

Religious Social Communication for the Conservation of the Riverbank Area

Mohammad Taufiq Rahman

UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung
fkrakoe@uinsgd.ac.id

Bukhori

UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung
bukhori478@uinsgd.ac.id

Suggested Citation:

Rahman, Mohammad Taufiq & Bukhori, Bukhori. (2022). Religious Social Communication for the Conservation of the Riverbank Area. *Jurnal Iman dan Spiritualitas*, Volume 2, Number 1: pp 1-6. <http://dx.doi.org/10.15575/jis.v2i1.13813>

Article's History:

Received August 2021; Revised January 2022; Accepted February 2022.
2022. journal.uinsgd.ac.id ©. All rights reserved.

Abstract:

This research shows that environmental problems in community development are still not fully resolved. For the Citarum River case, the government has already implemented the Harum Citarum Program. However, the local community itself determines whether or not the watershed is maintained. For this reason, educational and communication efforts from various parties concerned about this problem are necessary. Included in this are the clergy and religious communication. This is because the local community is religious. This sociological study explores public opinion on raising awareness of environmental literacy with a religious approach.

Keywords: river conservation; relational communication; watershed; sociology of communication; religious event

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa permasalahan lingkungan dalam pengembangan masyarakat masih belum sepenuhnya terselesaikan. Untuk kasus Sungai Citarum, pemerintah sudah melaksanakan Program Harum Citarum. Namun, masyarakat setempat sendiri yang menentukan apakah Daerah Aliran Sungai (DAS) itu tetap terjaga atau tidak. Untuk itu, diperlukan upaya edukasi dan komunikasi dari berbagai pihak terkait dengan permasalahan ini. Termasuk di dalamnya adalah ulama dan kegiatan komunikasi keagamaan. Ini karena masyarakat setempat adalah masyarakat beragama. Kajian sosiologis ini menggali opini publik tentang peningkatan kesadaran literasi lingkungan dengan pendekatan religi.

Kata Kunci: konservasi sungai; komunikasi relasional; batas air; sosiologi komunikasi; acara keagamaan

INTRODUCTION

The Citarum River runs through 12 administrative districts/cities. Citarum, according to data obtained from West Java Province's Regional Environmental Management Agency (BPLHD), provides water for the livelihood needs of 28 million people. Citarum is a river that provides drinking water to Jakarta, Bekasi, Karawang, Purwakarta, and Bandung. Citarum River, with a length of about 269 kilometers and an irrigated agricultural area covering an area of 420,000 hectares, is the source of the pulse of the Indonesian economy, accounting for 20% of GDP (Gross

Domestic Product) with a stretch of the industry along the Citarum River. Citarum is the province of West Java's longest and largest river, and it has a significant impact on the lives of those who live along it. The Citarum River's use varies from upstream to downstream, including household needs, irrigation, agriculture, animal husbandry, and industry (Anwar et al., 2019).

The water that flows through the Citarum, ironically, has been polluted by various wastes. Toxic and hazardous chemical wastes from industry are the most dangerous. According to data from the 2014 BPLHD, approximately 500 factories are currently occupied in the upstream Citarum area. Only about 20% treat their waste, while the rest dump it irresponsibly into Citarum tributaries or the Citarum without supervision or action from the authorities (government) (Pamungkas et al., 2021).

Seeing this phenomenon, the Governor of West Java, Ahmad Heryawan, has been determined to make Citarum a clean river since May 2014. The West Java Provincial Government has a program to achieve this goal. The Citarum Bestari (Clean, Healthy, Beautiful, and Sustainable) Movement, founded by Ahmad Heryawan and BPLHD, aims to restore the Citarum River's function to benefit the people of West Java. On the other hand, this program did not run smoothly and may have failed. The government has relaunched a program for Citarum called Citarum Harum, which aims to clean up Citarum and restore drinking water upstream. The Citarum Harum program itself is expected to take seven years to complete (Fridayani, 2020).

