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# MAINTAINING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY BASED ON TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE: LESSON FROM KAJANG TRIBE

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**ZULKIFLI ASPAN**  
 Faculty of Law, Hasanuddin University, Indonesia


**Keywords:**  
 Indigenous Peoples Local Wisdom  
 Environment Traditional Knowledge

**IRWANSYAH**  
 Faculty of Law, Hasanuddin University, Indonesia

## Abstract

The Indigenous People of Ammatoa Kajang in Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi, possess a "Passang Ri Kajang". Several of the Kajang tribe's messages are crucial to the preservation of the ecosystem. This village and a rubber plantation enterprise located in the Kajang customary forest have a long history of conflict. The findings demonstrate how Indonesia's indigenous peoples' local knowledge has developed into a potent barrier to preserving and safeguarding the environment. The fort had previously been put to a rigorous test by the demands of modernity and globalization via the clearance of plantation lands owned by the government and the private sector which had taken their traditional or ulayat territory, disguised as "investment permits." The presence of indigenous peoples, whose positions are being squeezed more and more, is brought to light by this scenario.

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Zulkifli Aspan &lt;zulkifliaspan@gmail.com&gt;

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**REVIEW RESULT: Article is accepted**

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S.N.	JUDGMENT CRITERIA	RESULT
1.	Originality	83%
2.	Scope of the Article	79%
3.	Content writing of the article	Satisfactory
4.	Clearly and concisely written of the article	Acceptable
5.	Are the presentation, organization and length satisfactory?	Yes
6.	Are the illustrations and tables necessary and acceptable?	No
7.	Are the interpretations and conclusions sound and justified by the data?	Yes
8.	Are the references Cited Properly	Acceptable

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# Analysis on the Maintaining Environmental Sustainability based on Traditional Knowledge: Lesson from Kajang Tribe, South Sulawesi, Indonesia

Zulkifli Aspan<sup>\*</sup>, Irwansyah

Faculty of Law, Hasanuddin University, Indonesia.

<sup>\*</sup> E-mail: [zulkifliaspan@gmail.com](mailto:zulkifliaspan@gmail.com)

## ABSTRACT

The Indigenous People of Ammatoa Kajang in Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi, has a "Pasang Ri Kajang". Several messages from Kajang tribe have essential meanings in environmental preservation. This community has a history of years of conflict with a rubber plantation company that belongs to the area of the Kajang customary forest. The results show that the local wisdom of indigenous peoples in Indonesia has become a powerful bulwark to preserve and protect the environment. Before, the fort was subjected to a severe test from the pressures of modernization and globalization through clearing plantation lands belonging to the government and the private sector who took their customary or ulayat territories, wrapped in "investment permits". This situation raises the alarm for the existence of indigenous peoples whose positions are increasingly squeezed.

**Keywords:** Indigenous Peoples; Local Wisdom; Environment; Traditional Knowledge

## 1. Introduction

"Pasang Ri-Kajang" is part of the culture in customs Kajang Tribe in Bulukumba, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Customs that contain the ethics and norms related to forest management. Since long time ago, local wisdom people sustained culture value and environmental ethics, especially in saving the environment and environmental care. Some studies have been proved it. Other study showed that Aboriginal traditional knowledge influenced in saving the environment in Canada; Mount Salak traditional people have belief in maintaining and preserving the environment. Timorese Community in Timor Island appreciated in environmental management; Anak Dalam people in Jambi get benefit from the environment and save the forest; It showed that the local people still follow their environmental ethic. Mostly local wisdom have traditional knowledge in improving environmental knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Surtikanti, H. K., Syulasmis, A., & Ramdhani, N. (2017). Traditional knowledge of local wisdom of Ammatoa kajang tribe (South Sulawesi) about environmental conservation. In *Journal of Physics: Conference Series* (Vol. 895, No. 1, p. 012122). IOP Publishing.

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36 In the perspective of anthropology, Ahmad,<sup>2</sup> noted that the "pasang" as an  
37 absolute element in the belief system of the "Kajang". Ibrahim,<sup>3</sup> noted that " pasang" is a  
38 "verbal message that must be followed, complied with and implemented". Replace as  
39 something "sacred" because if it is not implemented in our daily activities have a negative  
40 impact in the form of the destruction of the ecological balance and chaotic social systems.  
41 Ammatoa indigenous people in South Sulawesi province Bulukumba call "Pasang Ri-  
42 Kajang".<sup>4</sup>

