sufficient to solve the waste issue on Bintan Island because a successful waste management system requires collaboration between all parties. In the long run, this waste issue will pose a threat not only to the tourism industry but also to marine life and the lives of Bintan Islanders.

The environmental communication policy of the Bintan Regency local government in the fight against waste management will be the subject of a more in-depth discussion in this article. The local government of Bintan Regency's environmental communication policy is implemented by involving all waste management stakeholders in public outreach. The Bintan Regency's local government then uses religious spirituality-based policies as well as structural policies to educate the community about environmental issues related to waste management. It is anticipated that the implementation of the combined policies will instill a conscious attitude toward avoiding littering to preserve the environment.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION THEORY AND RELIGIOUS-SPIRITUAL CONCEPT

Alison Anderson argues in his paper that environmental communication is a practical and essential approach to teaching people about the environment and our connection to the universe. It is a symbolic medium that is used to create environmental issues and negotiate various responses to those issues. To put it another way, environmental communication aims to increase awareness of environmental issues (Anderson, 2015). The right communicators are required to implement communication strategies. Additionally, research, ongoing monitoring, and evaluation are crucial components of the planning. The objectives and audience segmentation of each type of media also determine how it is used.

Additionally, environmental communication serves two purposes, as Robert Cox explains. First and foremost, pragmatic environmental communication It is instructive and

aids us in resolving issues with environmental communication. At first, it is just a way for us to communicate that happens to be a communication tool. Debate and problem-solving are frequently included in public education campaigns. Second, communication about the environment is essential. Additionally, environmental communication aids in the representation of the natural world and environmental issues, which are also topics that we can comprehend. Environmental communication encourages us to view forests and rivers not only as vital life support systems but also as something to be cherished by shaping our perceptions of nature (Cox, 2015).

Then, ecological damage caused by waste is exacerbated by human attitudes that ignore the practice of the religious-spiritual dimension in synergizing with nature. This is supported by the pace of modern science that justifies the excessive exploitation of natural resources. Then, the seriousness in understanding, interpreting, and implementing religious-spiritual messages and teachings is not only in the formal ritual aspects of worship but must also be able to touch social-ecology (Hartanto, 2019). If religious-spiritual religion only focuses on ritual routines and without being accompanied by the discovery of new alternatives to these rituals, then it is unlikely that the waste problem can be overcome, especially since government policies only rely on formal policies.

The integration-interconnection between religious-spiritual religion and human behavior to love and apply nature is a big homework for the government and religious leaders. Both must be able to realize the religious community that religions contain primordial messages of cleanliness and sanctity of nature. Among the steps that can be taken is to provide material content and religious-spiritual messages about the importance of protecting the environment from waste in every Friday sermon, religious pulpit, to church services which are strengthened in the form of structurally written government communication policies. Among the examples are the presence of green boarding school models, clean Friday and Sunday movements, and others that can be done by the community in their immediate environment.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach with a case study model. The main theory used is Alston Anderson and Robert Cox's environmental communication combined with the concepts of religion and ecology. Data collection used observation and literature, especially national and international journals, and books.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to Bintan Regency Number 12 of 2012, one aspect of life that must be maintained in an integrated and sustainable manner by both the government and the community in Bintan Regency is cleanliness. This is necessary for the realization and maintenance of a clean, orderly, and healthy environment. Hygiene management is a series that is systematic about how to manage waste from the source of waste to the final disposal site and includes containerization activities. Cleanliness is a physical condition of the city that is free of waste. However, in the field, the regional regulation encountered a problem and appeared to be restricted to rules that the community was in fact breaking.

This has a lot to do with information that was released by the Riau Islands' Tanjungpinang Environmental Agency (DLH), which said that many people who live on the coast still throw trash into the ocean. Most household and traditional market waste that is scattered throughout some Riau Islands, particularly Bintan Regency, ends up in the sea. The Bintan Regency Government has communicated with the community through socialization

with the primary goal of preventing people from throwing trash into the sea, which can cause flooding and detract from the beauty of urban governance.

