

# Character Education Based on Local Wisdom: An Analysis of the Modernisation Impact on the *Ngayu-ayu* Ritual in Sembalun Lombok

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**Abstract:** The community of Sembalun Village preserves profound local wisdom through the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual, a practice upheld to express gratitude to Allah Almighty. This research aims to analyse the character education values inherent in the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual and investigate modernisation's impacts on this cultural tradition. Employing a qualitative research method, key figures from the community, including cultural, religious, youth, and community leaders, were chosen as research subjects through *purposive sampling*. The *Ngayu-ayu* ritual encapsulates a diverse array of character education values, encompassing religiosity, communal cooperation (*gotong-royong*), tolerance, national spirit, patriotism, environmental consciousness, responsibility, discipline, and the appreciation of achievements. However, the ritual has undergone substantial changes due to the influence of modernisation. Ritual stages have been abbreviated and sometimes omitted, with a meticulous preservation of the sacrosanct elements. The traditional practice of fetching water from the 13 sacred springs, once undertaken on foot, now involves using vehicular transport. Furthermore, the communal meal-sharing activity known as "*begibung*" has shifted from a symbolic blessing dispersal to a more pragmatic distribution of surplus food to the local community. The impact of modernisation is apparent not only in altered ritual activities but also in the evolving mindset of the Sembalun community.

**Keywords:** Character education; The *Ngayu-ayu* ritual; Modernisation; Local Wisdom.

**Abstrak:** Masyarakat Desa Sembalun memiliki kearifan lokal berupa ritual *Ngayu-ayu* yang sampai saat ini masih dijaga dan dipertahankan karena ritual tersebut sebagai wujud rasa syukur kepada Allah Almighty. Tujuan dari penelitian ini untuk menganalisis nilai-nilai Pendidikan karakter yang terdapat pada ritual *Ngayu-ayu* dan dampak modernisasi terhadap ritual *Ngayu-ayu*. Jenis penelitian yang digunakan yaitu metode kualitatif. Subjek penelitian terdiri dari tokoh adat, tokoh agama, tokoh pemuda dan tokoh masyarakat. Informan dalam penelitian ditentukan dengan teknik *purposive sampling*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan, pada ritual *Ngayu-ayu* terdapat nilai-nilai Pendidikan karakter seperti religius, gotong-royong, toleran, semangat kebangsaan, cinta tanah air, peduli lingkungan, bertanggung jawab, disiplin dan menghargai prestasi. Selain itu, pada ritual *Ngayu-ayu* sudah mengalami banyak perubahan karena adanya modernisasi, mulai pada tahapan ritualnya (1) banyak tahapan yang dipersingkat dan bahkan dilewatkan, namun tidak melewatkan tahapan yang masih bersifat sakral, (2) Pengambilan 13 mata air dahulu dilakukan dengan berjalan kaki, namun sekarang bisa menggunakan kendaraan mobil, (3) Pada rangkaian acara ritual *Ngayu-ayu* terdapat kegiatan makan bersama atau dalam bahasa sasak disebut *begibung*, dahulu jika terdapat sisa makanan, maka segala bentuk akan ditumpahkan ditengah lapangan dan dianggap menghamburkan rejeki, namun sekarang, jika ada makanan yang tersisa maka akan dibagikan kepada masyarakat setempat. Hal tersebut menunjukkan bahwa adanya pengaruh modernisasi mengakibatkan perubahan pada aktivitas ritual dan mengubah pola pikir masyarakat Sembalun. Selain itu, keberadaan kearifan lokal di Desa Sembalun sudah seharusnya dilestarikan karena dapat dijadikan pedoman hidup dan

sumber pengetahuan serta sebagai solusi untuk berbagai masalah dalam memenuhi kebutuhan hidup masyarakat setempat.

**Kata Kunci:** Pendidikan Karakter; Ritual Ngayu-ayu; Modernisasi; Kearifan Lokal.

## 1. Introduction

Character education has become a highly significant issue for discussion, garnering considerable attention from the public. This increased focus is particularly evident following the identification of various problems related to the national character, as observed in the behaviour of graduates from the current formal education system (Sudarwo et al., 2023). Character education is a fundamental foundation for enhancing the national education system (Sulhan, 2018). Character education encompasses religious values, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, national spirit, love of the homeland, appreciation of achievement, communicativeness, love for peace, enthusiasm for reading, environmental concern, social responsibility, and accountability (Nugraha & Malihah, 2022). Character education is acknowledged as an integral part of the national education system in Indonesia, emphasising the understanding of core values.

