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Environmental Moral Education Values in the Serambeak Tradition

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ABSTRACT

Background: The Rejang ethnic group maintains a strong bond with the natural environment, which shapes a value system oriented toward its preservation. One medium for transmitting these values is the Serambeak tradition, which integrates Islamic teachings with local wisdom. **Objective:** This study aims to analyse the environmental moral education values embedded in the Serambeak tradition and examine their role in fostering ecological awareness within the community. **Method:** This research employs a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach, utilising analysis of Serambeak texts, interviews with traditional and religious leaders, and documentation. Data were analysed through stages of reduction, classification, and interpretation of meaning. **Main findings:** The findings indicate that Serambeak serves as an effective medium for environmental moral education, encompassing three primary dimensions: loving nature as a creation of Allah (SWT), preserving environmental sustainability, and reflecting on the continuity of nature. These values strengthen the community's connection to the environment and promote sustainable ecological behaviour. **Conclusion:** The Serambeak tradition, as a local cultural institution, functions as an effective means of transmitting environmental moral education, as it aligns with the community's psychological and cultural context. **Contribution:** This study contributes to the development of education grounded in local wisdom and enriches the discourse on Islamic education in environmental contexts.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Value systems in traditional societies play a fundamental role in shaping individuals' and communities' mind-sets, attitudes, and social behaviour. These values function not only as normative guidelines but also as a frame of reference for determining what is good or bad, right or wrong, and appropriate or inappropriate in social life. In communities that strongly uphold tradition, values are transmitted from generation to generation through cultural institutions such as customs, oral traditions, and everyday social practices (Winursiti et al., 2025). This transmission process occurs naturally through intensive social interaction, allowing these values to become deeply embedded in the collective consciousness. A strong value system contributes to social order, reinforces cultural identity, and fosters harmony between humans, the environment, and the spiritual dimensions of life (Hasan, 2025).

From an Islamic perspective, these values are embodied in the concept of *akhlak* (moral conduct), which encompasses all dimensions of human life. *Akhlak* regulates not only the vertical relationship between humans and God (*hablum minallah*) but also horizontal relationships among people (*hablum minannas*) and ecological relationships with the natural environment. Islam views nature as God's creation with intrinsic value that must be treated responsibly (Syahruramadhan et al., 2026). Humans, as *khalifah* (stewards) on Earth, are entrusted with maintaining

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ecological balance and preventing environmental damage that could threaten the sustainability of life (Noviani, 2024). Therefore, the ideal condition is the development of ecological awareness that is not merely rational but also spiritual and moral, encouraging environmentally responsible behaviour as an expression of faith-based values.

However, contemporary social realities reveal a significant gap between this ideal condition and the actual practices of modern society (Kusuma et al., 2025). Various forms of environmental degradation such as deforestation, land degradation, water and air pollution, and the excessive exploitation of natural resources indicate a weakening of moral awareness toward the environment (Marifah et al., 2025). This phenomenon is driven not only by economic and technological factors but also by shifts in value systems that increasingly prioritise materialistic and pragmatic orientations. At the same time, globalisation and modernisation have accelerated the erosion of local cultures, including the weakening of traditions as vehicles for value education (Suryati et al., 2025). Oral traditions, which have long served as effective means of transmitting moral values, are increasingly marginalised, disrupting intergenerational value transmission (Achmad et al., 2025).

Islamic education, in this context, develops dynamically through a dialectical process with social realities, allowing its values to be internalised in various forms of local cultural institutions (Supriadin & Pababari, 2024). Cultural institutions serve as effective media for value reproduction due to their emotional proximity, contextual relevance, and strong social legitimacy (Lagus et al., 2025). Within this framework, oral tradition becomes a crucial instrument in cultural education, conveying moral messages symbolically, narratively, and aesthetically in ways that are accessible and meaningful to the community (Hariadi et al., 2025).

Several studies indicate that moral education is closely linked to the development of ecological awareness (Chasanah, 2022; Yudi, 2025). Research from an Islamic education perspective emphasises that environmental values are integral to the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, highlighting principles such as balance (*tawazun*), responsibility (*amanah*), and the prohibition of causing harm (*fasad*) (Habibah et al., 2025; Widiastuty & Anwar, 2025). In addition, studies on local wisdom across various indigenous communities demonstrate that traditional cultural practices embody adaptive and sustainable values for environmental conservation (Antoni et al., 2025; Anwar et al., 2025). These values are often expressed through customary norms, myths, symbols, and oral traditions that serve as mechanisms of social control over the use of natural resources.