The Citarum Harum program also invites all residents of West Java to participate in this program because the Citarum River is the river of pride for the people of West Java. In this study, the Citarum Harum program was designed by Kodam III/Siliwangi to restore the glory of the Citarum River so that it is clean, beautiful, and sustainable as before. This also received an excellent response from the President of the Republic of Indonesia, the Ministry of Environment, the Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Affairs, the West Java government, and the people of West Java (Mustofa et al., 2021). This research uses a case study method with a qualitative approach. This study seeks to find out how residents understand the Citarum Fragrant program in terms of environmental literacy in terms of the role of religious events. Thus, this study is micro-sociological, more about interactions within the local community itself.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Location

Tarumajaya Village Office is located at Jl. Pejaten – Situ Cisanti Tarumajaya Village, Kertasari District 40386, close to Pangalengan District of Bandung Regency. Kertasari District is the district with the most land use in Bandung Regency. The Kertasari sub-district includes Tarumajaya Village, Cibeureum, Cihawuk, Cikembang, Neglawangi, Santosa, Sukapura, and the Citarum River. The division of Cibeureum Village formed Tarumajaya Village. It is the newest settlement in Kertasari District. It is situated in a hilly terrain with an average altitude of 1700 masl and a mountainous climate. It is supported by the morphological conditions of fertile mountainous soil, making the Tarumajaya Village area primarily agricultural. Tarumajaya Village has potential in plantations and animal husbandry in addition to agrarian potential (Anwar et al., 2019).

Situ Cisanti collects water from the seven mainsprings of the Citarum River. Citarum, Cikahuripan, Cikoleberes, Cihanwung, Cisadane, Cikawedukan, and Cisanti springs have discharge rates ranging from 200 to 400 liters per second. This lake, which is approximately 5 hectares in size, is located in Kertasari District, Bandung Regency. It is located on a 10-hectare plot in the Perhutani region, near Mount Wayang. Situ Cisanti has a depth of 3-4 meters, with an average depth of 2.5 meters. His role is critical for the people of West Java's source of life. Situ Cisanti is also a historical witness from the royal to the colonial eras (Tarumajaya, 2020).

Environmental conditions and water quality along the Citarum River have decreased significantly in the last twenty years. The rapid urbanization process resulting from accelerated development is linearly proportional to industrial activities, the high rate of population growth, residential areas, and land conversion as-built areas. Various negative impacts arise as accumulative compensation from the misalignment of the rapid development of economic development activities with environmental conservation (Baihaki, 2018).

Almost every rainy season, floods threaten various areas in West Java. Due to industrial and agricultural activities, river water pollution has reached a dangerous level and can threaten people's health and livelihoods. The complexity of the problems in the Citarum River Basin is a common challenge in efforts to restore and manage the Citarum River for the better. This is inversely proportional to the role and function of the Citarum River, the parts and functions of the Citarum are: (1) Supplying irrigation 420,000 ha. (2) Freshwater aquaculture. (3) drinking water sources and all community needs along the watershed. (4) Suppliers of drinking water raw materials for 80% of the

population of DKI Jakarta. (5) Water suppliers for the 187 MW Jatiluhur, Saguling 1,400 MW, and Cirata 1,008 MW hydropower plants (Febrianto, 2019; Iqbal, 2017; Mustofa et al., 2021).

The President and his staff also welcomed this. They went directly to the field and issued a Presidential Regulation (perpres) regarding the handling of the Citarum Harum program so that it was immediately shaded and supervised by the state and local regional officials. With the Presidential Decree, the program to improve the condition of the longest river in West Java is even more vital.

People's Acceptability of the Citarum Harum Program

The activities of the Citarum Harum program are routinely carried out every day by members of the TNI, but on Saturday and Sunday members of the TNI invite residents to help and contribute to ongoing activities, generally, this activity starts at 08.00 to 16.00 WIB. Through the Citarum Harum program activities, people's attitudes can be seen in responding to the Citarum Harum program. The residents' philosophy can also be known through the responses and active roles of the residents in the Citarum Harum program.

From the results of interviews and observations made by the researchers, the residents of Kertasari District fully support the activities of the Harum Citarum Program. With the Harum Citarum Program activities, residents find it helpful to get free education and guidance outside of formal education regarding the use of waste, utilization of agricultural products, and livestock products (Yanto, 2019).

