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The Role and Development of Lawas as a Traditional Literary Work in Preserving Samawa Local Wisdoms

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Abstract

This paper highlights the role and development of Lawas as a traditional literary work and its preservation toward other local wisdom in Samawa. This study was a descriptive-qualitative research where the author was attempted to use the field research in the process of collecting the data. It is purposively that the participant on the interview was chosen based on the capability of the samples in apprehend Lawas and acknowledged Lawas whether as a traditional literary work or as a local wisdom that renowned to be the preserver of the other local wisdom in Samawa Island. The result of this study showed that Lawas was primarily become the foundation of the existence of many local wisdoms in Samawa island, such as in Mataq Rame which is includes BaLawas, Ngumang, Sakeco, gandang, badede, batutir, Pangantan (marriage procession), and many kinds of procession related to local parades in Samawa. As a traditional literary work, Lawas independently become an expression medium for the society in the form of literary works and the sacred parade that is perpetuated from generation to generation. It is renowned that the creation of Lawas is based on the three foundation of life that was believed by the community and apply them in the real life. Those three foundations are acknowledging as Raboat Aji Lako Nene, Raboat Aji Inak Bapak, and Raboat Aji Lako Guru.

Keywords: Lawas; Local Wisdom; Culture; Samawa; Cultural Preservation; Literary Work

Introduction

The role of local wisdom in the community is essential to ruminate because by considering the local wisdom that society develops in their general vicinity, we could have determined the foundation of a specific group in regards to their way of life (Culture). Local wisdom is a kind of cultural heritage that has been developed by the community for a long time ago. It is tarnished that it was conceived from the musings and qualities that human progress has confidence in its tendency and condition. Supplementary, local wisdom has been established based on the values, norms, belief systems, and ideas of the local community. There are numerous opportunities for the development of local wisdom; this demonstrates it tends to be approached from the values contained therein. For example, religious values, ethical values, aesthetic values, intellectual values, or even other values such as economics, technology, etc. The wealth

of local wisdom becomes fertile enough to be extracted and analyzed given the factor of cultural development occurs so rapidly. Therefore, local wisdom in each region is practically poles apart. Several aspects of local wisdom show that this difference specified them in some domains, such as the way of society using traditional dress, performing entertainment in the traditional event, and the cooperation by doing collective work within the society. Moreover, one of the most important aspects that consist of local wisdom that commonly distinct between one tribe and another besides those mentioned above, is that way of such a community used traditional literature.

Everyone realizes that literature is indistinguishable from a culture in light of the fact that those both play out the blend to frame an arrangement that manufactures an identity. This indeed the archipelago of wealth that comes to be a magnet for the wider world that this diversity is a system in which the values of cooperation are represented through culture so that the people inside it remain one and uphold diversity in unity (Samovar, Porter & Daniel: 2009). Following the literature above, a location that the traditional literature still exists and settled to be utilized and polished among development is situated in the West of Nusa Tenggara, namely, *Samawa Island*. Geographically, *Samawa Island* was isolated into four locales, to be specific; West *Samawa Regency, Samawa Regency, Dompu Regency, and Bima Regency*. Every one of these spans has assorted language disciplines and conventional artistic works. As an area that very much holds tight to the local wisdom, Samawa is an area that is having a lot of customs and social parades. No form of ceremonies and activities in Samawa can be separated from cultural sacredness that they believe it was bequeathed from time to time. Here, traditional literature intends to understand as a literary work. As in *Bima Regency*, The villages in this city are thick with culture. The inherited culture exists in every aspect of people's lives such as agriculture and marriage.

Literary work in Samawa resembles foreordained along with the community because all the customary parades in Samawa are utilizing literary work that changes into certain fragments of its utilization. For example, it is developed as the core component of entertainment regarding marriage, religion, and all events that need the performance of literature (literary works) in its' process. This precisely how art merges and turns out to be the main element of the culture of the society in Samawa. In line with this, Teeuw in Saryono (2003: 244) states that "literature is the fourth path to truth in a society (in addition to religion, philosophy, and science) that can be understood". Hence, this may enlighten us on why literature turns out to be a foundation and is a pearl of local wisdom in each area in the world. Traditional literary work in Samawa is a fundamental issue, where they are chiefly utilized for the holy occasion. Expressly, the literary work is more worried about the consecrated service, for example, pangantan (wedding). In pangantan (wedding), it is comprising of certain means before a definitive procedure, those procedures, to be specific; bakatoan, basaputis, nyorong, barodak, nikah, and resepsi (the festival coordinated after authoritatively announced as spouse and husband). These certainly need entertainment or art performance, which called as sakeco, ngumang, baLawas, etc, whereby the civilians of Samawa, they organize them based on the arrangement of the marriage phases above. None of the entertainment above can be alienated from traditional literary works that are acknowledged as Lawas by the civilian of Samawa.

