

Local Wisdom in Life Cycle of Madurese Women As the Basis of the Arrangement of Self-Empowerment Communication Strategy

Farida Nurul Rahmawati
Dept. of Communication, Universitas Trunojoyo Madura

ABSTRACT

Madura with its four regencies has a variety of cultural tourisms ranging from dance art, traditional clothes, language, unique food, and local wisdoms. These valuable cultural assets are overlooked since Madura has been identified with violence, fight (*carok*), and underdevelopment. The fact is that there are a lot of local wisdoms which have supreme values.

Discussions about Madura cannot be separated from discussions about Madurese women. Madurese women who from the viewpoint of outsiders are identified with work ethics, hard working, Madurese traditional medicine, and sexuality are interesting to be discussed. This is due to the fact that many Madurese local wisdoms are inherent in Madurese women's life cycles. These wisdoms do have supreme values which can be Madurese women's self-potentials.

The objective of the study is to reveal Madurese women's local wisdoms in their life cycles. Ethnographic data were collected by observations and in-depth interviews with key informants to grasp hidden contents or values in every form of Madurese local wisdom. Besides, the data were collected from written documents such as archives, news or opinions. For the sake of historical framework and sharpened perspective, reviews were done to a number of references related to the focus of interest which has been developed by other researchers.

Madurese local wisdoms which are inherent in their life cycles include teenage phase, becoming a wife, and looking after the family. In the three phases above, the local wisdom imbued by their ancestors since their early life to Madurese women is confined in patriarchic cultural hegemony to the degree that they do not feel that it is in fact a gap. The patriarchic cultural hegemony inherent in Madurese women local wisdoms is materialized in three concepts *adhandhen* (dressing up), *arembhi'* (giving birth), and *amasak* (cooking) which must be done by a Madurese woman. Broadly speaking, the Madurese women's local wisdoms which emerge from their life cycles are that they have to work hard, not to be lazy, devote their life to their family by looking after themselves and their family. On the other hand, Madurese women with hard working characteristic and high work ethic imbued since their early life have great potential to increase their own economic life and family as well as are proof of their existence.

Key word : Local wisdom, Madurese women's life cycles

INTRODUCTION

Madura Island with 4 districts has many cultural tourism assets, ranging from dance, typical dress, language, food specialties, and local knowledge of the Madurese. It becomes hardly noticeable as long as the spread of Madura image outside is identical with violence, *carok* and rude. Whereas, in fact, there is much wisdom in Madura society filled by noble values.

Talking about Madura Island, it cannot be separated from the discussion about Madurese women. Outside the Madura community, Madurese women who are identical with the work ethic,

hard work, Madura medicinal herbs, and sexuality have been very interesting topic to be discussed, related to the fact that out of much local wisdom in Madura society, there is some local wisdom inherent in the life cycle of Madura women. This local wisdom is certainly filled by many noble values that could be the self-potential of Madura women.

But like any other local women, in every development process, women have always been subordinated, marginalized and disadvantaged. This is obvious from the design of every programs made by the government which is seldom involves the importance of women. Unlike the men, each program of any offices always made based on male perspective. Finally, the majorities of Madura women make a living in Madura domestic areas such as being servant, helping their husbands as fisherman, and becoming migrant workers abroad. In fact, if it will be observed further, those roles of Madura women with a high work ethic are as wage earners and family economic foundation.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

The deep extracting of local wisdom inherent in the life cycle of Madura women is one of attempts to analyze more about what kind of potencies that can be extracted from Madura women figures that could become the basis of the arrangement of self-empowerment communication strategy of Madura women.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Work ethic of Madura Women as a Form of Family Devotion

One of the inherent characteristics of the Madurese is a high work ethic soul. Madurese work ethic which is known as tough ethic are reflected and motivated from the values implied in the proverbs which is generated from Madurese ancestors. Proverbs such as "Oreng Madura ta' tako' match', tapeh tako' kalaparan" means Madurese do not fear death, but fear of starvation."

