

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES THROUGH SOCIAL FORESTRY

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I. PROBLEMS

Forest resources management in Indonesia since 1990s has a critical question. Many observers' criticism related with the facilities enjoyed by Logging Forest Concession (HPH) since 1970s and Industrial Forest Plantation (HTI) since 1989.¹ Apparently, the critiques contain two reasons. First, most of the owners of the concessionaries have a special relationship with the ruling groups in the government, compare with the professional groups on forest management, which have attention to ecological affairs rather than economics and profit orientation.

Second, by the permission of HPH and HTI operational in many provinces, the government certainly receives a lot of income for reboisation fees and forest results funds (IHH). Although, the economic benefits for the government from forest exploitation is fewer about 20 percent compare with HPH's owners that reached 80 percent. In contrast, in reality most of HPH and HTI owners do not care about ecological issues, sustainable forest management and social problems that cause a huge deforestation. The forest fire in Indonesia which happened in 1997, the contribution of HPH and HTI, besides big estate plantations through land clearing are also significant to be considered.

Conflict between forest dwelling people and HPH about land use rights have been widely reported to occur in Indonesian outer Islands.² For example, among two forest dwelling communities: Tabbeyan and Sentosa, in Irian Jaya occurred in 1990-1991 with YLS logging concession, represented by Korean timber company. The villagers complaint about not receiving monetary compensation for their destroyed forest lands. Such conflict tended to escalate into disputes and hostility to involve a third party in the process of their settlement.

The issues of forest squatters in Sumatera and shifting cultivators (Kalimantan) in many provinces since 1980s are rapidly increased in searching of new areas for their agricultural plantations such as coffee and rice fields. According to the report from Department of Transmigration and Forest Squatters in 1993, that it was registered critical lands related with activities among forest squatters and shifting cultivators totally 1,725,439 families. From that amount, 654,574 families stay in the forest areas of 3,606,243 hectares. And the rest, 826,433 families occupied around 3,248,689 hectares outside forest areas. In East Kalimantan, for example the location of land for shifting cultivation tends to be increased from 55,000 hectares in 1985 to 100,000 hectares in 1990. And the family which occupied the area totally reached 50,000~65,000 among 1,876,663 of its population (Mubyarto, 1992).

From above description, logging and population expansion are the primary forces driving deforestation in Indonesia and Southeast Asia (Poffenberger, 1990). According to the World Bank report in 1993, the destruction of Indonesian Forest annually reached 600,000~800,000 hectares. But, the serious effects primarily have suffered rural society who live around and in forest boundaries (Mubyarto, 1992).

The solution among HPH and HTI's affairs, our government orders them to keep strict "regulation" which emphasizes on replant and reboisation of forest. Otherwise, the Minister of Forestry (1992-1997) had imposed hard sanction to cancel their operational permission. It was registered, that the government had canceled almost 148 HPH's owners from totally registered 574 units in 1990.

On the other hand, the solution concerning forest squatters, shifting cultivators and the conflict on land use rights between local communities and HPH is throughout legal system. How the government executes "law enforcement" which hard sanction for land conflicts and effort to reorient macro mapping of land use and its clear limitations. The role of government, from its mapping to recognize the land use of communal land rights hak ulayat, agricultural, hunting areas in (Irian Jaya), forest production, forest conservation and protected forest for national parks, etc.

It is commonly known the ecological destruction recently suffered global crisis faced by human beings. Three indicators for global crisis are: (1) poverty; (2) the failure of ecological life; and (3) social hardship. Furthermore, the limitation of forest areas which drastically happened in developing countries such as Brazil, Peru, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, etc., have a negative implication for ecological sphere and earth climate balancing. The devastation of earth tropical rain-forests is causing worldwide concern. An equatorial forest as I mentioned above contains an estimated 50 percents of all known animal and plant species. As the forests are destroyed by human beings, so are genetic resources that evolved over millions of years. Because tropical forests play important and only partially understood roles in shaping our climate and atmosphere. Therefore, the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro has marked the growing concern of sustainability. The rhetoric of responsible exploitation of the environment by now is universal. Likewise the concerns of ecologically oriented scientists and policy makers to translate rhetoric into valid policies have gained legitimacy.

Nowdays, in the end of 20 century a great awareness was born, launched critical reflections and the paradigm transformation among scientists and policy makers in response and effort to understand the significant meaning of forest existence. Sustainable forest management is very urgent to maintain the sustainability of man earth, but inherently confess the acknowledgement on living rights and human dignity that is related to economic and social tradition depend on the existing of forest. On the other hand, commitment has been developed to enhance local community position in management and benefit on forest resources utilization (Korten, 1987). A wide range of forest products, including medical herbs/plants', bamboo, rattan, tannin, wood oils, fruits, and honeys, have considerable economic and employment potential. For example, in 1977 the

Southeast Asia rattan industry alone was valued at \$ 1.2 billion per year and estimated to employ half a million people. On the US other hand, in Indonesia rattan industry was valued US\$ 125 million and was able to employ at least 100,000 people in cultivation, collecting, processing, marketing, and small-scale manufacturing (Minister of Industrial and Trade, 1996).

