



## Strategies for strengthening community engagement (civic engagement) Tuban East Java in building Ecological Citizenship by Mangrove Center Foundation

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**Abstract.** *The purpose of this study was to determine the strategy of the mangrove center Foundation in strengthening Tuban community involvement into ecological citizenship. This research is based on the issue of environmental damage that is increasing every year, as well as the handling of environmental damage related to the government, related institutions, and the community. This study uses qualitative methods with a case study approach. The results found from this study is the role of the Mangrove Center as part of the civic community in combating environmental damage through strengthening environmental awareness in the community and related institutions. The participation starts from socialization, providing examples, and working together with the Environment Agency and local government agencies.*

**Keywords:** *Environment, character, society*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The study of ecology is not only about the environment between humans and animals but “Ecological models have combined the atmosphere, land, and ocean into comprehensive “earth system models”, on which climate change projections are based (in Davis, 2019 (Edwards 1996, 2010)). The opinion can be interpreted that The Shape of the environment is a combination of air, land, and oceans to form a series of Earth. Therefore, environmental damage not only damages the life of flora and fauna, but can also have an impact on the climate and the future of the Earth in the future. Environmental damage and protection of the environment has given rise to a movement that is often referred to as environmentalism.

Kalidjernih (2010) said that the core of environmentalism is ethical concern for nature. The idea of environmentalism or commonly called ecological citizenship has important implications for the conception of citizenship associated with the existence in the world today as a risk society, the importance of efforts to protect society from the effects of environmental damage. the impact of environmental damage occurs and is felt by society and other living things. Quoted from (Ministry of Environment and Forestry, 2023:60), low Environmental Quality will have an impact on a number of problems such as natural disasters, decreased public

health, reduced public welfare, and social conflicts. This will have an impact on human survival ranging from health, mobility, to the economy.

Reduced environmental quality can be caused due to lack of environmental awareness of the community. Environmental awareness is a state of awakening the soul or knowing something deeply related to the environment and can be reflected through the behavior and actions of each individual (Neolaka, 2008). Based on Neolaka's opinion, consciousness is not only defined that they understand cognitively, but also act or maintain and manage their environment through concrete actions. Awareness begins from the perception created by a person who is influenced by the knowledge and experience of the person (Krech, 2000). The phrase from Krech can be interpreted that one's knowledge and experience can affect one's mindset and perspective. Extensive knowledge and qualified experience provide opportunities for a person to have a broader perception and can foster awareness of behavior for long-term goals.

Isin (2009) States “citizenship as status and citizenship as practice”. According to Isin, citizens can be viewed from two aspects, namely aspects in terms of status and aspects of their activities for the interests of their country. In this case, it can be said that, a citizen in terms of status is due through the hereditary aspect. An important role as citizens is their role in maintaining the sustainability of the country. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the involvement of citizens and the community (civic engagement) in competence, skills and attitudes in maintaining and caring for their environment. The strengthening can be done by various aspects, namely the government, community organizations, and individuals themselves.

Quoted from (DIKPLHD East Java Province, 2017), in 2015-2019 Tuban was designated as a national priority Industrial Area directed at the development of the North and South regions as the development of the cement and petrochemical industries. In (Rochwulaningsih, 2017) revealed that the economic calculation and profit (profit oriented) is the culprit against environmental destruction. With the high level of the industry, it is important to keep pace with environmental management and environmental awareness from all circles of society as well as companies and governments.

Environmental Conservation in Tuban Regency is carried out in cooperation between the government, the community and related institutions. The nature of the network of various global environmental movements has a significant impact on the process of strengthening civil society (Rochwulaningsih, 2017). One form of environmental movement in Tuban Regency is the mangrove center Foundation. The foundation is engaged in Environmental Conservation,

which until now is still active and contributes to the socialization and strengthening of environmental care characters ranging from cooperation with educational institutions such as a school, as well as other institutions to embrace the community in order to create ecological citizens. Various ecological activities carried out by the Tuban community with the assistance of the Mangrove center are a form of community involvement or civic engagement, meaning everything related to citizen actions, both individually and collectively aims to participate in government policy making and various activities in the community with or without coercion (Wadu, 2020 ; Adler and Goglin, 2005)