A review of previous studies shows that research on oral traditions has generally focused on linguistic, literary, and socio-cultural aspects. Some studies have also examined the role of oral traditions as media for character and moral education. However, research that specifically integrates environmental moral education with local oral traditions remains limited. In particular, within the context of the Rejang ethnic community, comprehensive studies examining the environmental moral values embedded in the Serambeak tradition remain scarce. This indicates a significant research gap, especially in efforts to connect Islamic values, local culture, and environmental education within an integrated analytical framework.

Within the Rejang community in Bengkulu Province, the Serambeak tradition represents a form of cultural heritage with high educational value. As an oral literary tradition, Serambeak functions not only as a medium of aesthetic communication but also as a vehicle for conveying life values encompassing social, moral, and spiritual aspects (Maharani et al., 2024). The Rejang people, who live in mountainous areas, have a high level of dependence on the natural environment, which shapes a collective awareness of maintaining ecological balance and sustainability (Prihatiningrum, 2020). These values are internalised through Serambeak through symbolic expressions that convey moral messages about respecting, protecting, and preserving nature as part of human responsibility.

Amid rapid social change, the existence of Serambeak as a culturally based educational medium faces various challenges, particularly in terms of preservation and its relevance to younger generations. Modernisation and advances in information technology have transformed communication patterns, leading to a decline in the use of oral traditions in everyday life (Zamhari et al., 2025). Without proper documentation and revitalisation efforts, this tradition risks extinction, ultimately leading to the loss of an important source of societal values. Therefore, studying Serambeak is highly relevant not only for cultural preservation but also for developing educational models grounded in local wisdom and oriented toward environmental sustainability.

This study aims to identify, describe, and analyse in depth the environmental moral education values embedded in the Serambeak tradition of the Rejang ethnic group. In addition, it seeks to examine the role of Serambeak as a cultural medium in the internalisation of ecological values rooted in Islamic teachings and local wisdom. The study also aims to explain how these values shape community awareness, attitudes, and behaviours regarding environmental preservation. Furthermore, it explores the relevance of Serambeak values in contemporary education, particularly in the development of culturally grounded educational models oriented toward environmental sustainability.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative, ethnographic design. This approach was selected because the study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the meanings, values, and cultural practices embedded in the Serambeak tradition within the Rejang ethnic community. Ethnographic research enables the exploration of social realities in their natural context through direct interaction with participants in their everyday environment. Accordingly, this study not only describes observable phenomena but also interprets the meanings of environmental moral education values as they are lived and practised within the tradition.

2.2 Participants

The participants in this study are members of the Rejang community who possess knowledge of and are directly involved in the Serambeak tradition. Informants were selected purposively based on criteria aligned with the research objectives. These criteria include traditional leaders, community leaders, cultural practitioners, and individuals who understand and continue to practice the Serambeak tradition. In addition, younger community members were included to capture insights into the intergenerational transmission of values and the challenges faced in sustaining the tradition. The number of informants was determined flexibly based on the principle of data saturation, that is, when the information obtained became repetitive, and no new themes emerged.

2.3 Data Collection

Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation: Participant observation was conducted to directly examine the practice of the Serambeak tradition in community life. This method allowed the researcher to understand the social context, interaction patterns, and symbolic meanings embedded in the cultural practices. In-depth Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants to explore the meanings, functions, and environmental moral education values within the Serambeak tradition. This approach provided informants with the flexibility to share their experiences and perspectives in depth. Documentation: Documentation was used to complement the data by collecting relevant materials, including written records, field notes, audio recordings, and Serambeak texts. These documentary sources supported and validated findings from observations and interviews. Technique and source triangulation were applied to enhance data validity, ensuring that the findings are scientifically robust and credible.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted interactively and continuously, beginning during data collection and continuing through to the conclusion stage. The analysis followed a qualitative data analysis model consisting of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data Reduction: This stage involved selecting, focusing, and simplifying raw field data, allowing relevant information aligned with the research objectives to be clearly identified. Data Display: Data were organised and presented in a systematic descriptive narrative to facilitate the identification of patterns, relationships, and underlying meanings. Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Conclusions were drawn and continuously verified through data interpretation, triangulation, and member checking with informants to ensure the consistency and validity of the findings.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

