

The Role of Village Communities in Preserving Forests in the Negeri Saunulu, Tehoru District, Central Maluku Regency

Nova S. Tuwael¹, Jusmy D. Putuhena², Billy B Seipalla³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Pattimura, Indonesia

jusmy_putuhena@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study aims to explore the role of village communities in preserving forests in the Negeri Saunulu, Tehoru District, Central Maluku Regency. The method used in this study is a qualitative method using descriptive analysis. Data collection techniques are interviews, focus group discussions, observation, and documentation. Sampling is done by simple random method. With a sample of 10% of the total 301 heads of families, 35 heads of families in in the Negeri Saunulu. Respondents in this study are religious leaders, traditional leaders, youth leaders, women leaders, and village communities. Data analysis is inductive or qualitative analysis results emphasize meaning rather than generalization. The results of the study show the role of village communities in preserving forests in the Negeri Saunulu, Tehoru District, Central Maluku Regency through reforestation and plant maintenance.

Keywords

village communities;
preserving, forests;
reforestation; plant maintenance



I. Introduction

Forests are an integral and inseparable part of the lives of the people who live around them. The interaction relationship between forest village communities and the surrounding natural environment has been going on for centuries across generations in the framework of the balance of the cosmos. The management and utilization of forest resources in each forest village community has its own characteristics in accordance with the cultural characteristics of the people living in and around the forest. Forest resources are defined as natural resources that have economic, religious, political, social, and cultural values. Therefore, the survival of communities and forests is highly dependent on the availability of forest resources around their environment (Soemarwoto, 2004). The economic condition of the population is a condition that describes human life that has economic score (Shah et al, 2020). Economic growth is still an important goal in a country's economy, especially for developing countries like Indonesia (Magdalena and Suhatman, 2020).

Forests have a very important position and role in national development, this is because forests have enormous benefits in developing the nation's economy (Spurr and Burton, 1973). Basically, the purpose of forest management is for the prosperity of the people, as explained in Article 33 Paragraph 3 of the 1945 Constitution that: "Earth, water and the wealth contained therein are controlled by the State and used as much as possible for the prosperity of the people". In many cases, Indonesia's natural forest wealth often creates conflicts within the community, both conflicts between the government and the community as well as conflicts between communities and conflicts between the community and the community itself. Of the many conflicts that often surface, conflicts related to forest management are the most common. The impact of the conflict often causes

various impacts that are directly felt by the community itself, such as the loss of access for village communities to conserve forests. In fact, for centuries they have depended on the forest and the riches that depend on it. Departing from this problem, the government should encourage the birth of community-based forest management policies (Suhendri, 2009).

Communities around the forest have their own concept of environmental conservation which allows forest maintenance measures to be carried out in line with, or even support, forest conservation efforts which are now legalized by the government (Soekanto, 2003; Sahlan et al., 2012). Although the word or term conservation is not yet known by the people of the Negeri Saunulu in general, the meaning of conservation has been going on for a long time, such as forest conservation or forest protection.

The importance of preserving and preserving the environment between humans and nature is not something new for the people of the Negeri Saunulu, but this has long been practiced from their ancestors by having culture/customs in preserving forests which were inherited from generation to generation from generation to generation in their own way. itself or commonly referred to as *sasi*, which is in accordance with the mindset and traditions and culture that take place in the people of the Negeri Saunulu in conserving forests. Where is *SASI*, it is divided into two namely, Church *sasi* and Indigenous *sasi*.

The people of the Negeri Saunulu are one of the customary lands around the Manusela National Park that still have or have traditional forest management principles to preserve their forest. The existence of the the Negeri Saunulu Community around the Manusela National Park area when viewed carefully is one of the countries that plays a role in preserving forests. This is inseparable from the potential possessed by the Negeri Saunulu Community such as, Nutmeg, Clove, Linggoa, Semama, Meranti, and so on that can be used wisely to realize the goal of conserving the forest.

This study aims to explore the role of village communities in preserving forests in the Negeri Saunulu, Tehoru District, Central Maluku Regency.

II. Research Method

The method used in this study is a qualitative method using descriptive analysis to describe systematically, factually, and accurately (Octiva et al., 2018; Pandiangan, 2018). Qualitative method is used because the data collection is more supportive if it is done through interviews, observation, documentation, and looking at the factors that influence it (Asyrai et al., 2022; Octiva, 2018; Pandiangan, 2015).