Lawas was a literary work that grew and developed from the place named Lawas Manca in Suyasa (1984), but it was intentionally disputed by the majority of Samawa culturist because Lawas was naturally established from Samawa's native culture and there are no involvement or even interventions from any other places. Reacted to this, Rayes (1991) briefly states that there was no research is done on either on precise data that has been found by any researcher about how Lawas revealed and how it is used the whole time. This might illustrate that Lawas has probably spread out practice from mouth to mouth and continued to develop from one place into another place in Samawa. By definition, Mabasan in Suayasa (2003: 87) defines Lawas as a cultural spectacle in Samawa and becomes a reflection of cultural values and serves as a medium of communication and expression for the community. The form of Lawas is similar to poetry is fundamentally comprise of the stanza, syllable, beat, rhyme, and other poetic devices. Categorizing Lawas as poetry can be reflected from Hornilai's definitions (1985), where he

defines poetry as the pieces of creative literary writing that contain verses of language, especially the ones that express a deep feeling or noble thought in beautiful language, composed with the desire to communicate the experience. This has a similar appearance with Lawas for the reason that it is also used equally in such functions above. Structurally, Lawas is made of Samawa's old language, which then formulates some arrangement of verses that are used verbally in a song, poem, and many kinds of traditional event that renowned as local wisdoms in the area of Samawa. Specifically, BaLawas is turning out to be the main medium of Lawas to be presented by the host culture when it comes to the traditional ceremonial. Lawas is a sequence of pitched language that can be performed as a solo or with the opponents (interaction between two or more people) where the community uses it to reciprocate the Lawas itself. Given the existence of Lawas, it is officially recognized that Lawas is perpetuated in the form of the anthology that consists of the collection of Lawas that has been created by several culturists. Although they have collected by many culturists, the primary case is that it still very limited scientific studies completed in terms of their roles and development as well as the values that is perceived within Lawas.

To take priority over all the elaborations above, though there was some research investigation regarding *Lawas* in Samawa, little is known that such the analysis in terms of the roles and the development of *Lawas* had never been done previously. The limited issues that responsible for the research in the current area possibly will jeopardize and triggered language loss, even the extermination of cultural identity. Respond to this, Teeuw (1984) argues that even oral literature often takes very strong intrinsic dynamics or changes due to foreign influences whether it is written or spoken. This means that many possibilities outside the dome (Samawa) potentially could give cultural erosion. If this occurs, society will lose its identity and could have affected by the intervention of modern culture and lose every inch of its history.

Literature Review

Samawa Local Wisdoms

Samawa is an island located in the middle of the Lesser Sunda Islands chain, with Lombok to the west, Flores to the east, and Sumba further to the southeast. Along with Lombok, it is part of the province of West Nusa Tenggara. Sumbawa is one of the most islands that has abundant cultural growth inside (Hagerdal, 2017: 1). The people on this island are still very adhering to the sacredness of the culture that is taking place and they are preserving it from generation to generation. From this culture, it is known that many forms of local wisdom are formed and spread throughout the island of Samawa.

Traditionally, the form of local wisdom in Samawa is not much different from several other cultures that are spread throughout Indonesia. Some examples of local wisdom in Samawa are; Marriage, dance, poetry, song, and many others which are generally known to have existed in several regions of Indonesia. In particular, what distinguishes the local wisdom that exists on this island from other places may lie in what is the underlying or root of the local wisdom it selves.

In Sumbawa, some existing local wisdom is formed from language (literary works) which is known as traditional poetry. Until now, this poem has become the foundation for the sustainability of other local wisdom that is believed by the community. As explained by Suyasa (2002), several forms of the application of *Lawas* to the other local wisdom in Samawa are *sakeco, ngumang, gandang, tutir, baLawas, bakelung*, etc. This is certainly a beauty in itself where a cultural continuity is determined by language which is used as the root of the formation of some of this local wisdom. However, this indeed does not apply to other forms of local wisdom, such as dress styles, because it is certainly things like this are not suitable formed through language or literary works. From the explanation above, it can be

concluded that the role of (*Lawas*) as a literary work and the basis for the formation of some local wisdom in Samawa plays a very important role. So, it becomes attention-grabbing for a researcher to see the values contained in (*Lawas*) and how their role and development in the continuity of customs in Samawa.

