

The Role of Libraries in Building and Promoting the Cultural Heritage Collection

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The Role of Libraries in Building and Promoting the Cultural Heritage Collection

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Abstract

In 2009, UNESCO recognised batik as one of intangible cultural heritage of humanity. Previously in 2003 and 2005, UNESCO also admitted Wayang and Keris as part of human masterpieces. However, some evidences show that some cultural heritages were neglected, so other countries claim on those heritages. Many young generations did not pay much attention of cultural heritage both local and national. One of library functions is to preserve and promote cultural heritages. Libraries should spread the cultural heritages awareness among society, so they will know about their culture. This paper aims to discover the role of libraries in building the cultural heritages collection. Some libraries in Indonesia have initiative in cultural heritages preservation. Those libraries start to build their cultural heritages collection. The collection ranges from literature, painting, and photos. Those libraries also promote the cultural heritages collection either manual or digital. Some libraries exhibit their cultural collection to attract users' attention or build special booth for cultural collection. Libraries have an important role to preserve and promote cultural heritage. Libraries have network all around Indonesia, from the provinces to the rural areas. We can rely on libraries in order to collect, organise, present, and disseminate cultural heritages of Indonesia. This paper gives recommendation for government, to empower information agency such as libraries to take part in cultural heritage preservation and promotion. So, all generation will get information and knowledge about Indonesian cultural heritages easily.

Keywords: Cultural Heritages, Cultural Heritages Collection, Promoting Cultural Heritages, Library Cultural Heritages.

Introduction

One of the functions and roles of the library is to provide a place to preserve cultural heritages and cultural recreation

by reading the library collections (University of Indonesia Library). Library is also a place for art and cultural development of the nation through its collection (Drajat, 2009). As a place for cultural development and exhibition, then it is no doubt if the library plays an active role in carrying out these duties. The function of collecting, storing, and developing cultural heritages is not the task of national and public libraries only, but also of special libraries and school libraries, for example, university libraries which provide cultural collection such as in Petra Christian University Surabaya (UK Petra) called *Desa Informasi*. UK Petra library has this initiation to answer the cultural heritage preservation. The *Desa Informasi* concept is to gather information and manage local content consisting of the all works by UK Petra academia (grey literature) and local content about *Surabaya*. UK Petra library also has *Surabaya memory* initiative which is a documentation of cultural heritage about Surabaya. It also keeps a collection of - *batik* as one of their special collections including a collection of books and works of *batik* in digital form called *Petr@rt Gallery*. Likewise, the Smithsonian library builds library cultural heritage project started in 2010, dealing with digital collections of art, culture, and history. For cultural heritage, users can search the collection through the digital library. Those are examples of how libraries have role to preserve local cultural heritages.

Library has strong connection with human culture because it functions as one of the information storage of the human culture. Library also records all culture and human civilisation that have been produced for centuries to be shared to the public widely. Likewise, current library function, in addition to education, recreation, as well as local storage as well as the nation's cultural

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treasures. This function is implemented by public libraries under the national library. If the national library needs to collect Indonesian cultural heritages, the public libraries throughout Indonesia can help to collect works of local culture.

Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage of each nation is different; the culture gives the unique values and has become identifier to each nation. National cultural heritage is a result of the people's existence in a country. According to UNESCO, cultural heritage is defined as "the legacy of physical artifacts and tangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations". UNESCO divides cultural heritage into tangible and intangible. Tangible cultural heritage is classified into these objects including buildings, historic sites, monuments, artifacts, and others. While the intangible cultural heritage cultural output is not in the form of monuments or objects but a tradition inherited from ancestors which are hereditary, including oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts. The most important thing in intangible cultural heritage is not the culture itself, but rather the wealth of knowledge and skill that is transmitted from one generation to the next generation. Referring to the division of cultural heritage, *batik* is including intangible cultural heritage because the main focus is not the end of the product (*batik*), but it emphasizes the knowledge and skills of how to produce *batik* so it can be preserved. *Batik* is one of the cultural heritages that has high artistic value. Indonesia has a lot of knowledge and skills of how to produce *batik* in each area. There is an initiative in protecting and preserving *batik* in Indonesia by inserting the knowledge and skills about *batik* into school and college curriculum. The curriculum is applied for elementary schools to high schools, including polytechnics and vocational schools as a local content component. In fact, there is a *batik* training programme initiated in Pekalongan that is supported by *batik* museum.

