

# Making Peace With Local Wisdom: Education For Indigenous People Of Tana Toa Kajang, Bulukumba, South Sulawesi

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**Abstract** Getting an education is the right of every citizen wherever he is and from whatever socio-cultural background he grows. However, in many regions of Indonesia both due to geographical, economic, and socio-cultural issues, the basic rights mentioned above can not be realized. One community group whose children can not go to school because economic and socio-cultural reasons is the Tana Toa or Kajang indigenous people in South Sulawesi. One of the reasons is related to formal school procedures that are contrary to the habits of the Kajang community. One of them is about clothes that Kajang people are generally very sacred black color, while in school must wear red (SD) and blue (SMP). Using ethnographic study to understand Ammatowa Kajang and content analysis, which attempts to analyze educational problems in Tana Toa Kajang, this paper seeks to understand a number of issues in indigenous education. With this method, this paper will identify various educational issues in the Tana Toa Kajang custom area and formulate a number of policies and initiatives that can be undertaken to address the problem.

**Keywords:** Education, Tana Toa, Kajang, Bulukumba, South Sulawesi

## 1. Introduction

The Kajang indigenous community is a community residing in an area which located 250-km away of East Makassar. They live by adhering to the customs that are bound by a "local wisdom" called "*pasang*". "*Pasang*" is a lesson handed down from generation to generation through oral speech. This lesson contains messages, advice, guidelines or instructions for life to all indigenous peoples, for the happiness of the world and the hereafter.

All aspects of Kajang indigenous community life are carried out with the *kamase-masea* principle or the principle of simplicity. The principle is reflected in daily life such as how to dress, the shape of the house, clothing, and also affects their literary and artistic works. With the principles summarized in "*pasang*" and the "*kamase-masea*" principle, people can co-exist in harmony with nature. Maintaining and strengthening these principles also mean strengthening the supporting communities.

Educating the children of the Kajang indigenous community is the most strategic way, so these life principles can survive. Unfortunately, because of economic and socio-cultural issues, education as a basic right cannot be realized properly. There are at least two reasons why education cannot be carried out properly in this community. First, there are some formal school procedures that are contrary to the indigenous habits of the Kajang community. One of them is the matter of clothing, which in general the Kajang community is very sacred in black, while in schools they have to wear red for elementary schools and blue for junior high schools. Second, parents generally consider children to be family assets, especially in terms of work. If the harvest time arrives, for example, some students must leave the class to help their parents in the fields.

## **2. Research Method**

This research uses an ethnographic approach, by collecting, classifying, and analyzing various educational issues for indigenous people in the Tana Toa or Kajang community. Research analysis using a qualitative research method approach. Data is collected through various methods such as observation, interview, document essence, and so on. The research area is an area inhabited by the Tana Toa indigenous people, in Kajang District, Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi. This community is still strong in maintaining its cultural identity through various rituals, and it is still believed by various myths and symbols and stories. The strength of cultural identity is strengthened by the maintenance of *pasang* in daily life. Data collection is done through three steps. First, Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The research team conducted a FGD which was attended by stakeholders, both from representatives of indigenous peoples, local governments, and teachers. The FGD activity aims to gather as much information as possible about various educational problems faced by the Tana Toa indigenous people. Based on the results of the FGD, researchers identified various factors as important problems in education in the Toa area and discussed various findings and sought solutions to those problems. Second, in-depth interviews with selected communities and officials at the local level, traditional and community leaders in Kajang. The people interviewed were not only those who lived in the customary area, but also the people who lived in Kajang outside who were not too attached to local customs.

## **3. Results And Discussion**

The Tana Toa community or commonly called the Kajang Tribe is one of the unique tribes and gives a lot of charm not only to travelers, but also researchers. This uniqueness is reflected in various aspects of their lives, both their origin, belief systems and social-community systems. The land where these people live is often called the "*kamase-masea land*". If the Bugis-Makassar community embraces Islam as their belief and Allah SWT as their Lord, then the Ammatowa people believe in *Turi'eAra'na* as God. This belief is the conception of divinity in "*pasang*" lesson [1]. The entire Ammatowa community trust system is summarized in *Patuntung*. The word *Patuntung* can also mean: study, peak or height, and searching. In other words, every Ammatowa people is required to learn to know the nature of the truth summarized in "*Pasang ri Kajang*" which contains messages, advice, guidelines or instructions for life that are required for the happiness of the world and the hereafter. All

*pasang* (messages) are spoken in Makassar, especially the *Konjo* dialect [2]. These lessons are passed down from generation to generation, from the first to the last [3]. Ammatowa is the leader of the *PatuntungriKajang* belief [4].

According to Paeni [7] and Adhan [8] the basic lessons of *Patuntung* is “*PasangriKajang*” which contains messages from *AmmatowaMariolo* (First Ammatowa). The doctrine symbolized and elaborated in all aspects of community life which contains important events concerning to government and society, about how something must be treated and how it must be applied. This lesson is used as a source of rules, norms, laws and predictions for a certain period.

