

LOCAL ECOLOGICAL RITUALS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: CULTIVATING ECOLOGICAL ETHOS AND ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

The increasing complexity of the global environmental crisis necessitates more contextual, culturally grounded, and transformative approaches to environmental education. Conventional models of environmental education often rely on technocratic and universalized frameworks that insufficiently engage with local cultural values and indigenous ecological knowledge systems. This study examines the potential of local ecological rituals in Indonesia, including Nyepi in Bali, Selamatan Laut in the northern coastal region of Java, and Syukuran Panen in agrarian communities, as culturally embedded pedagogical instruments for cultivating ecological ethos and strengthening environmental rights. Employing a qualitative conceptual approach, this research integrates socio-legal analysis, cultural studies, ecopedagogy, legal pluralism, and environmental justice theory to examine the intersection between indigenous ecological rituals, environmental education, and the right to a healthy environment. The study primarily relies on literature review, content analysis, and comparative conceptual mapping, supplemented by limited field observations conducted in coastal communities in Brebes, Northern Java, in 2024. The findings demonstrate that local ecological rituals embody conservation ethics, collective environmental responsibility, reciprocity between humans and nature, and socio-cultural mechanisms for transmitting ecological values across generations. Furthermore, the study argues that integrating ritual-based ecological knowledge into environmental education can strengthen environmental legal consciousness, support culturally responsive sustainability education, and contribute to the recognition of customary ecological practices within Indonesia's pluralistic environmental governance framework. This study concludes that interdisciplinary collaboration among the fields of law, education, culture, and environmental governance is essential for developing inclusive and culturally rooted environmental policies capable of advancing ecological sustainability and environmental justice.

Keywords: *Ecological ethos, Environmental Education, Environmental Rights, Local Wisdom, Traditional Rituals.*

INTRODUCTION

The environmental crisis has become a pressing global challenge requiring serious attention from all elements of the international community (Chasek and Downie, 2020). Ecosystem degradation, climate change, biodiversity loss, and various forms of pollution threaten planetary sustainability and human well-being (Adla et al., 2022). These impacts affect not only the present generation but also future generations (Saijo, 2020). Therefore, mitigation and adaptation efforts related to environmental change are essential to ensure a sustainable future.

Indonesia, an archipelagic country with rich biodiversity and high vulnerability to climate change, faces significant environmental challenges (Kurniawan et al., 2024). According to the 2024 World Risk Index published by the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict (IFHV)-Ruhr University Bochum, Indonesia ranks second globally in natural disaster risk, with an index score of 41.13 (Alfathi, 2025). Indonesia is classified “very high” risk category, surpassed only by the Philippines, which scored 46.91. The index is based on exposure and vulnerability to various natural hazards, highlighting the

Indonesian archipelago's high susceptibility to disasters (Alfathi, 2025).

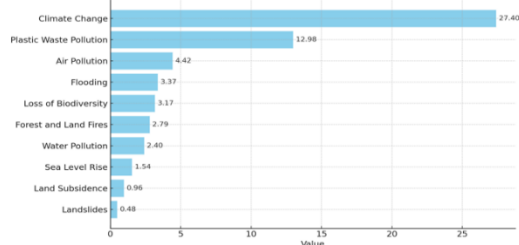
Table 1: World Risk Index by Country

Rank	Country	World Risk Index Value	Risk Category
1	Philippines	46.91	Very High
2	Indonesia	41.13	Very High
3	India	40.96	Very High
4	Colombia	37.81	High
5	Mexico	35.93	High
6	Myanmar	35.85	High
7	Mozambique	34.35	High
8	Russia	29.04	High
9	Bangladesh	27.83	High
10	Pakistan	27.17	High

Source: compiled by the authors from Alfathi (2025).

The data presented in Table 1 strongly underscores the urgency of addressing environmental issues in Indonesia. The country's high level of natural disaster risk directly threatens both public well-being and environmental sustainability. Furthermore, a 2023 survey conducted by Madani on environmental issues of greatest concern to Indonesian youth revealed that most respondents (27.4%) were highly concerned about climate change and global warming (Ahdiat, 2023). Other major concerns included plastic waste pollution, air pollution, floods, and biodiversity loss, as shown in Figure 1 (Ahdiat, 2023). These findings indicate a high level of environmental awareness among Indonesia's younger generation, who increasingly demand concrete action from the government to address these pressing environmental challenges.

Figure 1. Environmental Concerns Most Relevant to Youth: Findings from the Madani Survey



Source: Ahdiat, (2023)

The concerns expressed by younger generations regarding

environmental issues are closely linked to the human right to a good and healthy environment, as guaranteed by the Indonesian Constitution and various international legal instruments. A sustainable environment is essential for physical and mental well-being, as well as for fulfilling other fundamental human rights (Preston, 2023; Tang and Spijkers, 2022). Therefore, protecting and restoring the environment is not solely the state's responsibility but also a fundamental right of every citizen.

