

## **Impacts and Efforts to Preserve Local Wisdom of the Bajo Tribe in the Conservation of Marine Resources in Wakatobi Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province, Indonesia**



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**ABSTRACT:** This research aims to analyze the impact of the local wisdom's non-sustainability on the life of Bajo Mola people and to analyze efforts to maintain the local wisdom of Bajo Mola tribe in conserving marine resources. The method in this research is descriptive qualitative with a case study approach. Data collection was carried out by involved observation, in-depth interviews with selected informants, and documentation. The data obtained were analyzed by steps, data reduction, data presentation, and verification. The results of this study indicate that the non-sustainability of local wisdom has an impact on the life of Bajo Mola tribe, the impact consists of negative impacts, including marine resources that are starting to become scarce, this is influenced by the exploitative attitude of the people who do not care about sustainable management of marine resources. Lack of public awareness of the conservation of marine resources, the community no longer cares about the rules and attitudes that have become a separate identity for Bajo Mola tribe in protecting and managing marine resources. Positive impacts, including the development of community settlements, Bajo tribe feel more comfortable living in concrete houses made of coral than living in wooden stilt houses, this is a wooden stilt house, prone to sea breezes because of its presence above sea water which is always facing the sea free. Efforts to maintain the local wisdom of Bajo tribe are by making efforts to inherit it from generation to generation, the true inheritance of local wisdom aims to preserve and increase the understanding of Bajo Mola people towards their local wisdom.

**KEYWORDS:** Impact, effort, sustain, local wisdom, Bajo tribe

### **INTRODUCTION**

Bajo people have values and norms as well as local knowledge obtained from nature or what is currently known as local wisdom that governs their daily lives. The local wisdom and knowledge of Bajo Mola tribe is the result of a very long process from generation to generation. Local wisdom is an ancestral inheritance in the values of life that are united in the form of religion, culture and customs (Sambas, 2012). Bajo tribe believes that every component of the ecosystem in coastal and marine areas is guarded and protected by supernatural beings in the form of spirits. They have the belief that if the components of the ecosystem are disturbed, the spirits will show their wrath.

However, currently, there has been a shift in the viewpoint on the utilization of marine resources by Bajo Mola tribe in fulfilling their lives. Even though the Bajo Mola tribe considers it important to preserve marine resources such as coral reefs, sea-grass beds and certain types of fish, they also use them in exploitative ways. One of the reasons for the loss or shifting of traditional wisdom is the community's view that nature is no longer of sacred value but has potential that can be exploited to fulfill their lives (Keraf, 2002).

The use of marine resources by Bajo Mola tribe which no longer respects the principle of sustainability, for example by taking coral stones for house foundations, has the potential to damage coral reefs. Even though according to the community's opinion, only dead corals are taken, mining that is carried out continuously has the potential to damage the marine ecosystem and cause coastal erosion. Changing the concept of settlement from life on the high seas to living somewhere/on land is an attempt to justify marine and land life through an adaptation perspective by placing cultural change as part of its efforts to adapt to its environment (Suyuti, 2011).

This change in the lifestyle of the Bajo Mola people has an impact on their social and cultural values. Humans are the main factor causing a lot of environmental damage related to marine resources such as coral mining, sand mining, sea pollution, overfishing and so on. The interaction between humans and their environment does not always have a positive impact on the environment. This interaction, according to Suparmini, et al (2013), can have a negative impact which can lead to disasters, disasters and other losses.

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This change will damage their cultural system because the cultural system adopted will change along with the entry of new cultures either directly or indirectly. According to Soemardjan (2012), social change is the changes that occur in a society that affect the social system including values, attitudes and behavior patterns among groups in society.

A consumptive lifestyle can erode local wisdom norms in society (Suhartini, 2009). To avoid this, it is necessary to preserve the norms that have been in force in a society that is hereditary and closely related to environmental sustainability, namely local wisdom. It is in these conditions that the local wisdom possessed by the community can minimize the negative impacts that exist. Following, implementing, and believing in existing local values, which are carried out from generation to generation, directly or indirectly have a big role in environmental preservation.