National character development is paramount, as it involves nurturing, restoring, and instilling in citizens the behavioural concepts and noble values of Indonesian culture (Sri & Perdana, 2020). These values are deeply embedded in the local wisdom of various indigenous groups and communities. Within indigenous communities, the identity of the community's character remains strong, preserving ancestral traditions in many aspects of life. This reality poses a considerable challenge for the younger generation, who must take responsibility for safeguarding and preserving this cultural heritage. However, preserving these noble values is increasingly difficult due to the pervasive influence of foreign cultural values, which often conflict with the original values of Indonesian culture (Nugraha et al., 2022). Globalisation has facilitated the influx of foreign cultures, leading to a tendency among some individuals to perceive these external cultures as superior to their own. Consequently, this has triggered various cultural issues, such as the loss of indigenous traditions, the erosion of cultural values, the decline of nationalism and patriotism, a diminishing sense of community and cooperation, and the adoption of lifestyles incompatible with Indonesian culture (Ans et al., 2023). This perception risks suppressing the nation's cultural and artistic achievements, potentially leading to a gradual erosion of Indonesian identity due to the influence of foreign cultures (Suhaeb & Ismail, 2023).

The unavoidable impacts of globalisation and modernisation on the nation's way of life have steadily eroded Indonesia's noble cultural values. One of the most pressing issues today is the gradual fading of morality and national identity among the younger generation. The affective values promoted in education are slowly diminishing due to these influences (Ramadhani, 2018). New behaviours that were previously uncommon have become increasingly prevalent, including (1) a rise in societal violence; (2) linguistic deterioration, with a trend toward avoiding standard usage; (3) the growing influence of peer groups (gangs) in violent acts; (4) increased self-destructive behaviours, such as substance abuse; (5) declining respect for parents and teachers; (6) weakening individual and civic responsibility; (7) the normalisation of dishonesty; and (8) growing suspicion and animosity among individuals (Budiwibowo, 2016). Furthermore, the diversity of foreign cultures has led to the emergence of groups that display tremendous admiration for foreign cultures, undermining their love for their homeland, culture, and nation (Pramitasari, 2021).

As an archipelagic nation, Indonesia is home to many ethnic groups and cultures, each distinguished by its unique expressions. This rich diversity forms the core of Indonesia's national identity, renowned for its multifaceted ethnicities and traditional cultural expressions. These cultural expressions, which serve as markers of identity and cultural legacies, have evolved through various activities and creative endeavours within Indigenous communities, each bearing distinctive characteristics (Mukti et al., 2022). Almost every region in Indonesia showcases a blend of ethnicities

and cultures, with elements such as *wayang* (shadow puppetry), *batik*, *keris* (traditional dagger), traditional dances, musical instruments, regional songs, and customs, among others (Nikmah, 2020). Indonesia's national culture is globally recognised for its profound and noble values, many of which remain deeply rooted in traditional ceremonies (Rusman, 2019).

Among the many cultures in Indonesia, the Sasak ethnic group in Sembalun Village, East Lombok, stands out. Sembalun Village, one of the oldest settlements on the island of Lombok, is characterised by traditional houses known as *Rumah Adat Desa Beleg*, which serve as historical evidence of the indigenous community in Sembalun (Ariani et al., 2019). In addition to these traditional homes, historical sites and cultural attractions such as dances, musical instruments, and rituals contribute to the rich cultural tapestry of Sembalun Village. One such well-preserved traditional ritual is the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual. This ritual represents a form of gratitude to the Almighty for a bountiful harvest, protection from disasters, and a collective hope for the community's safety from diseases that once plagued the local population (Ariadi, 2022). The term *Ngayu-ayu* translates to "seeking prosperity and warding off adversity" (*Batang musibah*) (Nashuddin, 2020). According to the Sasak community in Sade Village, this tradition establishes a close connection with the spirits of the ancestors (Mahadika & Satria, 2021). Conducted every three years, the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual has been practised for over 600 years and passed down through generations.

