

Community-Based Ecological Empowerment through Customary Law: A Philosophy of Law Perspective from the Selorejo Indigenous Community

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Abstract. *The ecological crisis caused by massive land conversion over the last two decades has contributed to environmental degradation in the Greater Malang area. Data from the Indonesian Forum for the Environment (WALHI) in 2021 recorded the loss of 348 hectares of primary forest, indicating the erosion of the region's ecological integrity. This community-based empowerment initiative aimed to strengthen ecological awareness through the documentation and dissemination of customary ecological knowledge in the Selorejo Indigenous Community. The program was implemented through community discussions, field documentation, and the production of a documentary film highlighting customary law practices and local wisdom in environmental conservation. Data were collected through observation, interviews, discussions with community members, and documentation of customary conservation practices. The results show that the documentary process facilitated the preservation of local ecological knowledge and strengthened community reflection on the importance of forest protection, water resource conservation, and environmental stewardship. Customary practices, including collective forest protection, traditional rituals, community deliberation, and shared environmental responsibilities, encourage active community participation in environmental governance. Furthermore, the documentary film serves as an educational medium for disseminating ecological values and customary environmental norms to broader audiences. These findings demonstrate that customary law functions not only as a socially legitimate system of norms but also as a community-based mechanism for ecological empowerment, strengthening ecological legal awareness and supporting sustainable environmental conservation.*

Katakunci: Ekologi; Hukum Adat; Living Law.

Abstrak. *Krisis ekologis yang disebabkan oleh masifnya alih fungsi lahan selama dua dekade terakhir telah berkontribusi terhadap degradasi lingkungan di wilayah Malang Raya. Data Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI) tahun 2021 mencatat hilangnya 348 hektare hutan primer, yang menunjukkan terjadinya*

penurunan integritas ekologis kawasan tersebut. Kegiatan pemberdayaan berbasis komunitas ini bertujuan untuk memperkuat kesadaran ekologis melalui dokumentasi dan diseminasi pengetahuan ekologis adat pada Masyarakat Adat Selorejo. Program ini dilaksanakan melalui diskusi bersama komunitas, dokumentasi lapangan, dan produksi film dokumenter yang menampilkan praktik hukum adat serta kearifan lokal dalam konservasi lingkungan. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, diskusi dengan anggota komunitas, dan dokumentasi praktik konservasi berbasis hukum adat. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan bahwa proses pembuatan film dokumenter berkontribusi pada pelestarian pengetahuan ekologis lokal serta memperkuat refleksi masyarakat mengenai pentingnya perlindungan hutan, konservasi sumber daya air, dan tanggung jawab lingkungan. Praktik-praktik adat, seperti perlindungan hutan secara kolektif, ritual tradisional, musyawarah komunitas, dan tanggung jawab bersama terhadap lingkungan, mendorong partisipasi aktif masyarakat dalam tata kelola lingkungan. Selain itu, film dokumenter yang dihasilkan berfungsi sebagai media edukasi untuk mendiseminasikan nilai-nilai ekologis dan norma-norma lingkungan berbasis hukum adat kepada khalayak yang lebih luas. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa hukum adat tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai sistem norma yang memiliki legitimasi sosial, tetapi juga sebagai mekanisme pemberdayaan berbasis komunitas yang memperkuat kesadaran hukum ekologis dan mendukung konservasi lingkungan yang berkelanjutan.

1 Introduction

Current ecological phenomena point to an increasingly complex and extreme environmental crisis. Climate change reflects the disruption of the relationship between humans and nature (Ariska et al., 2025; El-Tawil et al., 2025; Folke et al., 2021). The development of modern technology operates within an exploitative paradigm that tends to view nature solely as an object of production and exploitation, thereby obscuring the ethical relationship between humans and the environment.

This situation creates tension with traditional value systems, which have long emphasized ecological harmony and cosmological balance (Keshari Mishra & Mishra, 2023; Maharani & Dony, 2025). Arne Naess asserts that environmental issues do not stem solely from technical and technological problems, but are also rooted in human behavior shaped

by people's perspectives on nature (Burnard & Colucci-Gray, 2020; Tanjung, 2021). The widespread conversion of land over the past two decades has contributed to serious ecological degradation. Data from the Indonesian Forum for the Environment (WALHI) in 2021 shows the loss of 348 hectares of primary forest in the Greater Malang area, signaling the erosion of the region's ecological identity (WALHI, 2021). In fact, Malang is known as one of the cities in Indonesia with a high level of natural, cultural, and religious diversity (Alfaqi et al., 2024).