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study used a qualitative research method with a cultural study approach. The qualitative method is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior (Rodiah & Triyana, 2019). Qualitative research methods are also often called naturalistic research methods. Thus, the presence of researchers will not greatly affect the dynamics of the object under study.

The cultural studies approach is an empirical and theoretical approach that aims to obtain an in-depth description and analysis of culture in a society based on intensive field research. Researchers collect data by coming directly to the field which is the object of research to study intensively the problem under study.

This research was carried out in Wakatobi National Park area in the settlements of the Bajo Mola tribe which are administratively located in South Wangi-Wangi District, Wakatobi Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **The Impact of Local Wisdom Unsustainability on the Life of Bajo Mola Tribe**

The impacts felt in the life of the Bajo Mola people can be categorized into two categories, namely negative impacts and positive impacts. Negative impacts can occur if local wisdom and society cannot adapt to these changes. While the positive impact of the non-sustainability of local wisdom will occur if local wisdom can be adapted to the community environment and the conditions of the people who can adapt. This positive influence will have a good impact on the life of the Bajo Mola people.

#### **Negative impact**

##### **Marine resources are getting scarce**

Various forms of local wisdom in Bajo Mola people are always related to the management of marine resources. This has become a separate identity for Bajo Mola people, which shows how Bajo Mola people value the sea. However, in reality, in the life of the Bajo Mola people, there has been a lack of local wisdom in Bajo Mola people themselves. This is influenced by the exploitative attitude of the people and the lack of awareness of the importance of local wisdom in managing marine resources.

Passive and active actions of humans determine the sustainability and continuity of the existence of natural resources that have been provided by the Creator, one form of action can affect the increase or decrease in environmental quality which can also directly impact human life itself (Marlina, 2020). Even though in principle this local wisdom is a form of teaching attitude to Bajo Mola tribe community in protecting and managing marine resource ecosystems properly.

The fading of local wisdom in the management of marine resources in Bajo Mola tribe has an impact on the reduction of marine resources around the settlements of Bajo Mola tribe. The lack of people who get fish around the settlements of Bajo Mola tribe results in people who are forced to go looking for fish outside Wakatobi sea waters. This is based on the results of the researcher's interview with Mr. JM one of the community leaders of the Bajo Mola tribe, saying:

"The impact that is being felt at this time is that it is already difficult for us to find fish in the sea at this time. In the past, we still caught a lot of fish around these waters, but now we have to leave the area to find fish. This happens because there are people who no longer obey their local wisdom. Many people have started violating, for example in the past we still caught a lot of sunu fish in front of this *kapota* reef, but now we rarely see it. This is because people no longer adhere to certain times when they go fishing. The people go fishing in that place every day, even though it's time for us to go fishing in that place." (Interview, May 30, 2022, translated by the researchers)

When the environment is not preserved it can have a bad impact on humans, on the contrary. If it is maintained it can provide welfare for humans. Communities have done whatever they want with marine resources, without regard to the value of local wisdom in it. The exploitation of natural resources in excess without regard to the carrying capacity of the environment has brought disaster impacts and ecological havoc to the sustainability and balance of ecosystems in the world (Kasmawati, 2011). The difficulty of finding fish around the waters of the Wakatobi Sea has caused many Bajo Mola people to lose their main livelihood. This has forced the Bajo Mola people to go to sea far outside the area and even to the Nusa Tenggara region, to find a decent livelihood to support their families.

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### **Lack of public awareness of marine resource conservation**

The dependence of Bajo Mola people on the sea requires the community to always pay close attention to marine ecosystems. In life, the Bajo Mola people have been taught by their ancestors to take good care of the marine ecosystem, so that the use of marine resources can be managed sustainable manner by generations of Bajo Mola tribe. Various forms of local wisdom in the life of Bajo Mola people such as *tubba dikatutuang*, *pamali*, *duata sangal* and *parika* are always related to the conservation of marine resources.

