How the Tallasa’ Kamase-Mase and Customary Law Saved the Tana-Toa Forest and Water Resources

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The world is facing environmental and clean-water crises. In fact, 780 million people or 1 in 9 people are lacking or having no access to improved and clean drinking water (WHO/UNICEF, 2012). Meanwhile, the 7th MDGs targeted that 2,1 billions of people in the world should be able to access clean drinking water. However, the destruction of forest ecosystem had caused water resource crises worldwide. Interestingly, the indigenous people in Tana Toa Kajang, South Sulawesi Indonesia, have a unique way of preserving their forests resources. By applying Tallasa' Kamase-mase principle, which is a local wisdom containing a set of local rules that regulated the Ammatoa indigenous people’s way of life and forest resources extraction by banning excessive logging activities. The effectiveness of this local value is evident by the sustainable forests condition making the people rarely experience water crisis. With no formal knowledge and education, the indigenous people Ammatoa have evolved a system to manage the ecosystem surrounding them. This form of local wisdom is interesting amidst ineffective government efforts to handle vast natural resources destruction. This research tries to understand the application of Tallasa' Kamase-mase principle and the enforcement of customary law in Tana Toa Kajang; and it’s the influence to repress forest destruction and maintaining water resources sustainability. It uses both qualitative and quantitative methods. Primary data is collected through spreading questionnaires, interviews and observation. Secondary data is collected through library search. Data is analyzed by using frequency and Likerts scale combined with qualitative data analysis. Based on the findings, the Ammatoa indigenous people are still firmly applying Tallasa' Kamase-mase a

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