



Muara Tanjung Women's Group Movement in Mangrove Forest Conservation

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Abstract. This research aims to determine the background to the formation of the Muara Tanjung Women's Group (MTWG) in mangrove forest conservation, the movements carried out in mangrove forest conservation and the obstacles encountered by the MTWG. Research Location in Sei Nagalawan Village. This research uses qualitative research methods with an ethnographic approach. Techniques in this research were carried out by means of in-depth interviews, participant observation and documentation. The results of the research show that the background to the formation of the MTWG in mangrove forest conservation began with the conversion of the function of mangrove forests to ponds which caused mangrove forests to be damaged, causing abrasion and flooding in Sei Nagalawan village, so Mrs. Jumiati, as the founder of the women's group, invited women to get involved directly protect the coastal environment. The movements carried out by the MTWG range from mutual cooperation activities, mangrove tree nurseries, mangrove tree planting, mangrove fruit processing, savings and loans, training and environmental education. With this activity there are obstacles that occur ranging from a dirty environment, land grabbing by the community to the lack of support from the village government.

Keywords: Mangrove Forest, Conservation, Muara Tanjung Women's Group (MTWG).

1 Introduction

Environmental damage is an activity caused by natural activities themselves and human activities which cause loss of function of the environment. Environmental problems are something that is widely discussed in Indonesia. This is due to the worsening condition of the earth in the last few decades. Deforestation, global warming and depletion of the ozone layer are some examples of environmental problems [1]. One of the environmental problems includes the destruction of mangrove forests.

Mangrove forests are forests located in coastal areas that are influenced by sea tides. According to [2], the meaning of the word mangrove is a forest that grows above the tidal line, but can grow on coral beaches and on dead coral land which is covered with a thin layer of mud or muddy beaches. Mangrove forests are dominated by various types of mangrove trees which can grow and develop in muddy coastal tidal areas. This forest is a group of tropical coastal vegetation [3].

Mangrove forests are easily damaged if the environment is not balanced. In fact, mangrove forest destruction does not occur naturally but also due to human

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intervention. The impact resulting from damage to mangrove forests is that coastal protection can disappear due to wind, high sea currents and waves and threaten the regeneration of fish and shrimp in offshore waters. In fact, mangrove forests naturally function as coastal protectors from exposure, floods and tsunamis.

Sei Nagalawan Village, Perbaungan District, Serdang Bedagai Regency is one of the coastal areas where many mangrove forests grow and the majority of the population are fishermen. The mangrove forest in Sei Nagalawan village was converted into pond land so that residents changed their profession to become pond workers. As time goes by, the conversion of mangrove forests experiences damage caused by the residents themselves. This condition is clear evidence of excessive use of the mangrove ecosystem. Public knowledge of the important function of mangrove forests is very minimal. In this case, the destruction of mangrove forests in Sei Nagalawan village has had an impact on the socio-economic life of the local community.

Based on this awareness, in Sei Nagalawan village, Perbaungan subdistrict, Serdang Bedagai district, there is a group of women who conserve mangrove forests called the MTWG. Mrs. Jumiaty, one of the residents of Sei Nagalawan village who cares about the natural surroundings, was the first to make an effort to preserve mangrove forests. Starting from concern regarding the environmental conditions in Sei Nagalawan village plus the flood disaster that hit the village, Mrs. Jumiaty invited women in the village to work together to preserve the mangrove forest again.

This research aims to determine the background of the MTWG in mangrove forest conservation, the movements carried out by the MTWG in mangrove forest conservation and the obstacles faced by the MTWG in mangrove forest conservation.

The theoretical basis used by the author in this research is *ecofeminism theory* (1988). According to Shiva, *ecofeminism* is a whole world view that combines saving the environment with the struggle for women's rights over poverty, hunger, eliminating debt and playing the world. *Ecofeminism* comes from ideologies, namely ecology and feminism, which are considered to have the same goal, namely to change the world free from various forms of domination [4].