Environmental conservation efforts can not be separated from the fact that the environment is where they live, have a social, cultural and economic dependence on the environment around them. Ethics of human relations with the environment is usually instilled by community organizations engaged in environmental empowerment. This will spur the good habits of the members in order to create an environment that is conducive and better than before through attitudes or behaviors that start from the habits of each individual. The ecological citizen not only has a feeling of concern for his environment but also takes part in the preservation and refreshment of the damaged ecological footprint. Ecological citizens also participate in guarding and fighting for their ecological rights in the form of legislation (Humphreys, 2019).

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The concept of community engagement or civic engagement has been extensively studied in recent years, particularly in the context of environmental sustainability. Civic engagement refers to the active participation of citizens in addressing issues that affect their community, and it plays a critical role in fostering ecological citizenship. Ecological citizenship emphasizes the responsibility of individuals and communities to engage in sustainable practices and environmental stewardship. In the case of Tuban, East Java, the involvement of local communities in ecological restoration projects, such as those led by the Mangrove Center Foundation, is key to building a strong foundation of ecological citizenship. This foundation helps ensure that environmental initiatives are not only top-down but also embraced and sustained by the local population.

Various strategies for strengthening community engagement have been identified in the literature, ranging from education and awareness programs to direct involvement in environmental projects. Scholars have emphasized the importance of knowledge-sharing platforms that enable communities to understand the environmental impact of their actions and

foster a sense of ownership over local ecological systems. For example, studies by Davies (2019) and Simon (2023) highlight the effectiveness of community-based approaches in encouraging sustainable behaviors and enhancing civic responsibility. These findings align with initiatives like those of the Mangrove Center Foundation, which engage local residents in mangrove conservation activities, thereby fostering an inclusive approach to environmental management.

In addition to educational strategies, building trust and cooperation among stakeholders is essential for the success of civic engagement efforts. Effective communication between governmental bodies, NGOs, and community members can lead to the development of partnerships that strengthen collective efforts in ecological preservation. Research shows that community-led environmental projects are more successful when they are supported by collaborative governance structures (McAdam, 2023). The Mangrove Center Foundation's work in Tuban demonstrates this, as the organization has created strong networks among local communities, government agencies, and international environmental groups, allowing for more robust and long-lasting environmental outcomes.

Finally, the role of culture and local traditions cannot be overlooked in shaping strategies for community engagement. Studies have shown that ecological citizenship is more likely to flourish in communities where environmental conservation is aligned with cultural values and traditional practices (Hands, 2023). In the context of Tuban, East Java, the Mangrove Center Foundation has integrated local knowledge and customs into its conservation activities, ensuring that mangrove restoration efforts resonate with the community's socio-cultural context. This approach helps cultivate a deeper connection between the community and their environment, further strengthening ecological citizenship in the region.

### **3. METHODS**

This study uses a qualitative approach, the researcher has a sensitivity to the reality created by others involved, and the consequences of changes and differences in values. Cresswell (2003) explained about qualitative research, which is a form of research that contains data collection which is then analyzed and compared and able to be interpreted. Qualitative research has the character to describe a real situation in a scientific way (Muchtar, 2015). Researchers take a qualitative paradigm in this study, because they want to examine more deeply about the development of environmental awareness values in Civic Education in the community through the spring water rescue program by the Mangrove Center Foundation in Jenu village, Tuban Regency.

This study uses case study research design (case study). It is a more appropriate strategy to use how-and-why questions when the researcher has little opportunity to control the events to be investigated and when the research rests on contemporary phenomena in a real-life context. Case study research is also divided into three types, namely explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive case studies (Yin, 2019, P: 1). This statement is confirmed by the definition of a case study in (Muchtar, 2015 hal: 430) which is a study in qualitative research, which begins with the occurrence of an event that is an event in society, is very interesting, because it contains a mystery and demands immediately to be considered to obtain the truth behind the event.

