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## **Intangible Cultural Heritage: Nusantara's Local Wisdom as A Source of Strengthening the Nation's Character**

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### **Abstract**

This research aims to analyze the intangible cultural heritage of the Nusantara's local knowledge values as a source of character building. The study was carried out utilizing qualitative methods and a content analysis approach. The study data was gathered from many relevant documents, and the content was thoroughly analyzed to identify the symbolic message. The study's findings indicate that

Nusantara's values for goodness and harmony have three important dimensions, including the relationship between humans and their God, humans and their environment, and humans and fellow humans. The wealth of local wisdom throughout the Nusantara acts as a unifying factor for its supporting community, encouraging people toward a peaceful and harmonious way of life.

**Keywords:** Local Wisdom, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Character

### **Introduction**

When we were kids, our parents often told us about the legends in their separate countries, for example, the tale of Sangkuriang for the people of West Java, Malin Kundang for the people of West Sumatra, et cetera. Furthermore, once at a time, the azure sky over Banda Aceh was filled with thousands of grouse flying in one direction. A student inquired of the elders there what this was. The elder added, quickly obeying their recommendations, taking a moment not long after the enormous tsunami hit the Acehese area in 2004. What can we learn from the many legends that exist in our homeland, with the rise of various natural catastrophes and a sign of increasingly complicated and opaque social relationships? Is this related to what is known as local knowledge, which is rapidly being abandoned by today's modern society? What exactly is meant by "local wisdom?"

Local wisdom is a cultural inheritance ingrained in every aspect of a community's culture. Culture, as an expression of human intelligence (Koentjaraningrat, 1998; Suparlan, 1984) <sup>[9, 16]</sup> in the face of natural challenges, takes numerous "distinctive" forms and subsequently becomes the identity of its owner (Alfian, 2014) <sup>[3]</sup>. Indonesia, with its ethnic diversity and a social environment that contains thousands of local knowledge values as cultural heritage, plays a vital role in enhancing national character and identity.

The Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemdikbud) defines intangible cultural heritage as the various outcomes of cultural practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills that are passed down from generation to generation continuously through preservation and re-creation, and are the result of culture, which comes in the form of intangible culture after going through the process of determining intangible culture (Diana & Putri, 2020; Purba *et al.*, 2020) <sup>[6, 12]</sup>. Intangible cultural heritage is intangible or abstract, such as concepts and technologies, and its nature might change and disappear over time, for example, language, music, dance, ceremonies, and various other structured behaviors. This study analyzes many forms of intangible cultural assets in the form of local wisdom values in each element of Indonesian cultural heritage that should be conserved.

### **Definition of Local Wisdom, its Functions and Forms**

As a form of intangible cultural heritage, local wisdom in culture in Indonesia contributes significantly to the preservation of life's harmony. Each local wisdom value encompasses a community's values, ethics, norms, regulations, and abilities in dealing with sustainability concerns (Suswandari, 2017; Wagiran, 2011) <sup>[18, 22]</sup>. Local wisdom is often used in decision-making (Adimihardja, 2008; Prayogi, 2020) <sup>[1, 11]</sup>, management, and several other social activities in the community's surroundings.

The basic characteristics of local wisdom are tied not only to original values but also to certain locality or territorial aspects, supported by original knowledge systems and those that have adapted to outside values.

Local wisdom builds its foundation on existing traditional teachings and rarely questions the political meaning embedded within them. Local wisdom is generally received sacredly through mystical events in a region. According to Adimihardja (2008)<sup>[1]</sup>, Indonesia possesses an incredible amount of Local Knowledge and Technology Systems (STPL), but decision-makers do not appear to recognize its benefits in enhancing people's prosperity. Numerous community development efforts are not successful, are not on goal, and need to grasp the ideals of the SPTL because they prioritize mechanical and linear Western-based models. As a result, there have been various conflicts of interest that have disrupted the level of human ideals advocated for in human rights.

Local wisdom can provide a unique response to local geographic-geopolitical, historical, and situational issues. According to Erica-Irine Daes (in Adimihardja, 2008)<sup>[1]</sup>, certain geographical settlements with language, social organization, economic systems, beliefs, and distinctive values can be referred to identify the significance of local knowledge systems and local communities. Local wisdom is an unwritten law that becomes a social reference and encompasses all elements of life.

Local wisdom are used as a method of conflict resolution (S.G.J.N. Senanayake, 2006; Tapung *et al.*, 2018)<sup>[14, 21]</sup>; hence they will serve the following purposes: 1) As a symbol of a community's identity, 2) As a unifying element among citizens, religions, and beliefs, and 3) Not coercive, but a cultural aspect that exists and survives in society as a binding force that is more striking and capable of survival, 4) Providing a color of togetherness for the whole community, 5) Adding mindsets and reciprocal relationships between individuals and groups by placing them on the common ground/culture they have, 6) As a driving force for the formation of togetherness, appreciation, and a collaborative mechanism to ward off many possibilities that produce and even harm communal solidarity, which is said to originate and expand on the common consciousness of an integrated community.