The focus of ecofeminist theory is on natural damage that is directly related to women. Ecofeminist theory emerged with a sense of dissatisfaction with the increasingly worsening direction of world ecological development. Focus of ecofeminist theory is about natural damage that is directly related to women. The theory of ecofeminism emerged with a sense of dissatisfaction with the increasingly worsening direction of world ecological development. Ecofeminism is an ethic that rejects the concept of dualism in the relationship between nature and humans [5]. Ecofeminism is tasked with forming human awareness of the importance of protecting the environment and making efforts to solve problems in human life and nature based on women's experiences and making that experience a source of learning in managing and preserving nature [6]. Based on the explanation above, the author uses social ecofeminist theory where the MTWG has met the criteria as a social movement

because the MTWG movement aims to make changes to achieve goals in mangrove forest conservation so that it can provide the expected benefits and results for the group.

2 Research Method

This research uses qualitative research with an ethnographic approach. According to [7] ethnography is an interpretation of culture with the aim of understanding life from the informant's point of view. Therefore, ethnography involves the activity of learning to see, hear, speak and act from the perspective of different individuals. This research uses qualitative research with an ethnographic approach, which is a method for answering questions about physical and social environmental conditions observed in the field research.

The location of the research carried out by the author was in Sei Nagalawan Village, Perbaungan District, Serdang Bedagai Regency. The data collection techniques used in this research are participant observation, in-depth interviews and documentation. There are five stages of data analysis techniques used in writing Spradley's ethnography. The first stage is choosing a problem. The second stage is collecting cultural data. The third stage is analyzing cultural data. The fourth stage is formulating an ethnographic hypothesis. The fifth stage is writing ethnography [7].

3 Results and Discussion

Sei Nagalawan Village is one of the villages in Perbaungan District, Serdang Bedagai Regency. The people in Sei Nagalawan village work in several sectors such as farmers, fishermen, employees, civil servants and laborers. The social conditions of the people in Sei Nagalawan village consist of Banjar, Malay, Javanese, Mandailing, Banten, Minang and Nias ethnic groups. The diversity of ethnicities in Sei Nagalawan village is proof of harmonious relations between different ethnicities.

3.1. Background of the MTWG in Mangrove Forest Conservation

Mangrove forest conservation has become a breath of life for the MTWG which was founded on October 1 2005. The MTWG is a group of women who conserve mangrove forests in Sei Nagalawan Village, Perbaungan Serdang Bedagai District, North Sumatera, Indonesia. The founder of the MTWG is 39 year old Jumiati. Now there are 17 members of the MTWG who have family ties within it. Apart from that, the MTWG also uses mangroves as an activity to empower women, mangroves and establish eco-tourism.

Based on the explanation above, the author draws a common thread that the MTWG has met the criteria as a social movement because the MTWG movement aims to make changes to achieve goals in mangrove forest conservation so that it can provide the benefits and results expected by the group.

The formation of the MTWG began when the mangrove forest in Sei Nagalawan village was converted into pond land so that the community's economy declined. Apart from that, the mangrove forest area has become damaged, bare and barren and has never been touched by the public again. The destruction of mangrove forests has resulted in the coastal area of Sei Nagalawan village experiencing continuous flooding.

Based on in-depth interview data with informants obtained by the author in the field, the informant said that the formation of the MTWG in mangrove forest conservation stemmed from community anxiety over the loss of the function of the mangrove forest. The destruction of mangrove forests caused by the transition of mangrove forests into ponds has also caused the economy of people who work as fishermen to decline. This shows that women's struggle to save nature and the environment that has been damaged reflects that nature and the environment are very important for people's lives [8].

Apart from that, due to the loss of function of the mangrove forest, the environment in Sei Nagalawan village, especially Hamlet 3, experiences flooding and when strong winds occur, the houses in the area are destroyed. There are also some people who take mangrove stems to use as firewood so that over time the mangroves become depleted. Mangrove lands have become barren and barren.

