

# Angklung and Local Wisdom Values

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## Abstract

Angklung performance in Indonesia has been growing since hundreds of years ago. It was carried out by the villagers as an expression of amusement on important days after harvest. The subsequent Angklung development is a transformation into performing arts. In addition to the aesthetic element, it also explores the communicative elements. This research uses experimental methods and pedagogic analysis. The research shows that when people study or perform Angklung, they are actually learning a lot of values. Students are not only adjusting the arm movement with the music, but also, adjusting the time to practice, conformity to rules, and teamwork. Thus, Angklung Performance in Indonesia provides local wisdom and can be a media for character education, especially to raise good values, tolerance, and good teamwork.

**Keywords:** Angklung, Indonesia, performing arts, local wisdom, values

## 1. Introduction

The growth and development of art in Indonesia is a result of communities' expression and creativity. Arnold Hauser in *The Sociology of Art* discussed specifically about this condition "Art as a Product of Society and the Society as the Product of the Art", that art as a product of society cannot be separated from the socio-cultural factors, which are natural factors and generation factors, all of which have contributed to the development of arts (1982: 94-328). Art and society are one unity, tied and bound to each other. Performing arts in Indonesia, mostly grew up as an expression of communities, which is then used as a medium of socialization, communication, ritual, entertainment, and education that lead to character building values, as it is also observed in the development of Angklung as performing art.

Angklung in Indonesia has evolved over hundreds of years ago. It is performed by the village community as entertainment expression on important days after harvesting. Later it develops as media to pass on values of life contextually, especially tolerance value, in coherence to unity rhythm tones to become one harmonious song. In the past, Angklung was sounded as walking, dancing, moving the body, with gleeful expression.

Angklung is a traditional musical instrument composed of several bamboo pipes of different sizes arranged in a small frame and shake to produce sound of a certain tone. It is usually played together to produce a tone harmonization.

In old Dutch magazine, 'WOLANDA HINDIA' No.6, 1939: *Dat deze muziek indruk op de beveling maakt, is bewezen. Zij beluisteren in de klanken krijgsmuziek, terwijl daartegen over bij anderen zinnelijke aandoeningen worden opwekt*. That this music (Angklung) has given the deep impression, is proven. Some feels the sound of war in the tones while it has given a very emotional impression to the other.

Refer to the Dutch colonial officials opinion, Angklung music has a strong influence on his supporters in Priangan/Pasundan, especially emotional impact on evoking the war spirit. Therefore, it was not surprising that in the mid-nineteenth century, the Dutch Government prohibited angklung as a performing art during the notorious "Cultuurstelsel" in Pasundan.



Figure 1. Angklung Bandung & long-pat drum instrument in 1900s.

Before the Japanese occupation, there is a change, thanks to creativity and persistent efforts of Daeng Soetigna, a teacher in Kuningan, who was born in Garut. Angklung, which has become the victim of Dutch colonial for so long, began to rise as national political movement. It was increasingly tempestuous among Indonesian people prior to Indonesian freedom. Since 1938, Daeng Soetigna has diligently conducted experiments on Angklung, known as one of the elements of art and culture of his nation and is a worthy nurtured and developed legacy, to have a decent place in the wider community.

Having been studied long from various aspects, Daeng Soetigna concluded that angklung can be quickly popular if it is adjusted to the taste of young generation, which is to modify ladder-tone from pentatonic to diatonic. After experiencing many obstacles and failures, the innovators finally managed satisfactorily.

Angklung had regain its place in the society. Even angklung got an international reputation, as is evident from the statement of the Australian musician IGOR HMEL NITSKY in 1955, as follows:

He was amazed, proud, happy, and surprise, that Daeng Soetigna has managed to find a practical and efficient method to teach angklung music to the Indonesian youth. It is the music that comes from their own history. The idea initially was to allow young people to be able to read and understand the structure of tone practically. Very talented young teachers discover how to play European music that is used for national idiom for people in the country. A valuable discovery which gives a combination of the players and spectators begin a discipline and pleasure. This is a great value that gives a unique satisfaction for players and spectators.

With Daeng Soetigna's creations, it turned out later, Angklung Art education could be used as a means to strengthen the soul of mutual cooperation, teamwork, discipline, prudence, agility, responsibility and so on, in addition to fostering a sense of musicality.

