

MOZAIK

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**Cultural Event Management
in Promoting Siak as the “Truly Malay”
for Strengthening Local Economy and Revitalizing Malay Culture**

**(Manajemen Event Budaya
dalam Mempromosikan Siak sebagai “Truly Malay”
untuk Penguatan Ekonomi Lokal dan Revitalisasi Kebudayaan
Melayu)**

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan acara budaya yang diadakan oleh masyarakat lokal Siak Sri Indrapura. Ini juga menyelidiki keterlibatan lebih lanjut dan kepedulian pariwisata dalam mempromosikan Siak sebagai “Truly Malay.” Penelitian ini juga mengeksplorasi upaya yang dilakukan oleh pemerintah untuk memperluas jaringan dan mempromosikan acara budaya sebagai daya tarik lokal, baik dalam lingkup lokal dan internasional, sambil memperkuat ekonomi lokal dan merevitalisasi budaya Melayu. Menggunakan pendekatan komunikasi dan budaya, penelitian kualitatif ini menemukan beberapa acara budaya di Siak: Festival Siak Bermadah, Ghatib Benghanyut, dan wisata olahraga seperti Tour de Siak. Semua acara ini memberdayakan masyarakat lokal dan menarik perhatian dunia. Studi ini juga menemukan bahwa peran pemerintah dalam mempromosikan acara-acara ini tercermin dalam bentuk publikasi di media komunikasi dan / atau peningkatan sumber daya manusia dan instrumen pendukung lainnya. Sementara untuk masyarakat lokal, ada peningkatan ekonomi kreatif dan upaya yang mengarah pada revitalisasi budaya Melayu.

Kata kunci: komunikasi budaya, event budaya, Melayu, Siak

Abstract

This research aims to describe cultural event held by the local people of Siak, Sri Indrapura Regency. It also investigates further involvement and tourism awareness in promoting Siak as the “Truly Malay.” This research also explores efforts done by the government to expand network and promote cultural event as local attraction, both in local and international scope, while strengthening local economy and revitalizing Malay culture. Using communication and cultural approach, this qualitative research finds several cultural events in Siak: Siak Bermadah Festival, Ghatib Benghanyut, and sport tourism like Tour de Siak. All of these events empower local people and draw worldwide attention. The study also finds that the role of government in promoting these events is reflected in form of publications in communication media and/or improvements in human resources and other supporting instruments. Meanwhile for local people, there are improvement in creative economy and efforts that lead to Malay culture revitalization.

Keywords: cultural communication, cultural event, Siak, Malay,

INTRODUCTION

The Siak Sri Indrapura Regency is one of regencies in Riau Province that is keen in developing its area with Malay principle. Several strategies and conductions have

been done to uphold Malay cultures, one of them is “packaging” various cultural events like Siak Bermadah Festival, Chotib Bengahyut, Silat Sijori Contest (Singapore, Johor, and Riau), Kompang Salawat Contest, International Creative Zapin Festival and many other programs that are highly demanded by the government.

Furthermore, the spirit of establishing Siak Regency as a city with Malay principle has been decanted in vision of development of the regency, that is: “Terwujudnya Kabupaten Siak sebagai Pusat Kebudayaan Melayu di Indonesia tahun 2025 (Actualizing Siak Regency as a Malay Culture Center of Indonesia in 2025).” One of the programs in realizing the vision by the government is campaigning Siak the “Truly Malay.” It is because the potential of Siak in traditional, historical, and cultural values allow this regency becoming a heritage city or city that possess cultural and historical richness that must be preserved.

Realizing Siak Regency as a center of Indonesian Malay culture in 2025 and Siak the “Truly Malay,” the government intensively promotes many cultural events which involve local people in it. Besides revitalizing cultural values and actualizing the visions, the efforts are also increasing Siak potentials as the most visited tourism destinations either in domestic or international levels. The purpose is to increase economy populist context as decanted in the Constitution No. 10 in 2009, concerning tourism for increasing economic development and local people welfare.