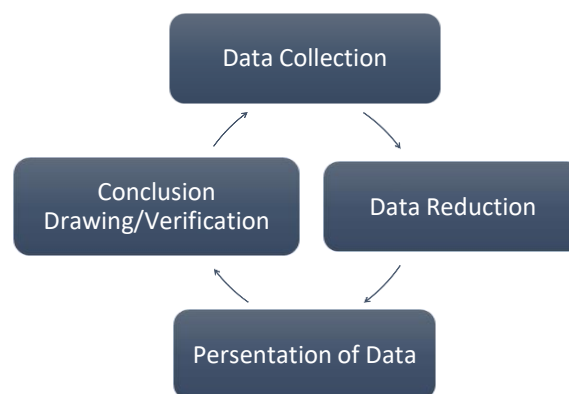
Mahawira (2023) notes that traditional ceremonies like *Ngayu-ayu* have become a fixture on the tourism calendar, attracting both domestic and international visitors. The sustained presence of this cultural event is mainly due to the strength of its customary law, which has been instrumental in preserving local gastronomy as a key attraction for tourism in Sembalun Village. Research by Kurniawan & Danti (2023) reveals that the native residents of Sembalun generally support the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual because it brings prosperity, fertility to their land and protection from diseases. The perspectives of the Sembalun community on *Ngayu-ayu* have been examined, taking into account their views on the tradition. Similarly, research by Wijayanti (2021) explores the community's behaviour in Sembalun Lawang Village in preserving local cultural values to enhance tourism. The findings show that the community is committed to preserving its culture and understands its importance in supporting tourism activities. The community continues to participate in cultural rituals such as the *roah* tradition, *Ngayu-ayu*, and *begaawe* to ensure the sustainability of these practices.

Muslim and Makmun (2020) identified ten forms of local wisdom within the Sasak ethnic group. The criteria supporting Sasak tribal, local wisdom can be utilised for disaster mitigation literacy, including (1) Sasak tribal, local wisdom is passed down orally from generation to generation; (2) disaster mitigation literacy based on Sasak tribal wisdom is responsive and adaptive; (3) the structure of Sasak tribal wisdom-based disaster mitigation aligns with procedural texts; and (4) Sasak tribal wisdom contains educational values related to disaster mitigation. The Sasak community in Lombok possesses local wisdom that fosters harmony between beings. Additionally, Rusman (2019) examines the role of the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual in environmental preservation. His findings indicate that the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual serves not only to maintain positive relations among humans but also to cultivate a harmonious relationship with nature, contributing to environmental sustainability. Ariana (2018) concluded that the communication patterns in the *Mapaq Toya* Tradition, a part of the *Ngayu-ayu* ceremony in Sangkan Gunung Village, serve various functions, including greeting, social, offering, purification, unity, and religious functions. The communication in the *mapag toya* tradition can be categorised into verbal and non-verbal forms.

Despite these studies, there has yet to be research on the values of character education and the impact of modernisation on the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual. Therefore, this study aims to analyse the character education values present in the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual and the impact of modernisation on the ritual. The local wisdom in Sembalun Village, Lombok, can be preserved through a deep understanding of each local wisdom held by the community. It is crucial because local wisdom is a guide and shared belief in community life. Hence, a profound understanding, particularly among the younger generation in Sembalun Village, is necessary to develop and preserve local intellectual values against the erosion caused by the waves of modernisation.

This study employs a qualitative research method rooted in postpositivist philosophy, which is used to explore natural object conditions. The qualitative approach is selected to obtain data that captures deep and meaningful insights (Sugiyono, 2019). The research is conducted in Sembalun Bumbung Village, Sembalun District, East Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province, chosen for its active practice of the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual. Informants are selected using a purposive sampling technique, where samples are chosen based on specific considerations. In this technique, informants must meet the criteria relevant to the research objectives and comprehensively understand the topics being studied. The research subjects include two customary leaders (TD1, TD2), a religious figure (TA), two community figures (TM1, TM2), and a youth figure (TP).

The study relies on three essential data collection techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation, a naturalistic approach, is particularly effective for collecting data on actions and behaviours. In this study, the objectives of observation are to (1) observe the site where the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual is performed, (2) observe participants in the ritual, (3) observe the equipment and tools used in the ritual process, and (4) observe each stage of the ritual. Interviews, structured as formal exchanges of information and ideas, aim to delve deeper into (1) the origins of the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual, (2) the educational character values embedded within the ritual, (3) the role of the ritual in shaping character, (4) the balance between local wisdom and global developments, and (5) the impact of modernisation on the ritual. Documentation is employed as a supplementary method, enhancing the credibility of the research findings. It includes written records, images, and other significant study-related work. Data analysis follows a systematic process of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification, all compiled into a research report. The study's credibility is further supported by including evidence such as written materials, photographs, or other monumental works related to the research topic.