Batik Indonesia

Batik has been known in Indonesia since the days of the Majapahit kingdom. It further developed during the

Mataram kingdom era whose location now is known as Yogyakarta and Solo. *Batik* is widely known, especially by Javanese people after the end of the 18th century or the beginning of 19th century. At first, it was all hand painted *batik*, but after the first world war in 1920s printed *batik* was introduced. At the beginning, *batik* was used by certain people, such as the royal family and their relatives and followers. But over time, the development of *batik* was known extensively outside the palace, and many people outside the palace wore *batik*. Now *batik* is known throughout Indonesia as a national costume in which each region / city has its own *batik* patterns trademark. Because of the uniqueness and high valuable history of *batik* in Indonesia, then in 2009 the UNESCO admitted Indonesian *batik* as one of the intangible cultural heritage that must be maintained in order not to extinct. Indonesian *batik* is a result of traditional handmade craft using durable dye drawn on the fabric, where the craft is rich in values and philosophy inherited hereditary, especially in Java.

Since the recognition of *batik* as one of world cultural heritage, many activities concerning *batik* are organised in Indonesia; one of which is the World *Batik* Summit held in Jakarta in 2011. The event was attended by 1000 delegates from both Indonesia and worldwide (Kompas.com). Moreover, October 2nd is also known as the Indonesian *batik* day as well as one of the world intangible cultural heritage from Indonesia.

The Role of Libraries in Supporting Cultural Heritage

Emerging of globalisation often makes the cultural change in a region. Many young people are losing their cultural identity. This is one of the effects of globalisation, where boundaries between countries are gone, so it facilitates foreign culture come into Indonesia. If the younger generation is not introduced to their own culture in the future they might suffer cultural identity crisis. This paper argued that library has a very important role in ensuring the preservation and dissemination of cultural heritage. Libraries and librarians have a hard job and crucial role to conduct cultural heritage preservation (Ekwelem, Okafor, & Ukwoma, 2011), i.e. as one of the storage and

dissemination of cultural heritage. Library as a cultural information centre, which could provide content related to the cultural heritage of Indonesia, will help people to learn Indonesian culture. However, not all libraries have already been doing these initiatives; there are many libraries which still focus on the physical facilities and collections for the general needs (public library), a collection of academic (university library), and textbooks (school library). Not many libraries focus on cultural preservation.

Described below are some libraries that have already had a concern about the preservation of national culture, especially *batik*, which is reflected through a collection that they have and programmes that they carry out. Petra Christian University Library (UK Petra Library) has a collection with an interesting title called *Desa Informasi* collection, which is a group of digital collection containing local content including local culture about Surabaya. In addition, UK Petra library also has collections of *batik*. If traced through OPAC, there are 92 collection titles about *batik* available in there. Furthermore, there are also collections of books about *batik* in digital form/ CD. The authors of these books are spread from various countries, ranging from Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Netherlands. Collection of books about *batik* in UK Petra Library was published between 1990s-2014. The books are about *batik* pattern/ pattern design, the story of *batik*, creative *batik*, learning *batik* (*batik* techniques and concepts), meaning/ value of *batik*, *batik* revolution, *batik* from various regions, *batik* works, *batik* masterpiece, accessories of *batik* and more.

Library and Archives Unit of Malang (Bapersip Kota Malang) also has some collections of *batik*, a total of approximately 80 collections. The collection of *batik* craftsmen and designers, *batik* painting, *batik* accessories, modern *batik* creations, and almost the entire collection are derived from the Indonesian writers. While the Library and Archives Unit of East Java (Bapersip Jatim) only has a collection of *batik* as many as 57 copies. Collection of *batik* among others takes a variety of topics about *batik*, such as *batik* copyright, creation of modern *batik*, *batik* painting, *batik* cloth bag, and *batik* as cultural heritage.

Besides the collection, there are some library programmes that support the cultural preservation, such as UK Petra Library with its “Surabaya Memory” that is available

online on www.surabaya-memory.petra.ac.id The purpose of this initiative is to record and preserve the heritage of the city of Surabaya. In addition, the library also holds events to support the preservation of culture in public places, such as in the mall.