Data collection techniques are activities to find data in the field that will be used to answer research problems (Jibril et al., 2022; Pandiangan et al., 2018; Pandiangan, 2022). The validity of data collection and the qualifications of data collectors are needed to obtain quality data. Data collection techniques are interviews, focus group discussions, observation, and documentation.

Sampling is done by simple random method. Simple random sampling is a technique used for random sampling and comes from members of the existing population (Octiva et al., 2021; Pandiangan et al., 2021; Pandia et al., 2018). With a sample of 10% of the total 301 heads of families, 35 heads of families in in the Negeri Saunulu. Respondents in this study are religious leaders, traditional leaders, youth leaders, women leaders, and village communities.

Data analysis is inductive or qualitative analysis results emphasize meaning rather than generalization. Inductive or qualitative analysis in this study with the aim of making a systematic, factual and accurate description, picture or painting of the facts, properties and relationships between the investigated phenomena (Pandiangan et al., 2022; Tobing et al., 2018).

III. Result and Discussion

3.1 The Role of Village Communities in Preserving Forests

a. Reforestation and Plant Maintenance

Planting is a habit of the people in the Negeri Saunulu. Planting plants can be done individually or in groups. Before planting, the community holds a meeting to determine when the planting day will begin. After finding an agreement on the day, date, and month of planting. The people's habit of planting is carried out in April and September. Planting in one year can be done twice or more.

Planting requires provisions that must be followed based on the conditions of the location/place where the planting will be carried out. Success in planting requires a method/procedure in planting based on perpendicular to the slope following the contour direction. In addition, by applying terracing technology to prevent landslides in areas with steep slopes. Types of plants grown on sloping areas are plantations and forest plants with woody characteristics, dense crowns, economic value, and can be used as soil protectors such as cloves, nutmeg, coconut, cocoa, langsung, samama, resin, salawaku, linggua, and titi.

The planting process carried out by the people of the Negeri Saunulu is carried out individually or in groups. Planting, of course, there are obstacles faced by respondents such as many dead plants, unpredictable weather, too high rainfall, and funding problems. Efforts are being made to overcome these obstacles, namely replacing dead plants, replanting with new plants. Caring for plants is a community habit after planting. In the Negeri Saunulu after planting, respondents took care of the plants by themselves or in groups. On their own if the plants they treat are not too large and the respondent wants to do it himself. Group if the plants planted are large enough and the respondent does it in groups to help ease the work and can be carried out twice a week. Plants that are cared for for seasonal crops and timber-producing plants.

Taking care of plants certainly avoids plants from being damaged. Based on the respondent's information through interviews that if there are plants that are damaged by other people, sanctions will be given to those who damage the plants. The sanctions given can be in the form of warnings to customary sanctions.

Constraints faced by respondents in caring for plants include costs, pests that are difficult to eradicate, expensive medicines and fertilizers. Efforts made by respondents to overcome these obstacles include spraying pests, making loans and forming groups to save costs.

The results harvested in forest use such as wood, cloves, nutmeg, fruits, cassava, and other plants. The results of interviews with respondents, harvesting plantation products takes an average of 1-9 months, and taking seasonal crops, wood takes a long time, which is more than 10 years. The wood to be taken depends on the size of the wood and even its age. According to the respondent's information, the wood to be taken should be old, so that later the wood used is durable and long-lasting, so a good way is needed to take the wood. The results of interviews with respondents that every resident is not allowed to take wood products that do not belong to them, if possible, must first ask permission from the owner. Replacement of wood after felling must be done to avoid scarcity of wood or so that the supply of wood is not exhausted.



Figure 1. *Community Activities in Harvesting Clove Crops*

b. Cooperation between Stakeholders

The people of the Negeri Saunulu strongly support forest conservation in order to protect existing forest products. The involvement of all stakeholders in managing forests in the Negeri Saunulu is carried out by all stakeholders, including village government, religious leaders, traditional leaders, community leaders, youth leaders, district government, Malusela Maupin National Planting Center, environmentalists.

The collaboration between stakeholders that has been carried out so far is Extension activities in the Negeri Saunulu. Extension activities are carried out more than three times a year. The purpose of this counseling is to provide direction to the community on what should be done in conserving forests, conserving forests and using forests.

The people of the Negeri Saunulu are actively involved in these activities because those who provide counseling are people who have competence in their fields. Respondents' participation in counseling which is very supportive has the largest percentage of 62.85% and supports of 34.28% so it can be concluded that 100% of the people of the Negeri Saunulu are very supportive of the extension activities.