Based on the background, this research is intended to find out the problems of the cultural events’ governance in promoting Siak the “Truly Malay” to strengthen local economy and revitalization of Malay culture. This research is conducted to find out how the government of Siak Regency comprehensively arranges the cultural events that is portray the Malay culture with economy values.

Governance is a term showing about management, to manage, to organize (Depdiknas 2008). So here governance is to reorganize things that have been done before. In this research, governance or reorganizing the cultural events beginning with process of cultural potential development. Developing cultural potentials means that developing economy values from the superior local cultural products. The next phase is developing phase which is advanced from cultural potentials discoveries in Siak Regency.

Cultural event is the whole events involved universal culture as specified by Koentjaraningrat (2004), they are belief, local organization, knowledge, language, earning, art and tool technology. The event covers preparation, conduction and effects appeared for preserved local people (Abdullah 2009:47). Then, Allen (2011) said cultural events are distinctive ritual, show, performance, celebration which have been scheduled and distinguishly for mutual, social, cultural purpose.

METHOD

It is qualitative research, the purpose is exploring, figuring out, and analyzing on how the government holds cultural events as promotion mean for Siak the "Truly Malay" program as local economy strengthening and Malay culture revitalization. The research is conducted in March to November 2016. Data are collected from deep and accidental interview to those related ones. The researcher also holds Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and collects research related documentations.

Data analysis technique is done by several phases. First, collected information (interview, observation and related documentation) is reduced for the research needs. After information filtering as corresponded with the needs, meaning process and analyzing are done to have final summary. The research is conducted for eight months, it starts from March to November 2016. There are several steps which are started by making the proposal to the final report.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As efforts in actualizing Siak the "Truly Malay," there are various cultural events held by the government of Siak Sri Indrapura. However, the most interesting cultural event and loved by many people either local people or foreigners from outside Riau Province and neighboring countries like Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei is Siak Bermadah Festival, Ghatib Benghanyut, sport tourism such as Tour de Siak, Assyura Porridge Festival, Traditional Top Tournament, Tradisional Culinary Exhibition, etc.

Siak Bermadah Festival is considered to portray Malay culture the most since there are various cultural elements either art, custom, or entertainment. Siak Bermadah means "Siak Bertutur". Hum activity or *bermadah* is portrayed in all art attraction (either theater, dancing—traditional and modern dancing like creative *zapin*—and *langgam* (Malay song).

Besides Siak Bermadah, another festival is Khatib Beghanyut, which is prayer like *thoibah* sentence that held along the day on boat or ferry. This is an annual event in Safar month (Hijri calendar) believed as a fully disastrous month. Therefore, Khatib Beghanyut is for protecting from bad luck. This ritual is cultural richness and Islamic tradition since the Siak Sultanate.

Beside those events, there are many events held with cultural conservation and local economy strengthening purpose. Unfortunately, local people don't have awareness for that purpose so that event performance, economically, does not have significant impact and local people involvement is still limited. This far, local people involvement can be seen in Malay culinary, Malay language and clothing use and handicrafts.

Local people involvement with culinary conservation is seen in two culinary problems that the most popular in Siak, that is Laksamana Raja Mengamuk and snack of Roti Jala or Roti Kirai. Improving and revitalizing Malay culinary in Siak,

there are several fundamental aspects that need to be notified, such as identity, representation, consumption, production, and regulation. Culinary identity needs to be clarified and its connection with Malayness needs to be told continuously so it represents condition and local people's culture. Meanwhile, as main consumer and producer, the government needs to create regulation for production process and marketing giving advantages.

Another local people involvement is seen in Malay clothing use. One of cultural richnesses in Siak, Malay clothing is a must significant maintained identity in the future. Quantitatively, Malay clothing is divided into several kinds, especially related to social value; Malay clothing is rich of values.

This cultural symbol does not lose flexibility which means in survivable context though the wearer and situation or social context changed. The flexibility makes Malay clothing wearer at present transformed. There might be several aspects reduced. Hence, Malay culture revitalization especially at clothing aspect, needs first phase, that is restoring the use at large-scale in every form of activities of Malay people in Siak, one of them is cultural event.

