

Local Wisdom of Taping NIRA AREN (*Arenga Pinnata* MERR.) in Order to Maintain Tradition by Batak Toba Community, North Sumatra

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Abstract

Aren (*Arenga pinnata* Merr.) is a type of aren that has high potential for ecological and economic value. The purpose of this study was to determine the form of local wisdom of the Batak Toba village community, North Sumatra in tapping nira aren. The method used was a qualitative method. Data were collected by means of in-depth interviews, as well as field observations. The results of the research show that the Batak Toba people use wild sugar arens as aren wine, roof huts in the fields and wedding ceremonies. The local wisdom contained in the maragat tradition of the Toba community includes: Cultural Preservation and Creativity, mutual cooperation, honesty, positive thinking, education, politeness, and tenacity.

Keywords: local wisdom, nira aren, maragat tradition, Batak Toba, cultural preservation

1. Introduction

Nira Aren is a liquid that comes from tapping on the male and female flowers of the aren tree (*Arenga pinnata* Merr.) and is a drink that is well known by the public. Nira Aren can be made into drinks or made into sugar (brown sugar) (Surya, Ridhwan, Armi, Jailani, Samsiar, 2018)

The term local wisdom consists of two words, namely wisdom and local. Therefore, local wisdom can be defined as local ideas and knowledge that are wise, full of wisdom, of good value and implemented by members of the community.

Local wisdom is not transferred to the next generation through formal or non-formal education but through local traditions. Wisdom is loaded with values that serve as a guide, guide, guide or life guide for acting and interacting with the environment (Yuldiati, Zulfan Saam, Mubarak, 2016).

Many people around the forest depend for their survival on forest resources, including local indigenous peoples or indigenous groups (Firmando, 2020). Indigenous peoples who still hold environmental values and ethics in managing forests are the Toba indigenous people who live in small groups (Febriyanti, Agus Hikmat, Ervial A. M. Zuhud, 2017). One of the natural resources that is relatively easy to obtain, both in the forest and in the gardens managed by the Toba people is sugar aren.

In the life of the Toba people, aren palms are used to meet their household needs by processing parts of the aren palms into aren sugar, fermented drinks (tuak), kolang-kaling, making house roofs, making aren fiber brooms, making broom sticks, and stems as bridge construction. Because the aren tree and its benefits are very close to the Toba people, this agricultural activity has become a hereditary tradition that is carried out every generation. In addition, because aren palms are also commonly found in Sumatra.

Tapping nira in the Toba Batak language called Maragat is one of the jobs that cannot be done arbitrarily. Until now, this activity is still surrounded by a number of rites that must be known and practiced by every paragat (the name for people who maragat). In the cultural wisdom of the Batak Toba people, the nira palm and the like are the incarnation of a goddess whose all parts are beneficial to humans.

The purpose of this study was to determine the form of local wisdom of the Batak Toba village community, North Sumatra in tapping Aren

2. Research Methods

This research was carried out from June 2021 to August 2021 in Onan Baru Village, Pangururan District, Samosir Regency. The type of research used is qualitative using the case study method. Informants or key figures were determined intentionally by the researcher (purposive). Types of data collected in this study in the form of primary and secondary data. Primary data is data obtained directly from in-depth interviews with respondents and field observations (Firmando 2020). Secondary data were obtained from the study of literature related to the research.

Dianalisis data by processing raw data so that it becomes careful data, or accurate and scientific. Data analysis conducted includes:

1. Reducing data, namely the selection process, focusing attention on simplification, abstracting and transformation of "abusive" data that arises from written records in the field.
2. Presentation of data, which is the process of combining information arranged in a more accurate and valid form.
3. Verification, which is the process of clarifying all the data that has been presented to be drawn into a conclusion.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The process of cleaning the Aren trees before being tapped.

Unprocessed aren trees are usually surrounded by bushes such as roots and other plants that can interfere with the activities of craftsmen, the aren trunks are overgrown with various ferns, besides the aren trunks are filled with thick fibers making it difficult to tap, therefore Aren oil craftsmen, before tapping, first clean the aren stems that are filled with fibers. Before the craftsmen tap, they first clean the fibers and remove the midribs that are around the bunches in order to make it easier to swing the bunches. Radam and Arfa (2015) said this cleaning was done when the male flowers were dark green and purplish. How to clean is to remove the leaf

midrib below and above the bunches that will be tapped and clean the fibers and other plants attached to the tree trunk. The goal is not to interfere with climbing and tapping. Then the bunches that will be tapped are tied to tree trunks/supported by bamboo so that the bunches don't break when knocked or swung.