Serambeak is an expressive form of conveying inner thoughts and conscience using refined, aesthetic, rhythmic language rich in figurative expressions. It is a living cultural institution passed down from generation to generation, intended to guide individuals toward proper conduct in everyday social interactions. Serambeak is commonly used to offer advice, encouraging individuals to adapt to their environment and interact with others in accordance with customary norms and religious values.

As an oral literary tradition, Serambeak represents the cultural and literary expressions of the Rejang people, transmitted orally from one generation to the next. Its oral nature gives it a distinguished and respected position within the community, particularly within the broader framework of Rejang cultural practices.

Table 1. Environmental Moral Education Values in the Serambeak Tradition of the Rejang Ethnic Group

No.	Category of Environmental Moral Values	Serambeak Excerpt	Meaning / Interpretation	Educational Implications
1	Respect for the Natural Environment	*"Stabik magea di mnea…"*	Nature is God's creation that must be respected; human treatment of nature determines the consequences received	Instills theological awareness and ecological responsibility
2	Preservation of Ancestral Land and Forests	*"Taneak tanai utan piandan"*	Land and forests are ancestral heritage that must be preserved for future generations	Fosters conservation attitudes and intergenerational responsibility
3	Protecting Plants and Avoiding Harm to Animals	*"Meak tembang banea…"*	Prohibits damaging plants and harming living beings; emphasizes ecological balance	Develops ecological empathy and ethical treatment of living beings
4	Protecting Water Sources and Rivers	*"Bioa tik kaka te mnei…"*	Water as a vital resource must be preserved and protected from pollution	Promotes awareness of sustainable water resource management
5	Reflecting on Environmental Sustainability	*"Lenget coa betiang bumei…"*	Humans are encouraged to reflect on God's creation and maintain environmental sustainability	Encourages critical reflection and ecological awareness
6	Serambeak as an Educational Medium	Serambeak oral tradition	An effective medium for transmitting environmental moral values through local culture	Strengthens value internalization through cultural approaches
7	Integration of Islam and Local Culture	Moral values within Serambeak	Represents an acculturation between Islamic teachings and local wisdom	Produces contextual and culturally relevant educational models

The findings indicate that the Serambeak tradition functions as a culturally embedded medium for transmitting environmental moral education that integrates Islamic values with local wisdom. Through symbolic expressions and poetic language, Serambeak internalises ecological ethics such as respect for nature as God's creation, responsibility for preserving natural resources, and reflective awareness of environmental sustainability into the collective consciousness of the Rejang community. These values are not merely normative but are socially enforced through customary practices, shaping attitudes and behaviours toward harmonious human nature relationships. The study highlights that culturally grounded educational approaches, such as Serambeak, are particularly effective because they resonate with the community's belief system, emotional attachments, and social structure, thereby strengthening ecological awareness and sustainable practices across generations.

Serambeak is typically conveyed by elders, such as grandparents and parents, and by respected figures, including traditional leaders, community leaders, and religious authorities, to younger generations or the broader community. Because it involves direct interaction between the speaker and the audience, Serambeak possesses a communal character, fostering a shared sense of ownership. This distinguishes it from written literature, which tends to be individual in nature, as it is consumed privately and does not require direct interaction between the narrator and the audience.

As an oral tradition, Serambeak consists of a body of literary expressions or spoken texts delivered verbally. It encompasses cultural, historical, and social dimensions of the Rejang community, as well as elements within the broader domain of literature. These expressions are created and transmitted across generations in accordance with their aesthetic values, preserving collective memory and identity.

Serambeak embodies beliefs, life principles, social order, behavioural norms, and standards of politeness rooted in the Rejang people's customs and religious values. Within Rejang customary law, "Serambeak" represents strong conviction, adherence to tradition and religion, guidelines for individual and social relationships, and codes of ethical

conduct aimed at maintaining communal well-being. In this sense, Serambeak functions as a medium for conveying and socialising Islamic values within the Rejang community through verbal expression.

