

Low Public Perspective on The Importance of a Sustainable Environment in The Environmental Journalism Polemic

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Abstract

Forest fires in Indonesia occur continuously every year, but coverage of these events has not been popular in the mass media. The purpose of this study was to identify the understanding of kumparan reporters about environmental journalism based on their knowledge and experience in reporting forest fires. To achieve this goal, this study uses an interpretive paradigm, a qualitative research approach, the unit of analysis chosen is the individual (kumparan reporter), data collection techniques are carried out with in-depth interviews (primary data) and reporting documentation written by the kumparan reporter (secondary data), Data analysis techniques are performed by reducing data, presenting data, and drawing conclusions. The concepts in this research are environmental journalism, reporters as news agents, reporters' understanding of reporting issues, and environmental journalism problems. A reporter who understands in reporting forest fires is a reporter who knows the ideal coverage in accordance with environmental journalism and applies elements of environmental journalism namely ecology, social and economic development. The findings in this study indicate that only some of the elements of environmental journalism are known and applied by kumparan reporters, so it can be concluded that kumparan reporters do not understand in reporting forest fires. The misunderstanding arises from the knowledge and experience in carrying out the journalistic process, namely there is no separate environmental desk, there is a separation of angle determination from reporters and editors, and the educational background of reporters is not related to environmental knowledge. Reporters only understand environmental journalism from their experience in covering forest fires.

Keywords: Coil; Environmental Journalism; Understanding

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of haze that often occurs in barren land due to human actions has never been a deterrent. The erosion of the sense of ownership of the world's lungs is getting thinner. Human apathy is the first step in encouraging damage. Weak understanding of education is a factor in Indonesia being damaged in our own hands. On the other hand, as the next generation of the nation, we must care and protect our homes with various efforts for the sake of sustainability in the future. Accompanied by technological advances and freedom of meeting, through mass media, all sources of information can be sent and known easily. The low level of human awareness to make environmental conservation efforts is an important note that needs to be built from now on in order to save from disaster. It is not surprising that the perpetrators will certainly be reluctant to take responsibility. Therefore, when everything

is made easier by access, it is hoped that it can create public awareness from the news presented through the mass media. In the mass media there are two main components as news producers, namely news and journalists or reporters. Through technological advances, all conveniences can now be felt by various elements, even ordinary citizens. It is not surprising that when there is a prolonged dry season, news of fires often occurs, such as forest and land fires (karhutla) in peatlands such as in the provinces of Kalimantan and Sumatra. Based on the environmental news site: Mongabay explains that forest fires that occurred in the provinces of Kalimantan and Sumatra experienced a significant increase of 160% from August 2018 of 328,724 hectares. Forest fires in 2019 reached 857,756 hectares. It consists of 630,451 hectares of mineral land and 227,304 hectares of peat.

According to Raffles B. Pandjaitan, Acting Director of Control of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK), the area of forest fires known was obtained from Landsat satellite imagery. The total area consists of 66,000 hectares in industrial plantation forests (HTI), 18,465 hectares of natural forest, 7,545 hectares of ecosystem restoration (RE), and 7,312 hectares in forest release areas. Most of them are in areas issued by the Ministry of ATR/BPN which have been certified, covering an area of 110,476 hectares. The cause of this forest fire is based on El-Nino through the movement of heat currents from Australia to Indonesia. In addition, residents are still found clearing land by burning. From this disaster, the role taken by the government is to extinguish and modify the weather using several helicopters, such as Cassa 212 (A-2105) Sortie I in Pelalawan-Inhu-Inhil-Kuansing-Lanud RSN by sprinkling 800 kilograms of salt. In addition, various efforts continue to be made, such as through CASA 212 A-2101 in Ogam Kemering Ilir by sprinkling 800 kilograms of CaO.

