

Questioning the Sustainability in Development: The Resilience of Local Variety of Rice in the Changing Dayak Community of Central Kalimantan, Indonesia

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Abstract : Over a quarter century, the idea of sustainable development has become a global discussion. In Indonesia, more than five decades since the development of the country took priority over any other matter, a discussion on the need of development is still an intriguing. Far from the enthusiasm of development programs run by the Indonesian government since 1967, the Dayak community in the interior of Kalimantan tropical forest was significantly abandoned from the changes. There were not many programs for the interior because the focus of development mostly was in Java island. Consequently, the Dayak live their life as shifting cultivator that has been practiced for centuries. Our ethnographic observation conducted in April-July 2016, found that today, they still maintain the knowledge and keeping the existence of local variety of rice. While in Java, these varieties have been replaced by more-productive-and-resistant-to-pest varieties, the Dayak still maintain more than 60s varieties. From the biodiversity's perspective, it is a delightful news; while from the cultural perspective, the persistence of their custom regarding to the practice of traditional cultivation is fascinating as well. The local knowledge of agriculture is well conserved and practice daily. It is revealed that the resilience of those rice varieties is related to the local social structure since the distribution of each variety usually limited to the particular clans in the community. While experiencing the lack of programs for village development, the community has maintained the local leadership and its government structure at the village level. The paper will explore the effect of how a neglected area, which was disregarded by development program, sustains their culture and biodiversity. We would like to discuss the concept of sustainability whether it needed for the development programs, for the changes into a modern civilisation, or for the sake of the local to survive.

Keywords : sustainable development, local knowledge, rice, resilience, Kalimantan, Indonesia

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