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Revitalization of Gotong Royong Culture as a Strategy to Maintain the Cleanliness and Health of the Community Environment

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Abstract: The problem of environmental cleanliness is still a challenge in various residential areas, including in Sukakarya Village. Poorly maintained environmental conditions, such as the accumulation of household waste, clogged drainage channels, and decreased community participation in community service activities, have the potential to have a negative impact on public health and environmental quality. One of the strategic efforts that can be carried out is the revitalization of the culture of mutual cooperation as a form of strengthening the collective participation of the community in maintaining environmental cleanliness. This Community Service (PKM) activity aims to increase public awareness, strengthen social participation, and create a clean and healthy environment through the strengthening of the culture of mutual cooperation. The method used in this activity is Participatory Action Research (PAR) with the stages of problem identification and field observation, Forum Group Discussion (FGD), implementation of mutual cooperation actions, community education, and evaluation of activities. The results of the activity show that the gotong royong revitalization program is able to increase community participation in environmental cleanliness activities, improve the physical condition of the environment through cleaning residential areas and drainage channels, and increase public awareness of the importance of maintaining environmental cleanliness and health. In addition, this activity also strengthens social solidarity and rebuilds the values of togetherness in community life. Thus, the revitalization of the gotong royong culture has proven to be an effective strategy in managing environmental cleanliness based on community participation and has the potential to become a model of sustainable community empowerment.

Keyword: Mutual Cooperation, Environmental Cleanliness, Environmental Health, Community Participation, Community Empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

Environmental cleanliness is an important factor in realizing a healthy, safe, and sustainable quality of life for the community. A clean environment has a direct influence on public health, as it is able to reduce the risk of various environment-based diseases such as diarrhea, dengue fever, respiratory infections, and skin diseases. The World Health Organization (2022) emphasized that good environmental sanitation quality is one of the main indicators in improving public health and reducing the number of infectious diseases. However, the problem of environmental cleanliness is still a challenge in various regions, including in densely populated organizational areas.

In the Sukakarya Village area, environmental problems are still a crucial issue, especially related to household waste management, drainage channel cleanliness, and low community involvement in collective environmental cleanliness activities. Environmental conditions at several organizational points show that there is still a buildup of waste in certain areas, poorly maintained airways, and a decrease in the intensity of community service activities that were previously part of the community's culture. If this condition is left unchecked, it can trigger various negative impacts such as environmental pollution, the emergence of puddles, the development of disease vectors, and the decline in the quality of health of the local community.

Theoretically, environmental health theory explains that the physical environment has a close relationship with the quality of public health. According to Friis (2021), poor environmental sanitation conditions, suboptimal waste management, and low clean living behavior are the main factors that cause various environmental-based diseases. Therefore, maintaining environmental cleanliness must be a shared responsibility involving all elements of society.

In the context of Indonesian socio-culture, gotong royong is a noble value that has long been a social mechanism in solving various societal problems, including environmental cleanliness. The theory of social capital from Robert D. Putnam (2000) explains that social trust, social networks, and collective norms are important foundations in creating effective cooperation in society. Gotong royong as a form of social capital has a strategic role in building social solidarity while increasing participation in protecting the environment.

However, social development and modernization have caused a shift in values in society. Individualistic lifestyles, busyness of economic activities, and reduced social interaction are factors that cause the culture of mutual cooperation to weaken. Firdaus et al. (2025) found that the decline in the culture of mutual cooperation has an impact on low concern for the cleanliness of the community environment and a decrease in the quality of social interaction between residents. This condition is also seen in the community of Sukakarya Village, where the participation of residents in community service activities is not optimal and has not been structured in a sustainable manner.

Based on the Collective Action Theory, Mancur Olson (1965) explained that solving public problems requires the active participation of all group members to achieve common goals. In the context of environmental cleanliness, mutual cooperation is a real implementation of collective action that is able to create social and environmental change together. Research by Fitriani et al. (2024) shows that the revitalization of the culture of mutual cooperation has proven to be effective in increasing concern for the cleanliness of the community's environment and strengthening social solidarity.