Although Angklung as musical instrument has some drawbacks as was supposed by some parties, but it can be accounted for as an educational tool. That's why Ministry of Education and Culture sees the need to set it as an educational tool in the school musical, by Decree dated August 23, 1968, No.082/1968 Minister of Education and Culture has decided, as follows:

- (1) Establish angklung music as an educational tool in the Ministry of Education and Culture;
- (2) Assign the Director General of Culture to work on Angklung to be designated as an instrument of music education not only within the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Angklung Performance art has taught the Indonesian people to coexist in different ways to achieve a common goal. Angklung show has taught "appreciating difference", thus with a difference then born a harmony. In this case not to contest differences, but to juxtapose. With the difference thus develop new strength.

## 2. Angklung as Education Media

In the past the tone of Angklung Art comprises three tones (1) Da, (2) mi, (3) na, a stepped-tone *Salendro*. Angklung has a large size, almost as tall as humans. Even the stepped-tone Angklung pentatonic barreled *Salendro* still exists in the districts of West Java, as Cigugur-Brass, Create Degree, Cirendeu-Cimahi, and other areas that exhibited at the event or Annual Festival or Folk Festival, at the time of post-rice harvest. While the book *Nagara Kertagama*, masterpiece in 1359, Angklung was used in entertainment media in Kingdom welcoming party. The pitched tone has grown into five, namely: 1 (da), 2 (noodles), 3 (na), 4 (ti), 5 (la).



Figure 2. Angklung Buhun Laras Salendro



Figure 3. Angklung Buhun Laras Salendro

A stepped tone diatonic is growing in schools, even at national and international community. It is the result of creativity of the Daeng Soetigna that transform from pentatonic tone to diatonic, which now serve as art subject in schools.



Figure 4. Diatonic Angklung

Angklung Performance art can be perceived as educational media. This is evident when studying Angklung music to form a song, in which there is a cooperation between the players. Why is that? Because each player is responsible for the tone of the instrument Angklung is played. Tones range from 1 (do), 2 (re), 3 (mi), 4 (fa), 5 (sol), 6 (la,) to 7 (si), and octave lower or higher, strung from the instrument angklung played by each individual. So if one personal is not skilled, the song will not be a unitary whole tone harmonies and beautiful.

Angklung music art contains the value of education especially social values, teamwork and discipline. It is felt that the play of angklung cannot be done by an individual, but it must be done by a lot of people or groups, which of course takes skill, patience, and intelligence of the players. In that way it helps the process of building a skilled, independent and responsible personality.

The values of local wisdom found in the concept of Sunda *Tri-Tangtu* (three determinants of human life), that *Cageur* (spiritual and physical sense), *Bageur* (good), *Bener* (right). And if all three are mastered, the person can be labelled *Pinter* (to be clever or smart). Angklung play can therefore measure, human intelligence, since playing Angklung music requires the synergy of mind, sense and feeling.

Angklung art education as well as aesthetic needs have unique and essential functions, so that the subjects cannot be replaced by other subjects. Based on various philosophically, psychologically and sociologically studies, it was found that the Angklung art education has unique role and strategic value of education in the corresponding changes and dynamics of the community.

Angklung art can satisfy human needs', hence it involves five basic human needs, namely: need for self-actualization, needs for meaning, social needs, aesthetic needs, and survival needs "(Pratt, 1980: 54). It shows that the aesthetic needs is seen as an essential part to be implemented in schools.

When people learn or perform Angklung performance art, it is in fact studying a lot of values. Students do not only adjust to the rhythm of music, complete songs with tunes he played, but also they adjust time to practice, adhere to the rules or structure of the song, and cooperate within the team as a group.

Therefore Angklung Art on Indonesian society in the past is a traditional art which is part of the 'totality of life'. It characterizes humans as special beings and also an area of activity that can seep into the exploration of human values that will never run out. It greatly contributed to the community, especially the forming of character, attitude, and mind.

### 3. Arts Curriculum in Schools

Indonesian art subjects in the 2004 curriculum, as a core development capabilities in the field of aesthetics, has a potential role to support and realize the whole Indonesian human personality. Arts education is multidimensional, multilingual, and multicultural, not only to develop the capabilities field of aesthetics but also to contribute to the developing non-arts capabilities through arts education in the field of logic and ethics (Kamaril, 2001).

In curriculum subjects, it is also mentioned that art has a role in the formation of students' personal harmony in logic, a sense of aesthetic, artistic, and ethics to achieve intelligence EQ, IQ, AQ, CQ, and SQ. Art education also contributes to develop creativity, taste and sensory sensitivity, as well as the artistic skills through learning approach to art, through art and learn about art.

