An Urging Need for Improving Knowledge and Values of Conservation Education in Indonesia

Sukarsono
University of Malang Muhammadiyah
sukarsono_umm@yahoo.com

Abstract. This present research was conducted in the locations in which the figures of Islam, the doers of the natural resources and environmental conservation, have received some awards at the local, national and international levels, in 2015 and 2016. A phenomenological qualitative approach with an emphasis on the events and symptoms the researcher interpreted was employed. The results of this research showed that the behaviors of the prominent figures of Islam in the natural resources and environmental conservation were heavily influenced by the knowledge and the values they possessed. The knowledge was gained from long and intensive training activities with various methods and approaches. The figures of Islam, the doers of the natural resources and environmental conservation, had more advanced thoughts than those who did not do activities of conservation and who merely focused on their worshipping activities in a narrow sense. Their patterns of acquiring the knowledge and values are expected to be able to be applied in the locations in which they or other ummahs of Islam live. This could lead the ummah of Islam will have a better awareness of and show real behaviors in maintaining the natural resources and the environment in accordance with the teachings of Islam, namely human beings as the God’s caliphs.

Keywords: knowledge, values of islam, conservation

INTRODUCTION

Various research results showed that the knowledge and awareness of the people in Indonesia about the natural resources and the environmental conservation were still at a low level. [1] suggested that it is merely 30% of the people, including the officials and the entrepreneurs, who had some knowledge about forest protection. [2] also found that people’s knowledge about forest and water conservation was still minimal. Moreover, [3] said that in their research results the people’s knowledge about the protection of the watershed, especially the Brantas watershed was still little so that a priority should be given to solve this problem. Similar researches made in various places with various conditions were conducted in Yogyakarta by [4], in Bali by [5], in Boyolali, East Java by [6], in Central Kalimantan by [7], in Malang, East Java by [8], in Lampung by [9] and also similar researches as documented by [10]. All the researches showed the same results that the people’s knowledge and about and their awareness of the natural resources and environmental conservation are still low.

Such low knowledge and awareness of the people in various strata may be seen from various disasters continuously happened that resulted in the loss of materials and environmental damages, even in deaths. For example, economic loss caused by the forest fire in 2015 was about Rp. 200 quintillion. The loss is from the burned plants, polluted water, air emission, flight business, and also the death. This also applied for the flood in urban or rural areas that not only caused economic loss up to billions rupiah but also environmental damages, loss of and damages of the settlements, including the deaths.

The low knowledge and awareness also happen among the Ummah of Islam. Due to rapid population growth and massive development process, from the planning to their operational activities, the importance of environmental protection is not paid attention. The Ummah of Islam that should serve as the fore-runners in environmental protection become powerless because of the pressure from the existing needs and social system. As a result, on the one hand, some possibility to act as God’s order to protect the environment is ignored. On the other hand, some hindrances are arisen from the Ummah of Islam in Indonesia themselves: a paradigm of thoughts and actions growing so far which is limited by the rigid Islamic tradition of the Middle Age and is merely based on the theistic subjectivism concept as stated by [11]. This concept tends to be merely oriented on the struggle for reaching one’s own goodness in order to gain some forgiveness and goodness from God either in this world or hereafter, instead of working on the complex and tiring relations and problems of the ummah.

Up to now, various publications have driven the Ummah of Islam, including the prominent figures, into a corner. As a result, the prominent figures are more known as the spiritual leaders who merely work on any business in the hereafter, even who promote any activities dealing with terrors. Some figures of Islam oppose the traditional pattern and involve themselves fully, even become leaders in various changes in thoughts and behaviors, including in the natural resources and environmental conservation.

Some experts propose a theory that knowledge is the most essential requirement to build one’s attitudes and behaviors in anything, including in the activities of environmental protection. [12], [13] assert that one’s behavior in environmental protection is influenced by
any knowledge one possesses, besides other supporting factors. [14], [15] that knowledge becomes the main requirement for someone of a group of people to behave and to act friendly to the environment.

On the basis of the thought, it is very vital for the ummah of Islam to improve their mastery of knowledge and to internalize the values of Islam in conserving the natural resources and the environment in order to make them possess a better paradigm and to really contribute to the conservation and to prove that they are the real caliphs on the earth.

If the transfer of knowledge is an important activity to influence the brain and the thought, the internalization of value is an effort to build an affective function. [16] states that one experiences the value of an object to the full through the realm of feeling. As a result, the internalization of value should involve one’s feeling, respect it and should also give a chance to reinforce one’s faith through the given internalization techniques.

METHOD

In this present research, a phenomenological qualitative approach with fixing model was employed [17] since the collected data were qualitative in nature since the object was determined before. The emphasis of this research was given on the scientific situations in which the researcher was the main instrument. The researcher focused his attention on the phenomena or symptoms appearing in the research site as understood by the researcher [18]. The data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observations and library research. In the data analysis, a triangulation technique was used, consisting of data reduction, data presentation and data verification [18].

This research was conducted in two locations in 2015 and 2016, where the prominent figures of Islam, the doers of the conservation did their activities: Sumenep regency, East Java province, and Lombok Barat regency, Indonesia. The figures and locations were determined on the basis of their achievement and the acknowledgment of the people either at the local, national and international levels towards their success in their activities of conserving the natural resources and the environment.