Environmental degradation in Greater Malang is not only reflected in statistical forest loss but also affects local communities whose livelihoods and cultural practices depend on forest ecosystems (Riniwati et al., 2016). Among these communities, the Selorejo Indigenous Community faces increasing ecological pressures as forest areas surrounding Mount Kawi experience environmental change. Consequently, understanding how local communities respond to ecological challenges through customary law becomes increasingly important.

In the context of increasing environmental degradation, examining customary law is important because it not only functions as a normative system but also serves as a mechanism of community empowerment that encourages collective participation in environmental governance (Zhou et al., 2025). Rather than relying solely on formal legal enforcement, customary law enables communities to internalize ecological values through shared practices, social responsibilities, and intergenerational knowledge transmission (Yadav, 2026). Understanding this mechanism is essential for strengthening ecological legal awareness and developing sustainable environmental governance rooted in local communities (Ogunkan, 2022). Furthermore, documenting and disseminating customary ecological knowledge through community discussions and documentary film production are important efforts to preserve local environmental values and strengthen public awareness of sustainable environmental stewardship.

The Selorejo Indigenous Community was selected as the focus of this study because it represents a local community that continues to preserve customary law as a living system of environmental governance

despite growing pressures from land conversion and ecological change. Through practices such as collective forest protection, traditional rituals, and community deliberation, Selorejo demonstrates how customary law operates not only as a cultural heritage but also as a socially legitimate mechanism that empowers community members to participate actively in environmental conservation (Ariska et al., 2025). This unique characteristic makes Selorejo an appropriate case for examining the relationship between customary law, community empowerment, and ecological legal awareness from a philosophy of law perspective. The primary beneficiaries of this initiative were members of the Selorejo Indigenous Community, particularly customary leaders, community groups involved in environmental conservation, and younger generations who play an important role in preserving customary ecological knowledge.

From a philosophical perspective, nature is not merely a resource to be exploited but also a space that shapes human existence and ethical responsibility. The relationship between humans and nature encompasses ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions, reflecting the interconnectedness between environmental sustainability and human life (Campbell & Gurney, 2024; Dicks, 2019; Lang, 2023). Driyarkara argues that human existence is realized through active engagement with the physical environment that constitutes one's living space. This interconnected relationship can be observed in the communities living on the slopes of Mount Kawi, where the forest serves not only as an ecological resource but also as a foundation for social and cultural life. For the communities of Selorejo the Kawi Forest plays a vital role in shaping environmental values, collective responsibilities, and customary practices related to environmental conservation.

Indonesia's cultural and ethnic diversity is reflected in the wealth of local wisdom that is alive in the social practices of its communities (Shofa et al., 2019). Local wisdom can be understood as a set of values, knowledge, and practices that arise from a community's social, cultural, and spiritual experiences and are passed down from generation to generation (Aldi & Barizi, 2025). These values are embodied in customary norms and social practices that serve as ethical guidelines for fostering

harmonious relationships among people, social communities, and the natural environment (Martoredjo et al., 2023). In the context of indigenous communities, local wisdom is embodied in customary laws that govern various aspects of social life as well as the community's ecological relationship with the surrounding environment (Maria, 2018).

In the Selorejo Indigenous Community, customary law functions not only as a cultural heritage but also as an important form of social capital that supports collective action in environmental conservation. Customary norms concerning forest protection, sacred areas, water resource management, and communal responsibilities provide a shared value system that strengthens social cohesion and encourages community participation in environmental stewardship. These social resources enable the community to maintain conservation practices through mutual trust, collective responsibility, and intergenerational knowledge transmission.

However, the sustainability of customary law faces various challenges amid contemporary social change. Increasing land conversion, the expansion of market-oriented economic activities, modernization, and the declining interest of younger generations in customary traditions have created pressures on the transmission of local ecological knowledge. In addition, the dominance of formal legal and administrative approaches often leaves limited space for customary institutions to play a significant role in environmental governance. These conditions raise concerns regarding the continuity of customary ecological values and the preservation of community-based conservation practices.