There are four primary factors that support the function of local wisdom in general. **First**, as various indigenous peoples' distinctive rituals and tactics for dealing with natural calamities. **Second**, as an incorporation into practices and policies that will stimulate community participation in overcoming issues. **Third**, by providing vital knowledge about the local context, we may help improve the implementation of community empowerment projects. **Fourth**, is an excellent example of community education activities aimed at overcoming problems.

## Method

This research is qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1997; Creswell, 2007)<sup>[4, 5]</sup> and the data acquired was in the form of verbal. The content analysis of various forms of documents (writing, photographs) relevant to the research subject was chosen as the qualitative approach in this study. The goal of content analysis is to comprehend texts as symbolic phenomena (Ahmad, 2018; Klaus Krippendorff & Wajdi, 1993)<sup>[2, 8]</sup>. Through content analysis, the researcher attempted to analyze a text objectively to get an overview of

the content as it is. Various sources of books, articles, research reports, and others are the main capital of this research.

## Result and Discussion

### Forms of Nusantara Local Wisdom

Local wisdom grows and develops as a result of the Indonesian people's cultural diversity. The explanation of these functions demonstrates how extensive the area of local wisdom is, ranging from very theological to very pragmatic and technical. Local wisdom occurs as an intangible cultural asset across the archipelago, as well as in various locations below (Sartini, 2004)<sup>[15]</sup>:

1. The inhabitants of Papua believe that the *te aro neweak lako*, or *the nature, is me*. This is a local wisdom based on the existence of Mount Erstberg and Grasberg, which are thought to be *kepala mama* (mother's heads). Land is seen as *kepala mama*, or as an inseparable component of human life. Therefore, the utilization of natural resources is carried out carefully.
2. In Bengkulu, the Serawai ethnic group believes in *celako kumali*, or taboo principles in farming and the tradition of *tanam tanjak* for environmental sustainability.
3. East Kalimantan's Dayak Kenyah ethnic group has a heritage of *tana' ulen*, or the idea of land management that prioritizes environmental sustainability. For the Dayak Kenyah Ethnic, the forest is a source of income that meets all of their needs. They appreciate one another and work together to cultivate the land.
4. The West Kalimantan Undau Mau Ethnic creates environmental awareness in settlement spatial planning patterns by identifying and utilizing trees. The cultivation is done in rotation with a certain *hera* period, and they respect taboos so that technology is limited to simple and environmentally friendly agricultural practices.
5. The Balinese have a local wisdom called *Subak* for managing rice crop waters that has remained to the present day. To be able to harvest rice collectively, this local wisdom includes good qualities for cooperation, mutual care, sharing, and not winning alone.
6. The Kasepuhan Ciptagelar indigenous people of Sukabumi Regency (Yayan Bagus Prabowo, 2021)<sup>[23]</sup> have a tradition of preserving nature (forest) by dividing the forest/*leuweung* area into three zones (entrusted, covered, and cultivated) in terms of forest utilization and management based on the customary law system, with the goal of maintaining forest sustainability. The Kasepuhan Ciptagelar indigenous people think that forests are the most significant factor in human survival.
7. The Lio ethnic community in East Nusa Tenggara's Sikka district has a local wisdom of *Pire* a calm moment or *pamali* (taboo), to touch, damage, or exploit nature. The *Pire* season is a time for nature to be cleansed of human influences (Suswandari & Astuti, 2020; Suswandari, 2020)<sup>[19, 20]</sup>.

Based on the examples above, it can be concluded that:

1. Almost every ethnic group in Indonesia uses norms from their respective local cultures when interacting with fellow ethnic groups or other tribes in socio-religious life, both internally (between adherents of the

- same religion) and externally (between adherents of different religions).
2. Some of each ethnic's local wisdom is still viable, while others are no longer functional due to the passage of time, a shift in community values, government involvement, or rejection by some members of the community.
  3. Local wisdom's functionality cannot be separated from the process of socialization carried out by the older generation to the younger generation.
  4. Local wisdom is functional in its original cultural context, but it becomes non-functional when removed from it. On the other hand, there are norms that stem from the local wisdom of specific ethnic, but which remain functioning wherever they are and even serve as a reference for other tribes.
  5. There is a chance that new local knowledge will emerge as an invention (institutional development) of old local wisdom that is no longer functional, even if the new local wisdom is not the same as the initial form of the old local wisdom.

### Various Form of Utilizing Local Wisdom in Strengthening Character

1. Local Wisdom and Expression of belief in God Almighty Religious freedom is one of the fundamental rights in Indonesia. According to existing local wisdom, Indonesia has been a religious nation since ancient times. This can be seen in specific ritual practices in certain communities, the objective of which is to ask God Almighty for protection, blessings, and overflowing thankfulness for the previous year's harvest, as well as pleas for blessings and protection in the next year. The *Seren Taun* celebration for the residents of Cigugur Village, Kuningan Regency, West Java Province, is one example. There are still many expressions of gratitude related to the right to belief that can be found in Indonesia.

