

**THE REUSE OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION FOR DISASTER PREVENTION
(CASE STUDY IN BANYUMAS, CENTRAL OF JAVA INDONESIA)**

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ABSTRACT

The way how to decrease human victims in a disaster could be attempted before a disaster happened such as socializations and education to improve community awareness. Despite regular socialization and education programs, information about natural disaster can use traditional communications also. This research used descriptive qualitative method with indepth interview, observation and documentation to collect data. The informans were collected as represented disaster mitigation institutions from Banyumas government and people who know about this problems and represented affected natural disaster areas. The result of this research shows that is a district that frequently stricken by disaster, Banyumas goverment already gave several things to prevent the appearance of victims in case the disaster came. The preventive action that goverment did such as the instalation of an early warning system technology, socialitation about disaster, even regular security about the current situation. Although these happening communication technology disaster does not leave the traditional communication media that already in use by Banyumas society since long time ago. The traditional media contains with two things which are folk performance such as Gagrak Banyumasan shadows puppet and Banyumasan Gending and the tools availability of traditional communication in this area. The folk performance could be as a complement media to educate people about disaster prevention with interact each other while the show is running/live. If both of the performing arts media could be switched on/revived and used again as a socialitation media regarding disaster case, so it would be easier for Banyumas society to understand because the used of Banyumas local language. For the tools of traditional communication media in this community such as kenthongan and bedug could be use as a early warning replacement, especially if the early warning system technology could not running well as usual. Sound from these tools also could be symbolized security situation in this community. Basically all of the traditional communication media are still needed by society in Banyumas area, included information sharing about disaster prevention.

Keywords: disaster prevention, traditional communication media, reuse

INTRODUCTION

Disaster is a thing that has to be avoided because it often comes unpredictably but is risky and causes both lives and materials loss. Generally, disaster will bring consequences as man victims, materials loss and public facilities damage that will affect to the lives of society and will also give impact to the future activities and development. Thus, in order to face a disaster there must be prevention efforts that will function as the programs that prepare, plan, control, and do the whole prevention and

handling actions. These programs are hoped to press and reduce the loss due to the occurrence of disaster.

One of southern Central Java areas which has high potential of natural disaster occurrence is Banyumas. Cahyono, the Head of Badan Penanggulangan Bencana Daerah (BPBD), an institution that is responsible in preventing and controlling disaster in Banyumas area, stated that based on national data, Banyumas Regency is ranked in 8th place as an area with high potential of disaster. This showed that Banyumas is placed in quite high position. Geographically, Banyumas Regency is located in Eurasia plate rim, which makes Banyumas has high risk of tectonic earthquake. This area is not only dominated by the mountains, but there are also rivers, unstable ground, forest, roads, and railways. Besides, there are unstable seasons, climate and weather changes. There are also uncontrolled sand mining on several spots near Serayu river, illegal logging and also the luxurious villas and houses on Mt. Slamet. The frequent, hard rain increases the wariness of disaster in wet season. Kranggan, an area in Ajibarang even has the highest rain fall rate, which is almost as high as Bogor City in West Java. Data from Badan Penanggulangan Bencana Daerah (BPBD) Banyumas showed there are 19 sub districts out of 29 sub districts that have high risk of flood. There are 91 villages with high flood potential in Eastern Banyumas, which are Tambak, Kemranjen and Sumpiuh. National roads in those locations are also easily inundated by flood. Another example is the event on October 16th 2012, where a house in Banjarpanepen village in Sumpiuh, Banyumas, was seriously damaged due to the landslide. There were seven people live in that house but fortunately the disaster didn't claim any victim.

PROBLEM

Based on the introduction above, there is a problem that can be abbreviated as "How is the reuse of traditional media communication for disaster prevention done in Banyumas?"

LITERATURE REVIEW

Disaster Mitigation

Based on UU No. 24 Tahun 2007, mitigation is a series of efforts including application of the regulation of high disaster potential development, actions of disaster prevention, emergency actions, rehabilitations and reconstructions. There are two kinds of mitigation, which are structural (i.e. checked dam, dams, earthquake-resistance houses and others) and non-structural mitigation (i.e. regulations, training, and others, which specifies in efforts to minimize disaster impacts).