In this context, conventional approaches to environmental education are often considered less effective in fostering deep and sustainable environmental awareness and pro-environmental behavior (Mendes et al., 2025). Overly theoretical approaches detached from local cultural contexts frequently overlook traditional values and indigenous wisdom that have long contributed to maintaining ecological balance (Berdame and Lombogia, 2020; Fenetiruma and Kamakaula, 2023). As a result, both knowledge transfer and the cultivation of an ecological ethos, a worldview that values and upholds ecological principles, remain suboptimal.

Recognizing these limitations, this study explores the potential of local ecological rituals and socio-cultural practices as underexplored pathways for cultivating an ecological ethos (Bhatt, Pant Jugran, and Pandey, 2024). Rituals such as *Nyepi* in Bali, which emphasizes harmony and reduces environmentally harmful activities (Surpi 2022); *Selamatan Laut*, a traditional sea thanksgiving ritual expressing gratitude and respect for the ocean (Fitria, 2024); and *Syukuran Panen*, a harvest ceremony reflecting the reciprocal relationship between humans and nature in agricultural life, embody profound ecological values relevant to environmental conservation (Imamah, Dewantri, and Lin, 2024; Manan et al., 2022; Tidha, Rero, and Sulaiman, 2022).

Existing scholarship on environmental education in Indonesia has predominantly focused on formal curricular reforms, sustainability literacy, and technology-based learning approaches (Mendes et al., 2025; Berdame and Lombogia, 2020). While these studies offer important insights into pedagogical innovation, they largely overlook culturally embedded ecological practices and indigenous ritual traditions as potential educational resources. Meanwhile, studies examining local rituals such as *Nyepi*, *Selamatan Laut*, and agrarian thanksgiving ceremonies primarily approach these practices from anthropological, tourism, or cultural preservation perspectives, rather than situating them within the broader discourses of environmental education and environmental rights (Fitria, 2024; Surpi, 2022). Consequently, limited scholarly attention has been given to how ritual-based ecological knowledge can simultaneously function as a pedagogical instrument, a mechanism for cultivating ecological ethos, and a socio-legal framework for strengthening the right to a healthy environment.

Furthermore, previous studies rarely integrate environmental education with perspectives of legal pluralism and environmental justice. The relationship between indigenous ecological knowledge, environmental pedagogy, and the legal recognition of customary environmental practices within Indonesia's pluralistic governance system remains insufficiently explored. This gap is significant because indigenous communities possess long-standing ecological values and conservation ethics that can contribute to more culturally grounded and sustainable environmental governance. Therefore, this study addresses these gaps by offering an interdisciplinary socio-legal analysis that connects local ecological rituals, environmental education, ecological ethos, and environmental rights within the

broader framework of legal pluralism and environmental justice.

This study addresses two key questions: (1) How can local environmental rituals and socio-cultural practices function as effective pedagogical tools for cultivating an ecological ethos and strengthening the right to a healthy environment in Indonesia? (2) To what extent can the integration of indigenous ecological knowledge into environmental education policies contribute to the legal recognition of customary practices within Indonesia's pluralistic environmental governance framework?

Through an in-depth conceptual analysis, this study contributes to a broader understanding of the role of local wisdom and cultural practices in environmental education. It also offers practical implications for policymakers, educators, and community organizations in designing environmental education programs that are more relevant, effective, and sustainable. Ultimately, the study seeks to strengthen environmental legal consciousness and advance the realization of the right to a healthy environment for all Indonesian citizens.

The following sections examine how local ecological rituals such as *Nyepi*, *Selamatan Laut*, and *Syukuran Panen* embody profound ecological principles, how these principles can be transformed into effective environmental education materials and approaches, and how the ecological ethos cultivated through these rituals relates to the understanding and enforcement of the right to a healthy environment within Indonesia's pluralistic legal framework.

Literature Review

Existing scholarship on environmental education and local wisdom generally falls into three major strands. The first strand focuses on the role of cultural rituals and indigenous traditions in fostering environmental awareness and conservation ethics. Studies on the

Sundanese ritual of *Ruwatan Leuweung Babakti Mandala Manglayang* demonstrate that ritual practices symbolically reinforce the interconnected relationship between humans and nature while cultivating collective ecological responsibility (Prasetyo, 2023). Similarly, Yasa, Suastra, and Arnyana (2023) argue that the *Ngaturang Cicipan* ceremony in Bali embodies the philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana*, which emphasizes harmony among humans, nature, and spirituality (Yasa, Suastra, and Arnyana, 2023). These studies share the view that local rituals function not merely as cultural performances but also as mechanisms for transmitting ecological values across generations. However, most of these studies remain largely descriptive and anthropological, focusing on cultural preservation rather than positioning rituals as transformative pedagogical instruments within environmental education frameworks.