#### 2. Justice, Integrity, and Cooperation

We cannot exist alone as social beings. When confronted with other individuals' existence, our existence as humans will take on new meaning. As a result, local wisdom develops inside the community about preserving cooperative relationships while maintaining a strong sense of justice and integrity, among other things. The Maluku people's *Pela Gandong* custom (Jozef Hehanussa, 2009) [7] is utilized to develop a dialogue between believers of different religions to resolve the seeds of conflict in general. *Pela* is an assertion of all human awareness, including shared awareness. In the meantime, *Gandong* denotes the friendliness and brotherhood of two or more communities. *Gandong* enhances bonds created as a result of genealogical awareness. In Tambakboyo Village, Ambarawa, Central Java, for example, despite a high degree of heterogeneity of religious believers and a dispersed population pattern (no grouping based on religion or family), there are even Christians who "*mangku langgar*" (the house porch becomes one with the musholla porch), but the community can still live in harmony. Furthermore, they have a local culture that stresses harmony (*sayuk*), which almost invariably underpins collective action or what is known as *sayuk sayuk rukun, tolobis kuntul* line in Tambakboyo society, in particular, and in Java in general. Furthermore, the local Tambakboyo village culture known as its faith of

*agemaning aji* and the motto "*the important thing is to live as sayuk*" is still functional and serves as a reference for the community to interact, allowing people with a high level of religious heterogeneity to live in harmony and peace (Suswaandari, 2014) [17].

#### 3. The Value of Local Wisdom in Conflict Resolution

Indonesia, as a multi-ethnic country, is extremely vulnerable to vertical and horizontal conflicts. Conflict in our life, in whatever shape it takes, is a violation of human rights values. However, there is no quick fix for resolving this conflict because, aside from the social conditions in our country, there are always complicated interactions between diverse factors. Conflict resolution patterns in one place may not be applicable in another. As a result, in order to determine the steps to resolve various conflict events, it is necessary to observe and analyze them, not only using universal conflict theories, but also using national or local paradigms, so that objectivity remains within the framework of our nation's life conditions, values, and order.

The approach of conflict resolution is better appropriate when the solution is tailored to area conditions and local culture. Ideally, the settlement is carried out entirely on the initiative of the grassroots community, who still adhere to local norms (local wisdom) and recognize the importance of local culture in preserving and ensuring community integrity. Among the local wisdoms that have been around for a long time and are still maintained today in efforts to resolve conflicts include (Mulyo, 2015; Qodariah & Armiyati, 2015) [10, 13]: *dalihan natolu* (Tapanuli), *rumah betang* (Central Kalimantan), *menyama braya* (Bali), *saling Jot dan saling pelarangan* (NTB), *siro yo ingsun, ingsun yo siro* (East Java), *alon-alon asal kelakon* (Central Java/DI Yogyakarta), and *basusun sirih* (Malay/Sumatra). Traditions and local wisdom still practiced in society can foster a desire to live in harmony and peace. This is due to the fact that local traditional wisdom emphasizes peace with others, the environment, and God. Because it has been so ingrained in society, resolving disagreements through local customs or knowledge is particularly appropriate. Because local wisdom is deeply embedded and usually not only profane but also sacred in nature, the community can more rapidly and easily accept its adoption. With this local wisdom, dispute resolution will be realized swiftly and accepted by all parties, resulting in no hidden societal tensions.

It should be noted that to resolve conflicts, the intricacy and intricacies of the problem must be thoroughly comprehended. Everyone must understand that each conflict is unique and cannot be solved by just applying a theory. Everyone must remember that, in addition to existing conflict resolution theories, society has its own problem-solving culture. However, dispute resolution frequently overlooks local norms and culture. As a result, it is critical to discover our cultural wealth.

### Conclusion

Local wisdom is also known as local knowledge or local intelligence. Local wisdom is sometimes referred to as the Local Knowledge and Technology System (SPTL) or indigenous knowledge, which can be included in intangible cultural assets and must be protected as character building. Local wisdom is frequently defined as a community's attitude, point of view, and ability to manage human relations with their gods, humans with their environment,

and other humans. Local wisdom can be viewed as the foundation for national identity building. Local wisdom is frequently utilized as a basis for local decision making, as it applies to natural resource management and various other social activities in the community's living environment. The functions of local knowledge are as follows: First, indigenous peoples have unique habits and ways of dealing with natural calamities. Second, as incorporation into practices and policies that will stimulate community participation in overcoming issues. Third, by giving vital knowledge about the local context, we may help improve the implementation of community empowerment projects. Fourth is an excellent example of community education activities aimed at overcoming issues. Learning from local wisdom will give people faith in the values of a harmonious and mutually respectful life. Regarding human rights values, the diversity of Indonesian local wisdom in each ethnic group reflects the implementation of very high human rights values. Horizontal disputes, uncontrolled environmental use, and acts of violence against others can be avoided if we constantly reflect on and learn from the principles of local wisdom in our society.

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