

Mangrove Literacy House Library: A Social Inclusion-Based Library in the Environment and Sustainability Sector

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ABSTRACT

Libraries are essential in educating people about sustainability and environmental issues, particularly in preserving East Belitung's mangrove ecosystems. The goal of this study is to determine how the Mangrove Literacy House Library, which the Peat and Mangrove Restoration Agency established in collaboration with the Environmental Council of Muhammadiyah Central Executive, has changed into a library that emphasizes social inclusion in the areas of environment and sustainability, particularly concerning the preservation of mangrove ecosystems. This qualitative descriptive study data is gathered through interviews, observation, and documentation and is then analyzed using Miles and Huberman's models. The findings of this study demonstrated that the RLM library works in partnership with the *Sayang Kampong* Farmers Group to increase public awareness of environmental issues and sustainability, particularly concerning the preservation of the mangrove ecosystems of East Belitung. Through this partnership, students learn about the environment and sustainability through reading activities at the RLM Library and hands-on experiences at the *Sayang Kampong* Farmers Group. Students can even put their knowledge of mangrove ecosystems they have learned about in the RLM Library into practice for the *Sayang Kampong* Farmers Group, making the RLM Library a library based on social inclusion in the environment and sustainability.

Keywords: Mangrove Literacy House Library; library roles; social-inclusion

1. INTRODUCTION

Environmental and sustainability issues are universal concerns that many countries, including Indonesia, are addressing. Bearing in mind that the earth, which is the home of all living things, has been overexploited in the name of necessity, it has the potential to cause environmental damage. If these conditions continue massively, ecological damage will become more

widespread and severe, and in the end, it will cause natural disasters. In Indonesia, especially in Bangka Belitung Islands, rich in natural resources, people have been exploiting them for quite a while, causing environmental damage everywhere, including in the mangrove forest area. In the last 20 years, Bangka Belitung Islands have lost 240,467.98 hectares of mangrove forest caused by changes in land use to mining and shrimp ponds. Under these conditions, environmental and sustainability issues are an urgent task to be carried out immediately in Bangka Belitung Islands. Its implementation is not only the responsibility of individuals or one institution but all people and institutions in Bangka Belitung Islands Province, including the library and its staff (Ismi & Wijaya, 2021).

Libraries can play an essential role in increasing individual knowledge about environmental sustainability and helping improve community welfare (Lankes, 2012). However, in this case, the library faces multidimensional challenges, such as low awareness and readiness of users and librarians (Khalid et al., 2021). The same situation also occurs in Indonesia, particularly in Bangka Belitung Islands, where public awareness of environmental damage prevention and preservation is still low, environmental damage management and prevention are only partially implemented, and legal enforcement is ineffective (Rusfiana & Hermawan, 2019).

On the other hand, based on research conducted by the National Library of Indonesia regarding the value of the national reading proficiency level in 2021 explains that the value of Indonesia's reading proficiency level in 2021 is 59,52 on a scale of 0-100, or medium category (Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2022). In such circumstances, the library's attempts to promote the environment and sustainability, particularly preserving mangrove forests in East Belitung, by increasing public awareness of the issue, are complicated. In addition to providing access to sources of information related to this matter, libraries must also improve the community's ability to use them so that people's knowledge regarding these matters increases. Thus, the community will understand the fundamental role of the library in supporting the environment and sustainability. Therefore, innovation is needed in how libraries can involve users in supporting the environment and sustainability during conditions where people's interest in reading is at this moderate level.

The Mangrove Literacy House Library (*Rumah Literasi Mangrove*) has a unique way of increasing public knowledge about the environment and sustainability, especially for preserving mangrove forests in East Belitung. This method is through collaboration with the Love Village Farmers Group (*Sayang Kampung*). Thus, students or library users of the Mangrove Literacy House can practice their reading experiences related to mangrove conservation with the *Sayang Kampung* Farmers Group. Reading and practicing it is one of the efforts to increase public knowledge about the sustainability of the mangrove ecosystem in East Belitung, so this effort has made the mangrove literacy house library a library based on social inclusion in the environmental and sustainability fields.

According to Wijayanti in Prasetyo & Utami, inclusion is an approach to building an increasingly open environment by including everyone with different backgrounds, characteristics, abilities, statuses, conditions, ethnicity, culture, etc. (Prasetyo and Utami, 2020). Meanwhile, social inclusion increases the participation of disadvantaged people in society based on age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, or economic status by increasing their access to resources, opportunities, and respect for their rights. Therefore, social inclusion is a process to remove barriers to community participation in society (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016). From an information perspective, social inclusion is always linked to how libraries and other information institutions become solutions to

information problems faced by society. Hence, libraries and other information institutions need to work together with each other and other communities (Lloyd et al., 2017).

