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## LOCAL WISDOM IN TRADITIONAL CEREMONIES: CULTURAL HERITAGE THAT NEEDS TO BE PRESERVED

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### Abstract

Traditional ceremonies in Lombok are a heritage of local wisdom that is loaded with social, spiritual, and cultural values that have been inherited from generation to generation by the Sasak people. This tradition reflects the harmonious life between man, nature, and God, and plays an important role in strengthening the collective identity of the community. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach through observation and interviews with traditional leaders and local communities in various regions of Lombok, and the results show that traditional ceremonies such as *Nyongkolan*, *Begawe*, and *Ngayu-ayu* not only function as rituals or celebrations, but also as a means of strengthening social relations, teaching the values of mutual cooperation, respect for ancestors, and solidarity between communities. However, the preservation of this tradition faces serious challenges due to the influence of globalization, changes in the lifestyle of the younger generation, and the lack of documentation and support from the government or related parties. Therefore, preservation efforts must be carried out in a sustainable manner by involving local communities, educating the younger generation, strengthening cultural documentation, and implementing policies that favor the protection of traditions. Traditional ceremonies are not only a cultural asset, but also an important part in maintaining the sustainability of local values and strengthening the identity of the Lombok people in the midst of changing times.

**Keywords:** Traditional Ceremonies, Local Wisdom, Lombok, Cultural Heritage, Preservation

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## INTRODUCTION

Local wisdom is the result of a long process of interaction between humans and the environment and others. It grows from the combination of elements of creation, taste, and karsa of society that are inherent in daily life. The values contained in local wisdom not only live in the minds of the community, but are also manifested in various forms of culture, symbols, and traditions. One of the concrete forms of local wisdom that still survives today is traditional

ceremonies. Traditional ceremonies are not just rituals, but a means to convey social, spiritual, and ecological values that have been passed down from generation to generation.

In various regions of Indonesia, traditional ceremonies are one of the important pillars in building the cultural identity of the local community. On the island of Lombok, which is dominated by the Sasak ethnic community, traditional ceremonies not only reflect the richness of local traditions, but also serve as a medium for education on the value of life. Some of the traditional ceremonies that are still actively carried out include *Nyongkolan* (procession of bridal processions), *Begawe* (post-wedding ritual), *Ngayu-ayu* (ritual of rejecting reinforcements), and *Peresean* (ritual of physical agility as a symbol of courage). These ceremonies preserve a deep philosophy about the life of the Sasak people and become a social mechanism to strengthen community ties and maintain human relationships with nature and the Creator.

Every traditional ceremony in Lombok contains elements of moral and social education. For example, in the *Begawe* procession, the entire surrounding community is involved in preparing and making the event a success. The concept of mutual cooperation, mutual care, and a sense of responsibility for the community are the main values that are taught from generation to generation. In addition, ceremonies such as *Ngayu-ayu* teach people to appreciate and protect nature as an inseparable part of life. This shows that traditional ceremonies are not only a ceremonial activity, but also a tangible form of local wisdom inherent in the social structure of Lombok society.

However, in an era of globalization and modernization that is accelerating, the preservation of traditional ceremonies faces serious challenges. Changing lifestyles, increasing individualism, and the dominance of global popular culture have influenced the way younger generations view traditions. Many of them have begun to consider traditional ceremonies as something ancient, irrelevant, and even a financial and time burden. As a result, interest in engaging in traditional activities is declining, and the cultural heritage that has been living in people's daily lives is slowly degrading in meaning and value.

This phenomenon is certainly very worrying, considering that traditional ceremonies are part of the collective identity that forms the identity of a community. When a tradition begins to be abandoned, an important part of the history and local wisdom that has been guiding the community in living life is also lost. UNESCO (2019) emphasizes that intangible cultural heritage, such as traditional ceremonies, is part of the collective intellectual property of communities that needs to be protected and developed. Cultural heritage is not just a symbol of the past, but an important resource in sustainable development, character strengthening, and preservation of the nation's cultural identity.

In this context, it is important to conduct in-depth research on the meaning and function of traditional ceremonies in Lombok. The goal is to explore the values contained in it, understand the role of traditional ceremonies in people's lives, and identify challenges and opportunities for their preservation. Various studies have shown that the preservation of local culture can strengthen character education, increase awareness of identity, and foster a sense of pride in ancestral heritage. Hanun Imtiyas et al. (2022) stated that the integration of local culture in learning in primary schools through participation in traditional ceremonies can instill the value of responsibility, solidarity, and respect for one's own culture. Meanwhile, Saputri et al.

(2024) revealed that community activities that promote local traditions have been proven to increase the participation of the younger generation in maintaining culture.

Even so, the preservation of indigenous culture still faces various obstacles. Among them are the lack of written and visual documentation of the process and meaning of traditional ceremonies, lack of policy support from local governments, and low active participation from the younger generation. Sari and Supriyadi (2023) revealed that the lack of strong synergy between schools, traditional leaders, and the wider community caused cultural preservation activities to run partially and not integrated. To overcome this problem, a collaborative approach is needed that involves all elements of society, be it educational institutions, cultural institutions, traditional leaders, the government, and the private sector.

