

ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOOL: DIGGING OF ECOLOGICAL CONCEPTS (STUDY AT SEKOLAH CITRA ALAM CIGANJUR)

Abdul Mujib

Center for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies
Graduate School of Universitas Gadjah Mada

Email: abdulmujib@mail.ugm.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Environmental school is a good way to introduce student for preserving the nature. By involving education, student can sustain their environmental awareness with religion and science. As their foundation, student can balance among religion, science and ecology. Environmental school (Sekolah Alam) also becomes a new model of learning to save the nature. Bruno Latour's theory about ecologizing modernity is compatible with this way. However, Sekolah Citra Alam as a prototype of environmental education is based on religion. Although, among religion, science and ecology are balance in this school, but when it is seen at conceptualization of digging ecology, it is lack of knowledge about understanding deep ecology, gaia or anthropocene. Sekolah Citra Alam Ciganjur only teaches about how to be close and to maintain the nature. I criticize environmental school since it is still very-costly, and it can only be reached by rich-people. The model of environmental school is a good-way to respect nature and environment for children as the next generation.

Keyword: religion, ecology, education, environmental school

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of many ways to maintain nature. Education becomes effective way to give understanding about the importance of sustainability of nature. The education of sustainability of nature is very important to be understood by students because they will become the next generation, and we (our generation) have to maintain our environment for them.

In school, students can learn the knowledge of ecology from teacher and environment. Normatively, the teacher teaches students why they need to preserve nature. By practicing that students involve to plant some trees (planting) and keep environment. Ecology is a way for students to understand and to practice between normative and practice (in reality).

One of schools which have program for preserving ecology is Sekolah Citra Alam Ciganjur. In this school, students learn about planting, cultivating and selling of self-production. Students impose to be close with environment so that they can maintain for themselves and the next generations. Most of environmental schools (Sekolah Alam) emerge due to respond of environmental crisis. This crisis causes the degradation of nature. Environmental school offers the approach for human, especially for students to close with nature. How student learns that the earth has to maintain for their next generation. Moreover, environment is needed to be understood as the

concept of ecology, consist of the awareness of anthropocene, gaia, deep ecology, eco-justice and making cooperation with SDGs. Therefore, the balance of all aspects must be owned by every student so that they have awareness of the important of maintaining and sustaining the earth or environment.

The combination of religion, science and ecology is the implementation of curriculum in this school. In some sessions, students learn about computer, and sometime they learn in the field or environment. Of course, before they conduct anything, religion as normative aspect, has been given to students. Therefore, this environmental school is the collaboration between development of technology and understanding about nature. In this paper, I raise two questions:

1. How does Sekolah Citra Alam use normative and practice of the ecological concept?
2. What is the challenging of Sekolah Citra Alam in doing ecology?

Those two questions are trying to reveal whether Sekolah Citra Alam and ecological concept can match or Sekolah Citra Alam only takes advantage from the issue of ecology by the costly tuition-fee. This paper tries to discuss what should be done and how should be done by environmental school, especially Sekolah Citra Alam Ciganjur to be really giving awareness to students about the importance to maintain environment.

Theoretical Framework

This paper uses ecological theory from Bruno Latour. The implementation of this theory is that the existence of ecology in modernity era. Latour said that ecologizing modernity is the alternative way to preserve the nature. In this paper also consist of other theories such as deep ecology, gaia and anthropocene to see how student in environmental school contribute to maintain the nature.

Methods

This paper use literature from some books and websites, especially for the profile about Sekolah Citra Alam. This paper begins with the profile and tries to compare with the concept from books. The focus of this paper is only Sekolah Citra Alam because the researcher supposes this environmental school can represent another school which focuses on nature. However, after comparing Sekolah Citra Alam from website and theory from books, this paper find the challenging of the environmental school with the costly-fee but it is beneficial for sustainability of nature. Thus, the understanding of the Sekolah Citra Alam's background is very important before analyzing with the theory from books.