The library is an institution that needs to pay attention to social inclusion (Fitriani and Niswa, 2019). In 2015, The Ministry of National Development Planning of the Republic of Indonesia launched a social inclusion-based library service transformation policy. This policy is strengthened by the 2019 Government Work Plan (GWP), which includes literacy for welfare as one of the priorities in supporting human development priorities. Therefore, library services based on social inclusion are the answer to development challenges. By transforming library services into library services based on social inclusion, the library has a role as an information provider whose existence can be utilized by the community as a vehicle for learning without any restrictions on age, gender, or social class (Prasetyo and Utami, 2020).

The role of libraries in environmental and sustainability issues is nothing new. In 2000, Boyden and Weiner conducted research with the title *Sustainable Libraries: Teaching Environmental Responsibility to Communities*. The object of this research is the Oak Park California Library. The results of this research show that the design of the Oak Park California Library supports sustainable development so that the design of the Oak Park library can be used as an example by other communities in terms of building similar projects related to libraries (Boyden and Weiner, 2000). Furthermore, in 2014, research was conducted by K. Townsend with the title *Environmental Sustainability and Libraries: Facilitating User Awareness*. The research was conducted in libraries with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certificates in Canada, namely four college libraries and 20 public libraries. This study's results show that libraries with LEED certificates in Canada actively promote environmental sustainability to library users (K. Townsend, 2014).

Furthermore, in 2020, research conducted by Mochammad with the title *Library 4.0: Eco-Blended Library and Library Inclusion* was conducted at the Malang State University Library. The results of this study stated that the Malang State University library had succeeded in implementing an eco-blended library innovation. An eco-blended library is an innovation that pays attention to sustainable development by maximizing the environmental ecosystem in the library (Mochammad et al., 2020).

However, what distinguishes it from the Library of the Mangrove Literacy House is that, in supporting the environment and sustainability, the library focuses more on the preservation of mangrove forests by increasing the knowledge of library users regarding this matter and by combining the histories of SD Muhammadiyah Gantung and East Belitung, which are very iconic. Therefore, this study intends to find out how the Mangrove Literacy House, initiated by the Peat and Mangrove Restoration Agency in collaboration with the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership Environmental Council, increases its users' understanding about the environment and sustainability, especially for the preservation of mangrove ecosystems in East Belitung so that this becomes the library of the Mangrove Literacy House as a library based on social inclusion, especially in the field of environment and sustainability for the preservation of mangrove ecosystems in East Belitung.

2. METHODS

This research is qualitative research with a descriptive method. The instruments in this study were the researchers themselves, and the data collection techniques used in this study were interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with teachers and

students at the Muhammadiyah Islamic Junior High School, Gantung, East Belitung. The number of teachers who became informants was two, namely Mr Imam, who doubled as the principal, and Mr Irul. In contrast, the number of students was one person, namely Khalila Kirpalani. Apart from teachers and students, the informants in this study also came from the *Sayang Kampung* Farmers Group management, namely Mr Yudi Senga. They were chosen as informants, considering that the Mangrove Literacy House is in the Muhammadiyah Islamic junior high school, Gantung, and is managed by it. Observations were made directly in the field and on the Peat and Mangrove Restoration Agency website and news websites related to the Mangrove Literacy House Library. The documentation used is the welcome text of the Regent of East Belitung, delivered at the inauguration of the Mangrove Literacy House, and video documentation of activities carried out by the *Sayang Kampung* Farmer Group. To test the validity of the data, researchers used a triangulation technique.

The data analysis in this study uses the Miles and Huberman model. According to Sugiyono, analysis with this model is carried out interactively and continuously until it is complete and the data is saturated. In this analysis, three activities are carried out simultaneously: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification (Sugiyono, 2017).

1. Data reduction is a selection process, summarizing data that is considered necessary and choosing the main and important things. Data reduction was carried out since data collection using the data collection techniques used in this study.
2. Data presentation is a process of describing data or connecting various kinds of data collected so that it has meaning and is easy to understand. Data presentation can be narrative text, matrices, graphs, networks, and charts.
3. Concluding or verification is an activity that is carried out at the end of qualitative research. At this stage, one must arrive at conclusions and verify the meaning and truth of a conclusion.

An interactive model that describes the interrelationships of the three activities can be seen in the figure below.

