

Cultural Communication in Forest Management Conservation in the Ammatoa Kajang Customary Area

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Abstract. In practice, cultural communication can be built into a variety of activities depending on the form and objectives of development to be realized, one of which is development communication in forest resource management. Conservation area management cannot be separated from the existence of the surrounding community. Understanding the communication construction that develops in a community group is an important aspect of understanding society. The Kajang tribe is one of the few tribes in Indonesia that still practices local wisdom and cultural values. The Kajang tribe's love for the environment stems from their regard for the forest as their own mother, as the mother is a revered and protected figure. The purpose of this research is to uncover cultural communication in the conservation of forest management in the Ammatoa Kajang customary area, as well as its construction as an implication of community interaction with the surrounding forest resources. The research utilizes qualitative methods and the theory of symbolic convergence. Data collection methods include observation, interviews, and desk studies. The study's findings suggest that there is a symbolic convergence in the Kajang community's historical context, which is strongly constructed by the oral tradition of communication via *Passang ri Kajang*. *Passang Ri Kajang* is a source of law in the conservation of forest management, regulating all aspects of forest management and the life of the Ammatoa indigenous people. *Pasang* is a culture that the Keammatoaan people strongly believe in. The following phrases express the values of cultural communication in forest conservation: *Jagai linoa lollong bonena kammayya tompa* (take care of the earth and its contents). Another expression is (*kasipalli*), which means "do not destroy the forest." Traditional leaders in Ammatoa have a great deal of influence in forest conservation and can set a good example for the community in the surrounding area. As a traditional leader, Ammatoa upholds *Pasang* as the guiding principles of community life, as well as prioritizing the principle of "abborong" (deliberation) in decision making.

Keyword: custom, symbolic convergence, oral tradition, kajang customary area.