

# THE MESURYAK TRADITION AS A MEDIUM FOR STRENGTHENING CHARACTER EDUCATION AND CULTURAL LITERACY BASED ON BALINESE LOCAL WISDOM

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## Abstract

*Tradition Mesuryak or Megarangan is one of the Balinese intangible cultural heritages that still survives today, particularly in Tabanan Regency. This tradition is held every year after the Kuningan holiday celebrations as an expression of gratitude and joy for the community in sending off the spirits of their ancestors who return to the afterlife. This study aims to examine the values of character education and cultural literacy contained in the implementation of this tradition. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with an ethnopedagogical approach, through observation, interviews, and documentation studies of the community of traditional practitioners in Bongan Village, Tabanan Regency. The results of the study indicate that the tradition Mesuryak contains a number of important character values such as religiosity, mutual cooperation, gratitude, social solidarity, and a love of local culture. Furthermore, this traditional practice also reflects a living form of cultural literacy, where the community understands, internalizes, and passes on cultural values through collective and symbolic actions. Mesuryak not only as a medium for cultural preservation, but also as a means of character learning for the younger generation. Thus, the preservation of local traditions such as Mesuryak can be used as a model for strengthening character education based on local wisdom as well as developing cultural literacy in schools and communities.*

Keywords: *Mesuryak, character education, cultural literacy, local wisdom, ethnopedagogy*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education serves not only to transfer knowledge but also to shape character and national identity. In the context of national education, strengthening character education is a primary focus, as stipulated in Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2017 concerning the Strengthening of Character Education (PPK). Character education is expected to foster noble values such as religiosity, nationalism, independence, mutual cooperation, and integrity in students (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017). One effective strategy for instilling these values is through a local culture-based approach, known as ethnopedagogy (Mulyana, 2013).

According to Suyitno (2012), ethnopedagogy is a form of education that utilizes local wisdom as a source of values, knowledge, and ethics in learning. This approach positions culture as a contextual, relevant, and meaningful learning tool for the community. In the Balinese context, religious traditions and rituals serve as sources of moral and social values that can be developed in character education.

One of the local traditions that is rich in educational value is the tradition Mesuryak or Megarangan, which developed in Tabanan Regency, Bali. This tradition is carried out on the last day of the Kuningan celebration, as a form of community gratitude to the ancestral spirits who return to the afterlife after receiving offerings during the Galungan and Kuningan celebrations (Suwena, 2018). Mesuryak "To shout with joy" in Balinese means "to cheer with joy." During the ceremony, people gather in front of their homes and throw coins into the air while cheering. This activity is not simply a celebration, but also has symbolic meaning, honoring and releasing ancestral spirits with joy (Pitana, 2019).

Apart from being a cultural heritage, tradition Mesuryak was also designated as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Indonesia (Intangible Cultural Heritage) by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2018, emphasizing the importance of preserving local cultural

values. According to Koentjaraningrat (2009), every local tradition reflects a system of values passed down through generations and serves to maintain social and spiritual balance in society. These values can be interpreted as a source of authentic and contextual character learning.

On the other hand, cultural literacy is a crucial aspect of 21st-century education. Cultural literacy encompasses not only the ability to understand cultural heritage but also the ability to internalize and practice these cultural values in everyday life (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (2019), cultural literacy serves to shape a young generation with identity, character, and national insight. Through traditions such as Mesuryak, society not only preserves culture, but also transmits moral, ethical and spiritual values to the younger generation in a natural and participatory manner.

Based on this background, this study aims to examine the values of character education and cultural literacy contained in the Mesuryak tradition in Tabanan Regency. This study is expected to contribute to the development of a contextual and sustainable character education model based on local wisdom, while also strengthening public awareness of the importance of preserving traditional culture.

This research uses descriptive qualitative approach with perspective ethnopedagogy, which views cultural traditions as a source of educational values and practices in society (Suyitno, 2012). This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to deeply understand the meaning, values, and social practices contained in traditions. Mesuryak as a medium for learning character and cultural literacy.

The research was conducted in Bongan Village, Tabanan District, Tabanan Regency, Bali, which is known as one of the main areas preserving traditions Mesuryak. The research subjects include traditional figures, religious leaders (stakeholders), teachers, students, and community members who carry out traditions. The informants were selected randomly purposive sampling taking into account that they understand the implementation of traditions and the cultural values contained therein.

The research data consists of: Data primer, namely the results of in-depth interviews with community actors in traditions, traditional figures, and teachers. Data seconds, in the form of documents, historical records, related literature Mesuryak, and references on character education and cultural literacy.

Data Collection Techniques : Data collection techniques are carried out in three main ways, namely: Participatory Observation– Researchers are directly involved in observing the process of implementing traditions Mesuryak to understand the symbols, activities, and values contained therein. In-depth interview– Conducted with traditional figures, communities, and teachers to obtain data regarding the meaning, values, and relevance of traditions to character education and cultural literacy. Documentation Study– Includes searching for archives, photos, videos, and cultural documents related to the implementation Mesuryak in Tabanan Regency.

Data Analysis Techniques: Data analysis was carried out interactive and sustainable follow the model Miles and Huberman (1994) which includes three stages, namely: Data reduction, by selecting, simplifying, and grouping data based on the themes of character values and cultural literacy. Data presentation, through narrative descriptions of the symbolic meanings and educational values in the tradition Mesuryak. Conclusion drawing and verification, to find patterns, meanings, and relevance of traditional values to the formation of character and cultural literacy of the younger generation.