DISCUSSION

1. Profile of Sekolah Citra Alam Ciganjur

To be close to environmental school, it is important to understand the genealogy and vision of Sekolah Citra Alam. It helps to understand the background of the establishment of this environmental school. This school has been established since 2000, under Yayasan Citra Nurul Falah Khaled Azmi.

The location of this school is at Jalan Damai II no. 54 Ciganjur, Jagakarsa, Jakarta Selatan.¹

Meanwhile, the background of this school is caused by looking at phenomena that today student is studying for school, not for themselves. So the impact is that students do not have wisdom to preserve nature and to pay attention to environment. Therefore, this school offers combination between academic and potential for keeping environment; so that they feel nature as their own knowledge.

This school uses environment as a learning-media. The concept of Sekolah Citra Alam is to invite students to recognize nature deeply and to keep it for themselves and the following generation. For the vision, this school is preparing the leader who has positive character by quality education. For the mission, it consists of three kinds;²

- Preparing the high quality program of education
- Developing of potential student who encompasses in intellectually, physically, socially and spiritually.
- Developing of good attitude and positive character

Regarding to that, M. Jamilun as head master of Sekolah Citra Alam said that the earth has been in crisis, especially in ecology and character.³ He hopes that this environmental school can create the generation which has attention and keep the nature that is caused by crisis. By doing this, this earth can always be green.

The purpose of Sekolah Citra Alam purpose is to develop the potency of students. I suppose that this idea emerge because of the crisis of environment and character in surrounding places. Students are expected to be able to integrate their intellect, physic, social and spiritual ability in their life. Furthermore, for the motto of the school is to create comfortable place for optimal learning. It is to take benefit from nature and regard it as friend. Students of this school learn to be very close to environment. Because it is fit with their purpose that this school wants to combine or integrate academic ability and sensitivity to the environment. Roisatun Nisa as the founder of this school explains the principles of this school are:⁴

1. Spirituality; in order the students care for nature and have wise-attitude (sensitivity) to nature
2. Social emotion; students have responsibility to nature
3. Logically thinking; that this earth/ nature can always be useful for human-being living
4. Entrepreneurship; student can take beneficial the nature for other compatibility

With regard to religious activity, students always pray Dhuha together before learning activities begin. After that, they recite *Asmaul Husna* to always thanks to God. These concepts and activities become the foundation for teachers and students. Principally, the independent of each student is emphasized for their future. And also of course their sensitivity to environment by using spirituality and logical thinking is important to be cultivated by students. By both spiritual and logical thinking, human-being can emerge their

¹ <http://www.citraalam.sch.id/about-us/profil-sekolah-citra-alam>

² Ibid.

³ Cited from her testimony in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=coJYmYwMl6I>

⁴ Ibid.

feeling for caring to nature. However, religious aspect is also used before they begin activities. In conclusion, this environmental school keeps trying to combine religion as the starting point in each of their activities, ecology as the sensitivity to nature and science as their logic to respond nature.

2. The Digging of Ecological Concept

a. Normative aspects

Normative aspect is a basic for someone to conduct something. It becomes the foundation attitude to act other things or to respond other people. Human being, when they act, it always has a reason why they conduct certain action. Normative aspect can also become foundation of students learning in this school. However, normative is important and it cannot be neglected since it prime factor for the knowledge of student.

The restlessness of environmental crisis was started by Nasr. Nasr (1968: 5) said that the awareness of the environmental crisis has significantly increased because of religion. He said that theological need to “re-sacralization” of nature in order to raise the ecological movement. He adds by ecological movement, it can make ‘synthesis’ as new religion (1968: 6). Furthermore, Lyn white (p.3) criticized in Christianity that science is the cause of the destruction of the earth. Modernity makes earth destroy faster. Modernity, such as the existence of factory seldom considers about the environmental surrounding. Thus, industry only exploits the nature without measuring the impact of their digging. There are many truths in Holy-book that nature is for human-being. However, it is used for them to exploit nature. Religion becomes guidance of exploiting nature to supply human-being consumption and need.⁵

Both of actors Nasr and Lyn White criticize that modernity has been become the cause for earth damage faster. However, they suggest religion can become solution in environmental crisis. Using religion as the foundation of overcoming crisis, that is so-called normative way. I suppose that normative, for instance in religion, becomes important factor for controlling and directing of environmental issue. Religion can become the source of danger. However, religion usually becomes as the center of guidance for life.