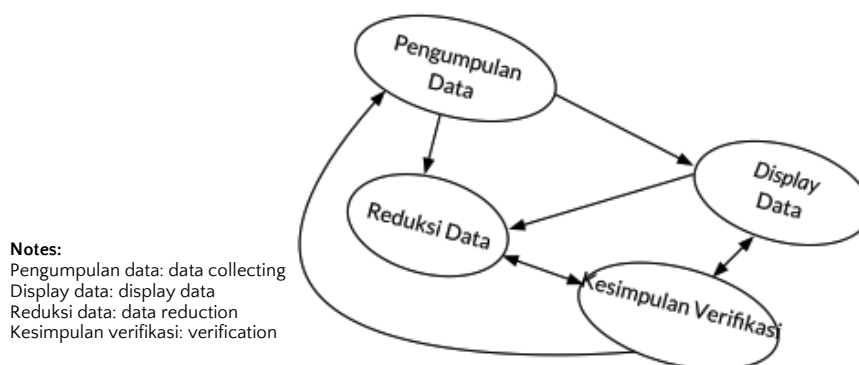


Figure 1. Interactive Models (Miles & Huberman in Usman & Akbar, 2008)

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

History of the Mangrove Literacy House Library

From now on, abbreviated as the Peat and Mangrove Restoration Agency initiated the RLM Library, the Mangrove Literacy House Library in collaboration with the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership Environmental Council. The library is in front of the Muhammadiyah Islamic Junior High School, Gantung, East Belitung, and was inaugurated on June 5, 2022, coinciding with world environment day. The inauguration of the RLM library was attended by the Regent of East Belitung, Deputy for Education and Socialization, Participation and Partnership, Peat and Mangrove Restoration Agency, and Muhammadiyah Central Executive. Placement of the Mangrove Literacy House Library at Muhammadiyah Islamic Junior High School, Gantung, East Belitung. Not without explanation, because before the Muhammadiyah Islamic Middle School, Gantung, East Belitung was established, previously in the same place the Muhammadiyah Elementary School, Gantung, East Belitung had been standing. So that the existence of the Muhammadiyah Islamic Junior High School has historical value for education in East Belitung was enshrined in the novel *Laskar Pelangi*. In addition, this also aims to make education in East Belitung closer to the environment and more inclusive so that later the community will love the environment more, as stated by the Deputy for Education and Socialization, Participation and Partnerships, Peat and Mangrove Restoration Agency, during the inauguration.

"...that the aim of the local government is that education is closer to the environment and inclusive, then the existence of a literacy house that is open to all people, can be a house to build solidarity, diversity and love for the environment..."

There is an RLM library at the Muhammadiyah Islamic Junior High School in Gantung, East Belitung. The library is open not just for the staff and pupils at the school, but also for members of the general public from both within and outside of East Belitung. Even though the RLM Library was not entirely open for the public every day at its first inauguration, this was because of operational issues with the RLM Library. The RLM Library was made available to the public at the end of July 2022, with service hours Monday until Saturday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Collection of Mangrove Literacy House Library

The RLM library has a collection of general books and books related to mangrove ecosystems and the environment, with 55 titles or 125 copies. Most of the books came from donations from the Peat and Mangrove Restoration Agency and were entrusted by the Archives and Library Service of the Bangka Belitung Islands Province, totaling 52 book titles. In addition, the RLM Library has a collection of miniature mangrove ecosystems and murals about mangrove ecosystems. According to an interview with the RLM Library manager, digital books are still in the application development stage, thus, the collections in the RLM Library are planned to include both printed and digital or non-printed versions.

"...Still in the application development stage from Balai Pustakanya. When it's finished, we will definitely inform and teach the teacher how to operate it..."

In addition to this collection, the RLM Library also has a collection of photos about the history of the Muhammadiyah elementary school, Gantung, East Belitung, and the transformation of the Muhammadiyah elementary school into a Muhammadiyah Islamic Junior High School. The photo is equipped with descriptive information about the picture. A collection of historical images of the Muhammadiyah Elementary School can provide factual information about the Muhammadiyah Elementary School, which is the setting in the *Laskar Pelangi* novel,

a famous novel. Thus visitors will get a different perspective from the *Laskar Pelangi* novel about the Muhammadiyah Elementary School. According to Asyraf Suryadin and Tien Rostini, the version of the novel *Laskar Pelangi*, which describes the Muhammadiyah elementary school, is unlike reality. The background description of the Muhammadiyah elementary school, Gantung, which is entirely deficient like in the novel, becomes its strength and attraction for its readers. This is natural because the author wants to attract readers and, at the same time, lead to the setting of a place far from school, such as in an urban area. In reality, Muhammadiyah Gantung elementary school, as stated by its former headmaster, Muntasir Irsyad, "*the school has cement floors, plank walls and shingle roofs and no ceiling*" (Suryadin & Rostini, 2021).