The second strand of scholarship examines local wisdom and indigenous ecological knowledge as alternative foundations for environmental learning and sustainability education. Shahida (2024) highlights how household-based rituals and micro-level cultural practices shape environmental values that may contribute to educational processes (Shahida, 2024). Likewise, Waluya et al., (2023) demonstrate that the cultural ecology of the *Baduy* indigenous community provides an adaptive framework for local wisdom-based environmental education (Waluya et al., 2023). Collectively, these studies emphasize the pedagogical potential of indigenous knowledge systems and community-based learning. Nevertheless, their primary focus tends to center on ethnopedagogical and socio-cultural dimensions, with limited attention to the broader legal and political implications of integrating indigenous ecological

knowledge into formal educational and environmental governance systems.

A third strand of scholarship discusses environmental education from the perspectives of sustainability, curriculum development, and environmental literacy. Existing studies primarily focus on formal educational reforms, green curriculum initiatives, and sustainability-oriented pedagogical innovations (Mendes et al., 2025). While these approaches contribute significantly to improving environmental awareness, they often rely on universalized and technocratic educational models that insufficiently engage with culturally embedded ecological worldviews. As a result, local rituals and customary ecological practices are frequently marginalized within formal environmental education discourse, despite their longstanding role in maintaining ecological balance and social cohesion within indigenous communities.

Although previous studies provide valuable contributions, several important gaps remain insufficiently explored. First, existing scholarship rarely examines local ecological rituals simultaneously as cultural practices, pedagogical instruments, and mechanisms for cultivating ecological ethos. Second, studies on environmental education generally overlook the relationship between indigenous ecological knowledge and the realization of environmental rights, particularly the right to a healthy environment. Third, limited research integrates environmental education with socio-legal perspectives such as legal pluralism and environmental justice. Consequently, the role of ritual-based environmental education in strengthening environmental legal consciousness and supporting pluralistic environmental governance remains underdeveloped in academic discourse. This study seeks to address these gaps by offering an interdisciplinary socio-legal analysis that connects local ecological rituals,

environmental education, ecological ethos, and environmental rights within Indonesia's pluralistic legal framework.

In addition to previous scholarly discussions, preliminary field observations conducted in coastal communities in Brebes, Northern Java, in 2024 indicate that the practice of *Selamatan Laut* continues to function not only as a ceremonial tradition but also as a communal mechanism for transmitting ecological values and fostering collective environmental responsibility. Community participation in the ritual reflects local understandings of reciprocity between humans and marine ecosystems, particularly in relation to sustainable fishing practices and respect for coastal resources. These observations suggest that ritual-based environmental values remain socially relevant and potentially adaptable within contemporary environmental education frameworks. However, despite their practical significance, such locally embedded ecological practices remain insufficiently integrated into formal environmental education discourse and policy frameworks.

Conceptual Framework

The first theoretical lens employed in this study is ecopedagogy, a form of critical environmental education that situates sustainability within cultural and place-based contexts. This perspective is strongly influenced by Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), which emphasizes critical consciousness (*conscientização*) and transformative education (Freire, 1970). Building on Freire's ideas, scholars such as Richard Kahn, in *Critical Pedagogy, Ecopedagogy, and Planetary Crisis* (2010), conceptualize ecopedagogy as an emancipatory practice that challenges dominant development narratives while integrating ecological sustainability with social justice (Kahn, 2010). This framework enables the study to examine how indigenous knowledge systems can contribute to educational models that are both environmentally sustainable and culturally grounded.

The second framework employed in this study is legal pluralism, which recognizes the coexistence and interaction of multiple normative orders, including state law, customary law, and community-based regulations. Foundational insights from John Griffiths' essay *What is Legal Pluralism?* (1986), along with later works by Sally Engle Merry (1988), provide the conceptual basis for examining how indigenous communities negotiate between state-imposed legal frameworks and their own customary practices (Griffiths, 1986; Merry, 1988). Legal pluralism is particularly relevant in the Indonesian context, where customary law (*hukum adat*) continues to regulate communal life, especially in matters related to land and natural resources. By employing this perspective, the study situates education and sustainability not only within formal institutions but also within the dynamic interaction between statutory and customary legal regimes.

The third theoretical framework is environmental justice theory, with particular emphasis on recognition justice and participatory justice. Foundational works such as Robert Bullard's *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality* (2018) demonstrate how marginalized communities often bear disproportionate ecological burdens due to systemic injustice (Bullard, 2018). Furthermore, David Schlosberg's *Defining Environmental Justice* (2007) expands the concept beyond distributive justice to include the recognition of cultural identities and meaningful participation in decision-making processes (Schlosberg, 2007). This framework enables the study to analyze whether educational and policy approaches genuinely recognize indigenous perspectives and ensure inclusive participation in sustainability governance.