The students of this environmental school are really intended to study religion. Before teaching activities started, students have to pray, and in many times they have to perform *Sholat Dhuha*. Probably the expectation is to thank God upon the giving of nature. In some extent, they have to recite *Asmaul Husna* which is the merciful name of the God (Allah). It seems that as the basic of this school is too religious.

As normative way, the activities are to practice what religion (Islam) teaches to human. That is paying attention for trees, animals, and other creations. However, performing pray before activities is the evidence that this school is implementing the doctrine of religion which is Islam. Furthermore, religion can become the motivation of activities. For instance religion is the source of attitude. This environmental school uses religion as the basic to conduct of God’s order. So the students or especially their parents feels comfortable and believe that Sekolah Citra Alam Ciganjur is suitable with their religious order.

⁵ http://www.siena.edu/ellard/historical_roots_of_our_ecologic.htm

The key concept of ecology

To discuss deeply of this paper, I use some of concepts from ecology to understand how Sekolah Citra Alam close to ecology. According to Bauman (2015, 752) the label anthropocene “is among all of the other issues I have aired here, squarely locates the problem and the solution in the *anthropos*.” And he goes further by giving statement that anthropocene is Lynn White critique, that “(a) technological solutions will not heal the environmental crisis, because (b) the problem is at heart a religious one, and thus (c) the solution must be religious.” So that it is still about humanity, but he emphasizes into the responsibility of human, not human as the center of destruction of nature that so-called anthropocentrism. Ian Sample (2014, 4) explains that “The anthropocene is a proposed epoch that begins when human activities started to have a significant global impact on Earth's ecosystems.”

Therefore, I suppose that anthropocene is the moment for human being that they have responsibility for the earth. What happen in the earth is because of the human action. So, there is like causal-impact which is destroying or disaster is caused by human himself. Therefore, by this ecological concept, we hope that human can be careful and aware for their action to the earth. For example we see the case of modernization, especially by establishing factory. The waste kills the other creations such as fish or trees. So, the earth become hot and climate cannot be controlled or predicted again.

By knowing anthropocene, normatively, people have to be careful for earth and should think also for their next generation. Anthropicene also becomes the models of basic cause-effect that people needs to be close to nature. By this discussion, environmental school has important role to make awareness for human being to pay attention to environment. Whereas the education is applied since they are still children.

The following concept is GAIA. According to Lovelock (1979, 16) “Gaia is a system made up of all the living things and their environment”. I agree that Gaia is the interdependence of anything, including micro-organism. I suppose that according to Gaia concept, every part of our body is the subject. Between one and another has relation. If one part does not have good function it will disturb the other parts. By viewing Gaia, the earth is one unity, and human is the part of human being. So if there are people who try to destroy the nature (plant, animals, and other creations), It will have impact to the part of earth as well.

For understanding deep ecology, I propose Deep ecology as the way for understanding ecology not only seeing from ecological aspect, but also from other aspects such like feminism or economic. In addition, Bron Taylor and Michael Zimmerman (2005, 2) said that “deep ecologists generally believe that only by “resacralizing” our perceptions of the natural world can we put ecosystems above narrow human interests and thereby avert ecological catastrophe by learning to live harmoniously with the natural world.” Deep ecology is always trying to co-exist with nature, and human have to keep it.

