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Model of Environmental Communication with Gender Perspective in Resolving Environmental Conflict in Urban Area

(Study on the Role of Women’s Activist in Sustainable Environmental Conflict Management)

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Abstract

Conflicts over natural resources in urban areas have led to the reduction in the quality and capacity of the environment which transformed into an environmental conflict. The participation and involvement of women as environmental activists are very important in the environmental communication process and environmental conflict resolution. This study aims to identify factors that influence the activity of environmental communication by women activists in resolving environmental conflicts in urban areas caused by environmental problems, as the consequence of city change project that was not well planned. The study was conducted in three study sites, Jakarta, Tasikmalaya, and Malang, by distributing questionnaires to 140 respondents consisting of women activists who care about environmental activities. To analyze the relationship between these components, this research was carried out by regression analysis followed by path analysis. Hypothesis test results showed, with the results of correlation coefficient of 0.837, this shows the relation X1, X2, X3, and Y is a strong relationship, and all three basically independent variables have influence and can explain the dependent variable with a value of 69.3%. Theoretically, this indicates that the variable X3 (understanding of the situation of environmental conflict), the main factor that affects the individual's ability to communicate to resolve environmental conflicts. The finding of this research indicates an existence of environmental communication model with gender perspective from women activists that are engaged in the environmental field which can contribute in environmental conflict management in urban areas in the research site, to achieve environmental security.

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1. Introduction

The reduction of environmental quality and its carrying capacity made the conflict of natural resources transformed into an environmental conflict. Degradation and environmental issues create a conflict that leads to environmental security. Environmental security in this study is focused on environmental conflict because of environmental degradation [1]. Environmental insecurity will disrupt the continuity of human life, and the women will be the victims of the environmental problems that occur. Because of their close contact with the environment and use of natural resources, women are often affected by environmental conflicts, which lead to resource depletion and degradation of the environment. This poses risks on women’s lives and space. Marginalized woman as a vulnerable group against environmental conflict in some places has been an "engine" which is able to persuade people in the community to maintain and preserve the environment [2]. Women can act as agents of change that can respond to environmental changes better than men, with such an active role in the traditional roles of men in situations of natural disasters.

Women and men have different interests, and their needs relate differently with the environment. It is out of these differences that both have different roles in the environment [3]. The involvement of women in environmental conflict management was examined through environmental communication approach [4]. Some cities in Indonesia have shown that the environmental communication by women activist could raise awareness and raise public participation in environmental conflict management. The involvement of women in all levels of prevention, peace-building in conflict management and conflict resolution environment to support efforts to empower citizens through communication environment in their communities. This act has become the social capital to achieve sustainable environmental management.

Environmental communication is essentially the process of distribution of information that is part of the symbolization of the physical environment and the natural systems that are interrelated to each other. Study on environmental communication is not just about how to communicate between individuals in the effort to reach awareness, and changes in behavior become more pro-environment, but also related to the communication situation carried out in conditions of ongoing environmental conflict [5].

Currently, the worse environmental problems occur in many cities in Indonesia. The role of women in environmental preservation becomes crucial because it has not reached critical momentum and is "covered" by the situation of environmental pollution and damage that occurs. One example of the implementation of environmental communication approach that has successfully resolved environmental conflicts in Kampung Bonang and Tambak at Central Jakarta was in 2011. Environmental communication conducted through family welfare education, which is called the PKK (Pendidikan Kesejahteraan Keluarga) activities by women's groups and another community, has been raising awareness to end the conflict with jointly conduct environmental management. Environmental communication through training activities for residents on how to grow crops and composts has supported the greening of the environment in that region. Other examples of environmental communication activity can also resolve environmental conflicts caused by water crisis that occurred in Batu, Malang, past in mid-2013, also in Tasikmalaya in 2012. Environmental communication is not the dominant form of awareness towards conservation of water resources as a solution of the conflict.

Approach to environmental communication with an emphasis on the role of women is necessary to prevent and resolve conflicts in the urban environment. This shows the relationship aspects of gender and human security, particularly in the environment security, related to the achievement of sustainable development. In this regard, this study aims to identify factors that influence the activity of environmental communication by women activists in
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