43 Land is an important aspect of community life. It is realized that environmental  
44 issues are always dynamic because they are related to human behavior and needs.  
45 Sometimes the law (in the norm) cannot pursue what the environment needs at this time,  
46 primarily if it is associated with the environmental crisis that has occurred recently. As  
47 Mahatma Gandhi said, "earth is capable of meeting human needs, but not for human  
48 greed...". The environmental crisis occurs due to natural factors and human factors,  
49 including the weak enforcement of environmental law, both administratively, civilly, and  
50 criminally.<sup>5</sup>

51 However, as it turns out into practice, when the positive law cannot overcome the  
52 environmental crisis, the indigenous community or customary law community (the  
53 United Nations calls it "indigenous people"), since hundreds of years ago have shown a  
54 way of life that is very friendly to nature and the environment. For indigenous peoples,  
55 humans and the environment are one soul. One of them is the Ammatoa Kajang customary  
56 law community.<sup>6</sup> This community cares for and manages the environment with its local  
57 wisdom, through a "Passang ri Kajang", a customary rule that is highly sacred by this  
58 community.

59 Several words in "Pasang Ri Kajang" have important meanings in environmental  
60 conservation, such as "Anjoboronga Angkotai Bosia" which means it is the forest that  
61 calls for rain, "Punna nitabbangi kajua ri boronga Ang'ngurangi bosu, appatanrei  
62 tumbusu", which means if the wood is cut in the forest area, will reduce rain, and  
63 eliminate springs. There are also customary rules called "Patuntung" in managing and  
64 maintaining forest functions and areas. Like Pasang "Katutui ririe'na, rigentenganna tala

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<sup>2</sup> Ahmad, S. 2007. *Education and Indigenous Belief Systems Ammatoa*. Makassar: Published Pustaka Reflection.

<sup>3</sup> Ibrahim. 2001. *Community Ammatoa in Preservation of Forest Resources*. Makassar: Published Pustaka Reflection.

<sup>4</sup> Syarif, E., Fatchan, A., & Astina, K. (2016). Tradition of " Pasang Ri-Kajang" in the forests managing in system mores of" Ammatoa" at District Bulukumba South Sulawesi, Indonesia. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(6), 325-325.

<sup>5</sup> Aspan, Z., & Yunus, A. (2019). The right to a good and healthy environment: Revitalizing green constitution. Paper presented at the *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 343(1) doi:10.1088/1755-1315/343/1/012067 Retrieved from [www.scopus.com](http://www.scopus.com)

<sup>6</sup> Husein Alting, 2010. *Dinamika Hukum dalam Pengakuan dan Perlindungan Hak Masyarakat Hukum Adat atas Tanah*, (ogyakarta: LaksBang PersSindo, p.31.

65 *tabbua palaraya*", which means take good care of (the forest) as long as it exists, before  
66 a crisis or famine comes.

67 However, the existence of the Ammatoa Kajang indigenous community and their  
68 customary forest was threatened through a series of conflicts with plantation companies.  
69 PT. London Sumatra (Lonsum), a foreign company in the plantation sector, since 1919  
70 has been planting rubber in forest areas claimed by the Kajang indigenous people as their  
71 customary forest areas. The prolonged conflict was caused by the claims of the Ammatoa  
72 Kajang community based on customary law against PT. Lonsum uses state law through  
73 Plantation Cultivation Rights (HGU).

74 In this conflict, the long struggle of the Ammatoa Kajang customary community  
75 in defending their customary forest or customary rights through litigation and non-  
76 litigation has paid off. In 2013, through decision No. 35/PUU-X/2012 in the Judicial  
77 Review of Law 41/1999, Customary Forests are Forests located in traditional territories  
78 and are no longer State Forests. At the local level, the Kajang customary community,  
79 assisted by several elements of civil society, finally succeeded in pushing the issuance of  
80 the Bulukumba Regency Regulation Number 9 of 2015 concerning the Inauguration,  
81 Recognition of Rights, and Protection of the Rights of the *Ammatoa Kajang* community.

82 In addition to the problems mentioned above, the existence of indigenous peoples  
83 and their local wisdom is also in danger of cultural degradation, which is slowly eroding  
84 it. This situation occurs as a result; 1) the pressure of industrialization in various sectors  
85 that require land to sacrifice the forest, which is the territory of indigenous peoples. This  
86 situation makes the community squeezed between surviving or having to leave their  
87 area.<sup>8</sup> 2) land conflicts between indigenous peoples and plantation business actors are  
88 backed up with a business permit instrument issued by the State. 3) When land (land)  
89 becomes narrow, some indigenous peoples choose to become workers in the city and  
90 influence other members of indigenous peoples. 4) modernization and the "city" lifestyle  
91 make some people regard traditional-local wisdom as an ancient and primitive way of  
92 thinking and living.