RESULT

Knowledge Bases Values and Behaviors of Conservation

Research results showed that the prominent figures of Islam, the doers of the conservation, based their activities of conserving the natural resources and the environment on the knowledge they obtained not from the Islamic books they have studied so far, but from the trainings they joined in. It is in the trainings that they may improve their insights and build stronger Islamic values in themselves.

The prominent figures of Islam in the two locations had similar experiences in gaining the knowledge, namely through trainings of improving insights either in indoor activities or in simulations, surveys and six-month trainings on researches and being followed by practices under the team guidance in the locations in which they lived. The knowledge improvement was also made through various meetings either seminars, or workshops, and the like.

Theoretically, the prominent figures’ behaviors based on the knowledge may be approached from the attribution theory proposed by Fritz Heider (1946-1958). On the basis of the knowledge they got, the figures analyzed and organized their thoughts under the cause-effect framework and adjusted it to the environment and the people around them. This phenomenon turns out the same with findings obtained by [9] where he studied the society in doing some conservation in Gunung Simpang – East Java. Their behaviors in the research sites were encouraged by external factors – activities made by an NGO working on its attention to the natural resources and environmental conservations. Its purpose is to help the society improve their understandings and internalized values on the natural resources and the environment.

Strategies in Transferring Knowledge and in Internalizing Values

The possession of knowledge and values in the prominent figures of Islam showed trainings or any other forms are the first and the main activities to do. Without any knowledge transfer or value internalization, any expectation of someone or a group of people to act something in conserving the natural resources and the environment would not be able to realize develop. The fact shows something that may be adopted as a strategy in transferring knowledge and in internalizing values of conservations among the people as a whole, especially the Ummah of Islam.

Intensive Trainings

Training activities intended to transfer knowledge made by the doers of the natural resources and the environmental conservation often failed. The failure was caused by the unserious committee in organizing the trainings, relatively short time, and fewer variations of the presentation methods.

Any training should be held intensively and continuously, without being interrupted by any other activities, except for the training activities. Some trainings in conservation considered as successful are done at least for six-month or even one-year period. Such a long time may be used to present materials in the forms of theories, simulations and direct practices in the field. It is necessary to avoid presenting some information or insights through seminars and the like which may result in an impression of talking much, being a know-it-all to the participants, giving poor examples or actions.

Involvement in Making Awareness

It is impossible to educate prominent figures in religion and in society using the same way or approach as adopted to the students. The approach adopted should be adjusted to the age levels, situation, experiences and the status of the participants as the prominent leader in a
society. The approach to internalizing values should be made through an andragogical approach. The prominent figures in religion and in society, in general, feel glad if their human values are acknowledged and respected. This will appear if the domain of affection in the figures is made alive.

In the internalization of value, the trainers should make personal rapport and try to become "models" for the participants on the basis of the feeling of love. Values will maximally develop if the training process happens in the atmosphere of love and understanding [18]. Some techniques of the value internalization developed by [19] are among others: indoctrination, moral reasoning and clarification.

An indoctrination technique is usually made to students, instead of prominent figures, since this technique is dogmatic in nature. But if possible, this technique may be adopted. This technique usually exists in lecturing or coercive methods.

A moral reasoning technique is the one that is expected to be appropriately applied for the prominent figures of the community who are used to discussion or deliberation, even who are leaders in the activity. This technique may be implemented by giving an environmental problem existing around them and in the teachings of Islam. The analysis of the problem should end with some conclusions reflecting a new understanding and awareness and values from the reasoning results. This technique should be applied in groups so that the participants may share their thoughts and may be able to make some conclusions.

A clarification technique is adopted by the trainers through modeling of real activities by facing the participants to the facts in the fields. Clarification is made by making the participants sure that the environmental problems are not in imagination or in the paper, but they will grow and develop in the dynamics of daily life. The variation of the technique will make the participants able to accept any values that are expected to be presented.

Building some Awareness and Togetherness

Training strategies are made to build some awareness and togetherness [20]. A training is also intended to result in outputs in the form of knowledge and values of conservation according to the teachings of Islam.

Togetherness in conservation should be built since the training activities are done, because it will be applied in the field. [18] explains that as stated in the Holy-Quran, the role of the caliphs in conserving the earth is impossible to realize if it is merely done by an individual, though he is a prophet. Involving others as the role of the caliph will be more strategic if it is done on the basis of awareness. Therefore, any activities in implementing the values of the caliph need two main things, namely the process of making some awareness and of building togetherness.

Awareness and togetherness are the duties of the caliph in managing the environment. [18] explains that the relation of human beings and the nature and the human beings is not the relation between the conqueror and the conquered, but togetherness and submission to the Allah SWT.

CONCLUSION

Disasters, damages of the natural resources and the environment in the surrounding of the Ummah of Islam prove that the Ummah of Islam cannot serve their function as the caliph in maintaining the earth. In order to commit the duties, it is necessary to master the knowledge that may be able to build strong Islamic values.

Any training programs to improve knowledge and internalize values should be made soon to prominent figures or to the ummah of Islam directly out of existing the Islamic institutions. Strategies and techniques of trainings should be adequately selected and applied in order to build behaviors of the ummah of Islam so that they will be able to stand at the front line in the field of conservation to maintain the future life and to do a noble duty as God’s caliph.

REFERENCES