Therefore, community-based initiatives are needed to strengthen the preservation and dissemination of customary ecological knowledge. In this study, community discussions and the production of a documentary film were conducted as efforts to document local wisdom, facilitate collective reflection, and reinforce ecological awareness among community members. These activities were expected to support the sustainability of customary law as a social resource for environmental conservation in the Selorejo Indigenous Community.

The existence of customary law demonstrates that Indonesia's legal system reflects the country's cultural diversity and long history. In practice, Indonesia has two main legal systems: customary law and statutory law (Dina Rahmita et al., 2025). Customary law is a traditional legal system rooted in the values, norms, and customs of local communities that have been passed down through generations, whereas statutory law is a modern legal system established and institutionalized through national legislation (Aji, 2017). These two legal systems coexist in society, even though each has its own distinct characteristics, principles, and mechanisms.

Amid increasing ecological damage, the existence of customary law becomes crucial because environmental issues cannot be understood merely as an ecological crisis, but also as a crisis in humanity's perspective on nature. The positive law approach to environmental conservation often remains administratively oriented and has not yet fully addressed the lived experiences of local communities. Top-down conservation policies tend to treat communities as objects of regulation, so that social participation and local values in environmental stewardship have not been given adequate space (Amin et al., 2025). This situation has meant that, in many cases, national laws have not yet been able to substantially foster ecological awareness among the public.

The national legal approach, which tends to be positivist, often fails to fully accommodate the existence of customary law in environmental management at the local level. As a result, the space for indigenous communities to implement social mechanisms aligned with their values and life experiences is becoming increasingly limited. This situation is exacerbated by modernization, land conversion, legal uncertainty regarding customary territories, and the relatively weak bargaining position of indigenous communities in relation to market forces and state policies. These challenges are also experienced by the Selorejo Indigenous Community, whose social and ecological life remains closely connected to the forest ecosystem of Mount Kawi. Community members reported concerns regarding environmental changes surrounding forest areas that have long functioned as sources of water, livelihoods, and customary practices. The loss of forest cover in the Greater Malang area,

as reported by WALHI (2021), reflects broader ecological pressures that may threaten the sustainability of local conservation practices and the transmission of customary ecological knowledge across generations. Consequently, the Selorejo community faces the dual challenge of maintaining environmental sustainability while preserving customary law as a living system of ecological governance.

In response to these challenges, the Selorejo Indigenous Community continues to uphold customary law as a guide for social and ecological life. Passed down across generations, customary law regulates not only relationships among community members but also the relationship between humans and nature. Its legitimacy derives from the community's collective experiences, values, and cultural practices rather than solely from formal state recognition. This condition reflects the concept of living law, which views law as a social institution that grows and develops within community life.

Despite its importance in maintaining environmental conservation, the transmission of customary ecological knowledge faces increasing challenges due to social change, modernization, and ecological pressures affecting local communities. As a result, efforts to document, preserve, and disseminate this knowledge have become increasingly important for sustaining ecological awareness and community participation in environmental stewardship.

To address this need, this initiative was carried out through community discussions and the production of a documentary film documenting customary ecological knowledge and environmental conservation practices within the Selorejo Indigenous Community. The community service activities aimed to preserve local ecological knowledge, strengthen ecological awareness, and promote community participation in environmental stewardship through the dissemination of customary environmental values. In addition, this article examines how customary law functions as a mechanism of community empowerment in strengthening ecological legal awareness. Specifically, it analyzes (1) how customary law encourages community participation in environmental conservation, (2) why the Selorejo Indigenous Community continues to rely on customary law as a socially legitimate

framework for environmental governance, and (3) how the living law perspective explains the role of customary law in sustaining ecological awareness and community-based conservation.

2 Method

This community engagement initiative was conducted in the Selorejo Indigenous Community, Dau District, Malang Regency, East Java. The program aimed to strengthen ecological awareness and preserve customary ecological knowledge through community discussions and the production of a documentary film on customary law and environmental conservation practices.

The implementation of the program consisted of several stages. First, a needs assessment and context identification phase was carried out to understand ecological issues, customary conservation practices, and community needs related to environmental preservation. Second, community engagement activities were conducted through meetings and discussions with customary leaders, local residents, and community groups involved in environmental conservation.