Hendriawan,dkk. (2016) said, cleaning the aren bunches is done if the male flowers have not broken the skin, namely by cleaning the fibers around the bunch and at the same time removing (removing) the two leaf midribs that are above and below the flower bunches, this cleaning is done to make it easier wiretapping.

Wiretapping Preparation

After the bunches are cleaned then the flower bunches are tapped and beaten using a wooden stick until the bunches look bruised, if you use iron the bunches will be damaged and will affect the results of the tapped nira. Then the fruit bunches are swung before the bunches are sliced. The wiretapping is done twice a day, in the morning and in the evening. Sunanto (Purba, 2020), which states that every time you tap, you first slice the aren cobs where the juice comes out so that the capillary channels open, so that the juice can come out smoothly. Sunanto (Purba, 2020) said that tapping the juice can be done twice a day, in the morning and in the evening because the aren bunches dry quickly. Aren that is tapped cannot be done by just anyone.

The forms of local wisdom in processing aren trees are the existence of the place where the aren trees grow and the local knowledge of the community in knowing when the aren bunches are ready to be tapped (Sibarani, 2018). The equipment used is still obtained naturally, such as using a ladder made of bamboo, which is an environmentally friendly material. Meanwhile, the ingredients used before tapping the aren sap bunch are liter of water, spoon of whiting than 3 pieces of mangosteen leaves. The purpose of these ingredients is to purify the juice and to scent aren sugar. the local knowledge of the enau craftsmen is local wisdom.

3.2. Special Treatment In The Process Of Taking Nira Water

The majority of the people of Onan Baru Village are Tuak (craftsmen, because the people of Batak Toba only use forest products (Ikegami, 1997). To produce Tuak, of course, you have to do the tapping first, the people of Kampung Batak Toba do the tapping the same as other areas.

Tapping tuak in the Toba Batak language is called paragat, a kind of knife used when tapping aren wine. Paragat first selects aren fruit which is expected to produce sap water. When a suitable fruit bunch has been found, the paragat then cleans the base of the aren fruit trunk and beats it with balbals, a tool made of wood, which is specifically for tapping (maragat). After the fruit bunches are beaten repeatedly for several weeks, then the mayang is cut. Then the paragat wraps the ends of the bunches with a medicine made from whiting or taro which is pounded for two to three days. With this procedure, the water begins to flow smoothly. A paragat taps aren wine twice a day, in the morning and evening. Tuak that was collected in the morning was collected at Paragat's house (Firmando, 2020)

After the taste is tested, Paragat puts it in a tub of tuak, a type of bark called raru, to match the taste and alcohol, where the alcohol content of the tuak varies depending on the area of manufacture. Raru is what causes fermentation.

Local Wisdom Found in the Maragat Tradition in the District

Local wisdom is the original wisdom and knowledge of a society originating from noble cultural traditions to regulate the order of people's lives. In this case, local wisdom is not only a cultural value, but a cultural value that can be used to organize people's lives in achieving increased welfare and the establishment of peace (Sulasno, Wahyuddin, and Fitria A., 2020). Local wisdom that is still found in Samosir District, for example, local wisdom contained in the maragat tradition of the Toba Batak community in Samosir District, among others:

1. Cultural Preservation and Creativity

The maragat tradition is one of the traditions preserved by the Toba Batak people in Samosir District. Because the marpolat tradition can produce industrial products that have a lot of selling value to the free market. In the maragat tradition, creativity is needed from people who rely on bagot (aren palm) as their livelihood.

2. Mutual cooperation

In the maragat tradition there is also the value of mutual cooperation wisdom, namely in the manufacture of brown sugar and processing of aren seeds for the manufacture of kolang-kaling. In making sugar, it requires a minimum of 3 people to produce brown sugar once. Likewise with the manufacture of kolangkaling, the author visited two points of making kolangkaling in Samosir sub-district. The author observes, the workers in making this kolang-kaling consist of 4-5 people. This mutual cooperation activity is carried out in order to achieve the targets they have planned. Mutual cooperation in maragat also makes one of the reinforcements in the community in the Samosir District area and this mutual cooperation is a national character that was clearly seen by the author during the research. Mutual cooperation is also the embodiment of the third principle of Pancasila, namely the Unity of Indonesia. So, mutual cooperation will foster a sense of togetherness, increase social solidarity, strengthen brotherhood, make people aware of the public interest and social responsibility, create harmony, high tolerance and a sense of unity in Indonesian society.

3. Gratitude

The gratitude meant by this maragat tradition is to be grateful for the blessings that have been obtained from the results of the maragat, no matter how grateful the results are. Because we enjoy the results of our hard work, if we remain diligent, in the future we will get better results than before. For this reason, humans must thank God for the blessings He has given, favors that can still be felt by workers who complain about their fate on this aren plant. The maragat tradition, for example, is a tradition handed down by our ancestors to be carried out by the next generation.

