



Research project of counterparts funded at IPB

Name	Counterpart	Title
Rina Mardiana Endriatmo Soetarto Soeryo Adiwibowo Putu Riana Pertiwi Nor Qomariah	C02	The Dynamics of Marga Serampas Customary Community after the Establishment of Customary Forest (Hutan Adat) in Jambi, Indonesia

Background and Objectives

The Ministry of Environment and Forestry issued a new Social Forestry policy in 2016, primarily aiming to protect the forests while ensuring the well-being of forest-dependent communities through various schemes. One of the five schemes is Customary Forest (*Hutan Adat*) which targets the forest-dwelling customary communities. Many customary communities in Indonesia rely on forest resources for their livelihood and have managed the forests traditionally for a long time. Yet, due to lack of land tenure security, they were often excluded from their own forests. The arrangement for Customary Forest scheme is different from other schemes. Through the newest policy, customary community is granted an ownership right to the forests. Among the first nine customary communities that were granted legal recognition and establishment of their forests in 2016 is the Marga Serampas community in Jambi. The implementation of this policy brings changes to the community. This study examines how the establishment, impact, and legal recognition of Customary Forest affect the dynamics in Marga Serampas Customary Community.

Methodology

This study employs triangulation method that combine the qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Data triangulation was selected as it allows the researchers to gain a holistic understanding of the research situation and a general background knowledge about the phenomenon (Mathison 1988). The quantitative data, obtained from household surveys, provides general statistical information about the villages. While the qualitative data was obtained through an ethnographic approach by collected key informant interviews and focus group discussions to gain a more detailed and in-depth understanding of the keys actors' perspectives.

Results and Conclusion

The Foster Tree and Forest Preservation Story

With a high level of community commitment in protecting the forest, the benefits are sensed not only by the village community but also the global community that is currently struggling with climate change and global warming issues. This community initiative should be appreciated so that the existence of forests can also provide more benefits. For this reason, the adoption of trees or the care of trees in the Rantau Kermas Customary Forest was initiated. The Foster Tree was developed in the form of a fund-raising scheme that will be rewarding people who have taken good care of their forests. The Foster-a-Tree program is carried out with assistance from KKI Warsi.

The Foster-a-Tree Program in the Rantau Kermas Customary Forest, which is a pioneer in Jambi, provides a broad opportunity for the global community to help protect trees in the customary forest. From the survey, there were 891 trees in the Rantau Kermas Customary Forest, in the varieties of *Medang*, *Terentang*, *Nolan*, *Surian* wood and others. The prospective foster caretakers can visit the website pohonasuh.org. They will be able to see the data of trees to be cared for in the form of tree species, diameter, coordinates and photos of the tree. Each foster caretaker can transfer as much as IDR 200,000 per tree yearly.

The tree foster caretakers are entitled to get a tree foster certificate, information on trees being taken care of by the customary forest management group in accordance with the foster tree update that is given out by the manager every 6 months. The utilization of funds collected from the foster caretakers of this program is utilized by the village community in accordance with a mechanism that has been mutually agreed upon. The funds collected have been regulated based on village deliberation (*musyawarah*), namely 65% for the Customary Forest Management Group (*Kelompok Pengelola Hutan Adat*, KPHA), 5% for customary institutions and for Village-Owned Enterprises (*Badan Usaha Milik Desa*, BUMDes) by 30%. The utilization by KPHA is then used for operational costs such as patrols, plant

enrichment in customary forest areas, social activities and other activities that balance the economic and conservation functions of customary forest areas.

The customary forest management group is obliged to maintain and control the trees that have been fostered for by foster caretakers starting from photo updates to the condition of the trees. The tree condition update is done once in 6 months. The group is also obliged to inform the foster caretakers a month before the care period ends. The manager will also include the name of the caretakers and the information of the tree that has been taken care of in the form of a signboard that is attached to the cared for trees.

