



The Value of Syair Aceh among Acehnese Indigenous People in Parenting Practice

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Article Info

Received:
14 September 2019

Accepted:
25 September 2019

Publish
01 September 2020

e-ISSN 2682-759X

Abstract

Syair Aceh is a privilege for parenting among Acehnese family. However, in this day and age, it is no longer used in Acehnese family lived in urban area. For those reason, this study aims to raise up the existence of syair Aceh and depicts the value engagement by doing an exploration research in rural area where Acehnese indigenous people stayed. It was captured in descriptive qualitative design (observation, in-depth interview and documentation). Two indigenous Acehnese families were participated and explored on how they used syair Aceh in parenting practice. The findings showed that there were myriad worthwhile values inside the syair Aceh, such as; (1) Religious value; Tawheed (Introduction of the presence of God), faithfulness of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and obey the parents; (2) Courage; defend the religion and preach it to humankind; (3) Social; how to interact to others; (4) Language. This study results hope will give awareness among Acehnese society to uphold the parenting tradition of using Syair Aceh as a way to introduce and provide early knowledge and experience in the Islamic life context.

Keyword: syair aceh, parenting practice, qualitative design, indigenous people

Introduction

Back then past few decades, parenting style already started when baby was still in mother's womb, the mother recites verses of Qur'an to her child and starts to sing Syair Aceh with gentle voice and soft intonation mostly in every child's napping time. Generally, syair Aceh consists of two main values; aesthetic and education. Aesthetic value comes from the voice and intonation while education comes from advice behind the verse in terms of heroic story, spirit of heroic, shalawat (a salutation and pray towards Rasulullah (ﷺ) and religious message. People know it as Syair Peuyayon Aneuk (a song in children napping time) (Yusuf, 2013).

Unfortunately, in this day and age, many Acehnese family living in urban era no longer perform and continue to utilize Syair Aceh as a parenting style. There are sorts of common factors one of which is coming from the demands of parental working hour. Based on study done by Muchlis,

2013 (as cited in Rezeki, 2016) about parental education based on Aceh traditional culture in Banda Aceh states that the family still apply Syair Aceh in parenting. In fact, another song either from Aceh or Indonesia are dominate rather than Syair Aceh itself. It caused by media influence such as television showing more modern and familiar song.

Family first support is critical in forming the spirituality and religion understanding toward children, because human's first capture of God will be in the starting life time (e.g., Richert and Barrett, 2005; Tirri et al., 2005; Nucci and Turiel, 1993; see Boyatzis, 2003). Consequently, role of parents truly determines how children establish the spiritual understanding (e.g., Hertel and Donahue, 1995; Ratcliff, 1992; see Mahoney et al., 2003) as cited in Bartkowkl, Xu & Levin (2008). The provider coming from parents, guardian who consistently train, assist, practice, the children in the right manner with the evolving capacities of the child.

Literature Review

Child's Napping Time

For younger baby starting from less than 1 year could have repetitive schedule napping time while up to one year, the changes easily happen as time goes by. The infant's sleeping time is crucial just like adult works in office. Back then in past few years, Acehnes people used to put the baby inside a traditional cotton hung into the house wood. The parents specially mother will automatically perform syair Aceh until the child feel asleep. As stated by Bascom (Danadjaja, 1994, p.19) as cited in Rezeki (2016) this verbal language function as a pedagogical device, protect and develop children intelligences. For Aceh tradition, the people do not associate the child with the song as western people did, rather than using syair aceh as a way to let the children know first who is the Creator one. Hence, the connection among syair aceh and children development obviously noticed.

Surprisingly, Gonzalez-Mena & Eyer (2009) also explained how important children's napping time and produced hints to help toddler get to sleep:(1) provide visual privacy for those children who need it; (2) provide a quiet, peaceful atmosphere; (3) make sure all children get plenty of fresh air and exercise; (4) do not let the children overtired (p.67).

