



The ‘Bakul Gendong’ as a communication strategy to reject the construction of a cement factory in Central Java



Eni Maryani^{a,*}, Rini Darmastuti^b

^a Padjadjaran University, Indonesia

^b Satya Wacana Christian University, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Available online 24 November 2016

Keywords:

Communication strategy
‘Bakul Gendong’
Resistance
Women’s movement
Environmental risks

ABSTRACT

Since 2006, one of Indonesia’s biggest corporations operating in the cement industry has been trying to build a factory at Sukolilo village in Central Java, Indonesia. The potential for of environmental damage caused by mining and the construction of this new factory is the main source of conflict between the public and the giant corporation.

The focus of this research was the communication strategy adopted by women in the community to reject the construction of the cement factory in Pati, Central Java, Indonesia. This research used a qualitative method through a case study approach. Interviews, observations, and literature studies were used as data collection techniques for in this research.

We found that the practices of the “Bakul Gendong” communication strategy were effective in developing women’s awareness of environmental issues based on the values they believe in. Through the women peddlers, women’s awareness of the risk of environmental damage caused by the cement factories was successfully developed. They also created female farmers’ group named “Simbar Wareh” to strengthen cooperation between them and to better-organize their resistance. The women’s movement to resist the cement factory was also conducted by building a network, meeting authorities, demonstrating, displaying traditional symbols during celebrations such as the “Agustus” (independence day celebration) and Kartinian (women’s day) as their sites of resistance. The local government and PT. Semen Gresik tended to use technical and economical communicative approaches, while the people mainly refer to local know how PT. Semen Gresik did not use the right communication strategy to understand the conflict that arose and how to handle it, until after 10 years of trying to build a factory in Sukolilo.

© 2016 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Since 2006, one of big companies from the cement industry in Indonesia has tried to build their factory in Sukolilo village in Central Java, Indonesia. The environmental damage that would be caused by the mining activities and construction of the new factory was the main cause of conflict between the communities and the company. Public interests are often marginalized in the assessment of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). EIA evaluations also tend to be biased in favour of companies that are supported by the local government. Local community that will be impacted by the proposed developments are rarely involved in EIA, hence their interests are basically neglected in the results of the EIA. For this reason,

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: emaryani@gmail.com (E. Maryani), Rindarmas@yahoo.com (R. Darmastuti).

the people in these communities were forced to fight for their interests by any means available to them. To that end, building awareness of the risks of environmental damage needed to be conducted thoroughly, and especially by women.

The reason behind the rejection of the plan to build a cement factory is mainly that people wanted to preserve the natural environment and their homes. According to the locals, although the construction of the cement factory was claimed to be in the name of economic growth and development, the future development of the local community had not been taken into account, and they would gain nothing from it. They felt that this project would only benefit private parties while destroying nature and causing contaminated water and high pollution. The people of the area had grounds to reject it as the area designated as the location of the cement factory is arable land used for the livelihood of communities in Sukolilo and it is still actively cultivated as productive farmland.

According to Arif and Hartati in *The daily 'Kompas'*, (August 1, 2008), the cement factory will be established in the mountainous region of northern Kendeng. Administratively, the region covers four districts, namely the districts of Sukolilo, Kayen, Cork and Margorejo. Of the four districts, the area designated as the mine site and cement factory spreads over thirteen (13) villages with a total area of 1,560 ha of land. In the original plan, PT Semen Gresik will use the traditional land of 1560 hectares for limestone quarrying (900 ha) of land mining clay (500 ha), a factory for the production of cement (75 ha) and transport/roads (85 ha) (Arif & Hartati, 2008).

Moreover, in the area planned to be used as the cement factory grounds there is a population of 1197 Samin people in the community, sometimes referred to as *Sedulur Sikep*. *Sedulur Sikep* is an indigenous person who is dubbed an upholder of the culture, customs and the environment in which they live.¹

Historically the formation of the Samin community has formed a forum for farmers. They call themselves the *Sedulur Sikep* term that means fellow relatives. According to a movement figure in Sukolilo, "In 2005, an association called *sedulur* (a family) or also named *Sedulur Sikep* was created. At the time, the 10 people who gathered to set it up included my relatives and me. Prior to this association, there were KTM (*Karya Tani Maju*). KTM is a group of farmers from Mbombong and Ngawen. At that times the elders *Sampir* and *Tarno* were still alive".

According to the wisdom of the *Sedulur Sikep*, protecting the environment is part of maintaining a balance between humans and nature. As one of the top figures in *Sedulur Sikep*, Omah Kendeng, stated on February 6, 2015, "Earth is like a mother (mother earth) who cares and nurtures. The sky is a father that fulfills. Like the plant, if there is no light, it cannot grow. If we care and protect the bottom, the top will also safe and secure. If we love the earth, it will also love us. Mother earth has unbounded kindness".

The teachings to love and preserve the environment are taught from one generation to the next. Consequently, when plans to build a cement factory is deemed to pose the threat on environmental degradation, the people of Samin, young and old are all involved in this resistance movement. The focus of this study was the communication strategies adopted by women in the Samin society to reject the construction of the cement factory in Central Java, Indonesia.

2. Literature review

Research on Bakul Gendong in Sukolilo cannot be separated from the cultural and historical context in this society, specifically the Samin community. The Samin community is one of many indigenous people who live in Sukolilo, area of Pati, Central Java. In the Sub-district of Sukolilo, the Samin people live scattered in several villages throughout Mbombong, Ngawen and Nggaliran. Of these three villages, most Samin people live in the Mbombong village. In view of its history, the Samin community was formed as an indigenous people's movement against the Dutch colonialists. In 1908, under the leadership of Samin Surosentiko rural communities around the teak forest in Blora, Cepu, Bojonegoro, Ngawi and Pati took on the fight against the Dutch government.

This resistance began when Samin Surosentiko saw the suffering of the people as a result of oppression by the Dutch government. People are in a state of distress and deprivation. Agricultural and livestock owned by the people were taken away by the Dutch government. Seeing how the condition distressed the people, Samin Surosentiko intervened and lead the people to take action and fight. Given that the human resources as well as the weapons they had were very limited and not in any way capable of countering the Dutch forces, they then resorted to a peaceful way to rebel against the Dutch by pretending to be insane (Darmastuti, 2015: 125).

The movement later gave birth to a new icon named after Surosentiko Samin, the surrounding community then called that community the *Samin community*. This society later developed into a very strong indigenous people known to resiliently uphold their principles especially against people and things that are considered life threatening to them. Therefore, social movements among the people of Samin became part of their lives. Some forms of resistance they used consisted of a variety of symbols and rituals that were blended into their daily life and among social groups in their society, including groups that consisted mainly of women.

This type of Resistance carried on by the Sukolilo Samin community today is in line with the results of James Scott's research in Sedaka, Malaysia. According to James Scott, debates on matters related to the political sphere where a group of people in power tries to impose its will on a party they perceived as weak, can occur anywhere, including towards the poor. In a small and poor village, people who are deemed weak often lose against arbitrators and strong exploitative economic

¹ Masyarakat Peduli Pegunungan Kendeng (JMPPK) Networking.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/4761779>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/4761779>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)