On other side shows that Madurese are even more afraid of hunger caused by their act which is not diligent and does not work hard so it makes them ashamed. Thus, they then work as hard as possible, as long as it does not against their religion, "he said. In other words, the Madurese will not consider work as something heavy, less benefit, or contempt as long as the activities are not immoral activities so that the result is halal wage. Thus, he said, Madurese people will not hesitate to roll up their sleeves or accept a job, that it is reflected in the proverb "temon nangtang lalab" (cucumbers brave to be made as lalap (dish of raw vegetables and a spicy sauce)). (Rifai, 2005)

However, not every Madurese is "mara perreng taleh" (like bamboo rope) that shows flexibility to accept any job no matter how hard it is. There is also Madurese which is "alos tanggung" (smooth halfway). "Those who are 'alos tanggung' seem to be delicate workers, but they actually cannot handle jobs, whether it is delicate work or even rough work. Other peoples are

like 'kerbuy Koros menta esae' (thin buffalo ask to plow). Means people requesting more responsibility or positions but they have not had the ability, "he said. Other ethics shown by Madurese in 'nyare kasap' (earning money) by doing 'kar-ngarkar nyolpe' ' (scrambling like chickens, then eating). (Rifai, 2005)

Proverb showed the persistence of the Madurese in doing work that seems to be unimportant but later it can reap huge benefits. In addition, he said, Madurese are advised to never avoid the hard works, so that, there will not come harder works, or the proverbs are "ja` senggaih malarat sakone` nyopre ta` kadhatengan kasossa`an se rajah."

"Another proverb says Peribahasa lain menyebutkan, 'oreng se nampek ka lalakon dhammang bakal nampane pakon berra', means those who refuse delicate works will accept heavy duty. Otherwise there are proverbs for fisherman, which is 'abantal ombak` asapo` angin or 'considering the wave as cushion and the wind as blanket' he said. (Rifai, 2005).

High work ethic implied in the proverb and the characteristic of the Madurese community, not only appeared in the self of Madurese men, but also in the characteristics of Madurese women. Work ethic of Madurese women are taught from the early age in the Madura family. Work ethic embodied in behavior, agile, diligent, and sensitive to the surrounding nature and environment are taught by the Madura family to the children, especially girls. Work ethic which is taught early on Madurese women is aimed to make them a "perfect" woman that will be ready to serve her family. (Interview with Dinara)

Information gained from the informants of this research, it was mentioned that out of all levels of education and socio-economic layers in society, it appears that Madurese women are hard workers both in domestic affairs and in the public work that generate money. High education of work ethic that is taught since they were children in Madura family becomes a motivation for Madurese women for doing tireless work during her lifetime. For Madurese women who have medium socioeconomic status, work is a reason to live and earn a living. In addition, work is an obligation that they have to do to be able to help their husband by supporting his family so that they can escape from the poverty. On the other hand, for Madurese women who have middle and upper socioeconomic status, work is a principle of pride and an example for their children. Besides, working for them is also a worship that should be done. Behind different reasons to continuing to work stated by Madurese women in all social strata, there is an equal principal emphasized on Madurese women in working, which is there should be balance between doing domestic work in each household and doing public work that gained money. Thus, it can be seen that a high work ethic owned by Madurese women embodied in the form of work activities in real life is not a self-actualization, but rather the form of responsibility and devotion to their family. This phenomenon makes the potential of Madurese women becomes invisible and makes her

position increasingly marginalized (interview with Dinara).