The next stage involved documentation and knowledge gathering through field observations, interviews, and documentation of customary law practices, traditional rituals, forest protection activities, and local ecological knowledge. The information collected was used as the primary material for documentary film production, including script development, visual documentation, and film editing.

Following the production process, community reflection and validation sessions were conducted to ensure that the documentary accurately represented community perspectives and customary environmental values. The documentary was then disseminated as an educational medium to promote ecological awareness, strengthen community participation, and preserve customary ecological knowledge.

Program outcomes were analyzed qualitatively through observations, interview results, community discussions, and documentation records. The analysis focused on understanding how customary law contributes to ecological awareness, community

participation, and community-based environmental conservation from the perspective of living law.

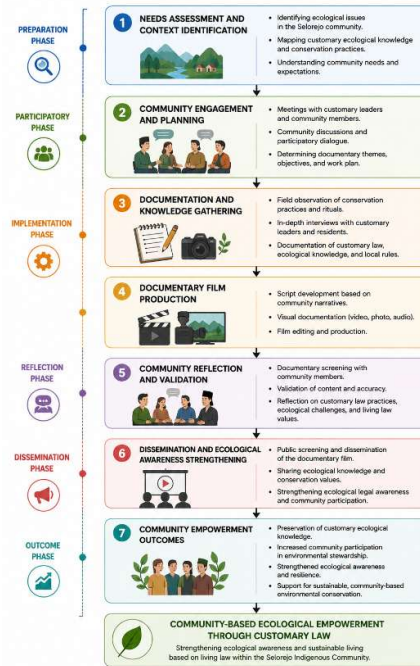


Figure 1. Stages of Community-Based Ecological Empowerment through Customary Law

Figure 1 illustrates the implementation stages of the community engagement program. The process began with needs assessment and context identification, followed by community engagement and planning activities. The next stages involved documentation of customary ecological knowledge, documentary film production, community validation, and dissemination activities. These stages were designed to strengthen ecological awareness, preserve customary ecological knowledge, and promote community participation in environmental conservation within the Selorejo Indigenous Community.

3 Results

The community engagement program implemented in the Selorejo Indigenous Community through participatory discussions and documentary film production generated several significant outcomes

that demonstrate the effectiveness of participatory approaches in strengthening ecological awareness and community empowerment. The initiative was designed not only as a means of documenting local wisdom but also as an educational and reflective platform that encouraged community members to revisit and reaffirm the customary values underpinning environmental governance. The findings indicate improvements in community understanding of customary ecological laws, enhanced participation in environmental conservation activities, and stronger collective commitment to protecting local natural resources. Furthermore, the active involvement of customary leaders, youth, and community members throughout the documentation process contributed to the preservation and intergenerational transmission of indigenous ecological knowledge. Based on field observations, interviews, and post-activity discussions, the impacts of the program can be understood through several key dimensions, as presented in the following sections.

Strengthening Customary Law Awareness through Participatory Documentation

The program demonstrated a significant contribution to strengthening awareness and understanding of customary ecological law within the Selorejo Indigenous Community. Through a series of participatory discussions and the production of a documentary film, the initiative functioned as a facilitative mechanism that encouraged collective reflection on existing environmental practices and the importance of customary regulations in natural resource management. The activities provided a structured space for community members to revisit traditional ecological knowledge that had long guided their relationship with forests, water sources, and sacred ecological areas.

A key feature of the intervention was the active involvement of customary leaders, elders, and community members throughout the documentary production process. Their participation extended beyond providing information; they were directly engaged in identifying significant ecological practices, validating local knowledge, and reviewing how customary norms were represented in the documentary. This collaborative approach ensured that the resulting media accurately

reflected local perspectives and strengthened community ownership of the conservation message. Such participation is consistent with community-based environmental governance approaches, where local actors become both producers and custodians of ecological knowledge.

Increased Community Understanding of Ecological Norms

The findings indicate that the program contributed to a noticeable increase in community understanding of customary environmental regulations and their relevance to contemporary environmental challenges. Prior to the intervention, several customary ecological rules were understood implicitly and transmitted informally through daily practice and oral traditions. However, many community members, particularly younger generations, had limited awareness of the broader ecological rationale underlying these traditions.

Following the discussion sessions and documentary screenings, participants demonstrated a clearer understanding of ecological boundaries established by customary law, including forest protection zones, restricted-use areas, and water source conservation sites. The visual and narrative format of the documentary enabled participants to better comprehend the relationship between customary norms and environmental sustainability. By making previously implicit knowledge more explicit and accessible, the documentary served as an effective educational tool that reinforced local environmental values.