From this case, the West Kalimantan Police Chief named 66 suspects who carried out forest burning, but it is suspected that the case is still unresolved (Liputan6.com). Even in Riau, the impact of the forest fires has been felt. The haze has caused 1,136 people in Pekanbaru to suffer from ARI. Of course, this problem must be resolved immediately (Agustiar et al., 2019) . According to the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, the area of forest and land fires in Indonesia reached 328,722 hectares in 2019. This includes 328,722 hectares in Central Kalimantan, 44,769 hectares in West Kalimantan, 25,900 hectares in South Kalimantan, 19,490 hectares in South Sumatra, 11,826 hectares in Jambi, and 11,022 hectares in Riau. Legal regulations prohibit burning that causes significant haze such as burning on peatlands, although it is used in situations and locations where smoke can cause undesirable local impacts, including health or transportation (Parsaulian, 2020) . Other impacts of forest

and land fires certainly result in ecological damage, decreased aesthetic value, decline in the economic value of forestry and land productivity, inappropriate climate change both micro and global, biodiversity and ecosystems experience a decline. Not only that, the decline in soil quality, including soil physical properties, soil chemistry, soil biology, erosion, soil water storage capacity, removal of litter and humus, will all affect the subsequent growth of trees in the area (Murtinah et al., 2017) .

It is suspected to be a public matter that less strict law enforcement will certainly be misinterpreted by irresponsible individuals. Regarding law enforcement, it is an intriguing issue to explore. Sometimes punishment does not deter people who are interested in reaping hidden profits. As for Undang-undang and Regulation No. 32 of 2009 concerning environmental protection and management. Undang-undang number 5 of 1990 concerning Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems. Undang-undang number 41 of 1999 concerning forestry. Undang-undang number 32 of 2009 concerning environmental protection and management which regulates sanctions for parties proven to have violated are classified into 3 categories, namely (1) Environmental law enforcement in relation to Administrative Law / State Administration, (2) Environmental law enforcement in relation to Civil Law, and (3) Environmental law enforcement in relation to Criminal Law. The following are the main problems that often occur in the environment, including (1) land damage caused by deforestation, illegal logging, land conversion for plantations and industrial crops, oil mining, industry and settlements, (2) riverbank abrasion due to large and fast ship traffic, (3) river shallowing due to high erosion, abrasion and sedimentation, (4) surface water flow patterns that change due to land conversion, ports, docks and log ponds and (5) decreased water quality due to industrial liquid waste, domestic solid waste and domestic ship ballast water (Akhmaddhian, 2016) .

Land damage due to fires can be classified into three groups according to the fuel and the nature of the combustion, including (1) Subsurface fires burning organic materials below the surface. These fires produce smoke but are not visible because there is little air and organic material in them. Fires usually appear in peatlands with a thickness of 10 meters and spread over a long period of time, (2) Surface fires are a type of fire where fire burns litter, undergrowth, seedlings, stakes, and logging waste on the surface. Surface fires have the characteristic of spreading quickly, and the flames are large and hot, but quickly extinguished, and (3) Crown fires are fires that burn the crown (top) of trees. These fires will be very severe in plants with dense leaves and are easily burned. Forest and land fires occur due to natural

factors, among others; burning by humans usually occurs in the dry season when the weather is very hot.

It is possible that all forest and land fire damage can be minimized if we jointly maintain environmental ethics, which will certainly encourage people to organize themselves to care about environmental sustainability because humans are aware of their relationship with nature. In fact, the sustainability of nature itself determines human survival; if nature is damaged, humans will also be damaged. Reflecting on the phenomenon of haze, the purpose of this study is to educate in increasing public awareness of environmental damage that is oriented towards a good environmental ecosystem and foster a sense of responsibility to participate in maintaining sustainable environmental sustainability. This study analyzes forest fires that occurred on the islands of Sumatra and Kalimantan. The information obtained is expected to be used as material for policy makers in overcoming forest fires that occur.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with a juridical-normative type of research (Jonaedi, 2022). This study uses secondary data from primary legal materials such as Undang-undang Number 32 of 2009 concerning Environmental Protection and Management, Undang-undang Number 18 of 2013 concerning Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction, and the 1945 Constitution. The research instruments used are interview guidelines, recording devices and notebooks. Data collection techniques in this study were in-depth interviews and documentation. The data analysis technique used was Miles and Huberman analysis. Checking the validity of the researcher's data using data triangulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Environmental Journalism