Apart from the destruction of mangroves, another background is that the women in Sei Nagalawan village have useful work, which is useful rather than just sitting at home, it is better to spend their time with positive activities. The positive activities in question are empowerment activities that can help improve the economy of women in this village. Mrs. Jumiati, as the group leader, together with the women, was moved to plant mangrove trees again so that later the mangrove trees could function as a barrier against abrasion.

The MTWG began with the concerns of one of the people of Sei Nagalawan village, namely a housewife named Jumiati who had three children. Initially in 2004 Jumiati carried out individual mangrove planting activities with her husband. However, he feels that protecting the environment by planting mangroves cannot only be done by him alone, but there are people from the community who also help in the activities carried out by Jumiati. Therefore, Mrs. Jumiati invites relatives and neighbors in her home area first to start activities that are useful for their environment, especially women. Therefore, the MTWG was formed based on the awareness that the environment in this area had been damaged and had to be protected.

The MTWG is a women's group in Sei Nagalawan village. The formation of the MTWG has the aims and objectives of restoring the function of mangrove forests and preventing abrasion in coastal areas. Apart from that, to increase women's knowledge and develop mangrove forest ecotourism in Sei Nagalawan village by wisely utilizing natural resources for community survival and improving the economy of Sei Nagalawan village. This shows that the role of women is always oriented towards the

role of mother, caregiver and environmental protector and is considered to be able to help, protect and also care for nature [9].

3.2. Muara Tanjung Women's Group Movement in Mangrove Forest Conservation

A social movement is a movement carried out together to achieve a common goal desired by the group through collective action [10]. The social movement in question is the mangrove forest conservation movement carried out by the MTWG in Sei Nagalawan village.

Conservation means protecting and caring for nature which must be done simultaneously to create a clean and well-maintained environment. In order to realize this, of course there must be movements or activities carried out by women, especially the MTWG in Sei Nagalawan village as activists or environmental activists.

According to in-depth interview data obtained from the informants, the movements carried out by the MTWG in mangrove forest conservation are as follows:

1. Mutual cooperation

Mutual cooperation was the initial activity carried out by the MTWG from the beginning of the activity until it finally became a mangrove forest ecotourism. At the beginning of the formation of the group, the mutual cooperation carried out was to clean the land covered with damaged mangroves and replace them with new mangrove trees. Mutual cooperation continues to this day and now mutual cooperation activities are carried out every Saturday morning to clean up beach locations that are dirty due to fallen tree branches and lots of rubbish strewn about.

2. Planting Mangrove Trees

Conservation or rehabilitation is a movement launched by the MTWG since its inception and has become an icon for the group. This movement is oriented towards improving the function of the ecosystem on the coast and is one way to restore the function of mangrove trees. This movement is also in line with what the government is doing in integrating development with the supporting capacity of the surrounding nature. The movement carried out will also include conservation in mangrove forest areas. Apart from being a socio-cultural support, it also supports biodiversity.

3. Mangrove Tree Nursery

The mangrove tree nurseries run by the MTWG include Siapi-api Hitam mangrove seeds (*Avicennia Alba*), Nipah mangrove seeds (*Nypa Fruticans*), Perepat (*Sonneratia Alba*) seeds and Jeruju (*Acanthus Illicifolius*) seeds. In the nursery, planting media is first prepared, namely polybags, mud and the mangrove seeds themselves. Mangrove tree nursery activities are carried out continuously and periodically. Apart from being useful for new plantings, it is also an alternative income for group members and starting from scratch in making seeds.

4. Mangrove Fruit Processing

Mangrove fruit processing is one of the main movements nowadays because there are many enthusiasts who want to taste processed mangroves. However, this movement was initially carried out in 2010. They start making products by getting information from cyberspace. Apart from that, they got the idea to promote the processed mangrove fruit produced by the MTWG to government agencies and communities outside Sei Nagalawan village.

The mangrove products produced by the MTWG include mangrove chips, mangrove syrup, mangrove dodol, mangrove tea. Therefore, they only dared to start making chip products because there were orders from the public.