Looking at the environmental conditions and social challenges that occur in Sukakarya Village, strategic efforts are needed to revive the culture of mutual cooperation as a form of strengthening the community's social capital. The Community Service Program (PKM) through the revitalization of the mutual cooperation culture is one of the relevant approaches to increase community participation in maintaining environmental cleanliness, building collective awareness, and creating a healthy and sustainable environment. Thus, this activity is expected not only to have an impact on the physical aspects of the environment, but also to strengthen the social cohesion of the community in maintaining the quality of life together.

METHOD

This Community Service Activity (PKM) was carried out in Sukakarya Village with a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach. The PAR approach was chosen because it emphasizes the active involvement of the community in the process of identifying problems, planning actions, implementing activities, and evaluating program results. According to Orlando Fals-Borda (1987), PAR is a method that integrates research, education, and social action in a participatory manner to encourage sustainable social change.

The implementation of the activity is carried out through several stages. The first stage is problem identification and field observation. At this stage, the service team conducts direct observation of the environmental conditions of the community to identify the main problems related to environmental cleanliness, such as household waste management, drainage channel conditions, and the level of community participation in community service activities. In addition to observation, informal interviews were also conducted with community leaders, village officials, and local residents to obtain an initial picture of social and environmental conditions.

The second stage is the Forum Group Discussion (FGD) involving community elements, RT/RW chairs, youth leaders, and village officials. The FGD was carried out to explore public perceptions about the importance of environmental cleanliness, obstacles in the implementation of mutual cooperation, and formulate a strategy for revitalizing the culture of mutual cooperation that is in accordance with the social conditions of the local community. This participatory discussion method aims to build collective awareness and mutual understanding about the importance of protecting the environment.

The third stage is the implementation of environmental mutual cooperation. This activity includes community service work to clean the environment, cleaning drainage channels, transporting garbage, arranging environmental areas, and education about the importance of maintaining environmental cleanliness in a sustainable manner. The implementation of activities is carried out collaboratively between the service team and the community as a form of implementation of the values of mutual cooperation and collective action as explained by Mancur Olson (1965).

The fourth stage is education and strengthening public awareness. At this stage, socialization is carried out about the relationship between environmental cleanliness and public health, the importance of maintaining sanitation, and strengthening the values of mutual cooperation as social capital of the community. The educational material refers to the theory of social capital proposed by Robert D. Putnam (2000), which emphasizes the importance of social networks, beliefs, and collective norms in building community participation.

The last stage is evaluation and reflection of activities. Evaluation is carried out through post-activity observation, reflective discussions with the community, and measurement of changes in community participation in environmental cleanliness activities. This evaluation aims to assess the effectiveness of the program, identify obstacles during implementation, and prepare recommendations for the sustainability of mutual cooperation activities in the community.

With this participatory method, the PKM program is expected to be able to rebuild the culture of mutual cooperation as an effective strategy in maintaining the cleanliness and health of the environment and strengthening the social solidarity of the community in a sustainable manner.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of Community Service (PKM) activities in Sukakarya Village is carried out through the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach with the stages of problem identification, Forum Group Discussion (FGD), implementation of mutual cooperation actions, community education, and evaluation and reflection of activities. This approach allows the community to become the main subject in the process of social and environmental change through active participation in each stage of activities (Orlando Fals-Borda, 1987).

Problem Identification and Field Observation

The results of initial observations show that the environmental conditions in Sukakarya Village are still facing several main problems, namely the accumulation of household waste at several environmental points, drainage channels that are clogged by garbage and sedimentation, and the low intensity of routine community service activities. Based on the results of interviews with residents and environmental administrators, it is known that the decline in gotong royong activities is influenced by busy work, low collective awareness, and changes in the pattern of community social interaction that is increasingly individualistic.

These findings show that environmental problems are not only technical, but also related to the social aspects of society. According to Friis (2021), an environment that is not maintained has the potential to increase the risk of public health problems, especially diseases based on environmental sanitation. This condition shows the need for social interventions based on community participation to rebuild environmental awareness.



Figure 1. Early Environmental Conditions

Forum Group Discussion (FGD)

The FGD stage produced several important findings related to public perception of the culture of mutual cooperation. Most of the participants said that mutual cooperation is still seen as an important value in community life, but its implementation began to decline due to lack of coordination, lack of regular schedules, and lack of collective initiatives.

Through discussions, the community and the PKM team agreed on several revitalization strategies, namely the preparation of routine community service work schedules, the division of work areas based on RT areas, and the formation of environmental cleanliness driving groups. This process shows an increase in the community's collective awareness of the importance of environmental cleanliness.