Another evidence that the community supports the Citarum Harum program is that this program produces benefits for the environment and the residents and population of West Java. Now Situ Cisanti is a regional proud of West Java, as it is a mother of water streaming throughout West Java; also it is a national conservation area. So, the residents of Kertasari District were pleased with the Citarum Harum Program and was greatly helped by the activities carried out in their village. For example, this *iftar* activity, residents were very enthusiastic about coming and gathering to enliven the *iftar* activity held by TNI members in collaboration with the Artha Graha Foundation (Iksan, 2019).

Based on the results of field data, the findings that the researchers got were: (1) Residents welcome the Citarum Harum Program in their area because it provides many benefits for their lives. (2) The attitude of the residents is quite enthusiastic when there are activities that are being carried out in their area.

Citizens' Responsibilities Regarding the Harum Citarum Program

The Harum Citarum Program is a program that has a common goal and shared responsibility, because the Citarum river is a river belonging to the residents of West Java. The responsibility referred to here is the responsibility of citizens for damage to the Citarum river or other environmental damage in their area caused by themselves or others as a form of self-awareness towards the environment, whether residents have solutions or efforts as their responsibility for their mistakes made on the Citarum river or the surrounding environment (Hakim, 2019).

The excerpt from the interview with the Village Head revealed that as a form and effort of being responsible for the community towards the surrounding environment, residents are obliged to take part in the activities held in the Citarum Harum program which will raise awareness for each citizen. to take part in restoring the glory of the Citarum River (Sutisna, 2019). Based on the interview results above, we can see that we have a responsibility by contributing to the Citarum Harum Program in their area. Residents feel ashamed if they do not participate in the activities held in their area; in this case, it means that residents have a sense of responsibility towards this program.

The activities in the Citarum Harum program and the residents who contribute to these activities are a tangible manifestation of the responsibility carried out by residents in the Citarum Harum Program. The basic concept of responsibility can be started from oneself, family, and society at large (Iksan, 2019).

Based on the field data results, the researchers' findings were: (1) Residents are obliged to participate and contribute to the activities carried out during the Citarum Harum Program as their responsibility to be the people of West Java. (2) Residents already have awareness and shame if they do not participate in the Citarum Harum program in their area.

Citarum Harum Program in Religious Communication

In practice, religious communication in society is different. In Islamic societies such as in Cibeureum, religious communication occurs especially when religious and religious-based events take place such as lectures to commemorate Islamic holidays, Qur'anic recitations, *tahlilan*, *istighosyah*, celebrations for the birth of children, moving houses, and so on. At that time, government programs were often voiced by representatives from the

government such as the head of the RT or RW who were also present at these events. Government programs are usually delivered before the events take place. That is what happened to the people of Cibeureum, Kertasari, Bandung Regency. Here, counseling on the maintenance of watersheds (DAS), namely the Citarum Harum Program, is included in religious events. These events are a state of community gathering amid their daily activities.

Among the events in the community is *Tahlilan*. *Tahlil* is the essence of monotheism *Laa Ilaaha Illa-Llah* (there is no god but Allah). *Tahlilan* is a set of formulas consisting of several *tayyibah* sentences, short letters, verses, or even fragments of Al-Quran verses that are read individually and communally (alone or in congregation/choir) on the belief that reading them get a reward from Allah SWT (Huda, 2019).

The reward is sent to people who are dead or still alive but are treated like dead people, for example a person who is on pilgrimage is given *tahlili* from the day of his departure until the seventh day after that every Friday night until the hajj returns home safely, what is meant by the word *thayyibah* Literally, good sentences come from the Qur'an, such as the *ikhlas* letter, *chair* verse, *tahmid*, *takbir tasbih hauqalah*, *shalawat*, as well as *tawasul*, *hadith*, and *prayer* (can be from the Prophet or the *ulama*). *Tahlilan* is a typical Islamic religious rite of *santri* either legally or culturally (Yanto, 2019).

