

Environmental Education as a Media for Character Building at School of Alam Raya Muaro Jambi

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Abstract—Various social phenomenon that have occurred in recent years in Indonesia are getting worst. Solving problems through violence seems to be common. Crime, juvenile delinquency, corruption, pornography, and drug abuse displayed through various media, and there are still many other social phenomena that need serious handling. This happened because this country is in a character crisis. Education has an important role to solve this problem. The aim of this paper is to explore the implementation of an environment-based educational model in School of Alam Raya Muaro Jambi (SARAMUJA), which is believed as one of the contribution to overcome the character crisis. This research used a qualitative explanative approach. The data collection techniques used was observation and in-depth interviews. Furthermore, the data analysis technique used was qualitative descriptive technique. The research concludes that SARAMUJA is an environment-based informal education model that focuses on building students' character. In the design, SARAMUJA made everyone as a teacher, and the universe as a school. Honesty, tolerance, creative, independent, caring for the environment, social care, and other characters are instilled using a very interesting method. By utilizing the environment, students are faced on and involved in various social realities, so that it will facilitate the process of character building within them.

Keywords—SARAMUJA; environment; character

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, various social phenomenon occurring in Indonesia are getting worse. Solving problems in the community by using violence seems to be common. Drug abuse and trafficking are increasingly prevalent. The behavior of increasingly wild politicians is always displayed through various media, and there are still many other social phenomenon that require serious handling.

From the facts, it can be admitted that Indonesia is currently experiencing a crisis of character and culture. If this problem is left continuously without any joint strength to deal

with it, then it is undeniable that this nation will decline in quality on the international scene. The chaotic life of the Indonesian people because they do not have the power of character (the best human being) such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, law-abiding, courtesy, caring, hard work, mutual respect, tolerance and the most important for a nation is the spirit of nationality.

The character is the values of human behavior that relate to God Almighty, self, fellow human beings, environment, and nationality which are manifested in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words, and actions based on the norms of religion, law, manners, culture, and customs. Kusuma stated that character is a human anthropological structure [1]. Character education will provide social assistance so that individuals can grow their freedom in living together with others in the world. Character education in Indonesia has been long-rooted in the tradition of education. Ki Hadjar Dewantara, Soekarno, Hatta, etc., have tried to apply the spirit of character education as a form of personality and national identity by the context and situation.

To continue the spirit of character education that has been inculcated by the predecessors, and to overcome the character crisis that is happening to this nation, an improvement in the national education model was carried out, which is focused more on character building. Majid and Andayani revealed a character education learning model that was inspired by Islamic education theory, namely [2]: there were three character education models namely "(1) Tadzkirah Model, and (2) Istiqomah Model, and (3) Iqra Model - Fikr - Dzikir.

Furthermore, Hasanah states that character education can be instilled through a holistic education model that includes 3 (three) domains, the knowing of good method, feeling the good, and acting the good [3]. Knowing the good is a good transfer of knowledge (cognitive). After knowing a good feeling and loving the good must be cultivated, namely how to feel and love virtue to be a driving force that can make people

always want to do something good so that they grow awareness of willingness to do a virtuous behavior, because of their love for virtuous behavior. After getting used to doing good, then acting the good in the form of real actions to be accustomed to daily activities.

Currently, character learning model is developed by utilizing nature as a medium of learning. In line with with character development through outdoor activities, Mortlock states that there are four basic skills that can be developed in conducting activities in the open [4], namely: Technical Skill, Fitness Skill, Human Skill, and Environmental Skill. The Human Skills (skills related to the development of positive attitudes) play a major role in the process of character building. According to Mortlock human skills enhanced the quality of human behavior [5].

One school that utilizes nature as a learning medium in character building is School of Alam Raya Muaro Jambi (SARAMUJA). This school is an informal education model that utilizes the environment in the process of building character for students, and by using the very interesting methods. The students are faced on and involved in various social realities, so that it will facilitate the process of planting the characters within them. The paper described the detail of the used of nature in education conducted by SARAMUJA as a medium in building the character of students.

II. METHOD

This research uses a qualitative explanatory approach. Data collection techniques used was observation and in-depth interviews with key informants. Furthermore, data analysis techniques used was qualitative descriptive techniques.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Environmental Education in SARAMUJA

School of Alam Raya Muaro Jambi or better known as SARAMUJA is an informal school established by Mochtar Hadi in 2010. Mochtar Hadi is indigenous person of Muaro Jambi who concern to social and culture in his environment, especially about Muaro Jambi Temple. Muaro Jambi temple is a legacy of the Old Malay Kingdom and the only legacy of the widest Hindu-Buddhist period in Indonesia [6].

This area is one of the national cultural heritage and has great potentials to become one of the world heritage sites because of its cultural richness. However, not many people know the existence of the temple. This condition is become a background of the establishment of SARAMUJA. Mochtar Hadi hopes that with the SARAMUJA, the community will become more familiar with the Muaro Jambi temple and become more concerned on taking care of this historic site. In addition, Mochtar Hadi also hopes that the community cares about the environmental conditions in the Muaro Jambi temple area.