Arts education has a function and purpose of growing tolerance, democratic, civilized, and capable of living in harmony in a pluralistic society. Art can develop imaginative intellectual abilities and artistic expression, develop a sense of sensitivity, skill, and ability to apply technology, exhibit and perform in creative arts

In Angklung music, all of it has been covered. At this time, in schools, even in several community groups in Indonesian society organizations, Angklung Music is used as indicators of Human Intelligence.

Intelligent man can be seen from his angklung skills with alacrity, sensitivity to tone and sensitivity to rhythm. Everything becomes a unity between sense, thought, and skilled hand movements, in the effort to make a harmonic song.

At Saung Angklung Udjo, students do not only play the angklung as a traditional instrument, but they also involve in managing the studio, from creating, playing, and being Angklung Dirigent. Even for work orders of angklung to perform angklung show that almost every time can be viewed by the public. All of these activities involve the surrounding communities.



Figure 5. Saung Angklung Udjo

#### 4. Arts Education and Local Wisdom Values

Art education in the past was delivered naturally, starting from the family environment (internal), community groups (arts group), and in the school environment, either fitted into intra-curricular or extra-curricular. Education by Carter V. Good (In Djumransyah, 2006: 24) is the process of developing one's skills in the form of prevailing attitudes and behavior in society. Meanwhile, according to Godfrey Thompson, education is the influence of the environment on individuals to make permanent changes in the habits of behavior, thoughts and attitudes. John Stuart Mill (In Abubakar, 1982: 8), states that education includes everything done by someone who worked for himself or another person, in order to bring students to a level of perfection.

From the definition, we can conclude, that all education is man's attempt to improve his personality by way of fostering personal potential, which is spiritual (thinking, willing, sense, create and moral conscience), and physical (sensory and skills). It is located on the Angklung art values contained therein, ie the value *Cageur*, *Bageur*, *Bener* and *Pinter*, which of course extends the norms and values expected by society. Art values are loaded with the values of local wisdom that can be applied to education throughout the ages.

Angklung art can be a medium for educators to realign thinking and concepts of art education in schools to fit the objective essence, but still follow the dynamic needs of the community, namely:

1. Angklung art teaches the upright body posture, as playing angklung, saluting in the beginning and in the end. The body attitude, ethically-bridge layout taught manners, that as social beings, every time we come and go we should have ethical welcome and farewell manner, expressed through our body language.
2. Angklung art also teaches sensitivity to rhythmic sense and soul, as well as the coordination between brain, sense, *wirahma*, and body motoric.
3. Angklung art teaches manners, ethics and personality, as well as skills, flexibility, refinement, and a sense of beauty in one unity.
4. Angklung music principle as 'sense education' teaches etiquette or manners. There are three kinds of ethics or manners: (1) *Cageur* (self-carriage), which means the players can play the Angklung naturally healthy spiritually and physically, (2) *Bageur* (good favor, for the patience to wait for the tone he held to join tones of others, which results in friendly manners, humble, not arrogant, respect and think of others, (3) *Bener*, held tones will join well if done properly and correctly, which impacts the behavior, what is said will always be consistent with what is done. When all was done in synergy, it is called *Pinter*, or Intelligent, because all the components of the skill, sense sensitivity, and discipline get together into a single unity.

#### 5. Conclusion

Thus the values of Sundanese-Indonesian local wisdom can be used as a medium of education, particularly for building human character, as the future generation. When people learn or perform Angklung performance art, they are learning a lot of values. Students do not only adjust the hand motoric movement to the music, but also

adjust the time to practice, adhere to grip, and teamwork.

The existence of Angklung as art features beauty, offers a philosophy of life, good values, local wisdom that is proved to regulate the community life. Angklung art education is essential to build people mental and character. In other words, the art of Angklung can influence human behavior in particular groups. It can direct the way they think, feel and sometimes also determine their actions. In this case, the teacher or educator as heir to the nation's next generation plays a key role in determining the concept of **Angklung Art Education in the National Character Building**.

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Endang Caturwati is a lecturer of Dance Department in Indonesian Institute of Arts and Culture Bandung, Indonesia. She is a professor of Performing Arts in Institut Seni Budaya Indonesia (ISBI) Bandung. She got her doctoral degree from Gadjahmada University. One of her research interests is character education based on local wisdom either on dance or music performance. Her research on Angklung music as media of character education is conducted in West Java especially in Bandung, Bogor, Bekasi and Tasikmalaya. Beside teaching and conducting research, she is also actively involved in art communities, such as, “Perempuan Pendidik Seni”, “Ajang Kreativitas Seni Tradisi Indonesia” and the activities of building art teachers and art performers.