The efforts to minimize victims (mitigation) due to the disaster occurrence has been started since several years ago, orienting to Hyogo Framework, a commitment of international citizens to reduce the risk of disaster occurrence (Budianto & Tanti, 2013: 400). Disaster risk reduction can be

understood as efforts or measurements that is used to minimize loss by minimalizing threats, susceptibilities, vulnerabilities, and increasing coping and adaptive capacities in the contexts of before, on and after the disaster. One of the most essential indicators in decreasing the risk and impact of disaster is the society's readiness. Here, people's awareness and understanding, as the subject and also the object when disaster occurs in an area, are needed. As people are more aware and understand the importance of disaster risk reduction information, the loss, both in materials and more importantly lives, might be reduced.

In 2007, Indonesian Government released UU No. 24 tentang Penanggulangan Bencana. Even at the same year Indonesian Government had cooperation with UNDP by designing a program named Safer Communities through Disaster Risk Reduction (SCDR) in Development. This program's objective is to help Indonesian Government in developing a society which is safer from disaster (Budianto & Tanti, 2013: 400). The purpose is to make the regulation makers and society o be able to recognize and understand the disaster risks and have ability that can be functiones to reduce the loss risks due to the disaster occurrence.

Disaster countermeasures have been applied as one of 11 (eleven) mid-long term national development priorities on 2010-2014, which are integrated to national priority of Living Environment and Disaster Management (Budianto & Tanti, 2013: 400). That priority is directed to the efforts as follow; mainstreaming the disaster risk reduction as national and regional priorities, strengthening the capacity of disaster countermeasures in the capital and regional area, optimizing the control instruments of space using in the aspect of disaster risk reduction, increasing the resources of emergency handling and humanity actions, and also accelerating the recovery of impacted area (Bappenas, 2010).

Disaster reduction in Indonesia is still not working optimally since there is still not any blueprint of disaster risk reduction strategies that is purposed for creating correlations between stakeholders, disaster susceptibilities, society's communicative potentials and other development agendas that are specifically related to the human resources like education and poverty handling (Budianto & Tanti, 2013: 402). In the other side, disaster risk reduction should need the permanent institutions from one, three and five years. In every impacted area, the society condition will be different and it needs the different treatments in recovering them after disaster.

Traditional Communication Media

The efforts of information distribution through communication media for society are different because of different society structure and system in every region. For the linier society, which means that the problems are known and had by the biggest part of the society member, communication

through modern mass media will be more beneficial. In contrast with the plural society, modern mass media will not work effectively and it takes harder efforts than the use of traditional communication media in the society (Rogers, 1992).

Traditional communication media, which is also known as folk media, is human communication which is done by using symbols like sounds, cues, visual arts and shows (Rachmadi, 1988: 111). In modern, developed society, the human communication is done using modern media and technology like newspapers, radio, movie, television and other electronic appliances like internet, satellite and others. All of the mentioned communication channels are considered as communication media and are only differed by its source, type and scope. People's media are described as media which are cheap, easy, general, offering chance for dialogue, suitable and approved by cultural aspects, local, flexible, entertaining and also populist, and is also trustworthy by the society members, which are dominantly the villagers with traditional lifestyle (Oepen, 1988: 88).

Traditional communication media consist of many kinds and types, for examples are folklore (myths, legends and tales), proverb, aphorism, poem, folk songs, folk theater, and traditional music instruments like *kenthongan*, *gong*, *bedug*, *gendang* and others (Rachmadi, 1988: 111). All of those traditional communication media live among people, originated from their pure genuine tradition and is functioned as interactional tools in different occasions. Thus, people inherit their behavioral and moral values through the mentioned media to their ancestries. The needs of traditional communication media will always live as long as people need to inherit the values they need in their lives, which is not forcing and mingled with foreign values.

In many regions in Indonesia, there are still many villages that use folk performances as communication media among them. This is because the messages that are delivered in traditional media are more acceptable and understandable by the traditional villagers. The development messages will be delivered by their mother tongue through the familiar media which are suitable with their cultural values, which makes the people as the recipients don't feel forced to understand the messages. Some of the traditional communication media, the folk performances, that still live and active in Indonesia are *ketoprak* in Central and East Java, *ludruk* in East Java, *wayang* in the majority of Javanese people, *randai* in Riau, theatre and *dagelan*. All of those folk performances have characteristics as they are dominated by spoken element in conversations, dialogue or even in their songs.