The transmission of Serambeak occurs through statements and expressions delivered by elders to younger generations. This process becomes widespread as Serambeak serves as a constant reminder in daily interactions. Moreover, it functions as a powerful normative and regulatory framework, involving both individual and social sanctions. The dissemination of Serambeak engages all levels of society. In the book *Jurai Adat Suku Rejang: Tumbak Berambai Payung Agung*, Abdullah Sani (n.d., p. 2) explains:

"Serambeak emphasises fundamental principles as guidelines for implementing customary law, while also introducing valuable ancestral heritage to be passed on to future generations. It plays a role in governing village life, as expressed in customary sayings that highlight unity, shared ownership, social harmony, and collective responsibility. Customs bind villages, and communities are upheld by moral values, mutual understanding, spoken agreements, and shared commitments."

Like other forms of oral literature, Serambeak centres on themes of life, offering narratives that yield valuable lessons. Oral traditions naturally convey moral messages that leave a deep impression on listeners because they are closely connected to real-life experiences within the community. For this reason, Serambeak contains noble values that can be developed and utilised in cultural and literary formation. Its preservation is considered crucial, as it largely resides in the memory of elders, whose numbers are gradually declining. Serambeak also supports the development of oral language and serves as a medium for expressing thought patterns, attitudes, and cultural values within the community. As a cultural practice rooted in language, it is closely tied to the advancement of the community's linguistic heritage. Therefore, efforts to preserve and safeguard Serambeak are essential to ensure that future generations can continue to recognise and appreciate this rich oral cultural legacy.

3.2 Discussion

a) The Value System of Moral Education

Moral education (*akhlak*) is a fundamental component of Islamic education, as the prophetic mission of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) centred on the refinement of moral character. The term *akhlak* is derived from the Arabic plural of *khuluqun*, which linguistically refers to character, disposition, behaviour, or temperament. From this definition, *akhlak* concerns human actions toward oneself, others, and the surrounding environment. The concept of *akhlak* provides a framework for distinguishing between good and bad, serving as a basis for human action and moral choice (Sahnan, 2018).

Akhlak is a mental and spiritual quality that governs the relationship between humans and Allah (SWT) and interactions among individuals within society. The quality of moral behaviour in educational settings is significantly influenced by the type of education teachers provide (Jannah, 2019). Thus, moral education plays a crucial role in shaping students' character and ethical conduct.

Furthermore, *akhlak* is the manifestation of one's *aqidah* (faith). The strength or weakness of a person's faith can be observed through their moral conduct, as *akhlak* reflects the state of faith within the heart (Ginanjar & Kurniawati, 2017). Good actions indicate strong faith, whereas poor behaviour reflects weak faith. Therefore, good moral character is intrinsically linked to faith, while immoral behaviour contradicts its principles. Even if certain actions appear outwardly good, they hold no value in the sight of Allah if they are not grounded in faith (Abdul, 2016). Such actions are likened to a mirage in the desert, appearing real but lacking substance.

b) The Value System of Environmental Moral Education

The Rejang ethnic group resides in mountainous areas, where the majority of the population works as farmers and relies heavily on forest resources. Many community members still live in agricultural and plantation settings, making them highly dependent on natural conditions. As a result, the Rejang people are taught not only to use natural resources for their livelihoods but also to preserve and sustain the environment.

According to Ahmad Dibul Amda, the ancestors of the Rejang people recognised that uncontrolled, unregulated exploitation of nature began when humans developed a greater capacity to dominate their environment. While such exploitation has brought increased material prosperity, advancements in science and technology have also intensified environmental degradation.

Environmental damage caused by humans largely stems from their worldview. An opportunistic perspective tends to view nature merely as a commodity for profit, granting humans unrestricted freedom to exploit it. In contrast, the Rejang community is taught that humans are inherently connected to and dependent upon the natural

environment. Through customary institutions, individuals are guided to develop a sense of moral responsibility toward nature and to view it as a companion rather than an object of exploitation.

Customary institutions emphasise harmonious interaction between humans and their environment, fostering care and guidance so that all beings may fulfil their purpose of creation (Firmanda, 2017). This framework encourages individuals to act responsibly, avoid environmental destruction, and cultivate behaviours that are good, noble, and praiseworthy, while refraining from harmful actions. Ultimately, such values contribute to the creation of a peaceful and prosperous society.