**Figure 1.** Data Analysis Technique According to Sugiyono (2019)

Figure one shows the process of data gathering and analysis. The first step in the data analysis process involves gathering all relevant data. The researcher employed several techniques to collect information on the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual, including observation, interviews, and documentation. These methods were used to uncover detailed information and compile data related to the ritual. After gathering the data, the next step is data reduction. During this stage, the researcher thoroughly reviews all collected data, discarding irrelevant information and selecting data most pertinent to the research objectives. The reduced data is then systematically edited and organised, aligning with the research problem formulation to ensure a clear understanding and depiction of the findings. Following data reduction, the researcher moves on to data presentation. In this stage, the data is structured and organised into patterns that facilitate interpretation and the drawing of conclusions. The researcher presents the information consistently and systematically, ensuring it is easy to view, read, and understand. The simplified data is then presented as a coherent body of information highlighting the character education values inherent in the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual and the effects of modernisation on the ritual. The final stage of data analysis is concluding. This process involves synthesising the reduced

data while keeping the research problem in focus. The researcher compares and contrasts the collected data, ultimately reaching conclusions addressing the research questions. The conclusions drawn by the researcher offer insights into the character education values embedded in the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual and examine the impact of modernisation on this traditional practice.

## 2. *Ngayu-ayu* Ritual Based on Local Wisdom

Based on the interview findings with (TA), the term “*Ngayu-ayu*” originates from *Rahayu*, which means to seek safety. In the local language, *Ngayu-ayu* refers to an activity where the community seeks protection and safety from Allah Almighty. The *Ngayu-ayu* ritual is a unique tradition practised by the Sembalun community as a form of gratitude for the prosperity, blessings, and successful agricultural yields they have received. This practice aligns with the observations of the Sembalun Village community’s lifestyle, which maintains a close relationship with nature, using it to meet their everyday needs. This ritual symbolises the connection between humans, God, and the universe. During the interview, (TD1) shared historical accounts, revealing that seven families resided in Sembalun Village in ancient times. They lived in a primitive manner, struggling with food shortages and a lack of seeds. During this same period, Islam spread throughout Indonesia, including Palembang, Java, and eventually Lombok. There are two versions of how Islam was introduced to Lombok. According to one version, Islam reached Lombok in the 16th century through Raden Arya Pati and Raden Mangu Jaya. These figures arrived in Lombok by raft, landing at Pantai Labuan in Carik, Bayan, and continued their journey to Sembalun. There, they encountered the seven families, who were in the process of draining a pond but lacked food and the ability to cultivate crops. Recognising their dire situation, Raden Arya Pati and Raden Mangu Jaya offered seeds to the Sembalun community on the condition that they convert to Islam. Raden Arya Pati then introduced the teachings of Islam, which the local people quickly embraced. He taught the community about Islam, including the important relationship between God, humans, and nature. Shortly after that, the Sembalun community officially converted to Islam.

After the Sembalun community formally embraced Islam, Raden Arya Pati and Raden Mangu Jaya presented a handwritten Qur’an to one of the seven families, who were subsequently honoured with the title “Nek Islamin.” Meanwhile, the other families were called “Nek Ratani” after receiving red rice, white rice, and black glutinous rice seeds. Red rice was planted in Sembalun to continue life, while the white rice was sent to Bayan. After receiving the seeds, the two Radens also provided spears and swords to defend their lives and manage nature for cultivation. Before leaving Sembalun Village, they declared Nek Islam a religious figure and Nek Ratani a customary figure.

Additionally, Raden Arya Pati and Raden Mangu Wijaya mandated that the Sembalun community conduct a traditional ritual called *Ngayu-ayu*, held every three years during the month of Muharram, as a tribute to Allah Almighty for providing sustenance, prosperity, and prosperous agriculture. After receiving everything from the two Radens, they left Sembalun Village, going in different directions and leaving footprints marked with wood. Subsequently, the Sembalun community created a burial ground from these footprints, and the burial ground must be visited every three years as a form of respect for Raden Arya Pati and Raden Mangu Wijaya.