Furthermore, Taylor (2005, 3) said that “Learning about deep ecology, and immediately embraced it as their own, spiritual, philosophy”. Deep ecology is philosophical concept to understand more about nature. And, spirituality is also significant aspect that raises feeling for nature. Without spirituality, deep ecology cannot be integrated with the nature. This is some excerpts from Taylor about deep ecology:

“deep ecology overemphasizes cultural factors (worldviews, religion, philosophy) in diagnosing the roots of, and solutions to, environmental problems, thereby minimizing the roles played by the social, political, and economic factors inherent in global capitalism.” (Taylor: 2005, 5).
“Although controversial and contested, both internally and among its proponents and its critics, Deep Ecology is an increasingly influential green spirituality and ethics that universally recognized in environmentalist enclaves, and increasingly outside of such subcultures, as signifying a radical movement that challenges the conventional, usually anthropocentric ways humans deal with the natural world.” (2005, 8)

Another ecological concept is discussing into Eco-justice. It is more about the balance of nature and nurture. Such Bohannon said that the term of “eco-justice in order to emphasize the unity of God’s creation and the resulting moral connections between humans and the nonhuman world” (Bauman, 2011: 171). However, he also said “*environmental justice* is a moment advocating the rights and participation of marginalized people in environmental concerns, meanwhile *eco-justice* is a theological and ethical ideal that harmoniously incorporates both social and ecological concern” (2011, 164).

Sekolah Citra Alam Ciganjur tries to communicate with the nature. However, the way it connects to environment is by recognizing students to always maintain ecological circumstance. Students can also be close to nature and love it. This environmental school teaches to students in studying with environment. The teacher only informs that environment has to always be cared without understanding of the ecological concept. It is only more about religion which is God who creates nature, including human-being. They encourage loving each other.

Furthermore, eco-justice also focuses on the balancing of social and ecology. It can be assumed social is modernity. In some extent modernity and ecology have to be properly understood. Such like the factory has to consider the impact of their existence, and also do not destroy nature.

When eco-justice is implemented in environmental school, it will attract student and make it easy for teacher to explain that between social and ecology, intentionally they have to be balance. Balance encompasses the consequences of the modernity and the opposite. For instance factory is not allowed to be over-exploit of nature, because it can destroy the surrounding of nature and disturb the other living, such as micro-organism, animals, and human-being.

SDGs or Sustainable Development Goals is the program from UN (United Nation) to prevent the destruction of the earth. There are seventeen (17) focuses of program which propagandize to public.⁶ SDGs are cooperation with another organization. Probably, environmental school can join with SDGs to embody the sustainability of nature. The existance of SDGs is to control the exploitation caused by modernity, especially factory.

Furthermore, Bruno Latour as political philosopher and (perhaps) ecology(er) criticizes about the existence of modernity (Manshot, 5). His famous concept, that is ecologizing can be used to see how environmental school applies their concept to love the nature, and no more exploitation.

⁶ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/>

Therefore, Latour's concept can be used as normative in seeing the activities of Sekolah Citra Alam Ciganjur.

Practicing Ecology

The practicing ecology can be seen as everyday practices. Yet, it has many meanings why people (certain community) are doing those activities. Ecological practice can make changing of understanding of life. School as one medium also has significant influence in delivering the idea of ecology. By ecological practicing, environmental school today interests for people because it does not makes students bored, and it makes parents feel proud with their children because in environmental school it is also taught about how to become independent human with leadership character.

In this environmental school, students are taught how to recognize nature such by learning the kind of planting, do outbound activities, invited to take a walk surrounding the field. This school also creates the awareness of nature for the next generation. At glance, this model of environmental school is suitable with the Latour's concept about ecologizing of modernity (Manshot, 5). However, recognizing the early moment of students is needed, not only good for their stimulation but also to sustain the existence of the nature.

The program of Sustainability Development Goals is the cooperation program with UN (United Nation) in order to get same perception how to keep the sustainability of the world. SDGs are a good way to embed ecology program, which is to care and to be close to the nature. Environmental school is also close to eco-justice. Eco-justice claims to always justice with the nature (Bauman, 2011: 171).