Muchsin (2013: 36) states that the activity of swinging children in the Aceh community is part of a typical informal education system that begins at the age of infancy. Therefore, this parenting activity has been seen before the theory or research related to the activity. This implies that parents want the child to grow up physically and mentally healthy. Dr. Ratna Megawangi (Muchsin, 2013: 34) in her book "Character Parents Space" states that if a child gets a lot of embrace and physical touch from parents or caregivers before he sleeps, then there will be a longing from children towards their parents, these activities are the basis for harmonious relationships in a family.

Value in Syair Aceh

Yusuf (2013) explains some religious values consisting in syair Aceh, as followed:

Worship to Allah. The recognition of oneness of God through Syair Aceh has been embedded in Acehnese children when they were young. The arabic terms of "*thayyibah*" put in the beginning of syair in order to maintain the children that the first thing they should know first is God, not others.

Advice of Pray. Pray is a moslem worship ritual for five times a day as a compulsory in certain occasion. However, in Acehese tradition, children have been introduced a pray through syair Aceh.

Obey Parents. Obey parents is applied to all children in this worldwide. But for Acehese people, the lesson has been thought from the very early years of baby. The content is involved in syair Aceh where story about advice and child's role to the parents.

Courage. Zanuiddin (nd, p.17) also revealed at the time of Sri Sultan Iskandar Muda baby, the mothers or other women who are in the palace environment also sang a syair Aceh when swinging the sultan in his napping time. The first stanza in the poem above implies and hopes that the great Sri Sultan Iskandar Muda baby can conquer all the countries of the world, while in the second stanza implies if later the great Sri Sultan Iskandar Muda can attract the leaders of the country, in the third stanza it is expected that Sri Sultan Iskandar Muda can lead a country and finally in the fourth verse.

Syair Aceh and Children First Language Development.

It is noticeable that first skill which remarkable develop is hearing during infants even when the baby was still in mom's womb. Then the question appear does a child can understand the speech deliver to or just hear? Based on the research done by Jusczk, (1995), as cited in Kail (1998) that one child can recognize a single different alphabet. By testing a baby, a rubber nipple is connected to a tape recorder so that sucking turns on the tape and sound comes out a loudspeaker. In just few minutes, 1-month-olds learn the relation between their sucking sound: They suck rapidly to hear a tape that consists of nothing more than the sound p in pin, pet, and pat (pronounced "puh").

Primary caregivers (mother) or even caregivers (father, grandmother or nanny) in Aceh mostly performed this syair Aceh not only in children sleep time but also when having spare time just to talk with directly on parent's lap or shoulder. They tell a story, pray due to wealthy, joyful life of their children, everything utilizing syair. Mostly, the intonation up and down, and they speak relative slowly in direct full eyes assumed that the baby understands. However, the baby does not but this is the first way to stimulate children's language development during infant. Kail (1998, p.226) believes that infant-directed speech, helps infants perceive the sound that are fundamental to their language. Thus, syair aceh totally benefits in this language development moreover when touching, kissing represent at the same time.

During infant period, baby starts to babble with different intonation where sometimes up and down. This babbling is influenced by family background as Levitt & Utman (as cited Kail, 1998) that bring up the own patterns. For instance, England family intonation shows pitch first rises then falls toward the end of sentences, so both declarative and question patterns of intonation is integrated into their babbling. So, as the result, the more time parents talk to their baby, the stronger attachment between baby and primary caregiver.

Methodology

It was noticeable that two indigenous Acehese family were participated. While executing, this study is composed of a descriptive study to describe and compared an insight of an issue then divided into several themes. The data is collected by in-depth interview, observation and documentation to understand more about their experience. In order to address the ethical concerns, researcher asked first the participant and at the end give them back the result to be re-read.

Results and Discussion

SJ1 involves grandmother as a substitute caregiver as a mother. Grandma or who is often called *Mak* uses her granddaughter's care like a mother who has children. When taking care of his grandson *Mak* often uses tradition and values Aceh culture, one of which is *meusyae* (poetry) to the grandson when he wants to sleep.