However, the reality is that currently Bajo Mola people no longer care about their local wisdom, so this has an impact on increasing efforts to manage coastal and marine resources that are less environmentally sound. Based on the results of the researcher's interview with Mr. MJR, one of the community leaders of Bajo Mola tribe, said:

"With the loss of this local wisdom, Bajo Mola people no longer care about and do as they please when they go to sea. This can be seen from the existence of people here who go fishing in areas where it is prohibited, we see this often every day, even every day some people fish in these prohibited areas. Even though that means why people are prohibited from fishing there because that area is a place for fish to spawn, so people are prohibited from fishing there, now people no longer care about that". (Interview, 31 May 2022, translated by the researchers).

The lack of persistence of local wisdom in the life of the Bajo Mola tribe has an impact on the lack of public awareness in conserving marine resources. Deficiencies in integrating local (local) wealth cause failure in efforts to manage coastal natural resources (Stanley, 2005). The fading of local wisdom has affected Bajo Mola tribe in managing marine resources.

The community no longer knows and cares about the rules and attitudes that have become a separate identity for Bajo Mola people in protecting and managing marine resources properly. Many Bajo Mola people build houses using rocks as the foundation of their houses. Taking coral reefs is something that is strictly prohibited in the life of Bajo Mola people. This is very contrary to the local wisdom of *tubba dikatutuang* which teaches Bajo Mola people to always protect and preserve coral reefs in the sea. According to Dahuri (2004), one of the causes of changes in coastal ecosystems is uncontrolled economic activity and awareness of the importance of conserving natural resources in coastal areas which is still low among various actors. The lack of sustainability of local wisdom has an impact on the reduced awareness of the conservation of marine resources by the Bajo Mola people.

### **Positive impact**

#### **Development of community settlements**

The characteristics of traditional Bajo houses are influenced by natural conditions and the local climate. The design of the houses of Bajo people is also influenced by unpredictable weather which poses a threat in the form of strong sea waves (Dharma, 2017). The houses of Bajo people are prone to sea breezes because they are above sea water which is always facing the sea. However, the people in this area also want positive changes in their residential environment. This is based on the results of the researcher's interview with Mr. DS a member of the Bajo Mola tribe, saying:

"The development of this settlement is very contrary to the local wisdom of the *tubba dikatutuang*, which teaches the Bajo Mola tribe to always protect corals, but this is no longer cared for by the community. Many people have built houses from the rock this is known by the community, that these are all wrong actions, but the community feels more comfortable if they build houses from concrete rather than houses on wooden stilts. The community is no longer afraid that their house will collapse when there are strong winds. It's different from wooden houses. When there is a strong wind season, we are wary of piling up the house so that it forms artificial soil on which a concrete house can be built. The activity of hoarding coral under the house is continued until all under the house is filled with coral. Under the house that has been filled with coral, a permanent concrete house will later be built. The Bajo Mola people admit that permanent concrete houses are considered more comfortable than houses on stilts, now many people are building houses using concrete". ((Interview, 31 May 2022, translated by the researchers).

#### **Efforts to preserve the local wisdom of Bajo Mola tribe in conserving marine resources**

One of the efforts to preserve the local wisdom of Bajo Mola tribe in conserving marine resources is an effort to inherit the importance of local wisdom values from generation to generation. Inheritance efforts are a way to protect and utilize local culture or wisdom, especially local wisdom in conserving marine resources from various kinds of threats of extinction as a result of global cultural currents that have penetrated local culture. If this local wisdom needs special attention so that it can survive and be understood in the context of today's life. According to Basri (2014), a tradition will not live if it does not undergo transformation where there is an adjustment between tradition and modernization which is a natural thing because culture is an aspect that will always experience dynamics. Seeing the strong influence of globalization in the life of the Bajo Mola people today it is as if global values and ideologies are undermining all social orders that originate from local wisdom and ancestral traditions. Tradition seems to play less of a role as a value that can function in the social life of society. It is as if tradition is of adaptation of local culture with elements of modernization to create cultural dynamism. Because the role of local wisdom is very important, efforts are made to preserve it so that it is considered an ancient element that makes people farther behind the development of modern humans like in Western countries.