Various research reports recently published by social and natural scientists for example, Bulmer, (1982); Rahakette, (1984); Dove, (1993); Atmaja, (1993); Michon de Foresta, (1994), Tjitradjaja, (1994), Michael P Wells, (1990); Cornea, (1985), etc., show the mistake in treating local communities just as a target in forest resources management that executed by HPH and HTI's owners through programs of Village Development (HPH/HTI Bina Desa). In contrast, their research results told us that local communities must be treated as subject, because they able to manage sustainable forest resources by their own local knowledge and wisdom. The Indonesian government is able to review land use rights and to do spices arrangement for all sectors, the social welfare for promotion of Indonesian people can be achieved.

II. THE STRATEGY

The strategy for conservation and sustainable management on forest issues based on a Local Community Participation (A Study from Indonesia).

The government really notices in developing of forest resources management. One of her strategy to achieve this aim is to conduct alternative forest management system based on local community participation. Rural community of forest is a group of people that live in and around forest boundaries. They live with primary subsistence dependent upon forest resources utilization. Therefore, the practices of HPH and HTI's policy by cutting trees and land clearing cause a huge implication on ecological, deforestation, social, and daily life of local people which finally they ignore a sustainable forest management. Because, the concept of forest management since two decades ago has been really ignored the reality of local community who live in and around the forest. This policy has a serious implication on living standard of rural community, which suffer structural poverty.

The present trend in development is towards more attention to the simultaneous security and sustainability of human lives and nature. Resolving forestland conflicts requires the formation of building blocks to achieve social and behavioral change. A pilot project in Social Forestry encouraged by Ministry of Forestry regulation No.22/Kpts/II/1995, whose main goal is to empower social and economic society has been done in many provinces in Indonesia.

The impact of Social Forestry projects conducted in Southeast Asia over the decade and in Indonesia since three years ago for out side Java has a positive aspects. Therefore, drawing on the experiences of national social forestry programs and local projects in developing collaborative management systems (Poffenberger, 1990), to respond for environmental degradation and the growing conflict between government, private business and forest communities.

Since the sixth (1995-2000) of Indonesian's Five Years Development Plan (PELITA VI), the strategy of forest development drives the role of "social participation" in sustainable forest management. On the other hand, since that situation, the policy of Forest Department changes from the concentration on production and "economic benefit oriented" on forest management towards the necessity of local community role and "socio-ecological benefit oriented". Therefore, the forest sectors development programs in empowering communities through social forestry programs.

Related to social forestry programs, there are many aspects which a very relevant to be considered:

- a. The equality aspect in development trilogy must be prioritized. This policy must be conducted to allow community who lives in and around forest have an opportunity to manage forest resources as a national asset. It was an appropriate with the article 33 (3), Indonesia Constitution 1945, "Earth, water and natural wealth which contain on it must be mastered by state and use for social welfare of Indonesian people". Decentralization aspect must be carried out by central government. This policy trends on empowering social and economic of our local community in development.
- b. From the viewpoint of protection and sustainable forest resources aspect, in this regard, direct community participation is necessarily required. And on the other hand, the need of improving their incomes to be more welfare must be considered in the social forestry programs. The consequence from its implications that forest resources management should give a wide chance to local community to manage forest utilization results for their welfare, and also give independent choices appropriate with potential social economic they want to do. So, the program on "Social Forestry" can be conducted in the forest areas, which are familiar as "community forest" and the out side as "private forest". The latest project of "private forest" (**padat karya**) is suitable with decision from Directorate General of Reboisement and Rehabilitation Land (RRL), No. 5/KPTS/V/1998.

In order to build a welfare society and sustainable forest management we need a reformation of "participation" concept. The welfare of forest dwellers and sustainable forest management today and in the future must use **interactive participation and independent participation**. The understanding of interactive participation focuses on:

1. The control over forest resources management is done collaboratively by local people and other actors of forest, for example: businessmen and government bureaucrats;
2. The involvement of local people in forest management means they fulfill their own rights free from outsiders interference.

Here, I would like to present two examples as follows:

- a. A sustainable forest management : on **Shorea javanica** (oil lamp/damar trees):

A Case Study of People in Krui, Liwa Distric in West Lampung. In Krui (Pesisir Tengah) local communities have been traditionally managing and expanding damar (*Shorea javanica*) forests, the size of wihich is presently estimated more than 10,000 hectares.

b. Eco-tourism of forest management: in Sangeh Village-Bali.

The forest of Sangeh in Bali is an interesting example of how a local community/**traditional village** (desa adat) is able to sustain forest management since three centuries ago. Whether from the local people's perspectives that Sangeh forest really located in a terrible condition towards destruction of people, because it is located near resettlement and agricultural environment.

NOTES

¹ The forest exploitation through HPH system is rapidly increased. In 1968 HPH's concession just reached 25, by 1990 was increasing until 574 units. The log production from 6 million meter cubic in 1967 up to 31 million meter cubic in 1990. On the other hand, the government income from forest resources is US \$ 3 million in 1960, but in 1988 is increased until US \$ 300 million, and almost US \$ 1 milliard in 1996, the second national income after oil andgass (Walhi, 1993).

² Some policy analysts (e.g., Zerner, 1990; Gillis, 1988) argue that such conflicts result from conflicts in the Indonesian law itself, and a bias against forest dwelling communities in government policies. The government granted many areas under previously existing customary rights as forest production concessions. As a result, the rights assigned to timber concessions cause resentment and encourage excess timber harvests by local people within timber concession areas (Gillis, 1988:49).

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