



Volume 8 (2) (2025): 263-269

# The Indonesian Journal of Social Studies

Available at <https://journal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/jpips/index>

## LOCAL WISDOM VALUES OF JAKA TARUB AND BIDADARI SITES IN EAST JAVA ON ENVIRONMENTAL ECOLOGY SUSTAINABILITY

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### Abstract

The legend of Jaka Tarub, which has been known as popular folklore, actually has a deep ecological content from respect for water sources and forests to ethics of interacting with nature. The story of Jaka Tarub and Bidadari Nawangwulan occupies an important position as an oral tradition that conveys moral, social, and ecological values relevant to modern life. This study aims to analyze the ecological meanings embedded in the Jaka Tarub narrative and examine its relevance as a source of environmental learning in social studies education. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach using literature review, field observations, and in-depth interviews with communities around sites associated with the Jaka Tarub legend. Data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that the story reflects strong environmental ethics, including the sacralization of water sources, forest conservation, food security, and harmonious relationships between humans and nature. These values represent traditional ecological knowledge that supports environmental sustainability and socio-cultural resilience. The study concludes that integrating local wisdom from the Jaka Tarub legend into social studies learning can strengthen environmental awareness, cultural identity, and sustainable attitudes in responding to contemporary ecological challenges

**Keywords:** local wisdom, environmental ecology, Jaka Tarub, sustainability

**How to Cite:** Alrianingrum, S. (2025). LOCAL WISDOM VALUES OF JAKA TARUB AND BIDADARI SITES IN EAST JAVA ON ENVIRONMENTAL ECOLOGY SUSTAINABILITY. *The Indonesian Journal of Social Studies*, 8 (2): 279-285.

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e-ISSN 2615-5966 (Online)

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In the midst of the very rapid pace of development of the times, especially entering the era of Society 5.0, where global communication is developing rapidly through technological advances, the values of local wisdom face serious challenges. Globalization brings the impact of cultural erosion which is feared to cause traditional values that have been maintained for generations to gradually become extinct. One of the most effective efforts is through the use of environmental ecology, local culture, and socio-cultural traditions in the learning process in schools. The story of Jaka Tarub and Bidadari Nawangwulan occupies a position as one of the most popular stories. These stories are an integral part of oral traditions that not only serve as entertainment, but also retain moral, social, and ecological messages that remain relevant to modern life.

The 21st century is marked by the paradox of the progress of human civilization; On the one hand, technology is developing rapidly, but on the other hand, there is an alarming degradation of environmental quality and social cohesion. Indonesia, as a country blessed with a wealth of biodiversity, now faces a real ecological threat. Data from Forest Watch Indonesia (FWI) notes that in the period 2013-2017 alone, Indonesia lost 5.7 million hectares of natural forests, or equivalent to the area of the island of Bali (FWI, 2017: 1). More specifically on the island of Java, where folklore or the legend of Jaka Tarub developed, the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) reported that the clean water crisis and drought are an increasing annual threat, due to the destruction of water catchment areas and land conversion.

Empirically, the story of Jaka Tarub contains a strong conservation "genetic code". The existence of angels bathing in sendang (springs) is not just an erotic fantasy, but a sacralization of water resources. In the tradition of the Javanese agrarian society, the spring which is considered a "place of angel baths" will be kept pure, forbidden to be soiled, and preserved the surrounding vegetation. This is in line with the principle of Deep Ecology which views nature as having intrinsic value (Arne Naess, 1989). In addition, the myth of "planting rice with a grain of rice" (one grain of rice) represents high food efficiency and social resilience, an antithesis of the consumptive behavior of modern society. Ironically, these noble values are beginning to become foreign to the young generation who are poor in the meaning of cultural values (Sriyani, 2021: 171). This encourages the concept of social studies learning to have ecological intelligence and cultural resilience.

In social studies learning, folklore is not just a bedtime fairy tale. Folklore, legends and collective memory of the community in the form of oral traditions are also cultural archives that store ancestral values about how humans should interact with nature and others. The story of Jaka Tarub offers a unique perspective on the relationship between humans and nature that is full of sacred meaning.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Local Wisdom**

The local wisdom of the story of Jaka Tarub and the 7 angels is designed to provide a deep understanding of the relationship between environmental ecology and local wisdom in an effort to preserve the environment. The legendary story of Jaka Tarub with the seven angels is a form of learning process that integrates ecological values embedded in folklore with the concept of environmental sustainability and socio-cultural resilience. With the ethnopedagogy and ecopedagogy approaches, students are invited to understand that nature conservation is not only an environmental responsibility, but also part of cultural heritage that needs to be preserved for future generations (Wijaya, 2021: 58).