Practically, the combination of Sekolah Citra Alam Ciganjur, SDGs, and eco-justice are complementing each other's. This school also applies the balance of religion, ecology, and science. For the religion, students of this school always read *doa* (as usual in certain religion) before doing activities. And also they have to memorize the part of Quran as Islamic courage. Ecologically, students sometimes study into open-field which is not always in room. They are invited to plant trees. For science order, students also study computer, how to take benefit from technology.

In Sekolah Citra Alam, students are invited to pour flower/plant, cultivating, and selling the product of their planting. Students are also taught how to transplant plants. All of these are learned by students so that they have attention or care to the environment. They can appreciate each of things in nature. The important thing is that it makes students become freedom-person, because they are also taught how to grow their field by themselves.

Furthermore Rahma Dewi as class-coordinator said that Sekolah Citra Alam likes forest in the middle of city.⁷ It indicates ecology circumstances. She continues that when bell for going home ring, students say that they do not want to go home, because they bear to study in environment. And also, there are many extra-curricular such as traditional dance, play drama, singing. Ary Okta as environmental coordinator and art said that the purpose of this school is that to study creatively and make happy in learning anything. This school has routines outbound. It creates positive character, discipline, braveness, and

⁷ Cited from her testimony in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=coJYmYwMl6I>

fairness. Dellani Utomo as student said that her studying is like gaming, because she studies with nature and feels having fun.

To see the existence of ecological concept of antropocene, Gaia and deep-ecology is that students are invited to conduct together with the nature. As a view from understanding of Anthropocene, students are learned to have responsibility to environment. And we can see as a Gaia, which is how student interconnect with environment. Students is taught to be plant and sell the product, they are learned to respect with the nature. Therefore, actually, the concept of ecology in Sekolah Citra Alam has been implemented, yet it is only by practicing. However, it does not realize by the teacher, stakeholder or the student.

Aforementioned SDGs needs to cooperate to another organization to embody the purpose of SDGs, they conduct Innovative Environmental Education⁸

2013
300 schools being covered
2014
350 schools being covered
2015
350 schools being covered

The Description this action is “to promote environmental education in climate change and sustainable development from elementary schools to colleges, covering over 1000 schools and 1 million students.” There is opportunities for environmental school to cooperate with SDGs by this program. They continuous in their website that:⁹

“Education tour will be our main method to achieve the target numbers of schools and students being covered. The organization staff as well as the voluntary environmental education practitioners will be the speakers of the lectures. Through well prepared and interactive lecture with case studies, we aim to not only spread the knowledge in terms of climate change and sustainable development but also stimulate critical thinking and discussions among audiences/students.”

Education has become one of centers to promote SDGs program. I suppose that this way is effective to popularize the important to pay attention to nature. I think when we (laity people, stake holder, government) can cooperate to care the environment and nature; we can maintain our sustainability of the earth.

The Challenging of the Sekolah Citra Alam Ciganjur

Environmental crisis makes many environmental schools emerge. Most of them emerge to respond that nature is in crisis. It is caused by many people who exploit the nature, which is using science and technology without considering the impact for nature. Moreover, factory pollutes river and air. It will destroy the earth.

⁸ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/?p=515>

⁹ [Ibid.](#)

The emerging of environmental education becomes an alternative how to educate student since maintaining the nature and knowledge as practice in nature become so important to be learned. Environmental school does not only offer how people have to be close to nature, but also how to make people participate to preserve nature for the following generation. However, from some advantages of environmental school, it raises problems for people who do not have a lot of money, because its tuition-fee is high-cost. Whereas, the concept is delivered by environmental school is good which is how to introduce the attention for students since they child to nature.¹⁰

Another problem caused in environmental school is that the understanding of ecological concept. Some teachers said that Sekolah Citra Alam Ciganjur just wants to shape independent personal character of children; in order to they can be close with nature. Meanwhile, the concept should be understood by teachers. Then it is delivered to students. However, the ecological concepts is hard to understand, but by knowing the concept, teacher can be creatively to develop another part of environment to explain better.