## **2. DISCUSSION**

### **1. Character Education Values in Tradition Mesuryak**

The results of the study show that the tradition Mesuryak contains a number of character values that align with the goals of national education. These values are reflected not only in the ritual procession, but also in the symbolic meaning and social behavior of the community during the tradition.

#### **a. Religious Values**

Implementation MesuryakIt begins with communal prayers and offerings to ancestors as a form of gratitude for the safety and blessings of life. This demonstrates spiritual awareness and respect for supernatural powers. These religious values align with the main character of strengthening national character education, namely the formation of individuals who believe in and fear God Almighty (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017).

#### b. The Values of Mutual Cooperation and Social Solidarity

Tradition MesuryakIt was carried out collectively by all villagers. Preparation and implementation were carried out through strong cooperation among residents, reflecting a spirit of mutual cooperation and social solidarity. People of all ages participated, indicating cross-generational social interaction that strengthened social bonds. This aligns with the perspective of Koentjaraningrat (2009) that communal traditions function to strengthen social cohesion in traditional societies.

#### c. The Value of Gratitude and Shared Happiness

Cheers and coin tosses in tradition MesuryakIt symbolizes happiness and gratitude for the gift of life. Children fighting over money symbolize equally distributed fortune and blessings. This value can be linked to the characteristics of optimism and social happiness, which are essential to a community's psychological well-being (Suyatno, 2019).

#### d. Values of Love for Local Culture

Involvement of the younger generation in implementation MesuryakThis demonstrates efforts to pass on local cultural values. Through direct participation, students and adolescents learn to appreciate, understand, and preserve ancestral traditions. This love of local culture is part of national identity and a crucial component of local wisdom-based character education (Mulyana, 2013).

### 2. Cultural Literacy in Tradition Mesuryak

Besides character values, Mesuryak also become a place for practice cultural literacy who live in society. Cultural literacy in this context includes the ability to understand, interpret, and communicate cultural values contained in traditions (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Contextual Understanding of Tradition/ People understand that MesuryakIt's not just a ritual for entertainment, but a religious and social expression with profound symbolic meaning. This process of interpreting meaning is a form of high-level cultural literacy, where individuals can connect cultural symbols with moral and spiritual values.

#### a. Active Participation in Cultural Preservation

The active participation of the community, especially the younger generation, demonstrates the ongoing process of cultural transmission. Through direct involvement, they learn to think critically about traditions and play a role in preserving them. This aligns with the concept of cultural literacy according to Ministry of Education and Culture (2019), namely the ability to understand and internalize cultural values as part of one's and one's national identity.

#### b. Communication and Representation of Cultural Values

Tradition MesuryakIt also serves as a medium for cultural communication. Cheers, songs, and interactions between residents reflect a spirit of togetherness and collective expression. This form of nonverbal communication contains moral and social educational values that can be integrated into school learning.

### 3. Tradition Mesuryakas a Media for Character and Literacy Learning

a. The results of the study show that the tradition Mesuryakhas great potential to be used character learning media and cultural literacy based on local wisdom Through observation, reflection, and discussion of the values contained in traditions, students can develop a critical understanding and empathy for their own culture.

b. Approach ethnopedagogy This allows teachers to integrate local values into the curriculum, for example through Indonesian language instruction, arts and culture, or Pancasila education. Thus, character education is not merely theoretical but contextual, tailored to the students' social and cultural environments.

c. This is in line with the view Tilaar (2004) that culture-based education is a strategic effort to build Indonesian people with character, culture, and a sense of identity. Mesuryak becomes a concrete example of how local culture can be a living and meaningful source of learning.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

Tradition Mesuryak in Tabanan Regency, it is an intangible cultural heritage with noble values relevant to strengthening character education and developing cultural literacy. Research shows that this tradition embodies various character values, such as religiosity, gratitude, mutual cooperation, social solidarity, and love of local culture. These values are reflected through symbols, rituals, and the collective participation of the community, making this tradition not only a cultural event but also a means of moral and social learning.

Besides that, Mesuryak also reflects the practice of cultural literacy. Active participation. People, including the younger generation, not only understand the meaning of tradition but also internalize and represent it in their daily lives. This process fosters awareness of cultural identity, a sense of belonging to ancestral heritage, and the ability to think critically about traditional values.

Thus, Mesuryak can be used as character learning media and cultural literacy based on local wisdom. The integration of traditional values in both formal and non-formal educational contexts has the potential to strengthen national identity and create a generation with character, culture, and high social and spiritual sensitivity.

### **4. SUGGESTION**

For Educational Institutions

Schools and colleges are expected to integrate local values such as traditions. Mesuryak in learning activities through an ethnopedagogical approach. Culture-based project activities can be used as a means of strengthening character education and cultural literacy for students.

For the Government and the Department of Culture

Local governments need to continue to support the preservation of traditions Mesuryak through cultural education programs and community activities, including documentation, cultural festivals, and socialization of traditional values to the younger generation.

For the Community and the Young Generation

The community is expected to continue to preserve traditions Mesuryak by maintaining the purity of its spiritual and social values. The younger generation should be actively involved in cultural activities to understand and pass on their ancestral heritage creatively and critically.

For Further Researchers

Further research can be conducted with a multidisciplinary approach, such as semiotic analysis, multicultural education, or cultural communication, to broaden understanding of the social and educational functions of tradition. Mesuryak in Balinese society.

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