In addition to a high work ethic, Madurese women characteristics can also be seen from the form of their devotion to their family (husband) that includes the completion of tasks in total household (taking care of their husband and children, cooking, etc.), self-care as a service to the husband, and high sense of religiosity. These characteristics appear more with a culture of Madura that inherits doctrine or advice as dogma, such as: husband is an *imam* (family leader), do not ever brash husband, children should be taught by using Madurese culture manners and put religion as guidance. (Interview with supik amen)

With such characteristics, although basically Madurese women have known the rights and obligations equality between husband and wife, but that kind of emancipation is prefer called as innate instinct. A wife has an important role and responsibility to uphold the dignity and family life. Together they go to the fields to toil and sweat until "Pello agili koneng" (the sweat is flowing), which means working hard until finish.

Sense of the work is also applicable in the market, at sea, or anywhere where her husband works. However, an excess of Madurese women is reversed her duties as a mother and as a companion to her husband in preparing for the family, women will always be prosecuted faithfully serves. On the other hand, Madurese women traditionally have always lived under the rule of men (husbands). This means Madurese women have to obey, obey, obey and surrender to the will of her husband and was not justified to resist or refuse. (Interview with supik amen)

The Characteristics of Madurese women are features of actualization of local wisdom values application inherent in the Madurese women life cycle, through cultural traditions of their ancestors which are taught since their childhood in Madura family. From the extracting of local wisdom inherent in the Madurese women life cycle, it is known that the characteristic Madurese women that were formed by the implementation of ancestors' doctrine cannot be separated from partiarki cultural system. The system is embodied in the 3 domestic domain concepts that should be done by Madurese women, namely the concept of "Adhanden, Arembhi ', Amasak" (dress up, childbirth, and cooking). The third concepts are the expressions of devotion to her family Madura, because the implementation of those three concepts aims as good service for the family (especially for husband).

The excavation of Local Wisdom in Life Cycle of Madurese Women

Local wisdom is the attitude and the view on life as well as various patterns of life embodied in the daily activities which are undertaken by local communities in responding to a variety of problems in fulfilling their needs in the community. (Rifai, 2005)

In the life cycle of Madurese women, there is various daily activities performed by

Madurese community in responding to these problems. These daily activities become local wisdom that is taught early on Madura family especially by mothers and grandmothers to their daughters. According to the informants of this study, there are broadly three attitudes and behaviors concepts that must be acted by the Madurese women, those are *adhandhen*, *arembhi* and *amasak* (taking care of yourself, take care of the child / family, and cooking). Three concepts are embodied in the daily activities, done by local communities of Madura, and taught through generations to Madurese women since adolescence.

Local Wisdom Inherited in Madurese Women Since Adolescence

Adolescence is an important phase in the life of women, including in Madura. In their adolescence, Madurese girls uphold advices from parents or relatives who are more experienced. Various local wisdoms taught especially to the young women to prepare for married life later. In this phase, Madurese women have started applying local wisdom by doing *Amasak* and *Adhandhen* (self-care and cooking)

Madurese young women, who are considered as adults by the arrival of menstruation marked, get discourse and the advice related to the duties and responsibilities of women. Women who have grown should be more careful in keeping herself, because if something happens to women, it is related to the self-esteem and the dignity of the family. Various advices often be given to women in the family to prepare the future married life (interview with Atik, Dessy).

At the beginning of Madurese girls' menstruation, *slametan* ceremony is held. It aims to refuse disaster and so that the way forward after the adult life always gets salvation. Women who get their first period are not permitted to off their slippers even in the house, it is intended to reduce the risk of dirt that can cause odor problems. When the menstruation has finished, Madurese women are advised to take shower with *setaman* flowers water to maintain freshness, fitness, and body fragrance. Madurese women are also not recommended to consume green bananas, pineapples and cucumbers because the three fruits are not good for their female organs (interview with Ms. Supik Amin).

Other important advices are also done to Madurese women who will get married. Advice include that a woman should be a congregation for her husband. A wife should be completely devoted to their husbands because the husband is the head of the family, *imam*, and a life guide for her. In the belief of Madura women, wives should obey her husband in all things, whether when doing activity in the domestic domain and at the public. Madurese women should always ask permission and blessing from her husband when they do whole activities, it is because in their view, when women who have been married do anything without husbands' permission, it means they had dared to "bypass" the husband, and it is considered as taboo (interview with Ms. Dinara).