In addition, the local government has provided trash cans in coastal areas up to this point, but they are still confined to a single location. Another effort is the collection of garbage on the Tanjungpinang coast by janitors using four canoe units every morning from dawn to dusk. Additionally, garbage piles quickly form when carried by strong currents and waves during high tide. In the end, this makes the process of cleaning up the garbage more difficult and slows it down. In addition, the equipment used is still considered manual (traditional), which contrasts with how garbage is cleaned up and managed in other parts of Indonesia and elsewhere. Then there are the 20 officers and just four sampan units that are not proportional to the equipment (sampan).

In addition, it is anticipated that the volume of waste in the Bintan Regency's Regional Technical Implementation Unit (UPTD) will rise by more than 1,000 tons between 2022 and 2023. It is known that the volume of waste reached 13,000 tons in 2021, and that it is anticipated to surpass 14,000 tons in 2023. The Sei Enam Kijang Landfill (TPA), which has two zones for waste storage and landfill, is where waste is disposed of in the Bintan Islands. According to the Bintan Regency UPTD's data, the Sei Enam Kijang Landfill has a fleet of 13 vehicles in total. Three of these units provide services to the North Bintan and sub-districts surrounding it, four to East Bintan, and the remaining three to Gunung Kijang, Toapaya, and the surrounding areas.

Then, from each village in the Riau Islands Province (Kepri) to Bintan Island, waste management takes place. Several waste management programs have been suggested through the Bintan Island Project. Educational programs for waste segregation, stricter government regulations, and a "one village, one program" for waste management that starts in all Bintan villages are among these suggestions. Then, waste facilities and adequate landfill land are provided through collaboration with stakeholders in order to construct a system and waste management facilities.

As part of the Keep It Clean Plan, the Kepri World Cleanup Day (WCD) Team has also launched a follow-up program to the annual cleanup action. This project, which started with Let's Do It Indonesia and Citizen OS, has successfully included the Bintan Regency Government and other stakeholders in the preparation process. One of 34 Islands Projects, the Bintan Island Project aims to get people on the island talking about the problems with waste. Then, it suggests preferred concepts that will be put into action with the help of the government and a network of partners.

The Bintan Island Project has been successfully developed with the output of several recommendation ideas that became collective decisions by the involved Bintan community using Citizen OS, an online platform for discussion and collective decision-making through voting. The Bintan government will then continue its collaboration with the UK-based social enterprise Ministry of Waste to construct waste management infrastructure in Bintan at a joint meeting in June 2022. If the government and all stakeholders cooperate, the implementation of these concepts will be successful. This is to create a more advanced and cutting-edge system for handling and managing waste.

Environmental communication is difficult to carry out. A communication strategy that has been developed by the communicator (the local government, in this case the Bintan Regency Government) is necessary for environmental communication to run smoothly. This way, the communication that is carried out can be well received by communicants in the wider community and industry in the Bintan Regency area. The first step, which determines how environmental communication will be carried out, is the communication strategy. As a

result, the environmental communication strategy's stages and steps for dealing with waste must be taken into account and paid attention to. Supporting factors or factors that hinder it must also be taken into account.

These are the steps: First, there is the assessment phase, which includes the steps of situation analysis, problem identification, party/actor analysis, and communication goals. It is necessary to identify the community and industry that are the intended recipients of environmental communication in order to tailor the message to their circumstances and circumstances. It is time for the community and industry, as the primary stakeholders of any environmental communication program, to be placed as the primary actors in preserving the environment and waste management in the Bintan Regency area if it turns out that environmental pollution is caused by the behavior of the community and industry, who are still reluctant to behave and do not have an awareness of environmental sustainability. In addition, adequate research is required on the initial goals of environmental communication in order to tailor the message to these goals.