Integrating these three theoretical perspectives, ecopedagogy, legal pluralism, and environmental justice, provides a robust conceptual framework

for analyzing education and sustainability within indigenous contexts. Ecopedagogy emphasizes critical awareness and cultural grounding, legal pluralism highlights the coexistence of multiple normative systems shaping community life, and environmental justice foregrounds equity and participation. Together, these frameworks enable a multidimensional analysis that moves beyond technocratic approaches to sustainability by centering indigenous agency, cultural integrity, and social justice. This conceptual synthesis not only enriches academic discourse but also offers practical insights for designing educational and policy frameworks that are inclusive, equitable, and ecologically sustainable.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative approach within a conceptual framework that integrates socio-legal analysis and cultural studies (Holden, 2019; Susetyo et al., 2020). As a conceptual study, it does not primarily rely on direct empirical data collection but instead constitutes a theoretical exploration aimed at articulating and analyzing the interrelationships among local ecological rituals, the cultivation of ecological ethos, environmental education, and the right to a healthy environment. This approach was chosen to facilitate an in-depth examination of the meanings, values, and principles embedded within cultural practices and relevant legal norms, thereby generating a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Ravitch and Carl, 2019).

Although this study is primarily conceptual in nature, it is enriched by limited field observations conducted in 2024 in coastal communities in Brebes, located in the northern coastal region of Java (Pantura). These observations focused particularly on the implementation of the *Selamatan Laut* ritual and patterns of community participation within the

ceremony. The observational insights were incorporated to provide contextual grounding for the conceptual analysis, especially in understanding how ecological values are socially practiced, transmitted, and interpreted within local communities. The inclusion of these field observations strengthens the socio-cultural dimension of the study and allows for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between ritual practices, environmental ethics, and collective ecological responsibility.

The selection of a conceptual study methodology is based on its suitability for bridging normative legal principles, cultural practices, and educational values (Naeem et al., 2023). Conceptual analysis enables the researcher to conduct legal interpretation, synthesize relevant literature from multiple scholarly disciplines, and apply critical theory to examine the complex relationship among society, culture, law, and the environment (Bhat, 2019). This approach is therefore considered appropriate for developing a coherent and comprehensive framework regarding the potential of local rituals within environmental education and the advancement of the right to a healthy environment within Indonesia's pluralistic legal landscape.

The data used in this study are secondary in nature and include various sources, such as national and international laws and regulations related to the environment and human rights, scholarly journal articles on environmental education, environmental law, and cultural studies, as well as ethnographic works documenting local ritual practices and traditional wisdom. In addition, the study draws on legal texts concerning the right to a healthy environment and customary law to analyze how the ecological values embedded within rituals may interact with and gain recognition within the prevailing legal system.

The analytical techniques employed in this research include content

analysis and comparative conceptual mapping (Ligita et al., 2022). Content analysis is used to identify and interpret both implicit and explicit ecological values embedded in the descriptions and meanings of selected local rituals. Comparative conceptual mapping is then applied to examine the convergences and divergences among the ecological values reflected in these rituals, their pedagogical potential within environmental education, and their legal significance in relation to the right to a healthy environment and the recognition of customary law. Through these techniques, the study seeks to develop a comprehensive understanding of how local cultural practices can contribute to cultivating an ecological ethos and strengthening environmental legal consciousness.

Nevertheless, this study acknowledges several methodological limitations. The reliance on secondary sources and limited field observations may not fully capture the diversity of interpretations and practices of ecological rituals across different regions and indigenous communities in Indonesia. Moreover, the absence of extensive ethnographic fieldwork and in-depth interviews limits the study's ability to explore broader community perspectives, particularly those of younger generations and marginalized groups. Despite these limitations, the conceptual and socio-legal approach adopted in this research remains valuable for establishing a foundational interdisciplinary framework that may guide future empirical studies on ritual-based environmental education and pluralistic environmental governance in Indonesia.

DISCUSSION

Cultural Meaning and Ecological Ethos in Local Rituals

This subsection aims to examine the cultural meanings embedded within selected Indonesian local rituals, namely

Nyepi, *Selamatan Laut*, and *Syukuran Panen*, and to explain how these meanings contribute to the formation and preservation of ecological ethos within their respective communities. Through a descriptive analysis of the symbolism, narratives, core practices, socio-cultural contexts, and underlying beliefs associated with each ritual, this study identifies the ecological values internalized by community members and examines how these values shape their worldview and behavior toward the natural environment.