93 On the one hand, the condition of forests in South Sulawesi suffered significant  
94 damage. However, on the other hand, the existing forests in indigenous communities  
95 Bulukumba. Ammatoa in South Sulawesi province remain stable, even better. Such  
96 phenomena need to be revealed holistically, why it happened. Previous research on the  
97 phenomenon has been carried out such as: Research Yakib (2003) which found that forest  
98 conservation Kajang indigenous communities caused by people who cling to the principle  
99 of Pasng Ri-Kajang and Tallase Kamase-Mase. Research Lureng (1991) Pasang Ri-  
100 Kajang as a legacy of the traditional values of the ancestors who preserved until now.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Syarif, E., Fatchan, A., & Astina, K. (2016). *Loc.cit.*

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101 It is undeniable that the existence of local wisdom is currently in a weak position.  
102 Hence, this causes destroying traditional wisdom marked by changes in the social order,  
103 lack of humanist values, moral poverty, dependency or reduced community  
104 independence, and degradation of natural resources and the environment that support  
105 human life.

## 106 107 **2. Method of Research**

108 This article uses a socio-legal research method, a socio-legal research study that  
109 concentrates on fundamental law (law in action). The socio-legal approach adopts  
110 qualitative and quantitative methods from various social sciences and sees law as a social  
111 phenomenon. The data obtained through activities were identified and grouped according  
112 to the characteristics of the research objectives, then analyzed qualitatively descriptively.<sup>8</sup>

## 113 114 **3. Learning Environmental Lessons from Traditional Knowledge of Kajang 115 Tribe**

116 The Village of the indigenous *Ammatoa* and kajang community is located in *Tana*  
117 *Towa Village, Kajang* Subdistrict, Bulukumba. The gate to enter the community is  
118 symbolized as the boundary between the modern and traditional life of the Kajangese.  
119 The *Ammatoa* and the community members decided to avoid to be involved in machinery  
120 technological type of equipments as part of their life rule.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, it is difficult to find  
121 any electronic devices within the area. Mechanized vehicles such as cars and motorcycles  
122 are also prohibited to enter the traditional village site.

123 Local wisdom is all forms of knowledge, belief, understanding or insight, and  
124 customs or ethics that guide human behavior in life in an ecological community.<sup>10</sup>  
125 Customary law communities are an example of that ecological community. Local wisdom  
126 is a manifestation of the behavior of a particular community or society so that it can  
127 coexist with nature or the environment without destroying it.<sup>11</sup> In local communities,  
128 traditional wisdom is manifested in the form of a set of rules, knowledge, skills, values ,

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<sup>8</sup> Irwansyah. (2020). *Penelitian Hukum, Pilihan Metode & Praktik Penulisan Artikel*, Yogyakarta: Mirra Buana Media, p. 41.

<sup>9</sup> Samad, I. D., Niswaty, R., Agus, A. A., & Arman, A. (2021). Learning Environmental Lessons From Indigenous Ammatoa Kajang To Preserve The Forest. In *Journal of Physics: Conference Series* (Vol. 1899, No. 1, p. 012150). IOP Publishing.

<sup>10</sup> Rikardo Simarmata, 2006. *Pengakuan Hukum Terhadap Masyarakat Adat di Indonesia*, (Jakarta: UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok, p. 23.

<sup>11</sup> Fisher, M. R., & van der Muur, W. (2020). Misleading icons of communal lands in Indonesia: Implications of adat forest recognition from a model site in Kajang, Sulawesi. *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, 21(1), 55-76.

129 and ethics that govern the social order of the community that governs the community.  
130 Continue to live from generation to generation.<sup>12</sup>

131 Local wisdom in environmental protection and preservation is closely related to  
132 the life of the “customary community” or “customary law community” community which  
133 currently still exists amid the crush and pressure of modernization. The terminology used  
134 in this article is “customary law community”, to distinguish it from “customary  
135 community”. Customary law community is a technical juridical definition which refers  
136 to a group of people who live in a certain area, where they live and live in a certain  
137 environment, have wealth and a leader who is in charge of protecting the interests of the  
138 group (outward and inward), and has a legal system and government.<sup>13</sup> Customary law  
139 communities are territorial or genealogical community units that have their wealth, have  
140 citizens who can be distinguished from other legal community members, and can act  
141 internally or externally as a legal entity (legal subject) that is independent and governs  
142 themselves.<sup>14</sup>

143 The existence of indigenous peoples is further strengthened by the decision of the  
144 Constitutional Court no. 35/PUU-X/2012 (dated June 16, 2013), in the Judicial Review  
145 of Law 41/1999 on Forestry proposed by AMAN<sup>15</sup> and 2 indigenous communities. In that  
146 decision, the Constitutional Court affirmed that Customary Forests are Forests located in  
147 traditional territories and are no longer State Forests. Also, the existence of indigenous  
148 and tribal peoples is also internationally recognized. In 2007, the United Nations (UN)  
149 initiated the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous People (UNDRIP).

