

# Educating Learners about “Maritime” Attitudes through Geography Education

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**Abstract.** Places, spaces, and environments, are the major focus of geography. Therefore, the practice of Geography Education is expected to bring students closer to their environment. Indonesia is known as one of the largest maritime nations in the world, but the reality shows that to meet the domestic needs of salt alone, our country must import it. The current development is continuously oriented at and exploited the land area. Education units, starting from kindergarten, elementary, junior high to senior high school are very appropriate media to instil and cultivate a positive attitude towards the marine environment. This paper aims at get insight the role of geography education on build and grow the attitudes of Maritime of students at school in Indonesia. A strong foundation of maritime values based on the diversity of physical and socio-cultural potentials of a region, instilled in the environment of a unit of education, is expected to give birth to future generations that truly know, understand, and love the maritime environment within the framework of the territorial integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

## 1. Introduction

Looking at the globe, one will clearly see the beautiful landscape of the Indonesian archipelago that lies on the equator. The islands are spread out over the ocean. The sea is indeed the most dominant part that forms our homeland. In ancient times, some of the indigenous people who inhabited this country assumed that the sea was only a body of water, like a large lake. In the native language, the “large lake” is called “*tagaroa*” (*taga* = lake and *roa* = area). It is said that the word “*tagaroa*” is still used by the residents in Sangir-Talaud [1]. The total area of the Indonesian seas is estimated to reach 62% of the total area of the country. The phrase “maritime country”, basically refers to the oceanic atmosphere that has colored the life of the Indonesian nation in the past. Noting the fact that our country is a “maritime country”, ideally most of the people’s life in our country should be oriented towards the sea. However, in fact, only about 2% of the population of Indonesia make the sea as a source of life, not realizing that Earth is a “water planet”. The weather and climates that allow us to live on this planet are largely determined by the conditions of the sea and air. Coastal communities are also unaware of the development or information related to their environment. This clearly shows that the Indonesian nation is still not responsive to the condition and potential of the sea. Until now, the abundant resources derived from the sea cannot be utilized optimally, and one of the main causes is that development of Indonesia has not been sea-oriented [2]. The lack of maritime insight and all of its



potentials will actually provide opportunities for other nations to take advantage of the sea, while Indonesia must be satisfied by being a "spectator" only.

It should be admitted that the national development has been and remained land-oriented. Meanwhile, national development should encompass all potential resources, both on land and sea [2]. In accordance with the doctrine of the National Resilience which relies also on the "Maritime" Insight as the realization of the Archipelago Insight, it is necessary for every Indonesian citizen to explore and exploit marine resources to the maximum extent to continuously improve the dignity of the Indonesian nation. It is very important to improve the development in the coastal areas immediately. The poorest Indonesians are found in rural areas, where the main livelihood is fishing [3]. Thus, it is urgent to find the solution to help improve the life of the poor fishermen by exploiting the potential in their surrounding environment.

In this era of autonomy, every region is given the opportunity to inventorize and simultaneously utilize every potential of its environment, which is certainly not an easy task, especially if the younger generations and society in general have not acquired the love for the sea. So, the first step that must be taken is to raise public awareness to love the sea. To protect the marine resources from the exploitation by other nations and to foster the love of the Indonesian nation for the sea must begin with the youths, because they are the successors of the nation. With this, it is expected that the marine wealth can be utilized efficiently and effectively [2]. Thus, observations should be made to find the views of the people in general and youths in particular of the sea.

Education, in the family environment, schools, and communities, occupies a central position in fostering environmental awareness. Education is a process in which the older generations influence those who are considered not ready to carry out a social life; hence, the target to be achieved is the development of a certain physical, intellectual conditions, and characters as desired by the wider community or by the community where they live or will live in [4]. Education is a conscious and planned effort that is expected to play a role to improve both learners' physical and mental maturity. Education is also defined as a conscious and planned effort to create an atmosphere of learning and instructional processes so that learners can actively develop their potentials to acquire religious-spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble morals, and also skills required by themselves, the society, nation, and state (Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 Year 2003 on National Education System).