#### **4. RESULTS**

##### **Strengthening Ecological Citizenship Of Tuban Community By Mangrove Center Foundation**

Mangrove Center is a non-governmental organization oriented towards environmental conservation so that it becomes a more beautiful and green living environment. This can be preceded by education and appeal to the wider community to be aware of their obligations as citizens for the sustainability of the environment. Mangrove center established Tuban community as environmental citizens who dare to give approval to the government and the private sector in maintaining their environmental rights as stipulated in the state constitution (Dobson, 2015). Although Dobson added that the relationship of environmental citizens (ecological citizen) should not stop at the level of guaranteeing environmental rights because constitutional rights can be undermined by other parties. The improvement of the area carried out by the Tuban community and the Mangrove center as an example of ecological citizenship actions that not only comply with certain constitutional rules but also seek to monitor the activities of vulnerable groups that produce traces of ecological destruction. This activity is based on a conscious attitude or even an obligation to fix the industrial environment as a result of the damage caused, for example, former dugouts from mining. (Humphreys, 2009).

The involvement of Tuban's ecological community through activities organized by the Mangrove center not only has an impact on sustainability but also on improving the economy and a better life. The concern of the community by actively engaging in its policies is in line with the opinion expressed by Doolittle and Faul (2013) that community involvement is a person's process in trying to improve their community in a balanced manner with knowledge, skills, and values that are realized through attitudes or behaviors. The knowledge in question

is the knowledge of the importance of taking care of it and its environment, as well as its manifestation in attitudes and behaviors.

The process of environmental awareness education needs to be adjusted to the state of the environment. It is a form of community empowerment in Environmental Management, as well as the idea of “New Civics” expressed by Dunn (1915) which focuses on “Community living” or community life, until the 1920s the term civics was used to refer to the field of teaching relating to livelihoods, society, and the economy (Gross and Zeleny: 1958, in Winataputra: 127). In this regard, for example, empowerment to provide a positive impact for people living in agricultural areas, it must be implemented in the field of agricultural modernization in order to produce high productivity in this sector (Supardi, 1994). In Anggara (2009), the concept of empowerment or empowerment not only concerns individuals, but also collectives. It is intended, that the purpose of empowerment is to build personal existence, family, community, country and even the world.

Tuban Regency is a small city in the coastal pantura which has potential in the field of fisheries, marine, agriculture, mining and industrial sectors. There are cement industries and limestone mines in Tuban Regency. There are factories from Semen Indonesia and Holcim Cement. Both utilize the natural resources of Tuban Regency as a source of raw materials for their production. This causes some excavation sites to become barren and sometimes dangerous due to the excavation of Earth's resources, the construction of industrial projects clearly affect the environmental balance (Supardi, 1994). Therefore, there is a need for awareness to do reclamation or other improvements.

In accordance with the rules of the person in charge of business and / or activities application for changes in environmental permits as quoted from Raharjo (2014), including:

1. Change of business ownership and / or activities;
2. Change management and environmental monitoring;
3. Changes that affect the environment that meet the criteria: changes in the use of means of production that affect the environment; increase in production capacity; changes in engineering specifications that affect the environment; etc.

Reclamation carried out by large companies also has a positive impact on the community. This is due to the reclamation in the excavation, then the safety of the community is more assured. This is because the excavation site is usually close to the field or gardening community. In addition, with the reclamation, making the excavation more green and beautiful and can be a new tourist destination for the community. This case is in accordance with the

statement of Supardi (1994), namely the improvement of development, maintenance of economic, social, and ecological must run harmoniously and integrated.

Apart from the industrial sector, Tuban city is also an area where most of the people are farmers. There is potential in agriculture and plantations in some areas. However, some communities are less developed and it is difficult to obtain good seeds and planting methods, so education is needed for the community to develop the potential of their area both in the agricultural sector and in the Fisheries and tourism sector. Triyanto (2006) states that Citizenship Education aims to encourage the creation of three talents and behaviors, namely: 1) Social and Moral Responsibility. This concept teaches about the need for self-confidence and moral and social responsibility both inside and outside the classroom, both to the authorities and among others. 2) Community Involvement. This concept teaches about the need to integrate into society and help each other as well as learning about community involvement and community service. 3) Political Literacy. This concept teaches about the institutions, problems and practices of democracy including examining how to make democracy effective in the life of a nation both locally, regionally and nationally through knowledge, skills, and values.