Conservation strategies also need to be adaptive in order to remain relevant in the midst of the dynamics of the times. Prasetyo (2020) suggests that the form and medium of implementation of traditions can be adjusted to technological developments, without having to eliminate the substance of the values it contains. For example, the use of digital media to document and promote traditional ceremonies, the involvement of local influencers in popularly conveying cultural values, to the integration of traditional ceremonies in cultural festivals and regional tourism. These steps can help reach the younger generation with a closer and more engaging approach, while increasing appreciation of the rich local culture.

In Lombok, the involvement of local communities in cultural preservation is very crucial. Traditions such as *Begawe* or *Peresean* can be packaged into educational and recreational activities that are interesting for young people if inserted in cultural festivals, school programs, or social media campaigns. Local governments also have a strategic role in encouraging cultural preservation through regulations on the protection of intangible cultural heritage, budget allocation for cultural activities, and facilitation of activities that involve cross-generational preservation in preserving traditions.

Thus, traditional ceremonies in Lombok are not only a cultural symbol, but also a valuable social asset to strengthen the identity of the community. This tradition reflects local wisdom that is able to survive in the midst of various changes, as long as there is a conscious effort from all parties to take care of and develop their values. The preservation of traditional ceremonies is not a step backwards, but rather a progressive effort to build a society that is firmly rooted in its own culture, while remaining open to the development of the modern world. Therefore, the sustainability of traditional ceremonies needs to be maintained through a participatory, collaborative, and adaptive approach, so that this noble heritage is not only a memory of the past, but also a source of inspiration for future generations.

## METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the implementation and preservation of traditional ceremonies in Lombok. Data was collected through direct observation in several villages that are still actively carrying out traditional ceremonies, such as Sade Village, Lingsar Village, and Bayan Village. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with traditional leaders, religious leaders, and communities actively involved

in the tradition, in order to obtain in-depth information about the meaning, process, and challenges in its implementation.

The researcher also utilizes documentation studies by examining cultural archives and official documents of local governments related to local cultural preservation policies. The data analysis process is carried out using stages according to Miles and Huberman (2014), which include data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. Data reduction is carried out by selecting relevant information, data presentation is carried out in the form of a structured narrative, and conclusions are drawn based on patterns found from observation and interviews. To maintain the validity of the data, this study applies triangulation techniques, both in terms of information sources and data collection techniques, so that the research results are objective, credible, and can be scientifically accounted for.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Traditional ceremonies are an integral part of the intangible cultural heritage that represents the local wisdom of the community. In Lombok, traditional ceremonies are not only a reflection of the cultural identity of the Sasak people, but also play a role in maintaining social harmony, spirituality, and human attachment to nature and ancestors. Although the world is moving rapidly towards globalization and modernization, local traditions such as *Nyongkolan*, *Begawe*, and *Ngayu-ayu* remain important elements in the social structure of Lombok society.

The results of this study show that traditional ceremonies still have a central role in people's lives, even though they are facing great pressure due to changes in values and lifestyles. Traditions such as *Nyongkolan*, for example, are not just a festive bridal procession, but a symbol of respect for the bride's family, a tool to strengthen relationships between citizens, and a means of maintaining social friendship. This tradition contains a symbolic message that marriage is not only a personal event, but also a social event that involves a wider community. The same is true of *Begawe*, which is a traditional party that is usually held after harvest or wedding. *Begawe* is a form of gratitude to the Creator for the fruits and blessings of life, and is an important moment to revive the values of mutual cooperation, social solidarity, and equality. In *Begawe*, all residents, regardless of social status, play an active role in the planning and implementation of activities. This strengthens the sense of community and cultural ownership.

The *Ngayu-ayu* ceremony also shows the spiritual dimension of the Sasak people. This ritual is carried out as a form of praying for salvation to God and ancestors, especially in a disaster or disease situation that hits a region. In this tradition, people show a high respect for the forces of nature and invisible beings, which are believed to be part of the system of balance of life. These ecological and spiritual values illustrate how close the relationship of the Lombok people is with the surrounding nature.

Community participation in the implementation of various traditional ceremonies reflects a high collective awareness of the importance of preserving local culture. Not only parents, children and teenagers are also involved in the preparation process, starting from practicing traditional dances, making special decorations, to managing consumption. This activity became an informal learning space for the younger generation to get to know and love their ancestral

culture. As stated by Saputri et al. (2024), the sustainability of tradition is highly determined by the active involvement of the community as cultural actors, not just passive spectators.

The existence of traditional leaders and religious leaders in various traditional villages such as Bayan, Lingsar, and Sade also plays a strategic role. They function as guardians of local values, spiritual educators, as well as oral speakers of various ancestral teachings. In a community that still holds fast to customs, their existence is highly respected and used as a moral reference. However, the preservation of traditional ceremonies in Lombok is inseparable from various complex challenges. This research reveals that although community spirit is still high, there is a tendency to decrease interest among the younger generation in traditional culture. Adolescents and young people are more exposed to global popular culture that often conflicts with local values. The instantaneous and individualistic modern lifestyle makes local traditions such as traditional ceremonies look "old-fashioned" or "irrelevant".