5. Savings and Loan Activities

The savings and loan activities carried out by the MTWG group are one of the activities that makes the members' economy more stable because basically every month members set aside the money they earn from their work to save and if there is a very sudden need, members can also borrow. From savings and loan activities every year, members also feel the benefits they get from the programs they carry out. As stated by Malhotra (2002), providing access to capital (savings and loan activities) helps women to increase their capacity to fight poverty and maximize economic needs.

6. Training Activities

The training activities carried out by the MTWG are one of the efforts of the mangrove forest conservation movement which is useful for socializing mangrove conservation activities which are beneficial for the group and also beneficial for other communities. The Muara Tanjung women's group not only provides training, but they are also given new training and new knowledge by other institutions or agencies.

7. Mangrove Education for Students and College Students

Since the mangrove forest area became known to the public, it has attracted many academics, including pupils and students. The MTWG offers activities in the form of introducing mangrove trees to taking part in planting mangrove trees.

From the data that the author obtained in the field research with the informants, it is clear that the success of the mangrove forest conservation movement carried out by the MTWG did not run by itself, even though for 2 years they did it independently, but they also collaborated regarding the success that would be achieved in order to make the forest conservation activities successful mangroves. The collaboration they carry out with several agencies and institutions such as the Fishermen's Advocacy NGO JALA (North Sumatra Fishermen's Advocacy Network), the KEKAR (People's Economic Strength) Foundation Tebing Tinggi, the Serdang Bedagai Government, the Forestry Service, KBR (People's Mangrove Nursery), academics such as universities and in collaboration with Bank SUMUT.

The mangrove conservation movement carried out by the MTWG has several benefits, namely saving the environment which was initially damaged and has now regained its function. Apart from that, this group is also useful for empowering women and having access to resources and can be a role model for other women.

3.3. Barriers to the Muara Tanjung Women's Group in Mangrove Forest Conservation

The Muara Tanjung Women's Group in mangrove forest conservation has obstacles that occur during the conservation process. Based on data obtained in the field, the obstacles encountered by the MTWG during mangrove forest conservation were in the form of disputes that occurred between the community and the village. The local community thought that the activities carried out by the MTWG were initially in vain. The MTWG was sneered at for not wearing what society said. The provocation from irresponsible parties made the community increasingly dislike the activities carried out by the MTWG. This resulted in cutting off road access to land used by the group for mangrove forest conservation. Walking with the community's dislike also has an impact on the village. In the past, the village did not support the activities carried out by the MTWG because various political factors which used to be rivals for the position of Village Head had a big impact on the MTWG. It is difficult for them to obtain permits and signatures on proposals which in fact require the signature of the Village Head.

There are many obstacles that occur in mangrove forest conservation activities carried out by the MTWG. Each member certainly has various hopes, the essence of which is that the MTWG will be better in the future. Apart from that, they hope that they can always carry out positive activities that are useful for each member, the community and for the future of the nation, mangrove ecotourism activities will become famous throughout Indonesia. The Village Government also hopes that in the future the activities carried out by the MTWG group will receive full attention and support.

4 Conclusion

The background to the formation of the MTWG in mangrove forest conservation is that there is concern from the community regarding the loss of function of the mangrove forest which caused flooding in Sei Nagalawan village due to the conversion of the mangrove forest into pond land. The ponds in Sei Nagalawan village are no longer producing so the economy of the people who work as fishermen is declining. Based on these reasons, women formed: (1) a women's group so that in the future the mangrove forest could function again; (2) MTWG movement in mangrove forest conservation, namely by carrying out mangrove conservation such as mutual cooperation activities, mangrove nurseries, mangrove tree planting, mangrove fruit processing, savings and loan activities, training and environmental education among students and student. The initial obstacle that occurred during the mangrove forest conservation carried out by the MTWG was a dispute with the surrounding community and the village did not support the activities carried out by the MTWG. During mangrove conservation activities, there is often ridicule from the community that the activities they are carrying out are of no benefit. Until the road access leading to the conserved land area was cut off, it made it difficult for the MTWG to access it.

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