Nyepi, the Balinese Hindu Day of Silence dedicated to stillness and introspection, carries profound cultural significance and embodies strong ecological values (Mudana, 2021). Symbolically, *Nyepi* represents the purification and renewal of the universe, during which all worldly activities cease to create space for contemplation and spiritual restoration (Putra and Narsa, 2020). The mythological narratives underlying *Nyepi* are closely associated with cosmic balance and the harmony among humans, nature, and God (*Tri Hita Karana*) (Harefa et al., 2024).

The core practices of *Nyepi*, including *amati geni* (abstaining from fire), *amati karya* (abstaining from work), *amati lelungan* (abstaining from travel), and *amati lelanguan* (abstaining from entertainment or leisure activities), directly reduce the human ecological footprint for an entire day (Surpi, 2022). Within its socio-cultural context, *Nyepi* is not merely an individual religious obligation but also a communal event that reinforces social solidarity and collective awareness of the importance of maintaining ecological balance. The beliefs underlying *Nyepi* reflect the Balinese Hindu worldview, which perceives nature as a sacred and interconnected entity deserving of respect and protection.

Furthermore, *Selamatan Laut*, a ritual commonly practiced by coastal communities in various regions of

Indonesia, carries cultural meanings rooted in gratitude and reverence toward the sea as a source of life (Normi'an, 2022; Wulandari et al., 2024). Symbolically, the offerings presented to the sea during the ritual represent expressions of thankfulness for the abundance of fish and the protection granted to coastal communities (Nurmalasari, 2023). The narratives associated with *Selamatan Laut* often include stories of sea deities or guardian spirits believed to influence the abundance of marine resources and the safety of fishermen (Maulidyna et al., 2021).

The core practices of *Selamatan Laut* vary across regions but generally involve the release of offerings into the sea, communal prayers, and, in some cases, traditional performances or entertainment (Fadlilah et al., 2024; Lasaiba, Touwe, and Riry, 2024; Nisa, 2022). Within its socio-cultural context, the ritual strengthens social bonds within fishing communities, promotes values of sharing and mutual assistance, and reaffirms community dependence on the health of marine ecosystems. The beliefs underlying *Selamatan Laut* reflect an understanding of the sea as a living entity that is essential to both the material and spiritual well-being of coastal populations (Sudarto et al., 2024; Supriadi, 2023). In addition, the ritual may embody customary principles related to the sustainable management of marine resources, reflected in traditional rules and practices respected by the community during the ceremony.

Syukuran Panen, celebrated by agrarian communities throughout Indonesia, is a ritual deeply rooted in cultural meanings associated with gratitude for the abundance of agricultural harvests (Manan et al., 2022). Symbolically, the harvest represents the successful completion of the agricultural cycle and the generosity of nature (Agustin and Mesra, 2024). The narratives associated with *Syukuran Panen* often

involve myths concerning the rice goddess or earth spirits believed to bless and protect the harvest (Nastiti, 2020).

The core practices of this ritual include offerings of harvested crops, communal prayers, village feasts, and various expressions of collective celebration (Azhima, Priyatna, and Muhtadin, 2020). Within its socio-cultural context, *Syukuran Panen* strengthens solidarity among farmers, celebrates collective labor and shared success, and reinforces awareness of the importance of maintaining soil fertility and sustainable agricultural practices (Pradana, Tertibi, and Tohari, 2024). The beliefs underlying *Syukuran Panen* reflect an agrarian worldview that regards the land as a life-giving mother and emphasizes the importance of maintaining a harmonious relationship with nature to ensure the sustainability of future harvests. Traditional knowledge related to sustainable farming practices and the wise use of natural resources is often transmitted and reaffirmed through the ritual.

Through the analysis of the cultural meanings embedded in these three rituals, several core ecological values can be identified. *Nyepi* instills values of ecological balance, self-restraint in the exploitation of nature, reduction of environmental impact, and spiritual connectedness with the natural world. *Selamatan Laut* emphasizes gratitude toward marine resources, respect for the sea as a vital ecosystem, and the importance of sustainable resource management practices. Meanwhile, *Syukuran Panen* highlights reciprocity between humans and nature, appreciation for the bounty of the land, and traditional knowledge related to responsible agricultural practices. The interconnectedness between cultural practices and ecological awareness becomes evident in the way these rituals function not merely as religious expressions or cultural traditions, but also

as vehicles for transmitting and preserving environmental knowledge and ecological values. Both implicitly and explicitly, these rituals promote environmental stewardship and cultivate a sense of responsibility toward nature as an integral part of community life.

The ecological values embedded within these local rituals strongly correspond with the concept of ecological ethos (Smith, 2003). Ecological ethos can be understood as a value system that prioritizes ecological well-being and recognizes the fundamental interconnectedness between humans and nature (Butt, 2017). Rituals such as *Nyepi*, *Selamatan Laut*, and *Syukuran Panen* actively contribute to the formation of ecological ethos within communities by fostering respect, gratitude, responsibility, and awareness of ecological balance.