Some of the local wisdom mentioned by Suyasa (2002) are consist of; (1) Sakeco; a form of local wisdom that use Lawas as the core formation of local wisdom. Particularly, sakeco is a type of open amusement that presents Lawas as the tune joined by customary percussion instruments, for example, genang, rabana rea, rabana tribute, gong, and sarune. Usually, this song consists of several people who reply to each other using the previously defined theme of Lawas. Sakeco is usually found in traditional Samawa wedding processions and practice, it usually takes a night. (2) Ngumang, unlike the other forms of Lawas presentation, Ngumang is usually singled out by one person, however, Lawas at this stage is a greater amount of an oral introduction which then in the wake of finishing the Lawas verses, the player will recite on the last stanza of Lawas utilized. Bringing Lawas to Ngumang is a way of expressing poetry with movement and is also supported by a percussion beat. This percussion instrument commonly used in Ngumang only uses Rabana/Genang. (3) BaLawas is the process of singing Lawas but the presentation requires more than one person. Usually, players at this stage will reply to each other according to a predetermined theme. The players in the BaLawas process usually consist of men and women. The major parts in the BaLawas procedure generally comprise of people. That, however BaLawas is additionally played by four sets. (4) Bakelung is a Lawas singing process with a mixture of stringed music such as guitar and lute. This Bakelung almost resembles a song, but it has a rhythm that is patent or can be said to be permanent. Although there can be arrangements, the lyric singing pattern usually does not change. In this local wisdom, it can be said that Lawas is a contemporary composition where it is presented in a modern ethnic way. And (5) Tutir is a way of telling stories from the Samawa community who use Lawas as a way of conveying the contents of the stories being told. Lawas at this stage are usually used in several parts which are the essence of the story. Besides, Lawas here is also conveyed when it relates to the advice of the previous person to the *Tutir* listener.

Lawas as a Cultural Spectacle in Samawa

Identically, the act of *Lawas* in Samawa is determinants when it is related to the ceremonial process. Traditionally, *Lawas* is becoming an essential part of preserving local wisdom. It is such a compilation of two interests when language and custom are combined to become one transformation as something sacred. This can be noted from Suyasa (2002) where he argues that "*Lawas* telah dimanfaatkan secara luas oleh masyarakatnya dalam berbagai aktivitas kehidupan, seperti saat menuai padi, karapan kerbau, upacara adat keagamaan seperti perkawinan dan sunatan, serta dalam berbagai bentuk hiburan". *Lawas* have been widely used by the civilian in their life activities, such as in planting a rice plant, buffalo race, religious events like marriage and traditional circumstance and in many forms of entertainment.

Lawas is a flexible, humorous language that can be used in many forms of traditional activities in Samawa, such as in song, storytelling, baLawas, sakeco, bakelung, and ngumang, etc. The use of Lawas also can be combined with traditional ethnic percussion music. For example, rabana rea, rabana ode, gong, genang, sarune, etc (Suyasa, 2002: 87). Lawas as creative literary writing and present verbally until now still survive for generations, and are recognized as folk literature that continues to develop from time to time. Whereas, Manca (1984) briefly elaborates that the arrangement of Lawas is similar to a poem. Based on the history of Lawas it was introduced by a poet from the place named Lawas. However, many Samawa culturists, because Lawas was a literature that traditionally grew and rooted in Samawa's native culture, rejected this. Lawas have been widely used by the community in various life activities, such as a custom event, traditional sports event, and religious event. Regarding marriage procession, Lawas has long known that it is used in this domain and it was divided into some major processes, they are; 1) Bakatoan and basaputis, the initial process before proposing the woman, 2) Nyorong, sometimes it is combined with the process of barodak. This process similarly is done like engagement, but in Nyorong everything prepared traditionally and religiously 3) Nikah, the process of a couple declared by the

headman that they are officially married under the law and belief, and 4) *Pangantan*, is the final process where a couple is put together in one place and united into an officially new family. All of those processes have their characteristics and uniqueness because *Lawas* are merely used in this circumstance.