Moreover, participants reported that the documentary facilitated intergenerational learning by creating opportunities for elders to share ecological knowledge with younger community members. This process contributed to the preservation and transmission of customary environmental knowledge, which is essential for maintaining long-term community resilience and ecological stewardship.

Enhancement of Community Participation in Environmental Conservation

Beyond increasing awareness, the program also generated positive changes in community attitudes toward environmental participation. The discussion forums encouraged participants to critically reflect on their individual and collective responsibilities in protecting local

ecosystems. As a result, many community members expressed a stronger commitment to conservation activities and recognized the practical importance of customary environmental regulations in safeguarding natural resources.

This shift in perception was reflected in greater willingness to engage in community-based conservation initiatives. Participants reported increased involvement in activities such as tree planting, forest monitoring, protection of water sources, and participation in customary deliberation forums addressing environmental issues. These findings suggest that strengthening ecological awareness through participatory communication can contribute to more active environmental engagement and collective action.

The results also demonstrate that customary law remains a relevant framework for environmental governance when supported by appropriate educational and participatory mechanisms. By reconnecting community members with local ecological values, the program helped reinforce social norms that encourage sustainable environmental behavior.

Observable Outcomes of Community Engagement

Several observable outcomes emerged during and after the implementation of the program. First, there was increased participation in community discussions and customary deliberation forums related to environmental management. Community members became more actively involved in conversations concerning ecological protection and the application of customary regulations.

Second, the program strengthened recognition of sacred ecological areas and customary forest boundaries. Participants demonstrated greater awareness of the cultural and ecological significance of these areas, contributing to stronger community commitment to their protection. Third, the intervention improved collective understanding of customary ecological rules, particularly among younger generations who had previously been less exposed to traditional environmental knowledge.

Fourth, increased engagement was observed in practical conservation activities, including reforestation efforts and community-based environmental monitoring. These outcomes indicate that the program successfully translated knowledge enhancement into observable behavioral changes and collective environmental action. Evidence for these outcomes was obtained through post-activity discussions, participant interviews, and field observations conducted throughout the implementation period.

Focused Contribution of the Intervention

The ecological conservation practices of the Selorejo Indigenous Community have developed through generations of cultural adaptation and local environmental management. Nevertheless, the present program specifically contributed by enhancing the visibility, accessibility, and transmission of these practices through participatory documentation and community dialogue. Rather than introducing new conservation mechanisms, the intervention strengthened existing customary institutions by providing tools that supported reflection, communication, and knowledge preservation.

The documentary film functioned not merely as an informational product but as a medium for cultural reinforcement and ecological education. By documenting local wisdom and making it available for broader community learning, the program contributed to the sustainability of customary ecological knowledge and strengthened community capacity for environmental stewardship. Consequently, the initiative illustrates how participatory media and community dialogue can serve as effective strategies for empowering indigenous communities and reinforcing customary environmental governance in the context of contemporary ecological challenges.

4 Discussion

1. Customary Law as a Living Conservation Practice

The findings indicate that the customary legal practices of the Selorejo community not only function as cultural traditions but also serve as a living ecological conservation mechanism deeply

embedded in the community's social practices. Various customary rituals, ecological prohibitions, the management of sacred areas, and collective efforts to protect the forest demonstrate that customary law operates as a value system that collectively governs the relationship between humans and nature.

The results show that these practices are actively reinforced through community involvement in discussions and the production of a documentary. The involvement of customary leaders and community members in identifying ecological practices and reviewing representations of customary law demonstrates that environmental knowledge is not only documented but also collectively reaffirmed. In this regard, customary law serves as a practical framework that guides community behavior in managing forest and water resources (Tias et al., 2026).



Figure 2. Several Customary Legal Practices

In this context, customary law represents the needs, life experiences, and aspirations of local communities that are often not fully accommodated within the state's formal legal framework. This is evident in how communities adhere more closely to customary rules regarding forest management than to top-down, formalistic administrative regulations.

