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FESTIVAL GUNUNG SLAMET AS A BIOCULTURAL CONSERVATION PRACTICE BY LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN SERANG VILLAGE, PURBALINGGA: AN APPLICATION OF BIOCULTURAL APPROACHES IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the Festival Gunung Slamet (FGS) in Serang Village, Purbalingga, Indonesia, as a community-based biocultural conservation system in which ritual traditions, biodiversity utilization, and local socio-ecological practices are closely interconnected. The research aims to analyze the cultural practices embedded within the festival, identify ritual plant species and their cultural significance, and examine the roles of local communities in sustaining biocultural continuity. A mixed-method approach was employed using qualitative and quantitative data collected through in-depth interviews with eight purposively selected key informants, direct observation, and secondary data analysis. The cultural significance of ritual plants was analyzed using the Index of Cultural Significance (ICS), based on quality of use, intensity of use, and exclusivity.

The findings show that the festival consists of interconnected ritual structures combining cultural, environmental, and social functions. Core rituals such as *kenduri*, *Sikopyah* water collection, *kirab budaya*, and *ruwat bumi* function as mechanisms for transmitting values related to gratitude, purification, reciprocity, and human–nature relationships across generations. A total of 37 plant species belonging to 20 families were identified, primarily sourced from farmland, forest areas, home gardens, and perennial crop systems. The ICS analysis indicates that species with high cultural significance occupy central and relatively irreplaceable roles within ritual continuity due to their frequent use, symbolic importance, and low substitutability. However, high ICS values do not necessarily correspond with threatened conservation status, but instead reflect strong cultural attachment and ritual dependency. The study further demonstrates that recurring ritual practices create continuous demand for culturally important species, encouraging their cultivation, maintenance, and intergenerational knowledge transmission within the community. Overall, conservation within the Festival Gunung Slamet operates primarily through ritual continuity, cultural obligations, and community stewardship embedded within everyday socio-ecological practices rather than through formal ecological protection mechanisms.

Keywords: biocultural conservation, ritual plants, cultural festival, Index of Cultural Significance, socio-ecological system, community stewardship.

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FESTIVAL GUNUNG SLAMET SEBAGAI PRAKTIK KONSERVASI BIOKULTURAL OLEH MASYARAKAT LOKAL DI DESA SERANG, PURBALINGGA: PENERAPAN PENDEKATAN BIOKULTURAL DI INDONESIA

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INTISARI

Penelitian ini mengkaji Festival Gunung Slamet (FGS) di Desa Serang, Purbalingga, Indonesia, sebagai sistem konservasi biokultural berbasis masyarakat yang memperlihatkan keterkaitan antara tradisi ritual, pemanfaatan keanekaragaman hayati, dan praktik sosial-ekologis lokal. Penelitian bertujuan untuk menganalisis praktik budaya dalam festival, mengidentifikasi spesies tumbuhan ritual beserta signifikansi budayanya, serta mengkaji peran masyarakat lokal dalam mempertahankan keberlanjutan biokultural. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan mixed-method dengan kombinasi data kualitatif dan kuantitatif yang diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam terhadap delapan informan kunci yang dipilih secara purposive, observasi langsung, dan analisis data sekunder. Signifikansi budaya tumbuhan ritual dianalisis menggunakan Index of Cultural Significance (ICS) berdasarkan kualitas penggunaan, intensitas penggunaan, dan eksklusivitas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa festival tersusun atas rangkaian ritual yang saling terhubung dan memuat fungsi budaya, lingkungan, serta sosial. Ritual inti seperti kenduri, pengambilan air Sikopyah, kirab budaya, dan ruwat bumi berfungsi sebagai media transmisi nilai syukur, penyucian, relasi timbal balik, dan hubungan manusia dengan alam. Sebanyak 37 spesies tumbuhan dari 20 famili teridentifikasi dalam praktik ritual, yang sebagian besar berasal dari lahan pertanian, kawasan hutan, pekarangan, dan sistem tanaman tahunan. Analisis ICS menunjukkan bahwa spesies dengan signifikansi budaya tinggi menempati posisi sentral dan relatif sulit tergantikan dalam keberlanjutan ritual karena memiliki frekuensi penggunaan tinggi, makna simbolik penting, dan tingkat substitusi yang rendah. Namun, nilai ICS tinggi tidak selalu berkaitan dengan status konservasi terancam, melainkan keterikatan budaya dan ketergantungan ritual yang kuat. Penelitian ini juga menunjukkan bahwa pengulangan praktik ritual menciptakan kebutuhan terhadap spesies penting secara budaya sehingga mendorong budidaya, pemeliharaan, dan transmisi pengetahuan antargenerasi dalam masyarakat. Secara keseluruhan, konservasi dalam Festival Gunung Slamet berlangsung terutama melalui keberlanjutan ritual, kewajiban budaya, dan pengelolaan masyarakat dalam praktik sosial-ekologis sehari-hari, bukan melalui mekanisme perlindungan ekologis formal semata.

Kata kunci: konservasi biokultural, tumbuhan ritual, festival budaya, Index of Cultural Significance, sistem sosial-ekologis, pengelolaan masyarakat.

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