Based on the researcher's findings, several Serambeak expressions contain environmental moral values, which can be classified as follows:

1) Respecting the Natural Environment

"Stabik magea di mnea, stabik kulo magea jano dineane, baik ite murusne baik kulo ite tmimone, kidek ite mneane kidek kulo ite mdingne"

Meaning: Respect the Creator of nature, and respect also what has been created. If humans treat nature well, they will receive its goodness; if they treat it poorly, they will experience negative consequences.

Serambeak teaches the Rejang community that respecting the universe is equivalent to honouring God as its Creator (Maharani et al., 2024). This principle aligns with Islamic teachings, which emphasise balance in all aspects of human life. Islam does not permit humans to prioritise one aspect of life while neglecting others (Ramdhan, 2018). These values are rooted in divine guidance, free from selfish desires, and aim to lead humanity toward dignity, mercy, and guidance for both worldly and eternal well-being.

Serambeak also emphasises that the entire universe belongs to God and is His creation. These principal forms part of a Muslim's theological belief, and denying it has serious implications for faith. It is inherently connected to the declaration of faith (*kalimah shahada* or *tawhid*), which affirms the oneness of Allah. This acknowledgement carries significant consequences, including the belief that all existence belongs to Allah. As stated in the Qur'an, particularly in Surah Al-Baqarah 284, all that is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Him.

لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَإِنْ تُبْدُوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبْكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ ۖ فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

Meaning: To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the Earth. Whether you reveal what is within yourselves or conceal it, Allah will call you to account for it. He forgives whom He wills and punishes whom He wills, and Allah is All-Powerful over all things.

The phrase *li-Allah* (لله), which begins the verse above, is commonly translated as "belongs to Him." However, many scholars of Qur'anic exegesis interpret it not only as ownership but also as referring to His role as the Creator, Sustainer, and Regulator of all existence. Indeed, the entire universe is created by Allah, belongs to Him, and is governed by Him; thus, everything submits to His will, whether willingly or not.

The subsequent phrase in the Serambeak expression, *"baik ite murusne baik kulo ite tmimone,"* conveys that the Rejang community must treat nature properly if they wish to receive its benefits. Conversely, the phrase *"kidek ite mneane kidek kulo ite mdingne"* indicates that harmful treatment of nature will result in negative consequences for the community.

These two expressions reflect the principle of *istikhlaf*, which holds that humans are entrusted with the responsibility to manage and care for the Earth as their living environment. *Istikhlaf* implies that absolute ownership belongs solely to Allah, while humans are entrusted with the responsibility to manage and preserve what has been given to them. Therefore, this principle must be understood alongside the concept of *amanah* (trust), which inherently requires accountability and responsibility.

The Rejang community, the majority of whom are farmers and rely heavily on natural resources, has approximately 78.2 per cent of its population directly dependent on how they treat the environment. If they care for nature responsibly, they will obtain favourable agricultural and forest yields. Conversely, poor environmental management negatively affects these outcomes (Juliansyah & Kurniawan, 2024). Moreover, environmental degradation has broader impacts on daily life, including drought, limited water resources for agriculture, difficulty accessing forest products, and air and water pollution.

2) Preserving Ancestral Land and Forests

"Taneak tanai utan piandan"

Meaning: Ancestral land and forests passed down through generations.

The ancestors of the Rejang community recognised that forest-related environmental issues are complex and closely tied to human behaviour, which has gradually declined in both quality and quantity in its support for human life. Therefore, preserving ancestral forests for future generations is a core principle upheld by the Rejang people in maintaining land and forest sustainability.

According to the Chair of the Rejang Lebong BMA, this Serambeak teaches the community to act justly and do good toward ancestral land and forests. The Islamic principle of justice (*'adl*) and benevolence (*ihsan*) is not limited to human interactions but extends to all creations, including animals, plants, and even inanimate entities. This is affirmed in the Qur'an, particularly in Surah An-Nahl 90, which emphasises justice, goodness, and moral responsibility in all aspects of life.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ ۚ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

Meaning: "Indeed, Allah commands justice, excellence, and giving to relatives, and He forbids immorality, wrongdoing, and oppression. He instructs you that you may take heed."