SARAMUJA has a motto "everyone is a teacher, the nature is my school" this motto makes learning at SARAMUJA unique and extraordinary, because it is not only aimed to maintain the Muaro Jambi temple area and protect the

surrounding environment, but has a greater purpose to build the character of the community through environmental education. Environmental education at SARAMUJA uses a simple and fun method that aims to make students have knowledge, skills, attitude, motivations, and commitment to solve and prevent the current problems [7].

The environmental education in SARAMUJA meet the ideal criteria of an environmental education. Some of these criteria are reflected in various activities carried out at SARAMUJA. This activity further impacts the character building of each student. Here are some criteria in environmental education at SARAMUJA:

1) *The Content associate learning with actual world [8]:* One of the ideal criteria in environmental education is content are real and connected with real events. The learning content at SARAMUJA is about Muaro Jambi temple, Batanghari river, and their environment.

2) *The course material specific to the locale and endorses a holistic understanding of the particular area's environment [8]:* From the beginning, SARAMUJA has carried a specific educational concept. The concept is about education in the Muaro Jambi temple area, so that students will understand the environmental conditions in the temple and understand how to protect the environment. This means that the activity carried out the harmony with the character. This in line with the statement that character develop in harmony with local wisdom [9].

3) *Participations in solution [10]:* The Activities that carried out at Muaro Jambi Temple are activities to solve environmental and social problems in the Muaro Jambi temple area. Students participate in solving these problems and prevent the problem from appearing [11]. One problem found is flood. Muaro Jambi temple is close to Batanghari river. In this area, flood occurs twice a year. The main cause is garbage. Students are involved in efforts to overcome this problem.

4) *Having an optimistic view to a better World [12]:* Activities at SARAMUJA make students more optimistic about a better world in the future, especially about cleaner and neater environmental conditions.

5) *More Attention to social equity, economics, and culture [13]:* Activities at SARAMUJA focus on social, economic and cultural issues. This is a complex problem found in the Muaro Jambi temple and needs attention for each generation.

B. Environmental Education as a Media for Character Building In SARAMUJA

Nowadays, Indonesia is facing character crisis in various aspects. Life practice has ignored the important values needed to build people character [14]. The relationship between humans and nature is colored by egoism, mastery and control, so that society emerges in promoting science and technology. On the other hand, social, economic and cultural disparities in society are rising up [15]. This character crisis increases anxiety because it will affect all of the generations.

The criteria of environmental education can be observed from the activities in SARAMUJA and gave an impact on the character that exists in students, with the following description are:

1) *Collecting garbage*: The garbage collection activities that carried out by SARAMUJA students are carried out in a unique way; they collect garbage in a parade down the village. During the parade activity students collected garbage and put it in a large trash bin which is written "River is not a giant garbage bin" in front of it. Through this activity, collecting garbage is not only a process of cleaning the environment but also as a form of cleanliness campaign so that the surrounding community does not dispose of waste in any place, including rivers. This activity raises the character of cleanliness. Cleaning the environment is the same as clearing the mind [13]. Of this taking out the garbage, students learn to put something in its proper place. This is not only able to anticipate flood, but also improve the quality of lives of the community. From this environmental education activity, the neighborhood health will increase [16].

2) *Planting trees*: One of the activities in SARAMUJA is planting trees in the area of Muaro Jambi temple and Batanghari river. Through this activity, students obtain the character of caring about the environment, appreciate environment, and understand the important of local resources for human lives [17]. Plant trees means conservation is really important, human need to preserve the natural resources because human and other creature needed each other.

3) *Queueing*: This is a simple but interesting activities in SARAMUJA. Students are taught to stand in line during the distribution of drinks and snacks. This activity builds the character of patience, honesty, tolerance. Students are asked to wait patiently until their turn comes, be honest about their turn, and tolerance to others because everyone also has the same opportunity to get drinks and snacks.

4) *Getting around the temple*: Students at SARAMUJA were invited to go round in the Muaro Jambi temple area while hearing the history about Muaro jambi temple. Students was also given knowledge of an example of behavior that allow and not allow in the temple. One example of behavior that should not be done in the temple is step on the inside of a temple and make graffiti on that. Through this activity, students learn to care about cultural heritage and other things.

5) *Recycling waste*: Waste that is collected during learning activities at SARAMUJA is not immediately discarded, it can be recycled into other items that have high use value. This activity raises the creativity and responsibility.

6) *Drawing and painting*: Students at SARAMUJA have the activities of drawing and painting. They draw the temple of Muaro Jambi, a clean and healthy environment, about activities at SARAMUJA and many more. Through this activity students learn to be more creative and have a positive and optimistic view about the future.

All activities at SARAMUJA that use educational environment as a media for character building are simple

activities that showed the uniqueness and the beauty of Indonesia culture. Implementation of character through the culture will be improving the quality of behavior [18]. So that, the character crisis in Indonesia going to decrease.

IV. CONCLUSION

By utilizing the environment through environmental education, students at SARAMUJA are face on and involved in various social realities and many activities. It's going to facilitate the process of character building within them. The activities are simple and unique but effective to be a media for character building.

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