Second, the development of a communication strategy, the motivation and mobilization of the Bintan Regency community and industry, and the selection of media are all part of the planning phase. The communicator, namely the Local Government of Bintan Regency and its appropriate derivatives, must implement the communication strategy. Next, different kinds of media can be used in a communication, but the benefits and drawbacks of each must be considered to fit the situation and circumstances of the communication. Utilize education, counseling, and interpersonal communication. Additionally, environmental sustainability can be brought to the attention of the public and the business community through the use of print and electronic mass media. together with digital, social, and mainstream media that have reached their peak of use. In addition, when dealing with waste issues, employ social marketing and mobilization in conjunction with the idea of environmental communication campaigns.

ECOLOGY-BASED RELIGIOUS SPIRITUALITY APPROACH

As a result, the human soul's fragility, emptiness, and dryness are reflected in the modern era's actions of destroying nature and littering. Religion ought to play a role in this. Religion can assist modern humans in rediscovering aspects of nature's sacredness by relying on a firm belief in supernatural powers in this case, God. Religion, with all of its spiritual resources, can inject ethical and aesthetic values into the voids of modern man's soul. It is hoped that doing so will allow modern humans to comprehend their place once more in this world. They can regain their life vision. It is anticipated that this level of awareness will alter how modern humans perceive life, life, and the universe (Northcoot, 2020).

The primary objective of the ecology-based religious spirituality movement is to shift human relationships with nature from the secular modernist paradigm to a more religious one. With ecology-based religious spirituality, modern humans' initial perception of nature shifts to one in which it is full of divine values without the need to devote themselves entirely to nature worship. It is anticipated that this shift in perspective will also alter human relationships with nature. With ecological preaching, nature is treated with ethical and aesthetic values instead of exploitatively by modern humans as a commodity to increase profits (Allison, 2019). Given that the destruction of nature has now reached a point where it cannot be negotiated any longer, shifts in perspective and patterns of relations are crucial and urgent. The numerous natural disasters that have occurred because of the recent ecological crisis ought to remind us of the significance of adopting a fresh perspective on the relationships between humans and nature. It will not be nature that is harmed by our exploitation and filled

with various types of waste if paradigms are not changed immediately; rather, it will be human existence that will be lost in the waves of "nature's anger."

In the current setting, the approach to religious spirituality shouldn't just encourage people to become pious people who focus solely on worship. In addition, in order to cultivate piety at the community and state levels, the piety should be expanded into the ecological, social, cultural, economic, and political domains. However, the ecology-based religious spirituality that is focused on conserving nature and the environment cannot be overlooked. The policymakers of a region, apart from the Regional Government of Bintan Regency and its citizens, largely ignore this model approach. The primary objective of this da'wah is to compel humans to resume their position as caliphs in charge of the universe's preservation and care (Fitriani & Aliyudin, 2021). Given that numerous catastrophes have threatened human existence on this planet, this is significant. The teachings and values of religion can be used as guidelines for this ecologically based spirituality approach.

CONCLUSION

Community involvement in every waste management process, beginning with regulating the rights and obligations of local governments, community rights and obligations, prohibitions, and licensing for waste management businesses, has been accommodated in the provisions of this regional regulation. It is hoped that this policy will be able to provide a sense of justice, expediency, and legal certainty for implementation in the field of waste management. The environmental communication policy of the Bintan Regional Government needs to be implemented as much as possible so that it can be effective and effective for the socio-economic.

Religious spirituality activities in the community should be able to raise awareness of the importance of recycling waste and protecting the environment. Religious leaders must provide religious materials on topics like garbage disposal and the significance of protecting the environment. Regarding the recommendations made in this study, it is necessary that the community of Bintan Regency's educational programs and activities include the environment and waste awareness as one of the most important and closely related topics to the community's religion. Additionally, this is because the community's religious and social activities have never included environmental studies. Consequently, the community's current understanding holds that religion, and the environment are distinct entities that do not adequately complement one another, whereas the environment is regarded as the world's work and a natural scientific study.

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