Recitation is learning or attending religious studies with pious or knowledgeable people. The word *istighosah* has various meanings from various opinions, including *Istighosah* comes from the word "*ghoutsu, ghotsa, ghoutsan, ighotsatan*" which means help, help him, help him. *Istighosah* asks for something to relieve distress or sadness and only asks for help from Allah SWT. It is permissible in all good matters. Meanwhile, according to KH. A. Nuril Huda the word *istighosah* comes from "*al-ghouts*" which means help. In Arabic grammar, sentences that follow the pattern (*wazan*) "*istafala*" or "*istifa*" indicate the meaning of a request or request. So *istighosah* means asking for help. Hence, the meaning of the *istighosah* recitation is attending a board of advisers to carry out worship, prayer, remembrance, and praying together, which helps ask for help, asking for help from Allah SWT on everything faced by humans led by pious or knowledgeable people (Huda, 2019).

The socialization of spiritual values in the Citarum Harum program includes *tahlilan* activities, *istighosah* and giving motivations by visiting the homes of residents who receive the assistance. The *tahlilan* activities are usually carried out three times a week in different RT, the materials that are socialized include short lectures whose themes are always changing, which essentially leads to a change in society in the future. Before the short lecture, usually, the companion of this program performs *tawasulan* (because) through the Prophets, companions of the Prophet, *Tabi'in Tabi'at* and the 'scholars who are trusted as a medium to offer prayers to Allah SWT. The *istighosah* activity is usually carried out once a year after Eid al-Fitr, as an event for friendship and halal *bihalal* by combining one RT with other RTs that have been guided. In the sense of language, *istighosah* is asking for help or assistance. While epistemologically, this word is a series of expressions accompanied by a sincere request to immediately get God's help or ask to be immediately avoided from calamity in this world and the hereafter. Usually the prayer is *istighosah* said in congregation in a place that is considered to meet the requirements of worship, such as the field, mosque and *zawiya* of the Sufis. The *istighosah* prayer is not intended to ask for personal help or assistance, but is intended for the public interest (Rusmana, 2019).

In its implementation, *istighosah* begins with a request for forgiveness for various sins that have been committed. One of the conditions for the fulfillment of *istighosah* is spiritual cleanliness from evil thoughts and demonic whispers. Some argue that *istighosah drawn* should only be done by people who have routinely closer to Allah. However, this view seems to need to be straightened out, because those who are more appropriate to do *istighosah* are ordinary people who feel they have done bad things and want to repent. The badness influences them the descent of Allah's grace (Huda, 2019).

These people should be included in *istighosah* under the guidance of people who always draw closer to Allah. The method begins with repentance and then jointly begs to be avoided from the calamities of the world and the hereafter. In addition, *istighosah* should not be done for political purposes (Yanto, 2019).

Technically, there are no special rules regarding *istighosah*, although some regulations or manners of praying must be observed so that prayer is not hindered (Fajar, 2019). During *istighosah* activities, the Citarum Harum program assistant usually invites the village head as a form of respect so that he can provide direction or correction about the program currently running. The activities are not much different from *tahlilan* activities, where *istighosah* is usually more lively by bringing in *hadroh* groups from students who accompany the program. Meanwhile, the provision of motivations is carried out every time there are *tahlilan* and *istighosah* activities or whenever there are significant associations for the continuity of the program. This assistance often includes

motivational inputs that are expected to change the community to be more aware of what it currently has, so this activity needs to be used as a real example that must be imitated by people everywhere (Iksan, 2019).

In introductory lectures on religious events, the local government usually believes that government activities such as the Citarum Harum Program are suitable and follow religious teachings. Usually, local kyai are asked for arguments related to the goodness of environmental preservation. It is also associated with responsibility (Rukimah, 2019).

The government also emphasized that if a sense of responsibility is instilled in the hearts of every citizen of Kertasari District and all citizens of West Java. Maybe this Harum Citarum Program will run smoothly, and the Citarum river will smell good again. Contributing to the Citarum Harum program is no longer people's responsibility as West Java residents but an obligation because Citarum is the pulse of the people of West Java (Iksan, 2019). After the religious event is over, it is usually closed with a prayer. Here, the kyai relates to the Citarum Harum program, bringing good and blessings. Kyai emphasized that the program will be a good deed for those who carry it out and benefit those around them (Yanto, 2019).