These findings are in line with the research of Hanun Imtiyas et al. (2022) who stated that modernization often brings a shift in value orientation in traditional societies. If there is no effort to integrate local cultural values in formal education and public media, then the younger generation will be further alienated from their own cultural roots. Another challenge is the impact of social and economic changes such as urbanization, migration, and increasing family economic pressure. Not a few families in traditional villages have begun to find it difficult to carry out the complete traditional ceremonies due to financial reasons. Most end up only holding ceremonies in symbolic or brief form, even in some cases, traditional ceremonies are used as mere tourist attractions without considering their philosophical and spiritual meaning. Such a reduction in value has the potential to damage the essence of tradition.

One of the other critical challenges is the absence of systematic documentation of the rituals and meanings of traditional ceremonies. Most of the knowledge is still passed on orally, which is certainly vulnerable to extinction as the number of indigenous elders decreases. The prayers, mantras, and philosophies behind traditional symbols have not been widely written or recorded digitally. In fact, as emphasized by the OECD (2019), cultural documentation and digitalization is a vital strategy in maintaining the sustainability of intangible cultural heritage in the digital era. Therefore, the involvement of academics, research institutions, cultural communities, and higher education institutions is very important. Documentation efforts through ethnographic research, documentary videos, or local book publishing can be a concrete form of preservation. In addition, training programs for the younger generation in the form of traditional schools, cultural workshops, or community-based cultural festivals can be fun and meaningful educational spaces.

The preservation of traditional ceremonies must also be understood as part of a sustainable development strategy. Hidayati (2023) emphasized that the values of local wisdom such as mutual cooperation, respect for parents and ancestors, and ecological awareness are very relevant in shaping the character of the young generation who are resilient, inclusive, and with integrity. Therefore, cultural preservation should not only focus on physical forms or processions, but also need to instill a philosophical and historical understanding of each element of tradition to the wider community. In this case, the use of digital technology is one of the promising adaptive solutions. Social media, educational YouTube channels, and other digital platforms can be used as effective means of promotion and cultural education, especially for

millennials and Gen Z. Digital storytelling or cultural stories that are packaged in an interesting way can introduce the noble values of traditional ceremonies in a contextual way that is easily accepted by the younger generation.

Local governments also play a strategic role in cultural preservation. Within the framework of national policy, Law Number 5 of 2017 concerning the Promotion of Culture emphasizes the importance of protecting intangible cultural heritage. Local governments can implement this mandate by drafting regional regulations that support traditional preservation, providing cultural incentives or grants, establishing cultural arts training centers, and strengthening customary institutions as the main actors of preservation. Collaboration between the government, academics, the community, and local cultural actors is also very necessary. The community-based preservation model has proven to be more effective in maintaining the sustainability of tradition because it involves the community as the owner of culture, not just the object of preservation. Desy and Winangun (2024) emphasized that a collaborative and participatory approach will strengthen a sense of shared responsibility for local culture.

In the face of social dynamics and globalization currents, traditional ceremonies remain the anchor that maintains the stability of values in society. While the people of Lombok still maintain the values of local wisdom in the form of traditional ceremonies, they are actually maintaining the roots of their identity and moral foundations that have been formed over the centuries. Traditional ceremonies are not only a legacy of the past, but also future assets that are rich in value, full of meaning, and full of potential. In closing, the preservation of traditional ceremonies is not enough just to maintain the procession, but it needs to be done with full awareness of the noble values it contains. In the hands of the culturally conscious young generation, and through real support from all parties, this legacy will remain alive and meaningful, becoming a source of inspiration in building a cultured, characterful, and highly competitive society in the midst of the challenges of the times.

## CONCLUSION

Traditional ceremonies in Lombok are a form of local wisdom that reflects the richness of social, spiritual, and cultural values of the local community. Traditions such as *Nyongkolan* (bridal procession), *Begawe* (post-harvest celebration or celebration), and *Ngayu-ayu* (request for safety) not only function as traditional rituals, but also as a means of strengthening social relations, instilling the value of mutual cooperation, and maintaining respect for ancestors and nature. These values are an important foundation in shaping the collective identity of the Lombok people. However, in the midst of globalization and changes in the lifestyle of the younger generation, the existence of traditional ceremonies began to face serious challenges. The lack of documentation, modernization, and lack of interest of the younger generation are obstacles in conservation efforts. Therefore, active collaboration is needed between traditional leaders, communities, local governments, and educational institutions to maintain the sustainability of this cultural heritage. Efforts such as strengthening customary institutions, integrating culture in regional policies, and public awareness of the importance of traditional values are strategic steps. That way, traditional ceremonies as a representation of local cultural

identity are not only preserved, but also passed on to the next generation in a meaningful and contextual way.

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