## **2. Methods**

This article is not a direct research, but it is a literature review. The literature study was conducted on a number of reference sources relevant to the topic. The source of reference sought relates to geography education, the aims, the nature and scope of geographic education materials, and maritime. Literature of books, papers and relevant research results. From some literature, conducted qualitative analysis, and finally made the conclusion.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

### *3.1. Growing the "Maritime" insight and attitude through geography education*

The sea with all its valuable resources, energy, and values will not be meaningful to the community's resilience and welfare without the ability to utilize and maintain its sustainability. The comprehensive "maritime" values must be extended, enculturated, and internalized to all citizens to whom the sea belongs. The transformation of maritime values ideally can be done from an early age through various institutions, both formal and non-formal, such as in the family, schools, and in various other social organizations [5]. It can also be done anytime, taking the most advantage of such moments or activities as light discussions in the family, religious congregation, traditional ceremonies, entertainment, parties, seminars, and workshops, and even national deliberation.

Media, such as newspapers, radio, television, and the internet must also be used as a vehicle for disseminating maritime-related information. The materials presented in the extension of the

“maritime” insight and attitude can be raised from the people’s story about the wealth, glory, meaning, and role of the sea in the prosperity of society, the stories of heroism, and marine adventure. The approaches, methods, and media used can be both traditional and contemporary [6]. On the other hand, counseling and extension to the community about the sea with all its potentials and possible utilization needs to be done, so that the local community can participate and feel the benefits directly [7].

Especially for formal education at junior and senior high school levels, the subjects that are highly relevant and clearly have made the sea as their object of the study are Social Studies and Geography. One of the objects of Geography that specifically discusses the “Maritime” in high school curriculum is hydrosphere. Geography, according to Semarang Agreement 1988, is a science that studies the similarities and differences in geosphere phenomena with environmental or territorial point of view in spatial contexts. In terms of materials, geography may have an incision with other sciences, especially earth science, but what distinguishes geography from other sciences is its formal object, namely region.

Geography is also a science that studies the causal relationships of the phenomena and events that occur on the surface of the earth, both physically and those related to living organisms along with their problems through spatial, ecological, and regional approaches for the interest of successful development [8]. The object of study of geography consists of lithosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, and biosphere, while the formal object is region. Region is a part of the Earth’s surface whose parts have a certain relation, so that each part has individual characteristics that make it distinguishable from other regions. Thus, in terms of materials, geography may have something in common with other sciences, but its distinctive power lies in its formal object, the region.

The extension of maritime values in non-formal or out of school education, from family education, community youth, youth Islamic organization, scout movements, nature lover organizations, to family welfare movement groups can be effective. Through the transformation of the “maritime” values to all components of the nation, it is expected that the values will always be ingrained in each Indonesian. The younger generation and society in general are expected to understand the maritime glory of the past, even further expected to make the sea as a source of livelihood and national dignity. Bahari Nusantara or the Archipelago Maritime will no longer become a monumental-fantasy story, but a reality in which the wealth and glory of the archipelago can be enjoyed by all Indonesian people.

It is common knowledge that Indonesia is an archipelagic country; its marine area is wider than its mainland. Its total coastline is the longest in the world, and the future of Indonesian nation will be determined more by our ability to utilize marine resources [1]. Youth and society in general should be encouraged to learn more, understand, love, and cultivate marine potentials. Compared to other components of the nation, the youth is the most important element of the society that should explore the “maritime” values. Indonesian youths, as the nation’s future generation, need to improve their knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to the sea. In this regard, data and/or information on knowledge, attitudes, and orientation of youth skills about the sea can be used as a reference to determine the treatment of education, especially one that is sea-oriented.

As explained above, in geography, especially in the topic of the hydrosphere, not only marine knowledge that needs to be disseminated to the learners, but also there must be a conscious and planned effort to simultaneously nurture maritime awareness. The success of geography learning in nurturing maritime awareness will certainly be determined by many interrelated factors, such as curriculum content, support from the school environment, learning methods and strategies used, and the creativity of the geography teacher. The profile of youths’ love for the sea can actually be revealed from their daily activities. It can be observed from the following things: (1) expression of their ideals in the future, (2) a sense of pride with the nation’s culture that has to do with marine aspects, and (3) personal and group attitudes towards the sea [2].

The teaching and learning practices should adapt to the current situations and challenges in order to stimulate students to be more creative and critical. The same is true for the teaching and learning of geography in high school. Geography teaching that is overly emphasized on extracting information without stimulating and training students’ thinking skills should be improved immediately. Through

the teaching of geography, students are expected to be able to analyze the interaction of the geographical factors on the earth's surface where the teaching is carried out. The teaching of geography is expected to give birth to future Indonesians capable of thinking for themselves and for the benefit of mankind in general. Through such geography teaching, learners will also be helped to acquire entrepreneurial skills that will be beneficial for themselves and others. Thus, geography teaching is expected to be a means of cultivating beliefs in one's own ability and the power create a better world. There is a saying of "Teaching geography for a better world". This means that geography education should contribute to creating better world conditions. Knowledge of geography enables people to develop an understanding of the relationship between people, places, and environment over time [9].