The Foster-a-Tree Program was launched in January 2014, with 10 caretakers and 32 trees taken care of. In the year 2019, more than 350 trees grow in 130 hectares of the customary forest. One of the criteria for a tree that can be adopted is that it must be more than 60 cm and above in diameter. The tree species, tree presence, tree height and coordinate location are also considered factors. This data is useful as information for donors who are interested in adopting trees.

Some of the notable tree caretakers are President Joko Widodo, Siti Nurbaya Bakar (KLHK) and Kuntoro Mangkusubroto, the former head of the Presidential Work Unit for Development Supervision and Control (UKP4). From the celebrities there are Astrid Tiar, Daniel Manantha, Dian Sastrowardoyo, even athletes (Sugiono, National Pencak Silat athlete), NGOs such as Hutan Itu Indonesia (The Forest is Indonesia, HII), and even from foreign countries such as Vladimir and Anne from Norway. Taking care of trees is a form of real contribution to save the environment and support a program to reduce carbon emissions caused by deforestation and forest degradation.

Illuminating parts of life through the Micro Hydro Power Plant

The preservation of the customary forest is a big determinant of the availability of water resources that supports the daily lives of indigenous people, the need for irrigation and the power source of the Micro Hydro Power Plant (PLTMH).

"Lampunyo nyalo karno rimbo tajago, lampunyo terang rimbo jangan ditebang". That was the slogan displayed on the location of the PLTMH Village of Rantau Kermas which was printed onto a sign board and stuck in the river bank. Since early 2000, the villagers have relied on PLTMH for their electricity needs. With stable electricity, this PLTMH is able to meet more than the needs of 115 houses in Rantau Kermas Village. The cost is cheap when compared to using diesel engines to help the community. According to the Village regulations, the electricity cost has been agreed upon based on the use of an electric circuit breaker, Miniature Circuit Breaker (MCB).

The existence of PLTMH in Rantau Kermas Village cannot be separated from Batang Langkup River which is the only source of water supply to generate PLTMH. The river, tipping Mount Masurai, is an important river that supplies water along four districts, namely Muara Siau, Lembah Masurai, Sungai Tenang and Jangkat. In order for the Langkup River to function properly, the existence of the customary forest in the upstream area as its buffer needs to be protected.

The Inspiration from Rantau Kermas

The designation and management of the customary forest in Rantau Kermas Village is an inspiration for other indigenous communities, especially the Serampas indigenous people residing in other villages within the Serampas customary area. In 2019, Depati Kara Customary Forests Jayo Tuo Rantau Kermas Village won the Kalpataru Award in the field of environmental savior. This award was received not without reason, given the long process of determining the customary forest Starting from the submission, agreement, political negotiations, recognition, until the determination and the now increasing public awareness. In the past, some people still wondered how forests could be a source of livelihood, why it is necessary to protect nature, and some of them also argued that natural disasters depend on fate. Now, people are starting to feel the benefits and are even proud of the national award they have received.

This award even led to the recognition of Rantau Kermas as one of the customary forests that has well-managed foster trees. Learning from the struggles and flood disasters that occurred from 1977 to January 2019, the community is made even more aware of the importance of forests. Some people even said, 'We who guard the forest still experience flooding and landslides, what if we don't protect it? Even our lights also depend on the existence of this forest'. The expectations for the existence of customary forests are also high to continue to be utilized from the current generations to future generations.

Serampas with the Challenge of Time

The Serampas clan customary territory includes five villages (Renah Kemumu, Tanjung Kasri, Lubuk Mentilin, Rantau Kermas and Renah Alai) which is administratively separate. They have their own challenges, especially for *adat* institutions which overshadow the five administrative villages in the *adat* area. The strength of the Serampas clan indigenous people lies precisely in the existence of their customary institutions that have survived to this day. As a consequence of compromise on the development of the times, both formal villages (*desa*) and *adat* leaders must continuously adapt and strengthen each other, especially in running both the government and *adat* systems in synergy.