Folk performances as traditional communication media are the communication media that are used by people in a particular area (local), since the native culture was not contaminated by modern technology and are still used until now (Rachmadi, 1988: 112). As the media are originated from the

native people, so its historical appeals are functional and aesthetic, both the popular (*ketoprak*, *ludruk*) and the classic one like *wayang*. Therefore, as it has function to entertain the audiences, the traditional communication media are also functioned to educate, strengthen and even change the values and traditions of the people. Folk media are the identity of people's expression. The messages that are being delivered to the people are the parts of their own life experiences, although there are also some magical-religious traditions as people's faith as reflections of their material and spiritual lives (Rachmadi, 1988:112).

Another traditional communication medium is the sound, which symbolizes a particular sign with a particular meaning like the ones in *kenthongan* and *bedug*. Related to the disaster occurrence, the sounds of people beating those traditional instruments are meant to inform, warn and save people by beating it in a particular rhythm as danger signs. The danger signs are an effort to warn people about the chance of disaster occurrence. The forms of those danger signs are agreed by local society, which impacts as in case they hear the danger signs, they can understand it and know what to do. Basically, these danger signs should fulfil some requirements, including accessible, immediate, coherent, and official (cited from http://carapedia.com/tanda_tanda_bahaya_info2538.html).

METHOD

The method used in this study is qualitative descriptive, which is a method that reviews, explains and analyzes data in order to solve social problems that are occurring at the present time (Effendy, 2004: 93). The data are collected through in-depth interview, observation and documentation. To test the validity of the data, researcher used data triangulation method (Moleong, 2001: 178). In this study, validity test was done by comparing the observation result with the result of in-depth interview and also comparing the in-depth interview result with the material of related document.

Purposive sampling technique, a sampling technique which is oriented to researcher's opinion about the eligibility of the representative informants, was chosen in order to choose informants of this study (Arikunto, 1993). Researcher chose five public figures as informants, who are believed to be trustworthy in giving data for this study and understand the problems of this study well. Another informant is chosen from Badan Penanggulangan Bencana Daerah (BPBD) in Banyumas Regency as the representative of the Banyumas government.

DISCUSSION

Disaster Communication Media

Yunianto, Kepala Pelaksana Harian BPBD Banyumas, stated that Banyumas is a district which has high potential of disasters like tornado, landslide and flood. In a disaster occurrence, the loss, both lives

and material, are things that should be avoided in handling the occurring disaster. The prevention process of victim loss can be done in some situations. First, the availability of information system that is provided by the regions with high disaster potential as early warning system to the people. This system should be prevailed directly and immediately as the early effort in preventing the disaster loss. Second, the availability of socialization and education to prepare people's awareness and preventing maximum loss. This program can be formed as counselling and direct simulation about the procedures to prevent the victim loss and as the self-rescuing effort if there is an unwanted disaster occurrence. This program should be organized regularly as warning system, and thus it will automatically work in disaster occurrence. In fact, people will get easily bored with counselling and simulation programs. There are many reasons for this, as they already understand the procedures, people also consider these programs will bother their income factors because they will have less time for working, which implies on lesser income they get. Third, the level of understanding and awareness of the people. If the society has high level of this factor, thus they will contribute directly in the disaster handling programs. In contrast, if the level is low, they will also have low contribution in further programs.

People's readiness is an aspect that is essential in facing a disaster. Therefore, there must be a disaster communication medium that will help people in being aware and thus increase people's contribution. The result of in-depth interview showed that people's contribution is not obtained from counselling and simulation programs. In the beginning of the programs, people are still in need of the knowledge and they are curious, for example is in the socialization program of siren installation as the first step of early warning system in Pekuncen. People were also still enthusiast in practicing the simulation. They did all the instructions, directed by BPBD team and LSM members, the enactment of evacuation route, signs and safe meeting point. But, their curiosity doesn't last forever since they will get bored and they feel they already know the materials, and they also had less contribution in the socialization process. They were just following the process but didn't have courage to ask questions about what they have to do in emergency situation when there is a disaster occurrence like how to inform their relatives and how to save lives if one of their family members become the victim.