The *syair* as follow below this:

Syair SJ1

Lailahailallah
Lailahailallah
Dek Cut beu meutuah
(Dek Cut be a good girl)
Lailahailallah
Eh beutuenget di dalam ayon
(Sleep well in the swing)
Dek Cut lon beu meubahgia
(Dek Cut be a happy girl)
Lailahailallah
Dek Cut saboh beu meutuah
(Dek Cut be a nice girl)
Panyang umu neubri lee Tuhan
(Longevity given by God)
Uroe ngon malam sabee lon meudo'a
(Night and Day My pray always for you)

The second child at SJ1 has an erratic bedtime density i.e. 2-4 times a day; at 10:00 WIB, at 3:00 p.m.; at 18.00 pm (conditional); at 21.00 pm. SJ1 implies that *syair* Aceh has myriad of kindness value where benefit to the children, as like the statement below:

"I think, syair aceh has three values which are; kindness, norms and religious. For example, the religious value when I always start syair using "Lailahailallah" and I tell how to worship Allah, where human comes from, what Allah allows us to do or not. In conclude, all related to our religion as a muslim." SJ1

Whereas in SJ2 the mother's role dominates the parenting pattern applied. Mother at SJ2 still maintaining the tradition of nurturing based on her explanation below:

"According to myself, syair is not only to stimulate religious value, but also morality. Religious coming from islamic story and manner toward God and The Prophet. For example, I told the baby about hereafter situation depicted our good deeds in the world. I know the baby might not understand, but as long as it is continued, they will remember it." Ms. B

In SJ2 the mother often uses poetry during the second lull his child. For the first child (2 years) the mother will put him to bed or on the bed, while the second child (4 months) sleeps using a swing during ± 30 minutes. Following is the child's sleep schedule at SJ2 in a day: at 8:30; at 11.00; at 13.30 pm; at 16:30 pm. When sleeping the second child (1.5 months) the mother often chants *syair peuyon aneuk*, following the poem sung:

Syair SJ2

*Ta eh hai aneuk, boh hatee ma
(Slepp my child, my sweet heart)
Gata lon timang lam ayon ija
(I swing you in the swing)
Beurayeuk gata hai muda seudang
(Grow up quickly my dearest son)
Beu harom keu bungong bangsa
(Make the nation proud of you)*

Understanding of Syair Aceh Value.

All two primary caregivers argue that there are beneficial values inside syair aceh. However, the value that has been mentioned is different one to another. Overall, three caregivers who practice syair Aceh in nurturing children have adequate understanding the value inside syair Aceh itself. Meaning that, not just because of regulation of the curriculum or just a way to speed up the baby sleep. Nevertheless, the beneficial meaning inside syair Aceh which contribute a lot for children development specifically on *Tawheed* (Islamic term in mentioning the belief of God unconditionally).

In general, the pattern of childcare in the Gampong (village) is practiced by mother and grandmother. Mother and grandmother are taking care of children, while father's role more tend to make a living, the maker of a rule which is then executed by all family members.

The research subjects acknowledged that the syair Aceh was used on parenting because the poem contains religious values, moral values and courage value. These values can be seen from the verse in the Aceh poem sung, like the lafadz *Lailahaillah* as the opening word of the poem implying the value of unity and virtue. This is so that the first knowledge is found by children is knowledge of Allah.

Conclusion

The results and analysis of the study showed that the research subjects aware of the importance of Aceh poetry in parenting. Therefore, the subjects want that culture of nurturing to be maintained that is by continuing to practice the culture of nurturing. So is by exposing the research informants that if the tradition of parenting through Acehnese poetry is not practiced anymore, it will have a negative impact on the generation of Aceh next.

Acknowledgements

Funding of this research work is generously supported by the RU Grant – UMCares: RU013-2017X, Ministry of Education, Malaysia

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