The repeated performance of these rituals serves not only as a symbolic reminder but also as a social mechanism for reinforcing and transmitting ecological values across generations, thereby shaping cultural norms and environmental attitudes. Furthermore, these rituals have the potential to foster a strong sense of place, belonging, and environmental responsibility, as they are deeply rooted in specific geographical, cultural, and ecological contexts.

Local Ecological Rituals as Pedagogical Instruments in Environmental Education

The rich tapestry of Indonesian local rituals, as discussed in the preceding section, holds substantial yet underexplored potential for transforming environmental education. This subsection examines how the inherent elements of *Nyepi*, *Selamatan Laut*, and *Syukuran Panen* can be translated into effective pedagogical content and approaches applicable in both formal and informal learning environments (Calvo de Mora Martínez and Kennedy, 2020). By critically analyzing the symbolic

meanings, narratives, and core practices embedded within these rituals, this study identifies their educational dimensions and proposes practical strategies for integrating them into curricula and community-based learning initiatives.

These rituals contain significant pedagogical potential. The symbolic meanings embedded within them can serve as powerful metaphors for understanding complex ecological concepts (Prasetyo, 2023). For example, the stillness and suspension of activities during *Nyepi* may be used to illustrate the environmental impact of human activity and the possibility of ecological restoration when such pressures are temporarily reduced. Likewise, the narratives associated with each ritual, often rooted in local wisdom and cosmological beliefs, provide engaging storytelling mechanisms for conveying ecological principles and highlighting the interconnectedness of living systems. The core practices of these rituals also offer opportunities for experiential learning. Participation in the preparation of offerings for *Selamatan Laut*, for instance, can foster appreciation for marine ecosystems and coastal resources. Similarly, observing or participating in the harvest traditions of *Syukuran Panen* can provide firsthand understanding of agricultural cycles and the importance of maintaining soil fertility. Moreover, the intergenerational character of these rituals facilitates the transmission of ecological knowledge and environmental values from elders to younger generations, an essential process for sustaining cultural continuity and environmental stewardship (Nxumalo and Montes, 2023).

Translating these ritual-based values into formal environmental education curricula requires a thoughtful and integrated approach (Meristin and Supriatna 2023). The ecological principles embedded within each ritual can be effectively incorporated into existing subject areas (Agung et al., 2024). For

example, the concept of balance (*Tri Hita Karana*) central to *Nyepi* can be explored in science classes when discussing ecosystems and biodiversity, or in social studies when examining human–environment interactions. The practices associated with *Selamatan Laut* may inform lessons on marine biology, sustainable fishing, and the environmental impacts of pollution in science and geography classes. Likewise, the themes of reciprocity and sustainable resource use reflected in *Syukuran Panen* can be integrated into agricultural science, economics, and ethics education.

Concrete examples of lesson activities could include calculating the carbon footprint of daily human activities inspired by the restraint practiced during *Nyepi*, conducting projects on local marine ecosystems and traditional fishing practices related to *Selamatan Laut*, or investigating sustainable farming methods alongside the cultural significance of harvest celebrations associated with *Syukuran Panen*. Adapting these concepts to different age groups requires adjusting the complexity of the material and the nature of the activities, utilizing multimedia resources, and encouraging creative expression through art, drama, and writing to communicate the ecological messages embedded within the rituals.

Beyond formal classroom settings, these rituals also possess substantial potential for informal environmental learning within communities (Datta, 2016). Participation in communal ritual activities can foster deeper environmental awareness and a stronger sense of ecological responsibility through direct experience. Community leaders and cultural practitioners may serve as important environmental educators during these rituals by explaining the ecological significance of the practices and the values underlying them (Prasetyo, 2023). In addition, pre- and post-ritual activities, such as community discussions and educational workshops, can be organized

to strengthen environmental learning outcomes by providing opportunities for reflection and deeper understanding. The storytelling traditions and oral narratives associated with these rituals are particularly effective tools for transmitting ecological knowledge and values in culturally meaningful and memorable ways (Daigle et al., 2019). For example, narratives concerning sea spirits in *Selamatan Laut* can be used to emphasize respect for marine ecosystems, while myths related to the rice goddess in *Syukuran Panen* can reinforce the sacredness of the land and the importance of sustainable agricultural practices.

However, transforming culturally specific rituals into broader environmental pedagogies requires careful consideration of several potential challenges. Religious sensitivities must be respected, and the risks of misinterpretation or superficial treatment of complex cultural practices should be avoided (Mariyono, 2024). Ensuring inclusivity and adequately representing Indonesia’s cultural diversity are also essential considerations (Hata et al., 2021). Therefore, collaboration among educators, cultural experts, and community members is crucial for developing approaches that are both culturally appropriate and pedagogically sound (Alim, Paris, and Wong, 2020).