150 The presence of this Regional Regulation and Decree of the Minister of  
151 Environment and Forestry must be seen as a manifestation of the state's constitutive  
152 obligation to respect, protect and fulfill the human rights of citizens. This recognition  
153 creates conditions where customary law can be enforced in protecting their traditional  
154 territory from outside interference that can damage the pattern of justice and  
155 environmental sustainability that has been applied for generations.

156 During the various problems mentioned above, several indigenous communities  
157 still exist and try to survive the swift influence of modernization and globalization that  
158 threatens their existence. For the Ammatoa Kajang community, the land tenure and use  
159 system in the Kajang MHA area is determined based on pairs which are their cultural

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<sup>12</sup> Lullulangi, M., Sampebua, O., Sunardi, S., & Dirawan, G. D. (2015). Model local wisdom to preserve the environment in South Sulawesi and West Sulawesi Indonesia. *Man in India*, 95(4), 1041-1050.

<sup>13</sup> Karim, H., Pagarra, H., & Ernawati, E. (2016). Exploration of Plant Species in Traditional Ceremonies Kajang Tribe in Bulukumba Regency South Sulawesi. In *Proceeding International Conference on Mathematic, Science, Technology, Education and their Applications* (Vol. 1, No. 1).

<sup>14</sup> Hildayanti, A. (2020). Manifesting Locality and Identity in Traditional Houses in Response to Environmental Change. In *3rd International Conference on Dwelling Form (IDWELL 2020)* (pp. 132-136). Atlantis Press.

<sup>15</sup> Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN) is a social organization that brings together various indigenous communities from various regions in Indonesia

160 wealth. The control and use of land in the Ammatoa Kajang customary area consists of  
161 jointly owned land and privately owned land.

162 In interacting and utilizing natural resources, the Ammatoa Kajang indigenous people are  
163 bound by *Passang ri Kajang*, a customary rule that all community members must obey.  
164 In Salle's notes, the local wisdom practiced by this community is called "*kamasemasea*",  
165 which explicitly instructs the people of Kajang to live simply and modestly.<sup>16</sup> The pairs  
166 of *Pasang* contain the teaching that the world created by "*Turie*" *A'ra'na* (God Almighty)  
167 and its contents, must be kept in balance, especially with respect to the forest. Therefore,  
168 the forest must be adequately maintained and receive special treatment, and should not  
169 be damaged. The importance of forests for the Kajang indigenous people is mentioned in  
170 a piece of advice in *Pasang*, which reads:

171 *Jagai linoa lollong bonena*  
172 *Kamayatoppa langi'ka, rupa tau siagang boronga*  
173 (Take care of the world and all that is in it, the sky, humankind and the forest)  
174

175 Pairs in the Kajang indigenous community is a system of cultural value that contains  
176 messages or traditional advice, customary rules made by ancestors. About how  
177 community members place themselves in relation to humans with nature and the  
178 environment. For them, "*Pasang*" is the highest value system for a community-oriented  
179 to this world and the hereafter. *Passang* becomes the difference between "good and bad"  
180 between what "may or should not" be done.

181 The forest, for the Kajang community, is a very sacred place. According to their belief, a  
182 forest is a place of residence or the dwelling place of ancestral spirits who guard the forest,  
183 in the customary language called "*pammantanganna sikamma to riolonta*". Hence, the  
184 Kajang indigenous people highly protect their customary forest. The importance of the  
185 forest for them is stated in a *Passang*:

186 *Talakullei nisambei kajua, Iyato' minjo kaju timboa. Talakullei nitambai nanikurangi borong*  
187 *karamaka. Kasipalli tauwa a'lamung-lamung ri boronga, Nasaba' se're wattu la rie' tau*  
188 *anggakui bate lamunna.*

189 (You can't replace the wood. That's all the wood that grows. You can't add or subtract  
190 from the sacred forest. People are forbidden to plant in the forest because one day  
191 someone will recognize the former plants).  
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<sup>16</sup> Salle, K. (1999). *Kebijakan lingkungan menurut pasang: Sebuah kajian hukum lingkungan adat pada masyarakat Ammatoa kecamatan Kajang kabupaten Daerah Tingkat II Bulukumba*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Universitas Hasanuddin, Makassar, p. 31.