This result is in line with the theory of social capital from Robert D. Putnam (2000) who explains that social networks and trust can increase the effectiveness of community cooperation

in solving common problems. FGD is a medium for strengthening social capital through communication and mutual understanding.



Figure 2. Community Discussion Group Forum

Implementation of Environmental Cooperation Action

The implementation of the gotong royong action was carried out collaboratively by the community, village officials, youth leaders, and service teams. Activities include cleaning garbage in residential environments, cleaning drainage channels, pruning weeds, and arranging public facility areas.

The results of the activity showed that there were significant physical changes in the environment, where areas that were previously filled with garbage became cleaner, water channels returned smoothly, and the environment became more organized. In addition to physical changes, active community participation showed an increase in the spirit of togetherness and social concern.

This is in accordance with the theory of collective action from Mancur Olson (1965), which states that joint action is an important instrument in solving public problems. In this context, mutual cooperation is a tangible form of collective action in maintaining the cleanliness of the environment.

These findings also support the results of research by Firdaus et al. (2025) who stated that the revitalization of the culture of mutual cooperation is able to increase community participation in creating a clean and healthy environment.



Figure 3. Implementation of Gotong Royong

Education and Strengthening Public Awareness

Educational activities are carried out through socialization about the importance of environmental cleanliness, household waste management, and the relationship between environmental sanitation and public health. The material provided emphasized that maintaining environmental cleanliness is not only an individual responsibility, but a collective responsibility.

The results of the activity show an increase in public understanding of the importance of protecting the environment. This can be seen from the community's commitment to continue regular community service activities and maintain the cleanliness of the environment on a daily basis.

According to the World Health Organization (2022), environmental health education is an effective preventive step in building clean and healthy living behaviors. Thus, education is an important factor in the sustainability of the program.



Figure 4. Environmental Cleanliness Maintenance Education

Evaluation and Reflection of Activities

The results of the evaluation showed that the gotong royong cultural revitalization program had a positive impact on environmental conditions and community participation. Physically, the environment became cleaner, waterways were more maintained, and the volume of accumulated waste was reduced. Socially, there was an increase in social interaction, solidarity, and community concern for the surrounding environment.

However, there are several challenges in the sustainability of the program, such as maintaining the consistency of community participation and building a more structured hygiene management system. Therefore, continuous support from the village government, community leaders, and residents is needed to maintain the sustainability of the culture of mutual cooperation.



Figure 5. Environmental Conditions After the Implementation of Gotong Royong

This PKM activity proves that the revitalization of the gotong royong culture is an effective strategy in improving the cleanliness and health of the community's environment. In addition to having an impact on the physical aspects of the environment, this activity also strengthens the community's social capital as the main foundation in sustainable environmental

development. These results strengthen the findings of Fitriani et al. (2024) that gotong royong is not only a social activity, but also an instrument of community empowerment in environmental management.

CONCLUSION

Community Service Activities (PKM) through the revitalization of the culture of mutual cooperation in Sukakarya Village show that re-strengthening the values of togetherness can be an effective strategy in maintaining the cleanliness and health of the community's environment. Based on the implementation stages which include problem identification, Forum Group Discussion (FGD), mutual cooperation actions, education, and evaluation, this program has succeeded in identifying the main environmental problems in the form of garbage accumulation, poorly maintained drainage, and declining community participation in environmental cleanliness activities.

The results of the implementation show positive changes, both physically and socially. Physically, the environment becomes cleaner, more organized, and drainage channels are more maintained. Socially, there is an increase in community participation, collective awareness, and solidarity between citizens in protecting the environment. The revitalization of mutual cooperation has proven to be not only a practical solution to environmental cleanliness problems, but also a means of strengthening community social capital.

Nevertheless, the sustainability of the culture of mutual cooperation still faces challenges, especially in maintaining the consistency of community participation and building a structured community service system. Therefore, a joint commitment is needed between the community, the village government, and environmental leaders to maintain the sustainability of the program through routine scheduling, the formation of cleanliness driving groups, and the strengthening of environmental education in a sustainable manner.

Thus, the revitalization of the culture of mutual cooperation can be a model of effective community empowerment in creating a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment and strengthening social cohesion in the midst of the dynamics of modern society.

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