It is important not merely to extract ecological themes from these rituals, but to pursue a respectful and contextualized integration of indigenous knowledge and cultural practices into educational settings. Furthermore, the underlying principles and values embodied in these rituals can be adapted to address contemporary environmental challenges. For instance, the principle of balance reflected in *Nyepi* may be applied to discussions on sustainable consumption, while the gratitude expressed in *Selamatan Laut* can be extended to broader forms of natural resource conservation. By thoughtfully and respectfully harnessing the educational potential of local rituals,

environmental education can cultivate a deeper and more culturally grounded ecological ethos, thereby encouraging environmentally responsible behavior and strengthening commitment to the right to a healthy environment.

Environmental Law and the Right to a Healthy Environment

This subsection examines the important intersection between ritual-based environmental education and existing constitutional and international environmental law frameworks, particularly concerning the right to a healthy environment. It argues that cultivating ecological ethos through culturally embedded practices aligns with the state's legal obligations to respect, protect, and fulfill this fundamental human right. By fostering public understanding and appreciation of the environment through cultural values and local traditions, ritual-based environmental education can serve as an effective mechanism for strengthening environmental legal consciousness and advancing the realization of environmental rights.

The right to a healthy environment is increasingly recognized as a fundamental human right within various international legal instruments and national constitutions, including that of Indonesia. Article 28H paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia explicitly states that every person has the right to live in physical and spiritual prosperity, to reside, and to enjoy a good and healthy environment (Daisahbeny, 2023). This constitutional provision serves as the foundation for the legal recognition of the right to a healthy environment in Indonesia (Karwur, 2024). This right encompasses not only the absence of pollution but also access to a clean, safe, and ecologically balanced environment that supports human well-being. The state bears the primary responsibility for ensuring the effective

realization of this right through three core obligations: the obligations to respect, protect, and fulfill.

The obligation to respect requires the state to refrain from actions that directly or indirectly violate the right to a healthy environment. This includes avoiding environmentally destructive policies or activities and ensuring that state-led development projects undergo rigorous environmental impact assessments, as mandated by Law Number 32 of 2009 concerning Environmental Protection and Management (*Undang-Undang Nomor 32 Tahun 2009 tentang Perlindungan dan Pengelolaan Lingkungan Hidup*, hereinafter *UU PPLH*).

The obligation to protect requires the state to take proactive measures to prevent third parties, including corporations, individuals, and other non-state actors, from causing environmental harm that may violate the right to a healthy environment. This obligation includes the formulation and enforcement of comprehensive environmental laws and regulations. Relevant provisions within the *UU PPLH* regulate pollution control (Articles 20–49), waste management (Articles 30–38), and environmental damage and liability (Articles 54–60).

In addition, the law guarantees access to environmental justice and effective legal remedies, as stipulated in Articles 84–97 concerning dispute resolution and environmental law enforcement. The *UU PPLH* also mandates the protection of ecosystems, biodiversity, and natural resources for both present and future generations, reflecting the broader objectives outlined in Article 4 of the law.

The obligation to fulfill requires the state to adopt positive and progressive measures to realize the right to a healthy environment. This includes implementing environmental education initiatives, as mandated by Article 65 paragraph (1)(f) of the *UU PPLH*, which assigns the

government responsibility for promoting environmental awareness across all levels of society. It also involves ensuring public access to environmental information, as provided in Article 5 paragraph (2) of the *UU PPLH*, and undertaking concrete efforts toward environmental sustainability and ecological restoration in accordance with the law's overarching objectives.

The integration of ritual-based environmental education reinforces the state's obligation to fulfill the right to a healthy environment. By embedding ecological values within culturally meaningful rituals and transmitting them across generations, such educational practices cultivate a lasting environmental ethic within communities. Cultural and spiritual values can foster intrinsic motivations for environmental stewardship, often more effectively than purely legal or regulatory approaches. When communities internalize an ecological ethos rooted in their traditions, they are more likely to engage in sustainable behavior and conservation efforts, thereby supporting the participatory objectives outlined in Article 6 of the *UU PPLH*.

Furthermore, ritual-based environmental education can strengthen environmental legal consciousness by providing culturally resonant entry points into environmental legal norms and principles. These rituals often embody values of balance, reciprocity, and respect for nature, principles that closely align with the foundations of environmental law. By connecting cultural values with legal rights and responsibilities, communities may internalize environmental regulations more deeply and meaningfully. For example, the principle of restraint practiced during the Balinese *Nyepi* Day can be associated with legal principles concerning sustainable consumption and pollution prevention. Similarly, the maritime thanksgiving rituals of *Selamatan Laut* encourage respect for

marine ecosystems, reinforcing legal protections for coastal and marine biodiversity. Agricultural rituals such as *Syukuran Panen* may also inspire sustainable land-use practices that align with Law Number 41 of 2009 concerning the Protection of Sustainable Agricultural Land.