This Serambeak expression also represents a pledge of loyalty to the homeland, particularly directed at anyone who attempts to seize customary lands. In many regions, the rights to customary land and forests have been taken through political and economic power. However, based on data from BKSD and TNKS, forest degradation in the Rejang area remains relatively low, largely because violations are firmly sanctioned under customary law.

Protecting ancestral land and forests from external threats is a core customary principle consistently upheld by the Rejang community. Equally important, however, is safeguarding these lands from internal damage caused by the community itself. This includes preserving the sustainability of land and all its contents, such as plants and animals. Therefore, regulations governing the proper use of forest resources and hunting practices are clearly based on Rejang customary law.

2) Preserving Plants and Avoiding Harm to Animals

"Meak tembang banea temanem boak"

"Dang cemcuk sembarang tebuk, dang mnyeak sembarang lubang, kete di benyawo dang mngis"

Meaning: Do not cut down trees, but instead plant fruit-bearing ones. Do not dig holes carelessly, do not urinate in holes indiscriminately, and do not harm any living being.

The phrase *"meak tembang banea"* implies a prohibition against cutting down trees merely to obtain their fruit, as this would eliminate the long-term productivity of the tree and disrupt the natural process of fruit development. This teaching aligns with the principles of Islamic moral ethics, which discourage taking fruit before it ripens or picking flowers before they bloom. Such actions deny living beings the opportunity to fulfil their purpose of creation.

This reflects a broader ethical principle that humans are required to respect natural processes and the continuity of life. Interfering destructively with these processes is considered a violation not only against nature but also against oneself. Environmental destruction, therefore, is understood as self-destruction. This is affirmed in the Qur'an, particularly in Surah Ar-Rum (41), which highlights the consequences of human actions on the environment.

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

Meaning: "Corruption has appeared on land and sea as a result of what human hands have done, so that Allah may let them taste some of the consequences of their actions, in order that they may return to the right path."

This Serambeak reflects Islamic moral teachings that prohibit the destruction of plants and trees. This principle is illustrated in a historical account in which, during his leadership as caliph, Abu Bakr instructed troops sent to Syria not to cut down or destroy trees, even in times of war.

Meanwhile, the phrase *"temanem boak"* encourages the planting of fruit-bearing trees so that the community may enjoy their benefits. This teaching aligns with the guidance of Prophet Muhammad, who encouraged Muslims to plant trees for various purposes, including food production, land restoration, and other beneficial uses.

Serambeak also teaches the Rejang community not to harm animals. This is reflected in the phrase *"Dang cemcuk sembarang tebuk,"* which prohibits indiscriminately piercing holes in trees, poles, or walls, as these may be inhabited by animals that could be injured or killed. Similarly, the phrase *"dang mnyeak sembarang lubang"* forbids pouring water or urinating into holes in the ground, as they may contain living creatures. The expression *"kete di benyawo dang mngis"* further emphasises the prohibition against harming any living being, whether they dwell underground, crawl, walk, swim in water, or fly in the air.

Through these teachings, Serambeak instructs the Rejang community to treat animals with kindness and compassion, even when they are slaughtered for consumption. As fellow creations of God, animals must be treated gently, cared for properly, provided with food and water, and maintained in accordance with their natural habitats.

4) Preserving Water Sources and Rivers

"Bioa tik kaka te mnei matei bioane dang ite tmitik, bioa lei kaka ite jmalei msoa kan mestei ite jmago mako dapet lei"

Meaning: The spring water we use for bathing should not be diminished, and the rivers where we fish must be preserved so that we may obtain abundant results.

Traditionally, the Rejang community shares common bathing places known as *Unen*, which may be located at natural springs (*bioa tik*) or along riverbanks. As such, the community is prohibited from damaging these water sources in ways that reduce their flow, as expressed in the phrase *"bioane dang ite tmitik"* (do not diminish the water source). Such damage may occur through direct destruction of springs or through deforestation in surrounding areas that serve as water catchment zones.