Recognising their dire situation, Raden Arya Pati and Raden Mangu Jaya offered seeds to the Sembalun community on the condition that they convert to Islam. Raden Arya Pati then introduced the teachings of Islam, which the local people quickly embraced. He taught the community about Islam, including the important relationship between God, humans, and nature. Shortly after that, the Sembalun community officially converted to Islam. In the first year after embracing Islam, the community of Sembalun Village began cultivating rice paddies. Upon successfully managing the fields and reaping abundant harvests, the people of Sembalun realised the presence of jinn and demons. These supernatural entities attempted to seize rice seeds and plunder the local harvests. In response, the people of Sembalun, angered by these evil forces, initiated resistance by wielding spears and swords. However, during this confrontation, the jinn and demons proved invulnerable. It led to despair and famine among the people of Sembalun. Subsequently, guidance came from the Radens, who had

provided the rice seeds, suggesting that the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual could be performed to overcome the jinn. Following this advice, the people of Sembalun made *ketupat* (rice cakes) to throw at the jinn. After successfully subduing the jinn, they were instructed to slaughter a buffalo and two chickens as an offering to supernatural beings to ensure the salvation of nature. It marks the origin of the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual in Sembalun Village. Once security was restored, a spear dance encircling the graves was performed, followed by the Tari Tandang Mendet, a symbolic dance signifying the triumph and joy of defeating the jinn. The atmosphere of the Tandang Mendet dance can be observed in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Tandang Mendet Dance

The sequence of events in the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual, as explained by (TA2), unfolds as follows:

- a. Wednesday, 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM: The traditional leader begins by collecting water from thirteen springs, then poured at the village *brugak* (a traditional raised pavilion).
- b. 8:00 PM onwards: Literary figures gather at the village *brugak* to read the Jatiswara palm leaf manuscript, an important text in Sasak culture.
- c. Thursday, 7:30 AM: The traditional leader performs the *sesampang* offering, a ritual to inform the ancestors and natural rulers that the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual is about to commence. Before proceeding, this ceremony seeks permission and blessings from the ancestors and Allah Almighty. It is intended to cultivate respect for nature and ensure harmony between humans and the environment.
- d. 10:00 AM: The customary cleric performs the ritual slaughtering of a buffalo. The buffalo's head is then planted as an earth peg, symbolically serving as a protector of Sembalun Village against disasters. Following this, the buffalo meat is cooked by local women and shared in a communal meal known as *begibung*, a traditional practice in the Sasak language.
- e. 1:00 PM - 1:30 PM: The collected water is ceremonially carried from the village *brugak* to the traditional leader, accompanied by the community and the Tari Tandang Mendet dance performance.
- f. 1:30 PM onwards: The main event begins with the *mapakin* ceremony, marking a symbolic and harmonious interaction between the traditional elders, guests, and the Sembalun community. This ceremony includes three stages of *ketupat* (rice cake) throwing:
  - The first throw is accompanied by the utterance of "lima" (meaning five).
  - The second throw is accompanied by the utterance of "limaolas" (meaning fifteen).
  - The third throw is accompanied by the utterance of "selae" (meaning twenty five).

These stages' festive and spiritual atmosphere reflect the communal and cultural significance of the Ngayu-ayu ritual. Figures 3, 4, 5, and 6 depict the ritual visually. This sequence highlights the rich cultural practices embedded in the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual, reflecting the deep connection between tradition, community, and the natural environment in Sembalun.



**Figure 3.** Recitation of Lontar Jatiswara



**Figure 4.** Planting of Buffalo Head



**Figure 5.** Laying of the 13 Sacred Springs



**Figure 6.** *Siloturrahmi* of Customary Elders

### 3. The Impact of Modernisation in the *Ngayu-ayu* Ritual

Based on the researcher's observations, the impact of modernisation is significantly felt across various aspects of life in Sembalun Village, recognised as a tourist destination. Several positive outcomes have arisen from technological advancements, such as (1) the utilisation of social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp for promotional activities, information dissemination, and commerce, (2) the creation of job opportunities through the development of hotels and restaurants, (3) an increase in income for local micro, small, and medium enterprises due to the influx of tourists from different regions and abroad, and (4) a shift from traditional buffalo-driven ploughing to the use of tractors in agricultural activities. However, modernisation has also brought forth negative consequences. Some of these include (1) the use of Facebook as a platform for mutual criticism, showcasing, and causing social disparities; (2) the tendency among the younger generation to emulate the lifestyles of outsiders or tourists, leading to the erosion of local cultural values, and (3) a surge in early marriages driven by social pressures, lack of parental supervision, and the practice being treated as a competitive event. The modernisation wave has also induced changes in the traditional Sembalun Village tradition of *Ngayu-ayu*.