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The growing global (modern) culture cannot be avoided in the development of local culture. We must realize together that culture will continue to experience dynamics toward the level of modern human civilization. Cultural traditions always transform as a result of the times and due to their adjustment to the context of the times (Sibarani, 2012: 3). Local wisdom will always live in a transformation as a form does not become extinct. As expressed by JM as follows:

"One way to continue to maintain this local wisdom, yeah so far this has been done by passing on or teaching from generation to generation to the younger generation or children at home regarding this local wisdom, for example like pamali. This pamali is always taught by every Bajo Mola tribe to their children about what is forbidden or which becomes taboo in our lives, although lately, it has been rare for parents to teach this pamali to their children, there are still parents who still teach pamali to their children". (Interview, 30 May 2022, translated by the researchers).

The inheritance and cultivation of cultural values since childhood in the family for generations need to be taught to maintain and preserve local traditions and wisdom. The diversity of adaptation patterns to the environment that exists in a society that has been passed down from generation to generation has become a guide in utilizing natural resources. Public awareness to preserve the environment can be grown effectively through a cultural approach. If this awareness can be increased, then it will become a very big strength in environmental management. In this cultural approach, strengthening social capital, such as sociocultural institutions, local wisdom, and norms related to environmental preservation is important as the main basis.

Local wisdom such as *tubba dikatutuang*, *duata sangal*, *parika*, and *pamali* in conserving marine resources is a cultural property and its own identity that belongs to Bajo Mola ethnic group which needs to be passed down from generation to generation to the next generation. Inheritance of local wisdom aims to preserve and increase understanding of tribal people Bajo Mola on its local wisdom. One form of inheritance of local wisdom to Bajo Mola tribe is by passing it down from generation to generation within the family. This inheritance is carried out by teaching children about various forms of local wisdom such as pamali that exist in the life of Bajo Mola tribe so that they can know and apply it in their daily lives.

In preserving local wisdom in Bajo Mola tribe community, it is always passed on by teaching it to the next generation. Inheritance is the strengthening of role model cultural values that have been maintained for generations so that each individual has an awareness of identity (Hidayat, 2017). This is an effort that is still being carried out by Bajo Mola people to preserve their local wisdom so that it remains sustainable and known by the next generation.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis in this study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

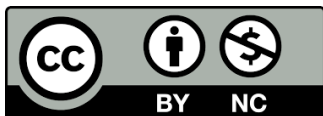
1. The impact of non-sustainability of local wisdom on the life of Bajo Mola tribe, consists of negative impacts and positive impacts. The negative impacts of the non-sustainability of local wisdom on the life of Bajo Mola people include: (1) Marine resources are becoming scarce. (2) Lack of public awareness of marine resource conservation. This can be seen from the existence of people who do not care about the rules and attitudes in fishing in certain areas that have become prohibited areas for Bajo Mola people. The positive impact of the non-sustainability of local wisdom on the life of the Bajo Mola people is the development of community settlements. Bajo people feel happier and more comfortable living in concrete houses than living in wooden stilt houses. In this case, Bajo people's houses are prone to sea breezes because they are above the sea water which is always facing the sea. However, the people in this area also want positive changes in their residential environment.
2. Efforts to preserve the local wisdom of Bajo Mola tribe in conserving marine resources are by carrying out inheritance efforts from generation to generation. Carrying out efforts to inherit and instill cultural values since childhood in the family for generations is very important so that children from an early age already know the values of local wisdom so that local wisdom remains sustainable and known by future generations.

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