From some explanation about ecology aforementioned, the importance of understanding and responsibility for human toward sustainability of earth, they are in interdependency between human and nature. It is all important to know deeply in order people also have attention and responsibility which have embedded them to nature. Therefore, environmental school also teaches the interconnectedness of human and nature. Nature is not as object again which has to be maintained, but it becomes a part of human life. Because, if human does not care nature, the nature will bring disaster for human.

The understanding of the basic of interdependency concept becomes importance; I think it is very important to teach to students. Because, when it is implemented to children, it will be more having advantages. However, when children are forced to understand the concept, I also suppose they will feel bored. So, the creativity of teachers is very need to promote the important of ecology.

CONCLUSION

Sekolah Citra Alam Ciganjur is a school which has program for the student similar with Latour's concept of ecology. It support to save the nature, and to keep the sustainability of the nature as suitable as of SDGs. Sekolah Citra Alam Ciganjur, also has challenging which is about the tuition fee and to popularize the concept of ecology. Hopefully, student can also invite their other friends into paying attention to environment.

The model of the environmental school is a good way to promote and understand how we (as human) need to keep the balance of the earth. If we destroy the part of earth, the earth will destroy us. Earth responds by giving disaster to humankind. However, I think the usage of ecological concept is very important. Although the ecological concept such as anthropocene, gaia, deep ecology and practice in eco-justice and SDGs are difficult, yet it is really helpful if it is understood by some of teachers. Because, by understanding of this ecological concept, the teacher can be more creative to teach to students. The teachers can also make another example for nature. How to make nature as the subject and become part of us as human-being.

¹⁰ For the specific tuition fee of Sekolah Citra Alam Ciganjur can be checked in <http://www.citraalam.sch.id/pendaftaran/pendaftaran-ta-2015-2016>

Aforementioned, there is similarity between anthropocene and gaia, it is about interdependency. The relation between human-being and nature or the correlation of the bodies depends on each other. Anthropocene is taught about how human-being has responsibility to nature, and it has been shown by inviting students to care the environment. Gaia which has been practiced by students, it is shown when they circulate their effort, starting from their planting until they sell the product of planting. It has been recognized as the independence as human-being.

Although stakeholders of Sekolah Citra Alam Ciganjur do not know details concept of ecology, yet they propagandize that human today needs to keep and make relationship with the nature, not only for us but also for the next generation. For some testimonies, the teachers said that they start to establish this school due to taken from the crisis of environment, and some of causations of modernization by manufactory and their awareness to surrounding environment. Most of actors in modernization do not think the impact of their conduct. Their activities also influence to other creatures.

Finally, the challenging of this school is that the fee is too expensive for common people with low income. It is good concept but it is only for rich-people. However this model of environmental school is a good-way to recognize nature and environment for children as the following generation.

Bibliography

- Bron Taylor and Michael Zimmerman. (2005). *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* London: Continuum.
- Excerpts from James Lovelock's *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth* (Oxford, 1979) and *The Ages of Gaia* (W.W. Norton, 1988)
- Henk Manschot. Podcast. II. Bruno Latour: Ecology and Pluralism
- Ian Sample. (2014). *Anthropocene: is this the new epoch of human?* The Guardian.
- Whitney A. Bauman (2015). *Climate Weirding and Queering Nature: Getting Beyond the Anthropocene*. Florida International University.
- Whitney A. Bauman, et.al. (2011). *Grounding Religion: A Field Guide to the Study of Religion and Ecology*. London and Newyork: Routledge.

Additional references

- | | | | |
|---|-------|------|----------|
| Sekolah | Citra | Alam | Ciganjur |
| https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=coJYmYwMl6I | | | |
| http://www.citraalam.sch.id/about-us/profil-sekolah-citra-alam | | | |
| http://bioscience.oxfordjournals.org/content/51/4/283.full | | | |
| https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/ | | | |
| https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/?p=515 | | | |
| http://www.siena.edu/ellard/historical_roots_of_our_ecologic.htm | | | |