With the expectations given to geography and geography education to improve students' thinking and reasoning as mentioned above, the executors in the field and the related parties must have the courage to reevaluate the curriculum and its implementation in the field, to be developed and improved in order to be more relevant to the demands of life. The results of evaluation can be made the basis to develop a model curriculum and model of implementation of geography teaching in various educational units that are in accordance with the demands to foster and develop the thinking, emotional power, interest and ability of the students to understand the environment that guarantees the life of the present and the future.

Each educational institution is required to be able to meet the demands and needs of the community. The implication is that it is not necessary for educational institutions to be in uniform. Educational institutions in urban areas, of course, should not be equal to educational institutions located in rural areas. The same is true for educational institutions in the highlands area, which should not necessarily be the same as those in the lowlands. Ideally, the characteristics of the environment where the educational institutions are located can be used as a consideration for schools to determine the quality profile of their graduates. Schools and other educational institutions are basically a "vehicle" to extend the various characteristics and potentials of the environment to the younger generation. One of the major potentials in the archipelago is the sea. Therefore, Geography Education is expected to take a central role in nurturing maritime awareness to its students. The less than optimal role of Geography Education in nurturing maritime awareness is expected to be soon revitalized. The lack of love for the maritime domain and the lack of empowerment of Geography Education are suspected to be a global strategy to make Indonesia unable to recognize the condition of its territory comprehensively, which is a threat to nationalism. It is ironical that although Indonesia is a maritime country, the love for the sea is not optimally cultivated, even in the educational environment [10].

To achieve the goal stated above, at the policy level, a review of the national education curriculum is required, and all parties should be committed to it. In the National Curriculum, geography should naturally be positioned as one of the subjects that unite the nation. Curriculum is basically a cultural product that should be able to describe serious efforts to help create future human beings with the desired level of knowledge, attitudes, and skills. The fact that Indonesia is a maritime country should be accommodated by the curriculum designers. Currently, geography subject at high school level is only taught in grade ten, eleven, and twelve for the concentration of social science program. For students taking natural science program as their concentration, geography is only an elective subject. Meanwhile, students taking natural science program who continue their study to the Faculty of Geography at Universitas Gadjah Mada, Geography Department of University of Indonesia, and Faculty of Earth Sciences and Technology of Bandung Institute of Technology certainly need geography as the basic knowledge. With the current status of geography in the national curriculum, geography teachers anywhere are expected not to spend their energy by blaming others. True teachers are not only transformers of knowledge, but they also build attitudes and cultivate skills. Teachers can teach about the importance of not throwing trash to the sea and the mangrove habitat. They can also teach marine-themed songs, introduce marine resources, and invite students to see fishermen's activities and the fish auction site and marine-based tourisms.

#### 4. Conclusions

Geography Education is the application of geography in the field of education, aimed at achieving national education goals. Geography Education is not only a transformation of spatial knowledge, but a vehicle for the development of attitudes and skills related to the object of study. The sea, with all its potential and dynamics, has long been one of the objects of geography at the school level. The cultivation of maritime attitudes through geography education is absolutely necessary. However, geography has not acquired a proportional and strategic place in the national curriculum. In the future, Geography must be ensured to be one of the important subjects that can unite the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia in the frame of nationalism and Bhineka Tunggal Ika (unity in diversity). The existence of the nation will be threatened and the identity of Indonesia as a nautical nation will disappear if Geography Education is not well-established. The practice of geography teaching and learning in educational institutions and the community is expected to rejuvenate the atmosphere of maritime life. There are many maritime traditions that can be taught and cultivated since an early age to learners through Geography Education. Places, spaces, and environments, are the major focus of major geography education. Thus, Geography Education is expected to get learners closer to their environment, so that learners are not deprived of the real cultural root, the maritime culture. Education unit is a very appropriate institution to instill and cultivate a positive attitude towards the maritime environment. The love of maritime values is expected to be instilled from an early age. Eventually, a generation that truly knows, understands, and loves the maritime environment will be born; a generation that also utilizes the maritime environment for the benefit of a wider community in the framework of the territory of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

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