Moreover, the recognition and integration of indigenous ecological knowledge, often transmitted through ritual practices, can enrich environmental governance through the incorporation of local wisdom (Suroyo et al., 2024). Customary laws and traditional practices contain valuable insights into sustainable resource management and environmental preservation. Recognizing these practices within legal frameworks, as reflected in the acknowledgment of local wisdom under Article 1 point 30 of the *UU PPLH*, may contribute to the development of environmental protection measures that are more culturally grounded and socially effective.

Such integration is also consistent with the principles of legal pluralism and reinforces the rights and roles of indigenous and local communities in environmental governance. It empowers communities to participate actively in environmental decision-making processes, thereby supporting the state's obligation to ensure meaningful public participation, as recognized in international environmental law and Article 65 paragraph (2) of the *UU PPLH*.

The proposed integration of local rituals into environmental education requires a clear implementation strategy. The conceptual framework of this strategy, including its core pillars and the logical progression toward realizing the right to a healthy environment, is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Core Pillars of Implementation (Conceptual Foundation)

Component	Description
Recognition and Appreciation	• Integration of ecological knowledge and conservation values embedded in rituals as

of Local Wisdom	<p>foundations for environmental education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of traditional and cultural leaders as custodians of knowledge and facilitators. • Documentation and preservation of rituals and environmental narratives.
Culture-Based Environmental Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of curricula and educational materials that connect ecological concepts with ritual practices. • Emphasis on participatory and experiential learning methods, such as simulations and dramatizations. • Utilization of arts and cultural expression to reinforce environmental messages.
Strengthening Environmental Legal Consciousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment of ecological values embedded in rituals with environmental legal principles. • Enhancement of awareness regarding environmental rights and responsibilities through culturally grounded narratives. • Encouragement of community participation in environmental governance based on local wisdom.
Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration among educational institutions, indigenous communities, civil society organizations (CSOs), government agencies, and academic institutions. • Creation of platforms for dialogue and knowledge sharing. • Training programs for educators and facilitators on integrating rituals into environmental education.

Source: Data Analysis

CLOSING

This study demonstrates that local ecological rituals in Indonesia, such as *Nyepi*, *Selamatan Laut*, and *Syukuran Panen*, possess significant potential as culturally grounded instruments for environmental education and the cultivation of ecological ethos. Far from being merely ceremonial traditions, these rituals embody ecological values, conservation ethics, collective responsibility, and reciprocal relationships between humans and nature that remain highly relevant in addressing contemporary environmental challenges.

By integrating these ritual-based ecological values into environmental education frameworks, sustainability education can become more contextual, participatory, and socially meaningful. The findings further reveal that indigenous ecological knowledge systems contribute not only to environmental awareness but also to strengthening environmental legal consciousness and advancing the realization of the right to a healthy environment within Indonesia's pluralistic legal landscape.

This study also offers important practical implications for environmental governance and educational policymaking. First, policymakers should consider incorporating local ecological knowledge and indigenous cultural practices into formal and non-formal environmental education curricula as part of sustainability-oriented educational reform. Such integration may simultaneously strengthen community participation, cultural preservation, and ecological stewardship. Second, environmental education programs should move beyond purely technocratic and universalized approaches by adopting culturally responsive pedagogies that resonate with local communities and indigenous worldviews. Third, recognizing ritual-based ecological practices within environmental governance frameworks may support the development of more inclusive and participatory environmental policies, particularly in regions where customary law and indigenous traditions continue to shape environmental management practices.

Academically, this study contributes to the interdisciplinary intersection of environmental law, environmental education, cultural studies, and socio-legal scholarship by offering a conceptual framework that connects ecopedagogy, legal pluralism, and environmental justice theory. Unlike previous studies that primarily examine ecological rituals from anthropological or

cultural preservation perspectives, this research positions local rituals as transformative pedagogical and socio-legal instruments capable of cultivating ecological ethos and advancing environmental rights. In doing so, the study broadens scholarly discussions on sustainability education by emphasizing the importance of indigenous ecological knowledge and culturally embedded learning systems within contemporary environmental discourse.

Nevertheless, this study also identifies several directions for future research. Further empirical and ethnographic investigations are needed to examine how ritual-based environmental education is practiced, interpreted, and transmitted across diverse indigenous and local communities in Indonesia. Future studies may also explore the perspectives of younger generations, educators, policymakers, and marginalized groups regarding the integration of local ecological rituals into formal educational systems. In addition, comparative studies across regions and cultural traditions may provide broader insights into the role of indigenous ecological knowledge in advancing sustainability education and environmental justice on a global scale. Ultimately, this study underscores the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration among the fields of law, education, culture, and environmental governance in developing more inclusive, culturally grounded, and socially just pathways toward sustainable futures.

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