Environmental journalism is closely related and familiar with conflict journalism. Not a few people understand that the journalism profession will certainly be related to news. Environmental journalism is reporting that oversees the process of handling a problem that arises until the solution is taken. Environmental journalism also plays a long-term role in the continuity of a coverage (Agus, 2014). Environmental journalism is a type of journalism that focuses on providing information to the public about environmental problems through news or coverage broadcast in the media. This information makes the public aware to participate in environmental management. As a new specialization, environmental journalism is not fixated on regulations, norms, and standard journalistic ethics. Environmental journalism tries

to report on handling related to environmental problems, observe the process until a solution is found, and has a long-term role in its coverage (Sudibyo, 2014). Environmental journalism can contribute and minimize environmental damage in the future if the reporting by reporters is in accordance with the actual facts. One of the environmental problems in Indonesia is forest fires which continue to occur every year. We all cannot close our eyes to the fact that forest fires are not solely the task and responsibility of the government, but the role of the community is needed because forest fires are also caused by people who still carry out deliberate burning.

The Purpose of Environmental Journalism

The low government attention to the community below, now makes the rampant cases that are crucial just wind. Many cases that actually need to be published and need to be known by the public and become learning materials. With the development of science and technology, now makes it easier, especially the field of journalists in playing a role. The main contribution of journalism is certainly to provide information in a new way to the community. The journalism profession is a potential that can advance the rights of the people. With the reach of environmental journalism, it can certainly reach information that is in the community environment even in areas that are difficult to reach. As with the problem of forest and land fires that occurred in the provinces of Kalimantan and Sumatra can be known by the general public because there is media that conveys the process of the incident.

Environmental Journalism Issues

The problem is that the reporting of forest fire issues so far has only been reporting events and damage that has occurred, one of the reasons is that reporters as agents in the news do not yet understand the reporting that is in accordance with environmental journalism. This statement is reinforced by Maslog (2017) in his research which states that the problem of environmental journalism is related to the knowledge or understanding of reporters regarding environmental journalism. Only a few reporters have a background in the environment and understand environmental journalism, even though reporters have a fairly large role in reporting natural disasters because they are the main actors in creating environmental journalism. The understanding of news that seeks to raise public awareness of environmental problems has also not been understood by kumparan reporters because their background knowledge regarding environmental problems is limited to informing the impacts that occur when forest and land fires are taking place, not providing information about the dangers that threaten their environment in the future, this statement is in line with Pratama

(2018) who said that Media Indonesia journalists have not provided in-depth information about the threats to the community due to the clean water crisis.

The forest fire reporting made by Kumparan reporters is not yet oriented towards environmental preservation. According to Agustina (2019), environmental journalism has its own idea, namely journalism that supports environmental sustainability. The orientation of writing news about the environment is on environmental preservation. So it can be said that kumparan reporters do not fully understand reporting that is in accordance with environmental journalism. It turns out that kumparan reporters' understanding of environmental journalism is not only based on their knowledge and experience, but also the influence of editorial policies in packaging forest fire issues that hinder reporters efforts to report on forest fire issues. kumparan reporters actually understand news that supports environmental preservation, but the editorial agenda is not oriented towards environmental preservation and claims that kumparan is not a media whose segmentation educates the public to care about the environment, thus hindering their efforts to report on environmental preservation issues and creating public awareness of forests. This is in line with Utomo's statement (2014) which states that the media agenda has a big role in presenting news related to environmental damage, but currently the mass media does not make environmental issues an agenda because environmental issues are considered less interesting compared to political, economic, and legal issues that get more public attention. This is different from the research conducted by Zulmi (2017) on the media The Jakarta Post Online which resulted in findings that the media in reporting environmental issues has sided with issues about nature conservation.