Dealing with self-care, Madurese women are required to diligently care of herself and her body that later can make her husband happy after marriage. Body treatments of Madurese women before getting marriage also get special attention. Madurese Women are advised to start doing body care through both external and internal treatment. Treatment is done in an effort to prepare women to be a wife who will have to serve her husband as a form of devotion. (Interview with the mother of Supik Amin). Additionally ceremonies and rituals performed before marriage, as follows: 1 week before the day of marriage, they should do fasting and drinking herbal medicine (in order to make the sweat does not smells bad); bath scrub for 1 month (works for yellowing the skin), give Kutek to the nails (pacar), room of reception and the clothes used in the marriage are covered by incense fragrance (diokep)

In the implementation of the local wisdom that is implemented through the advice of parents, the mother or the grandmother begins to prepare and require her daughter to drink Madura traditional herbal drink (jamu). The treatment in the form of herbal drink is started since girls' first menstrual period. Drinking herbal medicine is not odd things for Indonesian, especially for Madurese. Herbal medicine can be categorized as a traditional drink because it uses natural ingredients like nutritious herbs that are commonly used by local people through generations. According to the informants, drinking herbal drink is required to keep body in shape, reduce odor during and after the menstrual period. Likewise Madurese women who will get married should take herbal drink and do body treatments with herbal powder (lulur).

According to several sources, Madura traditional herbs for women basically use the same basic ingredients. Based on those same basic materials, then the herbs are developed into various ingredients with different uses and different users. Since adolescence, Madurese women already know the ingredients and the traditional herbal medicine for the treatment of their body. Herbal medicine and treatment for women basically consists of ingredients received through generations, which is delivered through parents and relatives. The treatment of Madurese women has been done since they were teenagers, and continued when they get married to the adult stage. In every stage of these women's lives, there is always distinct specific traditional medicinal herb. These are traditional ingredients, materials, and the utility of ingredients for women on the adolescent phase: Jamu galian singset, Jamu Keputihan, Jamu Galian Remaja putri, Jamu Paket (for girls who will be married), herbs which are taken regularly during menstruation, herbal beauty, and herbal powder

The concept of Adhandhen behavior in this phase is manifested in the habit of drinking herbs. This can be seen from the function of herbal medicinal drink that is drunk by Madurese women, is generally used for self-care. In addition, in the adolescent phase, the concept of Amasak behavior is also began to be taught. Since adolescence, women are made aware of the importance

of Madura cooking skills when they married later. The cooking skill owned by Madura women is a medium to serve their husbands, so that their husbands will not be turned into another person or neglected because she could not cook. Therefore, in this phase, Madurese women should start learning to cook. Several types of regional recipes of Madura are begun to be taught to Madura girls, like broth soup, Serpang rice, Sobi porridge, soto Madura and many more.

Local Wisdom Madurese women in Phase Life as a Wife

For Madura men, women had the highest place, because of women the men in Madura get spirit, and because of women, the self-esteem of men is ventured

In the relation of men and women as husband and wife in Madura, the wife is completely owned by her husband. This marriage as it is stated in Ihromi Scanconi (Ihromi, 1999: 100) the wife is known as *property owner*. In the pattern of property owner marriage, the wife is the husband's property, the same as cash and other valuables. The task is to make a living husband and wife's duty is to provide food for her husband and children and completing household tasks in part because her husband had to work to support herself and her children. The husband was the "boss" and the wife should submit to him. In the event of disagreement, the wife should submit to her husband. Thus, the stability will be created in the household. (T.O. Ihromi, 1999: 100)

Women are 'owned' by her husband fully, under his control. Absolute leadership is in the hands of husbands (men). The man who had the right to determine what should and what should not be done by women because women are his. As women become the center of men self-esteem, the women are being protected, supervised, and owned by men. It even becomes system in Madura culture, including the system of residence management.