4. Disciplines

Discipline is one of the keys to success in living the Maragat Tradition. The discipline referred to in this maragat tradition is discipline in time. Discipline in maragat is when tapping aren trees. When tapping sugar aren, tappers (workers) usually tap the base of the mayang twice a day. The first leads were carried out in the morning, from 06.30 WIB to 07.30 WIB. The second lead is carried out in the afternoon from 17.00 WIB to 18.30 WIB. This is done so that the tapper can produce a lot of nira and quality. If the aren tappers are late in tapping the base of

the mayang, it will result in the juice of the water being reduced than usual and it could also be that the base of the mayang dries up or stops releasing the juice. Usually the nira is taken by the tapper in the afternoon and it can also be in the morning, depending on the time of the tapper who took the sap. Harvesting tapped aren trees usually takes 3 to 4 months after cutting the base of the mayang.

5. Gender Management.

In carrying out the maragat tradition in Samosir District, we can also find gender management, namely when taking sap from the aren tree, never a woman works to take aren sap. Because this job is a very extreme job, where it takes physically strong to climb a very high aren tree. So, the author has never met (heard) a woman who works as a tapper of nira, but this is only done by men.

6. Hard Work

In the maragat tradition, you are required to work hard. The reason is because the work (results) in bagot (Aren palm) is a job that takes time and patience. For example, in the work of taking bagot nira, there is a long process before the base of the mayang is cut with a machete (machete). Paragat (workers) must swing the base of the mayang with a rope for about 30 minutes. Paragat should also be routine every day for several weeks (until the aren flowers fall) ready to be cut. So from one of these maragat traditions, the author sees the value of hard work being gained. Likewise when making kolang-kaling requires hard work in collecting alto (aren fruit) one by one to be boiled. It takes 2 to 3 hours just to boil this alto. After boiling, the skin of this aren fruit must be peeled again. After finished peeling, the aren seeds are soaked in a lime solution for 3-4 days so that the aren seeds are clean of the dirt on the aren seeds.

7. Honesty

The honesty referred to in the maragat tradition is that no lies are committed. For example, there is a resident who urgently needs brown sugar for his needs, so he orders 3 kg from the factory owner. Then the aren sugar maker went straight to his sugar cooking place, after weighing the sugar the order didn't reach 3 kg anymore. After weighing, it turned out to be less than 3 ounces of sugar. The seller feels that this is usually fulfilled in 3 kg. Without further ado, the buyer accepted and immediately paid for it.

8. Positive Thingking

In the maragat tradition, it is the main key in the smooth production of products to get the maximum possible work. This is very important, because it is the charge of positive thinking that will later crystallize into reality. So by filling positive things into the mind, at least positive ones will appear. Positive thinking in carrying out the maragat tradition should not think strangely to expect results that are not in accordance with what they are doing or generate a lot of profit with low quality. In addition, workers who try their luck on the sugar aren must also not have the nature of jealousy/envy to compete with fellow maragat workers.

9. Education

Working on local products using materials from aren trees is not as easy as we see. Manufacturing products such as brooms made from aren fiber, making brown sugar made from aren sap, or making clean water filtering from aren fiber, making aren wine, requires special

expertise in the field. Not necessarily workers who are experts in taking nira, also experts in making brown sugar, and vice versa.

10. Politeness

Courtesy in the maragat tradition is an important thing in undergoing the manufacture of products made from aren trees. For example, in taking nira, paragat (workers) need a long process to produce the nira. In this long process, Paragat must respect the aren tree he wants to tap. Because the Toba Batak people believe that the aren tree is the incarnation of a woman.

11. Tenacity

In the maragat tradition, tenacity is important to produce products that are made according to their expertise. It takes special skills to produce quality products. Types of products produced from aren palms, have a level of complexity in each field. Therefore, from the leaves to the roots of the aren palm, experts in the field are created.

4. Conclusion

The local wisdom contained in the maragat tradition of the Toba community includes: Cultural Preservation and Creativity, mutual cooperation, honesty, positive thinking, education, politeness, and tenacity.

The maragat tradition in the Samosir area has a folk discourse of local wisdom that is still found in Samosir, which aims to build the community's collective memory about the bagot or sugar aren tree so that through folk discourse it becomes a legacy of oral tradition for future generations who can take advantage of local values and wisdom from the discourse. These people, for example the local wisdom contained in the stage of the maragat tradition in the Batak Toba community, include local wisdom of mutual cooperation, local wisdom of togetherness in making brown sugar and processing aren seeds for making kolang-kaling.

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