The value of sacredness and the inheritance of sustainability awareness in nature conservation, which in the past was sacred, can now be analyzed logically in terms of its need to maintain the ecological balance of the environment itself. Ecological meanings such as the concepts of water conservation, food security, consumption discipline and environmental sustainability need to be taught again to understand the local wisdom of the environment if the balance is maintained.

### **Environmental Ecology**

Understanding environmental ecology is not only cognitive, but also encourages changes in attitudes and behaviors that are more concerned about the environment. The story of Jaka Tarub in social studies learning bridges the gap between the past and the present. This teaches that local wisdom in preserving environmental ecology is highly dependent on Ecological Resilience itself. If nature is damaged (dry sendang and empty barns), then the social structure of the community will be disturbed (Ramli Utina, 2009: 12).

Environmental ecology refers to the study of the interaction between organisms and their environment, which in the context of Social Sciences (IPS) is extended to the reciprocal relationship between humans, cultural systems, and ecosystems. The importance of ecological studies in this perspective is to understand how ecological applications in landscapes affect the populations, communities, and ecosystems in which humans are located. Environmental impact analysis (EIA) is one of the important concepts that shows recognition of the complex relationship between human activities and the sustainability of nature.

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. Qualitative research allows researchers to obtain comprehensive data on environmental ecological conservation with the site of the story of Jaka Tarub and 7 angels in the reality of local wisdom through observation, interviews, and documentation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This research was conducted in several waterfall locations that were identified as potentially having the legend of the story of Jaka Tarub with 7 angels. Data collection in this study uses data triangulation to ensure data validity with three techniques: observation, interviews, and supporting literature review (Sugiyono, 2021). This selection aims to obtain rich and contextual data based on local wisdom. Data was collected using three main techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with local informants to explore their perspectives on the integration of local wisdom values in Social Science learning. These three techniques are applied triangulated to ensure that the data collected are valid and complementary (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The data were analyzed interactively using the proposed model, which consisted of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification. Data reduction involves selecting and focusing on important information obtained from interviews and observations. The presentation of data is presented in a descriptive narrative that describes a museum-based learning pattern. Conclusions are then drawn through the interpretation of the meaning of local wisdom values based on the ecological context of the environment.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Ecological Values in the Story of Jaka Tarub**

This ecological crisis does not stand alone, but is rooted in a crisis of perspective. The dominance of the anthropocentric paradigm that places humans as the center of the universe and nature

solely as an object of exploitation has shifted the environmental ethics inherited from our ancestors. The relevance of re-excavating local wisdom is not just a nostalgia for the past, but an adaptive knowledge system that has been proven to be able to maintain the balance of the ecosystem for centuries. One of the narratives of local wisdom that is full of meaning but is often reduced to just a bedtime fairy tale is the story of Jaka Tarub.

The story of Jaka Tarub and Nawang Wulan is one of the Javanese legends that is rich in ecological values and local wisdom. Implicitly, the story of Jaka Tarub and the 7 Angels teaches strong principles of environmental ecology such as:

1. Sacralization of Water Sources (Sendang)

The meeting place of Jaka Tarub and the angels was in a sendang (spring) in the middle of the forest. In an ecological perspective, it shows that water sources are sacred, pure, and vital places. Water sources must be maintained beautifully, must not be polluted, and the surrounding forests (water catchment areas) must be protected so that water continues to flow.

2. Forests as Living Space

The story or legend of Jaka Tarub is described as a character who lives close to nature/forest. He hunts and uses forest products. Environmental Message: The use of natural resources is done in moderation, not large-scale exploitation.

3. The Myth of the Rice

One of the crucial parts of the story is when Nawang Wulan loses his magic because Jaka Tarub violates the taboo (opening the lid of the rice cooker). As a result, Nawang Wulan had to pound rice like an ordinary human, and the supply of rice in the barn quickly ran out. This teaches about Food Security. Rice (rice) is a finite resource. If humans are not disciplined ("breaking taboos") or are extravagant, then natural resources will be quickly depleted.