Figure 2. Room Interior of the Mangrove Literacy House at Muhammadiyah Islamic Junior High School, Gantung, East Belitung (Source: www.brgm.go.id)

Activities of Mangrove Literacy House Library

The presence of the RLM library aims to advance public knowledge about the environment and sustainability, especially about the preservation of mangrove ecosystems, as conveyed by the Deputy for Education and Socialization, Participation and Partnerships, Peat and Mangrove Restoration Agency.

"...Our presence in East Belitung is inseparable from our duty to accelerate mangrove rehabilitation, but we are also aware that mangrove rehabilitation efforts cannot work alone without public awareness..."

To realize this goal, the Peat and Mangrove Restoration Agency trained teachers and students at the Muhammadiyah Islamic junior high school, Gantung, East Belitung. The training aims to add insight to teachers and students at Muhammadiyah Islamic Junior High School, Gantung, about mangrove ecosystems, introduce learning modules, and increase teacher and student awareness about the importance of protecting mangrove ecosystems.

In addition to receiving training, teachers and students can practice related matters related to mangrove ecosystems. This practical activity was carried out through a cooperation scheme between the Muhammadiyah Islamic junior high school, Gantung as the manager of the RLM library and the *Sayang Kampong* Farmers Group, Sukamandi Village, Damar District, East Belitung Regency. In these practical activities, teachers and students receive several facilities to support these practical activities, including the availability of reading corners and

their books, discussion areas, mangrove recreation, and mangrove seedlings. These facilities are free of charge to teachers and students, and environmental activists, as stated by the head of the *Sayang Kampong* Farmers group.

"...Everything I do is solely to seek God's blessing. I only sell mangrove seeds to people who destroy them, to school children and activists it's free..."



Figure 3. Social activities in the Sayang Kampong Farmer Group of Sukamandi Village, Damar District, East Belitung (Source: Sayang Kampong Farmers Group and BRGM)

Other activities in the RLM Library are reading and discussion activities. To support this, the RLM library has a building area of approximately 54 m². Part of the building area is intended for discussion rooms and reading rooms for visitors to the RLM Library. Libraries are always required to develop and be innovative so that their users stay in the library and the library can meet the information needs of their users (Adji & Salim, 2019). The innovations made by the RLM library are not only to maintain its existence so that its users do not abandon it. However, more than that, the innovations made by the RLM library have made it a social inclusion-based library in the field of environment and sustainability, especially for the preservation of mangrove forests in the Bangka Belitung Islands. Forms of social inclusion in the field of environment and sustainability can be seen from the collaboration built by the RLM library with the village dear farmer group, where this collaboration further reinforces the role of the RLM library in increasing public knowledge about the environment and sustainability, especially regarding the preservation of the mangrove ecosystem in Gantung, East Belitung.

Through this collaboration, students and users of the RLM library gain experience regarding the environment and sustainability, especially regarding the preservation of mangrove ecosystems, through reading activities in the RLM Library and practicing them in the *Sayang Kampong* Farmers Group. For more details, see the image below.



Figure 4. RML Library Collaboration Pattern with the Sayang Kampong Farmers Group based on social inclusion in the preservation of mangrove forests.

The collaboration pattern above is not something new. This collaboration pattern has been carried out by the Muhammadiyah University of Bangka Belitung, the Archives and Library Service of the Bangka Belitung Archipelago Province, and the Owner of a Coffee Shop in Pangkalpinang City to develop community literacy, especially for connoisseur coffee in Pangkalpinang City (Suryadin et al., 2021). Such a pattern of collaboration not only increases public knowledge about the environment and sustainability, primarily related to the preservation of mangrove ecosystems, which has an impact on the emergence of public awareness, but such a pattern of collaboration can also create new tourist destinations in East Belitung.

4. CONCLUSION

Libraries are essential in increasing public knowledge of environmental issues and sustainability, especially concerning the preservation of mangrove ecosystems in East Belitung. However, realizing this is not easy, especially with low public awareness about the importance of the environment and sustainability, coupled with a moderate reading interest among the people. So innovation is needed to realize the vital role of the library. The collaboration carried out by the RLM library with the *Sayang Kampong* farmer group has made the RLM library a library based on social inclusion in the environment and sustainability, primarily related to the preservation of mangrove forest ecosystems. With this pattern of collaboration, experience related to the environment and sustainability, especially the preservation of mangrove ecosystems, is gained through reading books about it in the RLM library and practical activities at the *Sayang Kampong* Farmer Group.

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