Furthermore, the phrase *"bioa lei kaka ite jmalei msoa kan mestei ite jmago mako dapet lei"* emphasises that rivers used for fishing must be carefully preserved and protected from pollution. Maintaining clean and healthy rivers ensures that fish and other aquatic life can thrive and grow. For the Rejang community, fishing is generally not a primary occupation, although some individuals engage in it as a supplementary source of income.

Water is essential to human life. In the Rejang community, reliance on water extends beyond groundwater sources, with many now depending on treated river water for daily use. Therefore, maintaining water quality is critical, as pollution would directly affect their livelihoods and well-being.

5) Reflecting on the Universe

"Lenget coa betiang bumei bi napea, gunung bi ten gak, bioa bi lacea, ade di nak lem pitak ade di nak das pitak ade di lem bioa ade di nak udaro, jano igei di coa te meker ne men itek lak mukak akai bi lekep jano di nlie gen ite, men lak idup sitak nyabei"

Meaning: The sky stands without pillars, the Earth has been spread out, mountains stand firmly, and water flows continuously. There are creatures beneath the ground, on the surface, in the water, and in the air. What else is there that we should not contemplate, if we are willing to open our minds? Everything has been provided completely for us as human beings; if we wish to live, we need only to breathe.

The expression *"lenget coa betiang bumei bi napea, gunung bi ten gak, bioa bi lacea, ade di nak lem pitak, ade di nak das pitak, ade di lem bioa ade di nak udaro"* describes the greatness of God's creation, including the sky, Earth, mountains, water, air, and the diverse habitats of living beings. The phrase *"jano igei di coa te meker ne men itek lak mukak akai"* calls upon the Rejang community to reflect upon these creations as rational beings. Furthermore, *"bi lekep jano di nlie gen ite, men lak idup sitak nyabei"* emphasises that all these natural elements are blessings from Allah, provided to sustain human life.

This Serambeak highlights the natural environment as a living space created by God, to be contemplated by humans as thinking beings. According to Syafruddin, this teaching encourages three forms of reflection: first, contemplating the greatness of the Creator who has fashioned the Universe in perfect order; second, considering how the natural world can be utilised for human welfare; and third, reflecting on how to preserve environmental sustainability.

Overall, these Serambeak expressions embody essential environmental moral values that the Rejang community must uphold. They reflect the concept that humans are created as *khalifah* (stewards) on Earth, with all natural resources provided for their benefit. Accordingly, the community must recognise that plants, animals, water, and air are divine provisions that must be utilised responsibly. This requires maintaining, protecting, and preserving the environment, avoiding any form of destruction. Through such moral conduct toward nature, a peaceful, harmonious, and prosperous society can be achieved, ultimately representing the fundamental goal of ethical life in both social and national contexts.

The findings of this study reveal that the environmental moral education values embedded in the Serambeak tradition play a significant role in shaping ecological awareness, a sense of responsibility, and pro-environmental behaviour within the community. These values function not only as cultural norms passed down through generations but also as effective educational instruments for instilling environmental ethics grounded in local wisdom. The process of value internalisation through traditional practices demonstrates a strong integration of spiritual, social, and ecological dimensions, fostering harmonious interactions between humans and the natural environment.

Furthermore, these findings highlight that the Serambeak tradition holds strong potential as a culturally responsive model of character education that is both relevant and sustainable. The integration of such local values into formal and non-formal education systems can strengthen efforts to cultivate environmentally responsible generations. Therefore, leveraging local wisdom such as the Serambeak tradition not only contributes to cultural preservation but also serves as an effective strategy for advancing environmental education and supporting sustainable development in contemporary society.

4. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

4.1 Research Implications

The findings of this study suggest that integrating local cultural traditions such as Serambeak into educational practices can enhance the effectiveness of environmental moral education. By presenting ecological values through meaningful cultural narratives, learners are more likely to internalise ethical attitudes toward the environment. This approach is highly relevant to the development of context-based curricula in Islamic education and in guidance and counselling services, both of which emphasise aligning values with cultural contexts. In addition, the study indicates that the preservation and revitalisation of oral traditions can serve as a strategic means of fostering sustainability awareness amid the forces of modernisation, which often erode local culture.