The government through the Department of Environment and related agencies assisted by NGOs in cooperation in public education in increasing interest in Environmental Management in their area. Supardi (1994) stated that nature is a target to maximize human benefits both in terms of economic and social status. However, sometimes humans exploit nature without taking responsibility for its survival. That is what needs to be addressed and straightened out. Basically, humans can learn in different ways to understand; can learn to see and then be able to deepen what we want to do (Richards, 2015). It means that everyone is able to learn in a different way, can learn to see what we need to try and fix, and really focus on what is really needed. For example, as done by the Mangrove Center Foundation which manages the beaches around which were initially poorly maintained to become tourist attractions. This is an example that was eventually followed by other regions to create beach tourism on the coast of Tuban. Thus, the management also brings benefits to them in terms of economic and social aspects of the tourism sector.

The carrying capacity of tourism is influenced by tourist destinations and biophysical environmental factors of tourism locations (Soemarwoto, 2004). On the carrying capacity of the environment in the field of tourism, affecting the realm of community attitudes, namely in environmental management, is able to strengthen the attitude of mutual cooperation. Then, over time, it can also instill an attitude of responsibility and discipline for the community. This is

because there is an interest and benefit for them. Suppose the responsibility to maintain cleanliness so that the tourist attractions are crowded with visitors. Then discipline by habit. That is, if a person has become accustomed to throwing garbage where it should be, then discipline will appear over time. The arrangement in nature and social environment is the result of Environmental Management (Foster, 2008). Foster's view can be interpreted that the attitude of humans to their environment is the beginning of the formation of their environment, both natural and socially.

The existence of tourist carrying capacity, which is balanced by a proactive public attitude in managing and maintaining it will attract tourists. The purpose of tourism is to get recreation or refreshment both physical and spiritual (Soemarwoto, 2004). In the context of natural tourism, then what is sought by visitors is the beauty then by maintaining the beauty, will attract more visitors. The community must have ethics and ecological awareness because the ethical foundation teaches about harmony between humans and their environment (Rondli, 2017). Rondli's view can be interpreted that to realize ecological awareness, it first adjusts the ecological state of the environment so that ecological development can run optimally.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Strengthening tuban community involvement into ecological citizenship conducted by the mangrove center can be done through several approaches, among others, through socialization. Socialization is carried out to improve people's cognitive abilities regarding the importance of a good and clean living environment. In addition, with increasing knowledge, people are also able to understand the importance of citizen contributions in creating law-abiding ecological citizenship and the bad consequences of environmental damage itself. The next step is to give an example. The example given by the mangrove center is the existence of a clean and beautiful office area, as well as providing needs such as plant seeds to be obtained and planted for people in need. In addition to these two things, the mangrove center also seeks to improve the community's economy by creating nature-based tourism, in collaboration with related agencies.

## **6. LIMITATION**

In conducting research on strategies for strengthening community engagement in building ecological citizenship, several limitations can be identified. First, the generalizability of findings may be limited by the specific socio-cultural and environmental context of Tuban, East Java. Factors such as local traditions, political climate, and economic conditions can



influence the effectiveness of community engagement strategies, making it difficult to apply the same approaches in different regions. Additionally, the involvement of external stakeholders, such as international organizations or NGOs like the Mangrove Center Foundation, may introduce biases that do not reflect the true capacity of local communities to sustain long-term ecological citizenship without external support.

Another limitation is related to the availability and reliability of data on community engagement and ecological outcomes. Measuring the success of community-driven environmental initiatives is complex, as it often requires longitudinal studies and multifaceted indicators that assess both social and environmental impacts. Furthermore, the influence of external variables, such as climate change and global economic trends, may complicate the attribution of positive outcomes solely to community engagement efforts. This can result in difficulties in isolating which factors are most responsible for the success or failure of these strategies.

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