This shows that the media has its own characteristics and interests in packaging environmental issues. In addition, in the news of social arrangements that try to raise public awareness of legal norms, kumparan reporters already understand the elements of the news, but the editorial policy does not focus on law enforcement carried out by the government so that in their experience they have not tried to educate the public about existing penalties. Not only that, in understanding the news about the social impact on public health, reporters have indeed tried to educate the public to anticipate diseases that arise due to forest fires, but this is because there is the influence of editors who determine the angle of news about health. In addition, in understanding the news about economic losses, kumparan reporters have not understood the news because of two factors, namely their knowledge of ideal news about the economy and their experience of never writing economic issues in forest fire news

because the editorial policy is not oriented towards the economy. This is in line with what Shoemaker and Reese (1996) said that editors in a media organization are one of the parties who are very influential in determining the direction of the news. In addition, Kumparan reporters have also tried to make readers understand their news because they have tried to simplify and explain environmental terms in news about forest fires, as stated by Suyanto (2012) journalists must be able to present information about environmental issues in language that can be easily understood by the public.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers with three informants and a study of news documentation on kumparan reporters' understanding of environmental journalism in reporting on forest and land fires in the provinces of Kalimantan and Sumatra in 2019, researchers concluded that kumparan reporters did not yet understand environmental journalism considering that the elements of environmental journalism had not been practiced as a whole. The elements that have been carried out are implementing reporter attitudes that are in accordance with environmental journalism and making it easier for the public to understand the news. In contrast to the elements that have not been carried out, namely minimizing environmental damage, siding with nature conservation, creating public awareness of forests, and providing information about potential disasters in the future due to forest damage.

This happens due to several factors, including environmental journalism not being the main objective in reporting forest and land fires, reporters' knowledge does not yet meet the elements of reporting environmental issues that are in accordance with environmental journalism such as the ecological, social and economic context of development, this is because the background of individuals who do not have an education related to the environment, so far only relying on a journalistic educational background in writing and covering forest and land fires. On the other hand, an experience in making forest fire news is also not in accordance with the elements of environmental journalism. In it, reporting the conditions of affected residents and the damage that has occurred, has not provided educational information to the public regarding efforts to prevent and overcome environmental damage, nature conservation, and provide an overview of the potential disasters that can arise due to environmental degradation. The news about forest fires itself was obtained through interviews with officials and environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Therefore, in reporting forest fires, kumparan reporters tend to

position themselves as agents of social control where their news also advocates government policies such as criticizing policies that have not been implemented optimally by the government in overcoming forest fires, evaluating the effectiveness of government policies, and describing the government's shortcomings in overcoming forest fires. kumparan reporters have not realized that news that is in accordance with environmental journalism is not only controlling government policies, but also educating and making the public aware to be involved in nature conservation, caring for forests, and providing public education about the dangers that will arise to their environment in the future so that the public can make anticipatory efforts due to environmental degradation.

In addition, the editorial policy apparently influenced the understanding of kumparan reporters in reporting on forest fires, where there was no separate channel regarding the environment, there was editorial intervention in determining the news angle and the media agenda that was not oriented towards several elements of environmental journalism news such as nature conservation and environmental problems, in a social context such as news about public health there was a role for editors who chose the angle of public health issues, while in the economic context the editorial policy was not oriented towards economic issues in reporting on forest fires so that these issues were also not a priority for kumparan reporters in forest fire news. In addition, kumparan still packages its news by following the tastes of readers and is not yet comprehensive in reporting on forest fires. However, kumparan reporters have tried to cover both side because in the news has presented claims between the company and the government so that the news is balanced. In addition, they also try to make it easier for the public to understand the news about forest and land fires.

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