UIN Sunan Kalijaga Library also has cultural preservation activities that are held each year. The cultural exhibition booths show cultural product, such as traditional ceremonies, traditional snacks, local knowledge, and talk shows related to the preservation of cultural heritage, especially the cultures in Central Java. National Library has a *centre of excellence* that is also available online on www.coe.pnri.go.id programme which aims to provide services and information related to the local cultures. National Library works with libraries at the provincial level in providing services and information about local culture. The libraries at the provincial level that are in collaboration with *centres of excellence* PNRI are Bali, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), South Sulawesi, East Kalimantan, Riau, and Yogyakarta Provinces. But until now there are not many activities related to cultural preservation under this *centre of excellence*. PNRI also has a digital library programme that contains a collection of national heritage.

There are also cultural heritage preservation initiatives from libraries abroad, where almost all its national libraries develop preservation programme. For instance, in the national library of Denmark, it is not only doing preservation of past works such as books, paintings, and rocks, but the library also undertakes preservation of works of contemporary national heritage, such as newspapers issued by entire publishers in Denmark. Moreover, there are archives of radio, television, recording of gramophone, films ads, and CDs from Denmark since 1900 until today. There is also net archive website <http://netarkivet.dk/in-english/> project, where the library stores content on the Internet published by residents of Denmark.

Singapore’s national library too has a programme related to cultural heritage, which is packaged in “golibrary” programme, where library provides information about the activities of cultural heritage such as talk show about cultural heritage that is held in library, or discuss about Singapore landscape. National Library of Singapore also has a history of Singapore-related programmes of cultural heritage.

Library Initiatives to Support Cultural Heritage

Preservation of national culture has become the duty of all individuals, the successful preservation of cultural heritage cannot be separated from the active role of the entire community. We cannot rely only on one institution when dealing with cultural heritage preservation. However, library can become actively involved in the preservation of culture. In accordance with one of the functions of the library as a repository for the national treasures, libraries can start a programme of national treasures acquisition as well as processing, presenting and promoting the culture. If all libraries in Indonesia have related cultural preservation initiatives, how rich information about the culture that can be generated for the next generation.

The process of acquisition or building of national heritage collections can be done in various ways. For instance university libraries can work with faculty or study programmes. Lecturers and students can conduct a research or write a paper related to the local culture, and the work can be stored in the library. The work should be stored in digital form for widely distribution to users, as well as the freedom to access the resources of that culture. For public libraries, community involvement could be bigger, but often the constraints that arise related to the low contribution to the library community. In public libraries, they can build special collection such as local content or indigenous knowledge collection. Public libraries should embrace all community to enrich their local collection. The acquisition of local culture through the creation of relevant information is recommended, so the library must encourage people to participate in the creation of information about the local culture.

Next is the process of organising cultural collections. Collection of local culture can be processed and stored in digital form to preserve the cultural heritage. The process of digitalising of the library collection in the form of paper, photographs, tapes, and others can be done by the libraries. Many libraries build a new repository especially for the digital collection of cultural heritages. National Library of Indonesia builds a centre of excellence to preserve the cultural heritages. Unfortunately, the repository has not been widely used by PNRI; it can be seen from the

menu on the culture of the nation that it is still empty. If managed more seriously, a platform for digital cultural heritage collections in PNRI can be developed and used by the community.

Dissemination and promotion of cultural heritage collections in the library can be done online. Promotion can be done both online and offline, so that the library can target the entire community to get involved or make use of the services and cultural heritage information. Libraries can also create themed cultural events to introduce a particular culture to the public. Events can be organised outside the library in order to provide space for cultural communities where people can discuss about culture, make talk shows/ seminars and cultural exhibitions. Libraries should be intensified to promote cultural heritage, because the library has closeness with relevant community services provided, and the library collection is the embodiment of culture.

Conclusions and suggestions

The role of libraries in providing cultural heritage collections is very important. It is time for library to take over the role as an institution that cannot be separated by society and culture. Currently, the role of libraries is still not optimal in providing information about cultural heritage. Library only builds a 'home' that provides a place for cultural heritage, but it is still poor in content. It is time for the library to contribute in creation/ acquisition of cultural heritage by providing a space for society to get involved in the creation of cultural heritage information. Furthermore, the role of libraries in cultural heritage storage can be done by providing space for the creation of digital cultural collections. As for the dissemination and promotion of cultural heritage, library can spread information online through social media, or organise exhibitions about cultural heritage.

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