Thus, environmental awareness through religious communication must continue to be fostered, because people trust religious leaders more (Rahman, 2021). Communities around the riverbanks in the upper Citarum river are more afraid of taboo things and religious prohibitions rather than prohibitions from the government. In addition to feeling proud, people also feel the sacredness of these places, so that if they disturb them, it will result in accidents for those who do it (Kulon, 2019). Here, the people near Situ Cisanti believe in supernatural things more than the real ones. Therefore, communication through religious channels becomes necessary to continue.

CONCLUSION

The communication of the Citarum Harum program to the residents of the riverbanks has been carried out massively and intensively. They are thick with religious events. Therefore, incorporating the idea of cleanliness and environmental care must be approached religiously. During an introductory speech on religious events, the local government usually believes that government activities such as the Citarum Harum Program are suitable and follow religious teachings. Usually, local kyai are asked to explain the arguments related to the goodness of environmental preservation. It is also associated with responsibility to God. It is also a form of social responsibility because natural resources such as water catchment areas like Situ Cisanti and its surroundings are valuable assets for the community, even for future generations.

REFERENCES

- Anwar, R. K., Sjoraida, D. F., & Rahman, M. T. (2019). Socializing fragrant river program as a strategy for introducing environmental literacy to the upper citarum community. *Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism*, 10(3), 597–612. [https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt.v10.3\(35\).14](https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt.v10.3(35).14)
- Baihaki, E. (2018). Citarum harum, "jihad lingkungan" masyarakat Jawa Barat. *KOMPAS.Com*.
- Fajar, A. (2019). Teacher in Kertasari, Bandung Regency. *Interview*, August 2.
- Febrianto, N. (2019). *Mengenal Citarum harum, ketegasan Jokowi bersihkan sungai 269 Km*. Tagar.Id.
- Fridayani, H. D. (2020). The Government's Role in Facing SDGs 2030 Citarum River Clean-up Program, Indonesia: An Analysis. *Journal of Governance and Public Policy*, 7(1), 41–50.
- Hakim, A. (2019). Resident of Cibeureum Village. *Interview*, August 1.
- Huda, N. (2019). Religious Leader at Kertasari Subdistrict, Bandung Regency. *Interview*, July, 30.
- Iksan, A. (2019). Head of Hamlet in Tarumajaya Village. *Interview*, July 5.
- Iqbal, D. (2017). *Citarum masih saja tercemar tiap tahun*. <https://www.Mongabay.Co.Id/>.
- Kulon, E. (2019). Speaker of Mount Wayang Caretaker, Bandung Regency. *Interview*, August 17.
- Mustofa, M. U., Brahmantika, S. G. S., & Tarigan, B. R. (2021). Military and Water Governance Practices: A Theoretical Analysis of the Involvement of Indonesian National Armed Forces in the Citarum Harum Project in West Java, Indonesia. *Journal of Asian Social Science Research*, 3(1), 39–56.

- Pamungkas, B., Kurnia, R., & Riani, E. (2021). Potential plastic waste input from Citarum River, Indonesia. *Aquaculture, Aquarium, Conservation & Legislation*, 14(1), 103–110.
- Rahman, M. T. (2021). *Sosiologi Islam*. Prodi S2 Studi Agama-Agama UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung.
- Rukimah, S. (2019). Retailer around Situ Cisanti, Bandung. *Interview*, August 2.
- Rusmana, P. (2019). Head of Hamlet in Tarumajaya Village. *Interview*, July 27.
- Sutisna, A. (2019). Kertasari Local Artist. *Interview*, July 28.
- Tarumajaya, T. (2020). Profil Desa Tarumajaya. *Dokumen*.
- Yanto, Y. (2019). Teacher at Kertasari. *Interview*, July 4.



© 2022 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY SA) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>).