The reminding process of loss reduction is still important and needed to be done. This is important to avoid panic and uncertain condition and turn it to be calm and clear to do actions. They are also expected to warn the others in order to decrease the chance of more life loss, because if people wait for government's socialization programs, the result will not change. The informant from public figures explained that the effort of educating and building people's understanding of the things to do in disaster occurrence comes as the traditional communication media. Traditional communication media that can be used for that purpose is the folk performances as educating medium and *kenthongan* as the early warning sign if there is a disaster occurrence in their area.

Folk Performances as Disaster Education Media

Istiyanto (2003) stated that in rural people, which is dominated by traditional people, there are many kinds of social media as the effective tools to interact among one another. These media has been growing and developing since long ago and has become the socialization media of the people's values, from a generation to another. These media are known as folk media. The folk media use face-to-face communication both in interpersonal and group communications. Here, the contribution process of the members is very essential, both as the players and the audiences. They can deliver the messages directly in the performance. This is categorized as interactive communication process that is commonly happen in traditional people's lives.

Folk media often come as local arts or local folk performance. The arts of local folk performance is used as the local arts and folks performances. The arts of folk performance is used as the tools in introducing and delivering messages to the rural people, including the messages about disaster like the cause of the disaster, its prevention efforts and also the safety efforts in disaster occurrence. Because the rural people like and need the arts of traditional performances as entertainment media, thus these media can be a great tool as education tool about disaster. The education message about the disaster can be added implicitly as creative aspect in role's dialogue in the performances.

Further, Istiyanto (2003) stated that in traditional communication in rural areas, the use of folk performances as communication media has big potential to access many people, especially when the media have strong attraction which is rooted in people's life. The arts of folk performances are the communication tools that have been used in a local area, which is used before the local culture was not contaminated by technology and is still used until now. These media are familiar with the people, full of variations and can be immediately available, and also cheap. These media, with all of its advantages, have the potentials as effective tools in delivering messages, especially when it is specialized in the case of disaster that should be understood by all society members.

Generally, there are two kinds of folk performances in Banyumas that can be used as education and disaster communication media for traditional people in Banyumas. *Pakem*, the Javanese term of a story's plot in the performances, indeed cannot be changed drastically. But, the dialogues and the messages about disaster education can be added and modified. The purpose is to build awareness and understanding without being contrast with the main idea of the story that has been the plot of the performance. If the plot turned to be very different than the main *pakem*, the audiences will leave them, and thus it will not be effective in communicating the particular messages like the disaster topics. Two kinds of folk performances in Banyumas are:

- a. *Wayang Kulit Gagrag Banyumasan*

The history and definition of *wayang kulit Gagrag Banyumasan* are cited from Wikipedia (https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wayang_kulit_Gagrag_Banyumasan) and it explains that like the common Javanese, people of Banyumas also love to watch the performance of *wayang kulit*. The *wayang kulit* performances in Banyumas tend to follow *gagrag*, the Banyumasan style of puppeteer. The arts of Banyumas' *gagrag* puppeteer are actually similar with Yogya-Solo style that is combined with Kedu (southern Central Java area) style in its story, strike and language. The only difference is in Banyumasan *gagrag*, the *punakawan* (servants of the main character) use Banyumasan language. The name of characters are also generally same, except *Bagong* (Solo) turned to be *Bawor* or *Carub* in Banyumas. In Yogya-Solo style, *Bagong* is the youngest child of *Ki Semar* while in Banyumasan version, *Bawor* is the oldest. *Bawor* himself is the mascot of Banyumas Regency.

The main character of *Wayang Kulit Gagrag Banyumasan* is the folk nuance that is really deep, in which the good puppeteer will perform the dynamic reality of society. The famous puppeteers of *Wayang Kulit Gagrag* are Ki Sugio Purbacarito, Ki Sugino Siswacarito and Ki Suwarjono.

In the performance of *Wayang Kulit Gagrag*, all messages about society's reality, development information, government's program including the disaster socialization can be delivered clearly and it can also trigger the interactive communication between audiences and the performers when *punakawan* (*Bawor* and his siblings) making performance as the center of performance. This moment is functioned as the interlude from the main *wayang* story. In this scene, the puppeteer will insert the messages and even critics to everyone, subtly but also overtly as Banyumas people's principle in life, *cablaka*, which means forthrightness.