Based on the interview findings with (TM), significant changes have occurred in the stages of the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual, with many aspects being altered through collective agreements. From a cultural perspective, modernisation can be interpreted as changing attitudes and thinking among certain community members due to the need to adapt to the current era (Hatuwe et al., 2021). The influence of modernisation has affected changes in every part of the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual. Furthermore, the interview results with (TM) also state that another emerging change is the shortening, speeding up, and even omitting certain ritual stages. It is because not all existing rituals are eliminated; those with a sacred nature are still observed in *Ngayu-ayu* culture. Based on the observations, modernisation has provided many conveniences for individuals, leading to changes in the thought patterns of Sembalun society, which tends to seek practical solutions. This further raises awareness among the people of Sembalun that the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual, once time-consuming, can now be streamlined.

Modernisation has also given rise to new phenomena in the implementation of the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual. According to the interview with (TA), in the past, leftover food was scattered in the middle of the field, symbolising the scattering of blessings. However, in modernisation, the community's mindset has shifted towards the belief that it is better to distribute the remaining food to the people. Additionally, (TM) mentioned that one reason for preserving the ritual is its potential to promote local tourism. Trisnawati (2021) highlighted in her research that one of the *Ngayu-ayu* traditional rituals has shifted meaning. In the past, the ritual was conducted as an expression of gratitude to Allah Almighty. Still, with modernisation, *Ngayu-ayu* is now interpreted as a meaningful celebration and tourist attraction, making Sembalun Village a destination.

Based on the interview findings with (TD1), another change that has emerged in the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual process is related to transportation. In the past, the collection of 13 springs was done by walking, but today, it is done using vehicles. Modernisation of transportation has facilitated the people of Sembalun to cover distances more quickly. The presence of advanced technology also positively impacts the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual. One example is information and communication media such as television and smartphones, which can be utilised to introduce Sembalun's cultural heritage, particularly *Ngayu-ayu*, to a broader audience.

Additionally, these technologies serve as a means of communication, enabling interaction with people from various regions and countries. According to the interview with (TD1), in the past, the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual involved only the local community. However, with technological advancements, traditional leaders can invite people outside the region or foreigners, such as Nusantara kings and kings from several countries, especially Malaysia. The arrival of these dignitaries brings numerous entourages, making Sembalun Village more widely recognised by the broader community. It significantly impacts the income of the local population involved in hotels, restaurants, tourism, and various micro, small, and medium enterprises, as indicated by the interviews with (TM) and (TP).

#### 4. Character Education in the *Ngayu-ayu* Ritual

Based on the observations conducted by the researcher, the people of Sembalun Village still adhere to values derived from traditions and religious events such as Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, Maulid, Nuzulul Qur'an, and rowah/tahlilan. These values serve as guidelines for the people of Sembalun in their behaviour when facing various social issues. However, due to modernisation, negative impacts on behaviour and morality, especially among adolescents, have been observed. It has led to increased conflicts between villages, illegal racing, alcohol consumption, and a rise in early marriages due to premarital pregnancies. Therefore, there is a crucial need for instilling local cultural values, many of which originate from local wisdom, such as the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual. The presence of local wisdom in *Ngayu-ayu* within the Sembalun Village area must be preserved and maintained to safeguard the values of ancestral traditions. According to interviews with (TM), efforts are made to uphold and preserve the ritual by imparting understanding to the next generation, including the educated younger generation, who may need to be more familiar with or aware of their customs. Thus, to maintain the ritual, as mentioned by (TP) in the interviews, the younger generation should actively participate in these activities to gain a deeper understanding of the traditional customs and learn the character education



values embedded in each ritual process. Based on the researcher's analysis regarding the character education values in the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual, some of these values include:

#### *Religious values*

Religious values have been reflected since the early Radens arrived, who invited the Sembalun community to embrace Islam and provided them with the handwritten Al-Qur'an, known as *Nek Islamin*, serving as a guide for life. Additionally, the stage of presenting *sesampang*, conducted by the traditional leader, is a ceremony to notify the natural world's ancestors and rulers that the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual will soon occur. It aims to emphasise that in undertaking any action, one must seek permission and blessings from parents and Allah Almighty. It demonstrates the gratitude of the Sembalun community for the blessings, prosperity, and good harvest they have received. Furthermore, the traditional leader initiates the process of slaughtering the buffalo with the recitation of prayers.