4.2 Research Contributions

This study offers a new perspective on integrating environmental moral education, Islamic values, and local wisdom within a unified analytical framework. It enriches the field of education by demonstrating that oral traditions function not only as cultural heritage but also as effective pedagogical instruments for value transmission. Furthermore, the study provides empirical insights into the Rejang community, which remains relatively underrepresented in academic literature, thereby addressing an existing research gap. It also proposes a culturally grounded educational model that can be adapted to similar socio-cultural contexts.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIREC-TIONS

5.1 *Research Limitataions*

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the qualitative approach with an ethnographic design result in findings that are context-specific and not broadly generalizable beyond the Rejang community. Second, the data rely heavily on the interpretations of both the researcher and the informants, which may introduce subjectivity, despite the use of triangulation techniques. Third, the limited availability of written documentation on the Serambeak tradition means that much of the data is derived from the oral recollections of traditional leaders, which may lead to variations in interpretation. Fourth, this study does not extensively examine the effectiveness of implementing these values within formal educational settings or their impact on behavioural change among younger generations.

5.2 *Recommendation for Future Risearch Direction*

In light of these limitations, future research is recommended to adopt mixed-methods approaches to more objectively measure the effectiveness of Serambeak values in shaping ecological behaviour. Further studies could also expand the scope by conducting comparative research across different indigenous communities to identify similarities and differences in environmental wisdom. Additionally, it is important to explore integrating Serambeak values into formal education curricula and into guidance and counselling services in schools. Future research may also investigate the role of younger generations in preserving oral traditions in the digital era, including the use of technology as a medium for cultural revitalisation.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study indicate that environmental moral education within the Serambeak tradition encompasses several key aspects: fostering awareness of respecting nature as a creation of Allah (SWT), encouraging behaviours that protect and preserve the environment, and promoting continuous reflection on environmental sustainability. These values are not conveyed merely in a normative or didactic manner; rather, they are deeply internalised through symbolic expressions, metaphors, and culturally embedded practices that are easily understood and meaningfully experienced by the community in their daily lives. As a result, environmental ethics are not perceived

as abstract concepts but as lived values that guide attitudes, decision-making, and collective responsibility toward nature. This form of value transmission strengthens both individual moral consciousness and sustainable communal ecological commitment.

The Rejang ethnic group lives within a strong cultural and customary system, in which Serambeak serves as an important oral tradition that represents the convergence of Islamic teachings and local culture. This tradition functions as a medium through which religious messages are contextualised into culturally relevant forms, making them more accessible and acceptable to the community. Within Serambeak are embedded moral educational values, particularly those related to environmental ethics, which have become an integral part of social norms and everyday practices. The environmental moral education reflected in Serambeak illustrates a harmonious process of acculturation and accommodation, in which Islamic principles are not imposed but rather integrated with local wisdom, resulting in a balanced, culturally resonant ethical framework.

Furthermore, Serambeak, as a culturally based educational medium, has proven effective in transmitting environmental moral values through its aesthetic appeal, narrative structure, and psychological closeness to the community. Its expressive and symbolic nature allows values to be communicated in ways that engage emotions, reinforce memory, and encourage reflection. The presence of Serambeak has also facilitated the acceptance of Islam as a later-introduced religion, while simultaneously preserving and strengthening the cultural identity of the Rejang people. Therefore, this tradition plays a strategic role not only in maintaining environmental sustainability through value-based practices but also in shaping moral character, fostering social cohesion, and promoting behaviours that align with both Islamic teachings and contemporary sustainability principles.

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Author Contribution Statement

All authors discussed the results, contributed to the final manuscript, and approved the final version for publication. Fakhruddin: Conceptualization and Design, Methodology, Writing - Original Draft. Muhammad Taqiyuddin: Writing - Review & Editing, Performed data collection and Analysis, Interpretation of the results.

Declaration of Generative AI (GenAI) Usage in Scientific Writing

In writing this article, the authors used QuillBot to assist with technical aspects, such as language editing, sentence refinement, and clarity improvement. However, all ideas, analyses, data interpretations, and conclusions are the original work of the authors. All instances of Generative AI usage in this article were conducted by the authors in accordance with the IJCES GenAI Tool Usage Policy, with the authors assuming full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and integrity of the work."

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest in this study, whether financial or non-financial, that could have influenced the research findings or the interpretation of the data presented in this article.

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