To get the audiences' interest, the performance of *punakawan* is done in relax and humorous situation but the inserted messages can be emphasized repeatedly and, if needed, asked to the audiences to make sure that they understand the messages. If the puppeteer considers the audiences don't understand the messages, it can be repeated and asked in dialogue to the audiences creatively, without being too patronizing.

One of the examples of *Wayang gagrag's* messages about disaster is when the puppeteer told a disaster occurrence of flood in an area in Banyumas. With the right gamelan tone, puppeteer told how flood occurred on the area, the victim's fate, the causes of flood from illegal logging, the logged garbage, clogged streams, narrowing rivers, and also the human's behaviors that finally causing flood as a test from God.

Informant who represented the government also confirmed that the performances of *Wayang Kulit Gagrag Banyumasan* can be the alternative socialization media aside from the socialization media as society gathering and outdoor media like banners. The puppeteer has to get a note so the messages that will be delivered to the audiences are suitable with the reality and not considered as subjective or bias information. If the puppeteer explain the messages in the right way, the people's awareness of disaster will increase. In contrast, when the puppeteer cannot deliver the messages, audiences can misunderstand them. Therefore, the puppeteer's information and understanding about disaster topic should also be increased. This is justified by the public figures informant who told that indeed there are information about development and disaster messages are inserted by the puppeteer in the performances. The messages are usually inserted in satire and advices that are meant to trigger the audiences' curiosity. Even in many occasions, the audiences are also asked by the puppeteer about the topic. Usually, this dialogue happened when the main character's performance is in break and the performance is filled with entertainment performed by the servants of the main character to entertain and strengthen. The dialogue is delivered in Banyumasan language as the people's mother tongue so they will understand the messages that are delivered by the puppeteer. This folk performance is started from 9 p.m. until the breaking dawn.

b. *Gending Banyumasan*

Gending Banyumasan, or the traditional songs of Banyumas, dominate many kinds of traditional arts in Banyumas. It can also be called as the uniqueness of the Banyumasan culture, even with many creations that perform the Banyumasan rhythm and accent, which differs with other kinds of art performances. The other characteristics are that Banyumasan songs contain *parikan* or traditional poetry that is usually containing humorous satire, more dynamic rhythm than the Yogya-Solo style, which is even more similar to the Sundanese. The rhymes tell advices, humor, and depicting Banyumas society and the social critics. The songs of *Gending Banyumasan* can be played with regular *gamelan* or the *gamelan calung bambu*. As other Javanese *gending*, there are also *laras slendro* and *pelog* in the rhythm of *Gending Banyumasan*.

This performance art can also be inserted with much disaster information although not as the main message. The message can be delivered though the traditional poetry or in the specific rhyme in the main poetry. In *Gending Banyumasan*, the message is not delivered as straight as in *Wayang Kulit Gagrag Banyumasan* because it is a satire art. In *Wayang Kulit Gagrag Banyumasan* the puppeteer could tell the humorous story in dialogues, even puppeteer could

deliver vulgar messages to attract people's attention and relieve sleepiness. In contrast, the artists of *Gending Banyumasan* don't do them because it will be difficult to keep along with the music and poetry rhythm and the rhymes of *Gending Banyumasan* are formal, adjusting the situation. But, the messages of disaster information can also be inserted in this performance although the duration of *Gending Banyumasan* is much shorter than the duration of *Wayang Kulit Gragag Banyumasan*. *Wayang Kulit Gragag Banyumasan* performance can be held in a night, while *Gending Banyumasan* will only be held in two – four hours of performance.

The Sounding System of Traditional Communications

New technology like early warning system with siren and other soundings have been installed by the regional government as warning system of disaster occurrence in the areas with high risk of disaster. In fact, traditional people have had and used traditional media that are commonly used in the area where they live. The warning media are *kenthongan* and *bedug*.