Besides clothing, Siak Regency has also various handicrafts with high values in market if it is managed well. Handicrafts that have been produced by the local people such as bags, movable food cover, rugs, vases, baskets, raw mats, *takziah* baskets, fruits baskets, picnic baskets, are all made of remained rope of big company in Perawang. Another vital handicraft and the richest with Malay value is the Siak weaving. Revitalizing effort to this aspect is improving entrepreneurship awareness and modal facilitation by the government and other parties.

Besides modal facilitation, there are several ways done by the government promoting this cultural event as efforts for actualizing Siak the Truly Malay, they are promoting through media communication like papers, electronic and advertisement in strategic places. Newspapers partnered with the government in informing and promoting this cultural event is *Riau Pos*, *Haluan Riau*, and *Tribun Pekanbaru*, either in advertisement or advertorial; meanwhile involved electronics media are local television Riau Televisi, state television TVRI, commercial television Antartv, TV One, and Metro TV. Beside that the government also arranges banners, billboard installation, and exhibitions by official units, social media, etc.

The government does not only invite papers and electronic media but also online media like *goriau.com*, *bertuah.com*, and *antarariau.com* for promotion supporting all their cultural events activities.

In addition to the promotion with media above, the government also improves governance system by cooperating with many parties. It is since cultural events governance is collaborative management system that involves government and non-government sector for collective business (Muntasib 2009). Non-government holders are called stakeholders with various basic on their fields and influences. First, key

player, active stakeholders in management since they have importance and great influence. Second, subject, this is great importance but weak influence. Third, context setter, it has great influence with weak importance. Forth, crowd, this stakeholder has both weak influence and importance (Reed *et al.* 2009).

Stakeholders who have position as subject in Malay cultural event performance in Siak is local people in general and tourists outside Siak. The next stakeholders are context setters. These have position in cultural event context in Siak and they are academicians or researchers. What they have been researching is relating to Malay culture in Siak and becoming main guidance to the government in making decisions and policies in culture concern. Academic personal and researcher with their significant outcome also do not have great importance in cultural activities but for mutual progression. The last one is crowd. These parties are various, like small entrepreneurs who have temporary involvement, service providers who just appear when events are held and many others temporal parties.

Other than stabilizing cooperation between the government and stakeholders, based on previous sub-part, Malay culture resources concern in Siak and its development, also its historical and potential existence. There are several concrete steps that need to do by the regional government so that cultural events contribute in improvement to local economy and Malay culture preservation, they are continuous training and coaching in creative industry, food industry development, cultural centers development, regional regulation establishment for *songket* fabric use concern, school curriculum review from kindergarten to senior high level, and human resources improvement.

CONCLUSION

Based on explanation above and research findings in the previous explanation, there are several Malay cultural events done by local people of Siak Sri Indrapura as promoting facilitations of Siak the "Truly Malay." Those cultural events are Siak Bermadah, Khatib Beghanyut, and Tour de Siak. Local people awareness and involvement to cultural events held by the government of Siak Regency, can be seen in culinary sector, traditional clothing, handicraft industry, etc. Overall, this involvement needs to be maximized. In culinary sector, the main problem is food technology use limitation to improve quality and modal support to culinary entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, local people clothing's characteristics do not portray Malay personal culture characteristic especially when cultural events are performed. At last, local people participation in developing economy creative is still weak.

Effort done by the government of Siak Regency is enlarging network to promote cultural events performance becoming attraction in either local, national or international scope through various media. Besides media, the government also improves the governance of cultural event done by local people of Siak so that Siak the Truly Malay can be actualized; and also become economy local strengthening and Malay culture revitalizing simultaneously.

Thus, the government is (1) expected to improve quality and quantity of Malay cultural events in Siak, (2) needs to develop infrastructure in large-scale so that all people are involved in Malay cultural events in Siak, (3) needs to synergize and maximize the function of media either papers, electronics, or digital, (4) the governance done by the government of Siak needs to be based to cultural vision and mission that are assigned by the central government.

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