#### *Mutual Cooperation*

Based on interviews with (TM), the community's participation in the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual is crucial. With the participation and cooperation of the people, the ritual can be conducted successfully. It is evident in how the community, voluntarily and cooperatively, prepares for the event, from arranging the venue and necessary items to preparing and processing food materials by the local women together.

#### *Tolerance*

Tolerance can be defined as an attitude or action demonstrated by an individual to accept differences in terms of religion, ethnicity, race, and the attitudes and actions of others. According to (TD1) in the interview, the arrival of kings from the Nusantara region and abroad, accompanied by diverse delegations representing various ethnicities, religions, races, and cultures, did not lead to discrimination among the Sembalun community. They interacted with each other, showing mutual respect and appreciation, not only among fellow Muslims but also with non-Muslims. Both the young and the old actively participated in the ritual process. Besides the kings, people from outside Sembalun also flocked to witness the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual, and the people of Sembalun warmly welcomed their arrival.

#### *National Spirit*

The spirit of nationalism teaches us about social values, emphasising prioritising national interests over personal ones. According to (TD1), the ancestors engaged in warfare against jinn and demons, attempting to take the rice seeds and harvest from the local community. Despite initial defeat when the community fought back with spears, guidance came advising them to make *ketupat* and throw it in three processions: (1) the first throw starting with the phrase "lima," (2) the second throw starting with the phrase "Limaolas," and (3) the third throw starting with the phrase "selae." Ultimately, the jinn and demons were defeated in the last throw. From this event, it can be learned that the ancestors had a sense of unity and solidarity among humans.

#### *Love for the Homeland*

The attitude of love for the homeland refers to social values manifesting affection and loyalty to one's homeland. (TD1) mentioned in the interview that the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual tradition is an inheritance from ancestors that must be preserved, especially by the people of Sembalun. It demonstrates one aspect of love for the homeland, which involves participating in preserving the heritage of the ancestors. Cultural preservation is achieved through the involvement and participation of the local community, followed by imparting an understanding of customs and traditions to future generations to ensure the continuity and preservation of the culture.

### *Environmental Concern*

According to (TP) in the interview, one week before the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual, the Sembalun community collaboratively cleans the area where the ritual will occur. This initiative presents the village as clean, beautiful, and comfortable in welcoming the ritual event.

### *Responsibility*

Based on the interviews with (TM), during the preparation phase of the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual, traditional leaders and village officials have assigned tasks and responsibilities. Some are tasked with managing village funds, others with organising the event, and others with overseeing the food, among other responsibilities. It demonstrates a sense of responsibility among traditional leaders and village officials in performing their duties to ensure the successful and smooth execution of the ritual activities.

### *Discipline*

Discipline is a form of orderly and obedient behaviour in adherence to established rules or regulations. According to (TP), there are specific rules in the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual that participants must not violate, such as not wearing regular clothes or shorts. Additionally, the prominent figure in the *Ngayu-ayu* activity, A Mardisah, cannot be replaced by someone else. The timing of the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual must also adhere to the predetermined schedule.

### *Appreciation of Achievement*

The *tandang mendet* dance symbolises a celebration, victory, and joy for overcoming the jinn. The dance represents the battle against evil spirits that threaten the Sembalun village. It is created to express gratitude for successfully defeating the evil spirits that would disturb the village and protect the red rice seeds from pests.

This study identifies nine character education values within the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual: religiosity, cooperation, tolerance, national spirit, patriotism, environmental care, responsibility, honesty, discipline, and achievement appreciation. These values are integral to cultural practices passed down through generations and reflect universal principles contributing to national character development. The value of religiosity becomes apparent during the “sesampang” deliver stage, where the traditional leader informs the ancestors and nature spirits of the forthcoming ritual, seeking their permission and blessings. This act also conveys the Sembalun community’s gratitude for the prosperity and well-being they have received. Pratama et al. (2023) support this by stating that thoughts, words, and actions should be rooted in divine values and religious teachings. Cooperation is demonstrated through communal efforts during the ritual, with the Sembalun community, including women, working together to prepare food and food for the ritual site. It highlights the importance of collaboration in achieving shared goals. Arifin et al. (2022) emphasise that cooperation is a hallmark of Indonesian culture, reinforcing social solidarity within the community. Tolerance is evident in how the Sembalun community welcomes the arrival of kings from various regions and abroad, along with their diverse entourages. They adopt an inclusive attitude, respecting all backgrounds and engaging people of all ages. Elhefni and Wahyudi (2017) and Arafat and Ramlah (2022) note that tolerance is crucial for fostering harmony in multicultural societies.