In *nyorong*, before the two families go into the main activities of proposing the woman, there is an initial stage where the representative of both men and women's family mutually reciprocating the *Lawas*. They use *Lawas* as a medium of transferring the idea where this is done alternately and it is called the reply process between the two families married. According to the Samawa community, this process is called *Rabalas Lawas*. Some examples of *Lawas* are also used in *nyorong* procession. *Lawas* in the process of *nyorong* is not solely a kind of advice for the married couple, but also the two participants (Man & Women) to tone up the situation will use a funny *Lawas* or even a nasty *Lawas*. From this point, we can argue that *Lawas* can function as entertainment for the guests who attend the process of Nyorong. Some examples of *Lawas* Samawa which are commonly used and developed in the community in the form of advice can be seen in the description of the stanza which is set forth below:

- a. O sarea rama peno Laga mo rembit sembayang Lema nyaman nyawa lalo
- b. Tu loka beang nasehat Tu tarima kewa mengas Puji nene kenang Lawas

Lawas above is basically a collection of Lawas which conveys the meaning of advice for the person who is the object of the Lawas content. In general, there are many Lawas that were created based on the social conditions of the Samawa people, such as the creation of Lawas for young couples who have romantic relationships and criticism of the people's lifestyle which has begun to experience a shift due to the influence of foreign cultures that enter and interfere with the preservation of local culture. If it examined more deeply, Lawas is not only an advice, but the flexibility of Lawas requires a creator to express himself as a form of complaining about the reality that is seen and mixed in indigenous peoples.

Method

The study applied a descriptive-qualitative research, however, to give a clear depiction and interpretation in the detailed embellishments of *Lawas* as a means of preserving local wisdom in Samawa. As regards, Moleong (2011) says that the term of qualitative research is the way of a researcher collecting the information from capable sources, whether it is in the form of oral and text information. Therefore that this might give the opportunities for the researcher to describe and enlighten the phenomena that happen related to the study accompanied.

Consider that in investigating *Lawas* the researcher must be used an interview to collect the data, "Field Study" was intended due to identify the role and the development of *Lawas* in preserving Samawa local wisdom. Beside the data collection, the researcher do the process called "Data Reduction" where reducing the data was a kind of process of compiling raw data that is obtained from the sources. By the selection process, the researcher decided which data from the recorded interview to be used in the analysis. For further, the process of reducing data is proposed to avoid verbatim data that does not essential for the analysis. After deal with the data reduction process, the researcher analyze the data based on the transcription result. The selected information on the interview has been chosen by the researcher to describe the role and the development of *Lawas* as a traditional literary work and the means of preserving other local wisdoms. In addition, the documentation process has also considered to support the researcher in analyzing the data gathered. Semi-structured interview has been conducted which were includes some

questions provided in the interview. Moreover, the note taking from the semi-structured interview documents is also accounted as the addendum of the data.

Result and Discussion

Based on the title agreed, there two major findings discover by the researcher, they are; (1) the role of *Lawas* as a traditional literary work in samawa as a preserver of many local wisdoms in Samawa, and (2) the development of *Lawas* that transform from the past to the present era where *Lawas* experience some changes in its structure and values. Regarding the first result of the research is that *Lawas* has become the main foundation of many local wisdoms in Samawa Island. As the basis of the development of many local wisdoms, *Lawas* as a traditional literary works has an essential part in the culture. It can be noticed that without the intervention of *Lawas* perhaps it can cause the loss of local wisdoms in Samawa.

Lawas as a traditional literary work in fact become the main composition in many local wisdoms as mentioned above, such as; ngumang, gandang, dede, basual, baLawas, bakelung, sakeco, bagonteng, nyorong, and song. Each part of these Lawas presentation can be applied in many other local wisdoms such as mata rame, barempuk, pangantan, basunat, and etc. if we see from this explanation, it can be inferred that local wisdom in samawa is related to each other by means, there is a local wisdom inside the local wisdom. Many culturists in Samawa agreed that the terms of Lawas become the main concern of the local wisdoms life because it can be said that without Lawas there will be no such culture related language could be struggle to be perpetuated. This is not undergoing the local wisdoms that not include Lawas as the basic foundation of their creation.

Specifically about the role of *Lawas* in cultural area, there was a belief that the communities hold in thigh from generation to generation regarding the creation of Lawas. Those are recognized by the Samawa community as "Tali Ontar Telu". Tali ontar telu is a kinds of cultural spectacle in positive ways that aims to restrict the people of Samawa to be focused on three things for the living in this world they are; raboat aji lako nene, raboat aji lako inak bapak, and raboat aji lako guru. These three values by Soepriyanti et. Al (2018) are called as intangible cultural products. Raboat aji lako nenek concerned to the devotion of humans to god. This can be seen that the whole communities religiously believe in a religion. Consider to this, all of the people who are categorized as indigenous people of Samawa are Muslims. Raboat aji lako nenek shows some advices to human that life in this world is a temporary because one way or another they will come back to the creator of the universe (Almighty God). So the creation of Lawas reminds them to always doing a good thing so that in the afterlife they will received the good things either. Raboat aji lako inak bapak is similarly kind of advice that purposively create for the community regarding the devotion to their parents. So the content of Lawas at this stage is always based on counsel that aim to all of fathers and mothers in Samawa. The last stage is known as raboat aji lako guru. At this stage, the people ordered to give devotion to their teacher who thought them about anything whether in formal education or outside educational institution.