In the management of residence, women have a special room that is a woman house. The house is a home for women's groups. The house is inhabited by women and small children. Adult males have a outside which is very genera, such as *langgar*. The house is owned by women, families have an obligation to make a home for girls.

Receiving men guests in tanean is not common when there is not man at all. Women will only reply the guests from the inside of the house but they will not meet them. Guest will not wait if at the tanean there is not man. This is reinforced by the opinions of the informants who said that it was the custom in the village, when there are guests come, they will not be allowed to enter the tanean, but they will be treated in the *langgar* which is always built around *tanean lanjang* in Madura. If there are guests, especially men, they will be treated in langgar, moreover when there is a not adult man in the house. The house is only used to receive female guests. The room for men is in langgar. (Interview with Uus)

The phenomenon of governance residence above, shows the position of women is so special

in Madura. This privileged position is actually a form of protection, control, and possession of the female figure on Madurese men. These all because of women is a symbol of male pride in Madura. Welfare which was seen in Madurese women is Madurese success of a male, and vice versa, the fall woman is a failure of Madurese men. Here the self-esteem of Madura men is stake. From above facts, it is obvious how strong patriarchal cultural system surrounding the Madura Society

Patriarchal cultures that put Madurese women's status as wives in a possession of a man, has a consequences to the attitude of Madurese women as a wife. Based on information collected from informant, it is known that as a wife, she must be obedient and obliged to serve her husband well. It is taboo for a wife, and it is forbidden to see her husband's wallet, because it shows rudeness and distrust in the ability of her husband to support themselves and their families. (Interview with Supik amen)

As a form of service, a wife shall prepare a meal and accompany her husband while eating, conduc all activities with the consent or permission of the husband, and do other forms of service, including service to satisfy the sexual desire of her husband. Out of the phenomenon, it is not wrong if people outside Madura know that Madurese women have a higher sex desire than women of other ethnicities. This is because the sex education that is given since childhood. 12-year-old girls, before the wedding, have already know kinds of ingredients, as well as the sex style pattern. This education is indeed informal nature from their grandmother or mother. They had the concept of dry or wet. Dry is considered as healthy, while wet or muddy is not healthy. So women who are getting married do not eat cucumber or foods that contain a lot of water because it is not good. Thus, the sexual power is maintained. (Interview with Amin supik)

This is confirmed by the statement of one of the informants that since children and teens she had received information about the treatment of women in general, such as drinking herbal first period, and continued on a regular treatment. In addition, women should know Madura herbal ingredients specifically related to women's issues, such as overcoming the problem of *keputihan*, reducing pain during menstruation, the type of food that is taboo for women, and so on. (Interview with Uus).

From these explanations of local wisdom excavations of Madurese women in wives phase, it is obvious that there are many efforts done in the form of advice and prohibition in family life as a form of devotion and service implementation of Madurese women to their husbands. In the local wisdom, women choose to drink a traditional herb of Madura or *jamu* that are believed to have special use for that.

According to the informants of this study, there are some common herbal drinks that are usually consumed by Madurese women in her phase of their life cycle as a good wife. They can be made because the material is easy to search or it can be bought in a home industry. Some of these

ingredients, as follows:

1. Madura ingredients made by most Madurese women like Sari Rapet herbs and herbal fertilizer.

2. Madura herb commonly produced by home industries in Madura, such as Sepet Rapet scented or perfumed, *empot ayam*, *susut perut*, Jamu for birth, jamu to be taken by a new-mother, such as herbs for breast or "peja" and herbs for youth. For the body care of giving birth women, there are several types of tabu parem / parem bangkes, Parem atas, Peles dahi, Dupa ratus, Cebok / lakela and potions to make female sex organs closer.