The existence of customary law in Selorejo also demonstrates its flexible and adaptive nature in response to the community's social dynamics. Despite experiencing social change and the pressures of modernization, the community continues to uphold ecological values

passed down through generations via rituals, cultural symbols, and community social norms. This situation demonstrates that customary law is not static but remains vibrant and adapts to the community's needs without losing its cultural foundation. In the context of environmental management, customary law serves as a counterbalance to the positive law approach, which tends to be uniform and centralized. Customary-based conservation practices in Selorejo demonstrate that local communities possess ecological knowledge and social mechanisms capable of maintaining forest sustainability in a contextually appropriate manner, aligned with local environmental and cultural conditions.

Furthermore, the practice of customary law in ecological conservation in Selorejo demonstrates that environmental preservation is not merely understood as a technical issue, but also as part of the community's moral and social responsibility. Respect for sacred areas, the existence of ecological taboos, and customary rituals such as *selametan alas* and *selametan sumber* show that customary law contains an ethical dimension that guides community behavior in treating nature. Customary law functions not only as a social instrument in maintaining community order but also as a local ecological framework that fosters collective awareness among the community regarding the importance of maintaining environmental sustainability.

2. Strengthening Awareness and Understanding through Participatory Activities

The study found that the implementation of community discussions and documentary production contributed to increased awareness and understanding of customary ecological rules among participants. Community members demonstrated improved comprehension of ecological boundaries, particularly regarding forest protection zones and water source conservation areas.

The documentary functioned as a medium that made previously implicit customary norms more visible and easier to understand. As a result, participants were better able to recognize and articulate ecological rules that had previously been transmitted

mainly through oral tradition. This process of clarification also supported intergenerational communication, allowing ecological knowledge to be more effectively shared and understood across different age groups within the community.

In addition, the findings show that customary ecological rules in Selorejo are generally accepted and followed because they are rooted in long-standing community traditions and daily social practices. Community members tend to adhere to these rules due to their familiarity with ancestral teachings and their relevance to local environmental conditions, particularly in relation to forest protection and water source conservation.

The study also found that compliance with customary ecological rules is reflected in practices such as respecting sacred areas, following ecological prohibitions, and participating in community agreements related to environmental management. These practices indicate that customary norms are integrated into everyday life and are reinforced through social interaction within the community.

Furthermore, the results indicate that customary ecological rules are perceived as more accessible and understandable compared to formal regulations, because they are closely connected to the community's lived experiences. This contributes to the effectiveness of customary law in guiding environmental behavior in Selorejo.

Based on the findings, the process of strengthening awareness in this study can be understood as resulting from participatory activities that make customary ecological knowledge more visible, understandable, and communicable within the community. This process is illustrated in Figure 3.