The overall stages above show the people in Samawa that life must have a responsibility to God as creator, parents as people who give birth, and teachers as people who taught knowledge to their pupils. To be more specific about the role of *Lawas* as traditional Samawa literature, it can be seen in the following diagram below:

Culture

Local
Wisdoms

1. Sakeco
2. Balawas
3. Ngumang
4. Batutir
5. Bakelung
6. Lagu
7. Dede
8. Marriage.

Figure 1. The Role of Lawas

Concerning to the development of *Lawas* as a traditional literary works in Samawa. There are two major findings regarding this stage, they are the past and present era of performing *Lawas*. In the past era, *Lawas* has been created based on "Tali Ontar Telu" that has been elaborated in the previous section. The creation of *Lawas* cannot be separated from the existence of these three important values. This is what makes the people of Samawa able to maintain a culture that remains on the line of kindness and good guidance. *Lawas* based on "Tali Ontar Telu" is known as three parts of the creation, namely *Lawas Ahkirat, Lawas Dunia, and Lawas Pergaulan*. If it is viewed from these three traditional forms, it can be concluded that they reflect some of the values contained therein, namely; religious values, social values, and moral values related to education, and manners. The values contained in *Lawas* which include the two periods above can be seen in the figure below:

Cultural

Economic

Values
of
Lawas

Religious

Political

Figure 2. The Value of Lawas

Lawas in ancient times developed in a fixed realm in the sense that it was only used or performed based on traditional events, in this case, it was referred to as "Mataq Rame". Mataq Rame is an annual event organized by the community as a form of cooperation and gratitude for all forms of divine gifts they receive.

In this event, all forms of local wisdom performances were shown in one big event. Some of these local wisdom includes *Lawas* as the main character as well as encouragement for people who carry out *Mataq Rame*. The local wisdom groups are known as; *Badede. Bagandang, Barempuk, Ngumang, Barapan, Sakeco, etc.* In this event, all forms of local wisdom are displayed based on their functions. *Lawas* Ngumang is performed at Barempuk and Barapan Kebo events, while *Lawas* Badede and Sakeco are prioritized for encouragement when farming is carried out, for example when planting rice. Much

different from now, *Lawas* underwent significant changes, such as the creation of *Lawas* no longer depending on the value contained in the *Tali Ontar Telu*, the language used in the resent *Lawas* was no longer a pure figurative language of Samawa rather a language that had transformed both in terms of structure and shape.

In essence, Lawas structurally has a typographic form, which consists of three lines and eight syllables contained in it. The language in Lawas is also an old Samawa language, a formal figurative language specifically intended for the manufacture of Lawas. The difference with the current era is that Lawas was no longer has a similar form as described above but undergoes changes, as found by Sari (2007), namely Lawas, consists of three, four, and six lines. This is certainly contrary to the actual structural conditions of Lawas, where Lawas contains eight syllables that correspond to the scale of the tone where when it is sung, the chanting will match the rhythmic beat of the music. As a form of clarification regarding the structural form of a genuine Lawas, some cultural observers say that in ancient times there were six lines, but it cannot be categorized that the next three lines in the second part are a unity with the first line. This can be found in the Old form which is called "Lawas Sanepat". Lawas Sanepat is Lawas which has a continuation of three lines from the first three lines but this cannot be categorized as one Lawas unit because it is only a continuation of the first Lawas by using other Lawas which consists of three lines and eight syllables as well. So it can be concluded that structurally Lawas consists of three lines and no more than eight syllables.

Conclusions

The overall findings show that *Lawas* as a traditional literary work plays an important roles for the live of culture in Samawa Island. Regarding local wisdom, the sustainability of local wisdom struggling the modernization era is depends on how the community maintain to use *Lawas* as the foundation build local wisdom in Samawa. The result of the research also shows that the development of *Lawas* from the past to the present era is also known to be followed by the value contained inside. In relation to this, the awareness of the host culture (Samawanese) in preserving the *Lawas* should be the main concern so that it can uphold the identity that characterized the people who apprehend *Lawas* as their traditional patron of cultural modernization.

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