In the life cycle of Madurese women as a wife, the concept of local wisdom *adhandhen*, *arembhi* ', and *amasak* (taking care of yourself, taking care of the child / family, and cooking) is required to be done by Madurese women. A wife of Madurese men should be able to take care of themselves, take care of family and cook as a form of service to the husband. One of the ways is by regularly drinking Madura herbal and creatively makes innovations in cooking food by using local ingredients of Madura.

Local Wisdom of Madurese women in her Phase Life As a Mom

In addition to the household, Madurese women also work. If for example, her husband sails, she would be at home to make batik. This then developed into a fine art. Women also carved as art and production activities.

Women in Madura community social life actually emphasize the harmonious life. It can be seen from the expression *Rampa' naong beringin korong*. Suggestions for mutual assistance to each other and the importance of social solidarity is also heavily emphasized as the expression *ghu'tegghu' sabbhu 'or song-Osong lombung*.

In this phase of life as a mother, Madurese woman is required to perform tasks as housewives including taking care on families that are children, husbands and other family members. In her role as a mother, she must understand the various recipes and potions for child or other family members care.

Madurese women are known as a strong woman to keep a secret of the family. What happens in the family may not be public discussion, *jha' methha' buri' etengnga lorong* ((do not show (sorry) ass on the highway). However, the bad things sooner or later will be known by public, *sapenter-penterra nyimpen babathang paste e kaedhing bauna* (remains buried, the smells will be smelled too). (Interview with Mukmiroh Conscience)

In this phase of motherhood, Madurese women should have traditional herbs knowledge that can be used for keeping the health of family members. Potions can be either a drink with certain benefits, such as *pokak*, the benefits of the plants around us, and other traditional ingredients.

CLOSING

Local wisdom inherent in Madurese women lifecycle is ranging from adolescent phase, a wife, and taking care of the household. In the three phases, the local wisdoms that are given by their ancestors are locked in patriarchal cultural hegemony, thus Madurese women do not feel that all of those wisdoms is inequality so that they lack of entrepreneurial spirit in their souls. The restricted self-actualization activity in working to not exceed her husband's work, make Madurese women's high work ethic is only manifested in the activities to help her husband work, They do not work as a producer or even a proponent of the family economy, whereas, this potential is strongly owned by Madurese women. The cultural hegemony patriarchy inherent in the local wisdom of Madurese women are manifested in 3 concepts, *adhandhen*, *arembhi* and *amasak* to be acted by a Madurese woman. Broadly speaking, local wisdom of Madurese can be seen in the life cycle of them are women have to work hard, do not be lazy, devoted his life to their family by taking care of herself, taking care of their family. Besides, local wisdom of Madurese women were also can be seen on exploiting natural resources to be processed into daily need products; Utilizing a wealth of human resources to create opportunities, business and family welfare; Adopting natural resources of Madura and changing them into specific Madura products that are unique and attractive; Adopting religious education, formal education, and life skills as a skill of Madurese women.

On the other hand, Madurese women with the characteristics of hard work and high work ethics taught early actually has great potential to improve the welfare of Madurese women and her family economy as well as a proof of the existence of Madurese women. But unfortunately, so far, the potential of Madurese women does not run optimally. This is due to all sorts of effort and hard works that is done by women is not based on their actual potential but is actually more in the form of responsibility and devotion to their family. They work hard to help their husbands earning extra income. This phenomenon makes the potential of Madurese women is unnoticeable and marginalized. It makes the efforts done by Madurese women simply to sell well, not to be an entrepreneur that is full of innovation, creativity and product development.

References:

Ihromi, 1999. *Bunga Rampai Sosiologi Keluarga*. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia.

Rifai, Mien. 2005. *Manusia Madura*. Jogjakarta : LKIS

Wiyata, Latief. 2002. *Carok: Konflik Kekerasan dan harg Diri Orang Madura*. Jogyakarta : LKIS