4. Local Wisdom and Socio-Cultural Resilience

Stories or folklore or legends of the Jaka Tarub story from various places and various versions provide good local cultural wisdom. Compliance with Values and Norms (Taboo): Jaka Tarub's act of opening the rice cooker symbolizes a violation of the mandate or promise.

5. Adaptation and Resilience

The story of Jaka Tarub's sustainability after being abandoned by Dewi Nawang Wulan returns to the imagination that requires her to take care of her son (Nawang Sih) alone. This teaches resilience in the face of changes in social or family structures.

The story of Jaka Tarub can be interpreted as a mechanism for traditional society in regulating access to critical resources. Sendang or spring, which is the main setting for the meeting of Jaka Tarub and Nawangwulan, is a vital water resource and must be maintained. The incident of shawl theft (violation of social ethics and boundaries of belief) can be seen as a violation of environmental ethics that causes imbalance, the collapse of the social order (Jaka Tarub's family) is closely related to the destruction of ethics towards nature and resources.

In the context of Jaka Tarub, the angel of Nawang Wulan with his sacred power represents a vital ecosystem service. Its ability to turn a single grain of rice into a pot full of rice symbolizes productivity and abundance of agricultural products. This shows a deep understanding of the service supply of agricultural ecosystems that depend on a harmonious balance between humans and nature.

Modern environmental ecology recognizes that biodiversity has an intrinsic value that is independent of human utility. In the ecocentric paradigm, all living organisms and ecosystems

have the right to live and thrive. Biodiversity is not only important for the functioning of ecosystems but also for maintaining the balance of nature.

#### 6. Cultural Landscape and Environmental Heritage

Cultural landscapes are the result of dynamic interactions between humans and their environment over a long period of time. This landscape reflects the cultural values, identity, and heritage of the people who inhabit and manage it. From an ecological perspective, a well-maintained cultural landscape has a high value for biodiversity conservation and the provision of cultural ecosystem services.

Cultural heritage values and cultural identity are two of the six categories of cultural ecosystem services recognized by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. Other categories include spiritual services (spiritual, religious, or other forms of spiritual inspiration derived from ecosystems), inspiration (the use of natural motifs or artifacts in art, design, and fashion), recreation, and aesthetic value.

In the story of Jaka Tarub, interacting with sendang (spring) is not just a geographical place, but a living entity that must be respected and maintained. The presence of angels in the sendang symbolizes the purity and spirituality of nature in the cosmology of people's thinking in ancient times. This situation provides an overview of the creation of the story of Jaka Tarub which is associated with ecological relevance in the environment such as:

- a. Springs are important ecosystems that support life
- b. Respect for nature creates awareness to take care of it
- c. spiritual perspective encourages responsibility for the environment
- d. The students are taught to understand that water resources are not just an economic necessity, but a heritage that needs to be preserved
- e. Ecological awareness is developed through appreciation of the spiritual value of nature
- f. Water is an increasingly scarce vital resource, understanding water conservation requires an understanding of the hydrological cycle and how spring water conservation ensures the long-term availability of clean water

The story of Jaka Tarub and Dewi Nawang Wulan as a legend or Javanese folklore is recorded in many versions both in Java and outside Java with various names of characters and has almost the same storyline. Although it is literally a fantasy story, Jaka Tarub contains many ecological values that are relevant to modern life so that it needs to be retaught in the form of social studies learning in depth or meaningfully.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The narrative of Jaka Tarub's story builds socio-cultural and environmental conflicts between humans and the universe in the preparation of this teaching material to integrate this story into social studies learning so that the teaching materials produced can (1) build environmental awareness, (2) develop an attitude of caring for others, and (3) strengthen national identity by fostering pride in local culture, especially the folklore or legend of the East Java version of Jaka Tarub.

Jaka Tarub's local wisdom teaches us "Protecting nature is preserving life; Violating it means being ready to work hard to repair the damage." The initial perception that in the past "forests and springs were sacred" (guarded for fear of quality/pamali), but nowadays people think that "forests are used to meet human needs so it needs to be exploited, and springs begin to be polluted with waste due to human behavior not maintaining their environment as local wisdom as in the past.

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