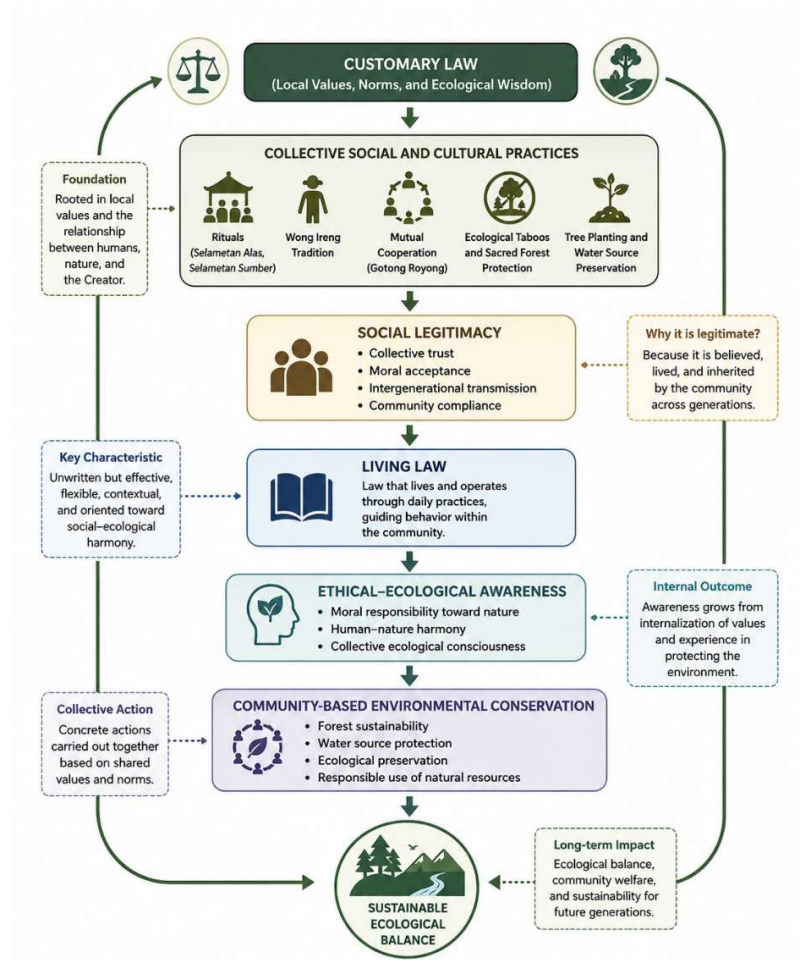


Figure 3. The Relationship between Customary Law, Living Law, and Ecological Awareness in the Selorejo Community

Figure 3 shows that customary ecological knowledge is maintained through daily social practices and community interactions. The participatory activities in this study, particularly discussions and documentary production, contributed to making this knowledge more explicit and easier to transmit. As a result, ecological awareness is strengthened through improved understanding and communication of customary ecological rules within the community.

3. Increased Participation in Ecological Conservation Practices

The findings show observable changes in community engagement in environmental conservation activities following participation in the program. Community members demonstrated increased willingness to take part in collective conservation practices such as tree planting, forest monitoring, and the maintenance of water sources.

In addition, there was increased participation in customary environmental discussions and deliberation forums. This indicates that the program contributed to encouraging greater community involvement in collective decision-making processes related to environmental management. The recognition of sacred ecological areas and forest boundaries also became more visible among community members. This suggests a strengthened shared understanding of customary ecological rules in relation to forest protection and water source conservation. These findings were identified through post-activity discussions, interviews, and field observations conducted during and after program implementation.

Overall, the results indicate that participation in both conservation activities and customary deliberation spaces is closely connected to the reinforcement of community engagement in environmental management. The program contributed to strengthening both practical involvement in conservation activities and collective awareness of ecological boundaries within the community context.

4. Clarification and Visibility of Customary Ecological Norms

The study highlights that one of the key contributions of the program is the clarification of customary ecological norms that were previously understood implicitly within the Selorejo Indigenous Community. Through participatory documentation and dialogue, these norms became more visible, structured, and easier to communicate among community members. This process helped strengthen the transmission of customary ecological knowledge within the community. By documenting and discussing existing

practices, the program supported the continuity of ecological understanding across generations. However, the intervention did not introduce new norms or alter existing customary rules, but rather focused on strengthening and clarifying practices that were already present in community life.

The findings indicate that the program contributed primarily to enhancing awareness, participation, and clarity of customary ecological practices within the Selorejo community. This was reflected in increased understanding of ecological boundaries, greater involvement in conservation activities, and improved communication of customary environmental rules.

Overall, the results suggest that participatory activities such as community discussions and documentary production can serve as effective tools for reinforcing existing customary ecological knowledge and encouraging collective environmental engagement. These activities functioned as a medium for making implicit knowledge more explicit and accessible within the community context.

The findings also show that customary ecological practices in Selorejo are closely embedded in daily social life and are reinforced through community interactions, rituals, and collective agreements. Practices such as forest protection, respect for sacred areas, and water source conservation reflect the integration of customary norms into everyday environmental behavior. However, the study also notes that the transmission of customary ecological knowledge relies heavily on oral tradition and social interaction, which makes documentation and participatory dialogue important in ensuring its continuity and clarity across generations.

5 Conclusion

This study concludes that the community-based program in the Selorejo Indigenous Community effectively strengthened ecological awareness through participatory documentation of customary ecological knowledge. The implementation of community discussions and

documentary film production contributed to increased understanding, visibility, and intergenerational transmission of customary environmental norms, particularly related to forest protection, water resource conservation, and collective environmental responsibilities. In addition, the documentary film also serves as an educational medium for disseminating indigenous ecological values and customary environmental practices to wider audiences beyond the local community. The findings further show that customary law operates as a socially grounded mechanism that encourages active community participation in environmental governance and conservation practices. It is recommended that participatory documentation approaches be further developed and supported as part of environmental education and empowerment strategies, both within indigenous communities and for broader public awareness of sustainable ecological stewardship.

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