At the time before communication technology enters their lives, *kenthongan* and *bedug* are the effective communication media that are used by traditional society. The main function is indeed weaken when the audio-based communication technology like microphone, amplifier and speaker are used as direct communication tools for gathering people. But, the use of those tools cannot be functioned at any time like when the people do their regular patrolling or village securing at night, and will bother the people who are sleeping or resting. In this case, *kenthongan* as traditional sounding system is better to use. Unfortunately, recently the meaning of the sound symbols only can be understood by the ones who use the instruments. As a sounding system with a particular meaning, the exact beats and rhythm of *kenthongan* should be understood by the ones who beat them. The rhythm mistake in beating *kenthongan* will also bring misunderstanding of the delivered messages.

Generally, *kenthongan* has some different meanings. For example, *kenthong raja pati* will bring signs that there is a murder in the area. The sounding symbol is represented by beating the *kenthong* once and pause, once and pause, and forth. If the *kenthong* beats sounded as twice beats followed with pause, it means that there is robbery or there is a robber who enters the area. Three times beats followed with pause means there is fire in the area. To spread the information about disaster like floods, *kenthong* beat will be sounded as four-time beats with pause. The *titir* sound of *kenthong* which sounded as five-time beats with pause symbolizes the animal theft. Besides, the sound of *kenthong dara muluk*, which sounded as one beat, pause, followed with eight beats, pause, one beat, symbolizes that the area is in the safe situation (cited from

<http://media.kompasiana.com/mainstream-media/2011/04/06/kenthongan-komunikasi-tradisional-yang-merakyat-352734.html>).

In contrast with *kenthongan*, *bedug* is functioned to call people for praying in mosque or *mushalla*, *kenthongan* is more flexible to use. Recently, in the arts of traditional performances in Banyumas, *kenthongan* is not only used as information tool about the current situation but also as the instruments in carnivals. Even, *kenthongan* is also used as a contest in Banyumas villages as the celebration of Indonesia's Independence Day. While *kenthongan* has the system when functioned as the security system in villages, the use of *kenthongan* in performance is functioned as musical instrument.

Kenthongan and *bedug* in Banyumas area are still used for its meaning and functions, although there are also many society members who forget the meanings of its beat sounds, which is also developing in many kinds of folk performances media which is newly used. The sounds of *kenthongan* and *bedug* are still functioned as signs of disaster danger. The danger signs are the early efforts to warn people about the disaster. The forms of those danger signs are usually agreed by the entire society, and thus the society will understand the signs and know what to do. Basically, the danger signs should fulfil some requirements as accessible, immediate, coherent, and official (cited from http://carapedia.com/tanda_tanda_bahaya_info2538.html).

Another advantage of *kenthongan* and *bedug* is that it is cheaper and is available in the people's life, easy to use and also massive. In an evacuation simulation in Pekuncen, *kenthongan* were beaten altogether from the houses and meeting points, which shows the occurred condition. The sound of *kenthongan* landslide disaster occurrence will be sounded as four beats in row and followed with pause. The sound then will be followed with other houses, which will help the entire village to understand the message and thus they will do the instructions as taught in the training. At the same time, the warning siren will be turned on and people will do the simulation. As analyzed, *kenthongan* and *bedug* as traditional communication media is still used based on its meaning and function in disaster communication system in Banyumas. These traditional media are functioned as complement of early warning system in the area. Even some informants tend to use these two tools because it is easy to use, *kenthongan* and *bedug* can be beaten by anyone. These two traditional tools will still function perfectly when the new technology is damaged, besides not all people will be able in operating the new technology.

CONCLUSION

As one of the areas which has high risk of disaster, the government of Banyumas Regency has done some efforts to prevent victims, especially the unwanted life loss. The government has installed early

warning system technology, disaster socializations and also the regular secure of current situation. But, the use of disaster communication technology will not put the traditional communication technology aside, which have been used by the Banyumas people.

The arts of folk performances like *Wayang Kulit Gragag Banyumasan* and *Gending Banyumasan* have been the culture power of Banyumas people. These two performances can be functioned as interaction tools among people to access updated information about the current condition in their area, including the topic of disaster and how to prevent victim loss. The use of these two folk performance media as complementary socialization media will make the messages easier to be accepted because it uses Banyumasan local language. Besides, the description of situation in the performance is based on reality, and thus audiences will be easier in absorbing the information. The sounds of traditional communication tools, which are the *kenthongan* and *bedug*, can symbolize the safety level of an area. Those two tools are still needed in the most of Banyumas areas.

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