The values of national spirit and patriotism also play a significant role in the *Ngayu-Ayu* ritual, as seen in the high level of community participation in preserving ancestral traditions and protecting the environment. Ramdani et al. (2021) stress that national spirit and patriotism are essential pillars for strengthening national identity and unity. Environmental care is showcased by the community’s collective efforts to clean the ritual area, ensuring the village remains clean and welcoming. Nadiyah et al. (2023) argue that character education should focus on environmental preservation as a legacy for future generations. Responsibility is reflected in each stage of the ritual, where individuals fulfil specific roles and responsibilities. It aligns with Aiena (2023) and Handoko (2023), who assert that responsibility

is a cornerstone in developing reliable, socially responsible individuals. Discipline is another crucial value, particularly in the preparation and execution of the ritual, which requires punctuality and orderliness. According to Made (2022) and Putri (2011), discipline instils the importance of structure and order, which are vital for achieving collective goals. Furthermore, the Sembalun community places great importance on achievement and hard work, as demonstrated by their recognition and celebration of individual contributions to the ritual. Wijaya (2019) and Baginda (2018) affirm that valuing achievement fosters motivation and a continuous pursuit of excellence, ultimately strengthening personal integrity and self-confidence.

Based on these findings, several practical actions can be implemented in the community to strengthen and preserve the character education values reflected in the *Ngayu-Ayu* ritual. For example, the community could organise regular cooperation activities beyond the ritual context, such as environmental clean-ups and conservation efforts. Additionally, efforts should be sustained to instil responsibility and discipline, particularly by involving younger generations in cultural and social activities. It can be achieved through character education programmes in schools that integrate local cultural values and community activities that engage all members of society. Implementing these actions is expected to yield broad positive outcomes for the community. First, strengthening the values of cooperation and environmental stewardship will promote stronger social bonds and a cleaner, more harmonious environment. Second, by continuously fostering responsibility and discipline, younger generations will develop into individuals with strong character, accountability, and discipline daily. It will enhance social life within the community and reinforce cultural identity and national spirit, ultimately developing a more inclusive, civilised, and sustainable society.

## 5. Conclusions

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual in Sembalun Village, as a form of local wisdom, reflects the community's gratitude to Allah Almighty for their well-being, blessings, and successful agricultural yields. The ritual serves to sustain relationships between humans, God, and nature. This local wisdom embodies key character education values, including religiosity, cooperation (*gotong-royong*), tolerance, nationalism, love for the homeland, environmental care, responsibility, discipline, and appreciation of achievements. Safeguarding and preserving this tradition is essential, as it carries these important values forward. Efforts to preserve and maintain the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual require educating future generations about the significance of their ancestral heritage. However, the ritual has experienced changes in its processes and stages due to the influence of modernisation, which has shifted the mindset of the Sembalun community. These changes necessitate the people of Sembalun to develop new knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to preserve their local wisdom amidst modern developments.

Character education plays a critical role in this context, particularly for the younger generation, who are the cultural heirs of this tradition. While modernisation has brought changes, it has also provided positive effects, such as enhancing communication and expanding the visibility of the ritual through social media and technology. Therefore, future generations must understand and appreciate the character education values embedded in this ritual, including religiosity, cooperation, tolerance, nationalism, love for the homeland, environmental stewardship, responsibility, discipline, and respect for achievements. Through these ongoing efforts, it is hoped that the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual and the local wisdom it represents will continue to be preserved, even in modernisation.

This research offers valuable insights into the *Ngayu-ayu* ritual and its role in preserving local wisdom, but it has several limitations. The study is limited to Sembalun Village, which restricts the generalisability of the findings to other regions. Its reliance on qualitative methods introduces subjectivity, as the interpretation may be influenced by researcher bias and informants' perspectives. Additionally, the focus on character education values and modernisation needs to fully explore other factors, such as socio-economic or political influences. Lastly, the study may need to capture the evolving nature of the ritual fully, necessitating further research to understand its adaptation to modernisation over time.

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