The Tana Towa people also believe in or have a conception of the universe [5]. They believe that the origin of natural events with all their contents was created by *TurieA'ra'na* which at that time did not contain anything and was only a vast ocean. There was a land in the form of a shell called *Tombolo*. Since the existence of humans in this world, the existence of Ammatowa has also existed. According to Ammatowa (Puto Palasa), the beginning of the emergence of Kajang indigenous land together with the formation of heaven and earth (land). Ammatowa descended to give birth to tradition, ocean, and kingdoms in various regions [6].

To carry out all aspects of community life, this area has a number of traditional instruments led by an Ammatowa who is often called *asbohe* or a father. According to Ammatowa (Puto Pallasa), Ammatowa has an obligation to protect all groups; *Tau Dongo* (stupid people), *Tau Macca* (smart people), *Tau Kalumanyyang* (rich people), and *Tau Kasi-asi* (poor people). Ammatowa also applies the same law to all these strata without discrimination among groups. In carrying out the "government", an Ammatowa assisted by Galla Pantama, Galla Lombo, Galla Puto, Galla Malleleng, KaraengTallu, Labbiriya, Sallihatang, Moncongbolea, Galla Lembanna, Galla Ganta, Galla Sangkala, Galla Sapa, Galla Bantala, Galla Jojjolo, Galla Pattongko, Anrong Gurua, Kadahaya, Totoa Ganta, TotoaSangkala, Lompo Karaeng, Lompo Adat, Loha, Kamula, Panre, Kali Kua, and Galla Bonto [9].

The issue of education for indigenous people is an interesting and important issue. This problem has been studied by many scholars in various places. Stephan May and Seila Aikman for example [10] studies about ILO conventions and education for local communities. Meanwhile, Susan C. Faircloth & John W. Tippeconnic III [11] and Margie Kahukura Hohepa [12] examines the relationship between leadership and education for local communities.

Related to traditional issues, there are three things that greatly affect education in Tana Toa Kajang; clothing, traditional ceremonies, and harvesting activities. Regarding to clothes, Kajang people are generally sacred in black and white. Black is a symbol of the human origin who are in the dark womb before deliver to the world and at the same time a sign of the decrepit soil which has been occupied. In the other hand, the white color is a symbol where human enter the brightly lit world after they was born.

Therefore, when public schools, especially primary schools require students to wear red (pants) and white (shirt), the number of students attending school can be counted. For parents of students and prospective students, clothing other than black and white is a form of violation of traditions, especially in the manner of dress. Facing this reality, The School and the Education Office of Bulukumba Regency negotiated with indigenous people. The result is that schools in the traditional area of Tana Towa are allowed to use white clothes (clothes) and black (pants or skirts). According to the former head of the Regional Elementary School [13], since the black-and-white clothing policy was implemented, the number of students attending school has increased significantly, although it still has to face other obstacles in the form of traditional ceremonies and work in agriculture, especially during the harvesting.

Another traditional issue is related to traditional ceremonies. Indigenous people of Tana Toa are people who are very familiar with various rites and ceremonies; from birth, approaching adulthood, adulthood, until death. The first steps ceremony to begin with are celebrated to welcome the baby born called as *Angngarru*, *Akkattere*, *Aklammasa*, *Akkalomba*. After that, they have to do the ceremonies when they approaching adulthood phase namely as *Assunat* and *Attarasa*. The ceremony after growing up is marriage. The death ceremony is *Aklajo-lajo*, *Addangang*, and *Addampo*.

These ceremonies must be carried out and followed by all indigenous people. The problem is that relatives who carry out traditional ceremonies often live far away from people's homes. In other words, this ceremony is not only performed by neighbors or families whose houses are close together or neighbors, but often also carried out by families who live in other districts, although it still remains within the same area.

The problems arise when the ceremony is held in another village. The relatives who will attend the traditional ceremony must stay a few days at the home of relatives who will carry out the ceremony. Thus, their children are forced to skip school for days. They finally miss school lessons. According to the headmaster of the region's school, permitted or not to go to attend the family ceremony, they still left without thinking about the continuity of their lessons. In other words, the appeal of traditional ceremonies is far greater than the appeal of going to school. What makes it worse is that this ceremony is not just happens one or two times, but continues and moves from one family to another. From one village to another, even from one districts to another. The next issue that makes education less successful in this region is related to the community's view of their children. Parents generally consider their children to be part of the daily work, so if the harvest arrives, some students must leave the class to help their parents in the fields [14].

#### **4. Conclusion**

The Tana Toa Kajang customary community is a community that up to now still adheres to their traditions. All the rules are manifested in various activities, such as marriage, death, farming, how to dress, and others. Education in Kajang, especially basic education cannot be separated from the issues of tradition which are still heavily adhered by the community. The issues are related to the color of clothing and traditional ceremonies. Indigenous people of Tana Toa are people who are very familiar with various rites and ceremonies, from birth, approaching adulthood, adulthood, until death. These ceremonies must be carried out and followed by all indigenous people, including their children. The problem is that relatives who carry out traditional ceremonies often live far away from people's homes. As a result, their children have to leave school for many days. The last problem is that the Tana Toa community considers children as economic assets of the family. Thus, if the harvest time arrives, children must help their parents in the fields, both when they are off and when school is still active.

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