Table 1. Respondents Participation in Counseling

No.	Respondents Participation in Counseling	Number of Respondents	%
1	Very Support	22	62.85
2	Support	12	34.28
3	Enough Support	1	2.85
	Amount	35	99.98

3.2 Forest Functions to the Community

a. Economic Aspect

Village communities are very dependent on existing forest products such as timber and non-timber forest products. Communities use wood products for economic needs or for household needs. Non-timber forest products are usually used to meet economic needs.

One of the available forest potentials is non-timber forest products (NTFPs) which can be utilized or managed by the community for various necessities of life. Bamboo, sago, coconut leaves, and rattan are usually used by the indigenous people of Saunulu as a form of craft to make saloi, amanisa, tumang, roofing, kamboti, lopa-lopa, and nyiru.

1. Saloi is a basket to transport harvest crops, or other forest products. The types of bamboo used are Tui bamboo or flute bamboo (*schizotachyum lima*) and loleba bamboo (*bambusa atra*) and the rattan used is ekano rattan.

2. Amanisa is the result of handicrafts from the village community which is woven from bamboo and rattan. This amanisa is usually used by villagers to catch morea, kabus, and shrimp.
3. Tumang is a work or handicraft that the villagers usually use to put the contents of sago. This tumang is made from the leaves of the sago tree and just in case the sago tree.
4. The roof is a woven cloth that is usually made by villagers to cover their houses or is also usually sold to meet economic needs. This roof is made of sago leaves and bamboo.



Saloi



Amanisa



Lopa-Lopa



Kamboti

Figure 2. The Handicrafts of the Negeri Saunulu Community from NTFPs

5. Kamboti is a handicraft from the people of the Negeri Saunulu long ago. Kamboti is made from coconut tree leaves which are woven into bags, to store things.
6. The midrib of sago and rattan is usually used to make Lopa-Lopa which is a small bag as a container to put cellphones, wallets, betel and areca nut and also other necessities.
7. Nyiru is a weave made of bamboo midrib, which is made with creations from the people of the Negeri Saunulu. Nyiru is also a place or item that is usually used by the village community to filter rice, sago and so on.

b. Ecological Aspect

Most of the people of the Negeri Saunulu are very dependent on forest products around the national park area, so they have to maintain the sustainability of plants so that they are sustainable by replanting plant species, carrying out prohibitions such as sasi, matakao, and salele.

3.3 Factors Affecting Community Roles in Preserving Forests

a. Physical Factor

1. Land

In conserving forests, soil is a very important factor. Soil serves as a location for planting land and others. The growth of plants is strongly influenced by soil fertility, therefore not all types of plants can live well. Fertile soil can produce many plants, because it is watered or by irrigation.

2. Water

Water is more vital for sustaining life, than any other element. Water is the main element of all body fluids which is very important for the transport of nutrients to body tissues and the disposal of metabolic wastes. Water also has a major role in the functioning of enzymes because it occurs in solution and involves hydrolysis

3. Climate

Climate is the result of the cooperation of various elements such as temperature, rainfall, light, air movement, and air pressure. The most important thing is air temperature and

rainfall, a lot of rain is useful for plants. In addition, a microclimate around the the Negeri Saunulu can be created while maintaining the existing forest

4. Topography

Topography or land slope is one of the considerations in the process of selecting plants or preventing erosion on sloping land, because sloping land has a greater possibility of erosion. The slope of the land varies, from flat to steep. Flat land is more profitable for short-lived plant species with a slope of between 3-8 percent which is still overcome by making terraces, while land with high slopes is suitable for planting long-lived plant species.

b. Non-Physical Factors

1. Capital

Capital is the most important factor in everything that is run. The size of the capital affects the respondents in conserving forests. Large capital is possible not to make it difficult for respondents to overcome various obstacles that arise

2. Labor

Manpower is one of the most important factors because whether or not an activity is smooth is determined by the workforce both in terms of the number of skills. Workers come from their own families and other people. Based on the information from respondents through interviews, most of the respondents came from their own families while others came from other people. Most of the respondents 80% of the workforce came from their own families while the remaining 20% came from other communities.

IV. Conclusion

The results of the study show the role of village communities in preserving forests in the Negeri Saunulu, Tehoru District, Central Maluku Regency through reforestation and plant maintenance.

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