194 The forest is sacred for this community because, according to ancestral beliefs passed  
195 down to generations, the customary forest is the beginning or place of their creation. This  
196 community believes that if a community member or outsider cuts wood, takes forest  
197 products without permission from traditional institutions, or destroys the forest, it will  
198 bring disaster/disaster. For this reason, it has angered the ancestral spirits so that it will  
199 bring curses, such as disease, death, and drought. The Kajang community fears the latter  
200 because it will have a domino effect on the survival of those who rely heavily on forest  
201 products.

202 If they violate this prohibition, they will be subject to sanctions which in the local  
203 language are called *Poko' Ba'bala'*, namely sanctions for serious violations for taking  
204 wood or other forest products in forests that are sacred to them. This sanction is a fine (in  
205 the form of money), in the local language, an amount of “*sampulonnua real*” (if translated  
206 into IDR 1,200,000), plus a white cloth. Moreover, if what is taken is wood or rattan, the  
207 wood or rattan must be returned. The types of severe violations in the sacred forest  
208 include: *ta'bang kaju* (cutting wood), *rao' doang* (taking shrimp), *tatang uhe'* (taking  
209 rattan), and *tunu bani* (burning beehives). If the accused does not confess, a ritual called  
210 *Tunu Passau* will be carried out. If the accused is proper to have violated customs, he will  
211 be exposed to reinforcements or danger after the ritual. It can be in the form of the disease,  
212 and not even a few experiences death. There are also sanctions in the form of customary  
213 punishments in the form of social sanctions. For the Kajang community, this sanction is  
214 heavier than the fine. The social sanction is in the form of ostracism, even up to the  
215 seventh or seventh generation. This social sanction in the form of exclusion is part of the  
216 *Poko' Ba'bala'*.

217 The *Ammatoa ri Kajang* community life in protecting the environment and forests is  
218 accompanied by various restrictions and *pamali'* under the commitment that the *Pasang*  
219 is true and needs to be guarded socially. Therefore, restrictions and *pemalis* are applied  
220 in prohibiting the wood cutting, rattan and ropes harvesting, shrimp and fish catch,  
221 animals hunting, or disturbing children within the *Borong Karama'*.

222 The customary sanctions applied in the *ammatoa* community is affecting the way the  
223 members' forest utilization and the use of wood in their life. Whether full respectful on  
224 *ammatoa's* rules concerning the forest or the environmental preservation awareness, to  
225 build houses or fulfil community members' needs on wood for households, the members  
226 prefer to bring or buy woods from the outside areas of Kajang's sacred forest. They let  
227 the forest remains sacred as they only use the forest to hold traditional ritual ceremonies.  
228 The Sacred Forest (*Borong Karama'*) is believed to been adhered by sacred spells to  
229 protect it or any matter of curse narratives.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Riley, E. P., & Priston, N. E. C. (2010). Macaques in farms and folklore: exploring the human-nonhuman primate interface in Sulawesi, Indonesia. *American Journal of Primatology*, 72(10), 848–854. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajp.20798>

231 **4. Conclusion**

232 The local wisdom of indigenous peoples in Indonesia has become a powerful bulwark to  
233 preserve and protect the environment. Before, the fort was subjected to a severe test from  
234 the pressures of modernization and globalization through clearing plantation lands  
235 belonging to the government and the private sector who took their customary or ulayat  
236 territories, wrapped in "investment permits". This situation raises the alarm for the  
237 existence of indigenous peoples whose positions are increasingly squeezed. The  
238 importance of maintaining and protecting the existence of indigenous peoples and their  
239 ulayat territories is not only a state constitutional obligation but also - as a manifestation  
240 of that obligation - a form of state responsibility to protect indigenous peoples. In order  
241 to ensure all legal instruments that come into contact with this community do not cause  
242 damage to the customary environmental ecosystem.

243

244

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# MAINTAINING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY BASED ON TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE: LESSON FROM KAJANG TRIBE

ZULKIFLI ASPAN\*, IRWANSYAH

Faculty of Law, Hasanuddin University, Indonesia.

\* E-mail: zulkifliaspan@gmail.com

**Abstract:** *The Indigenous People of Ammatoa Kajang in Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi, possess a "Pasang Ri Kajang". Several of the Kajang tribe's messages are crucial to the preservation of the ecosystem. This village and a rubber plantation enterprise located in the Kajang customary forest have a long history of conflict. The findings demonstrate how Indonesia's indigenous peoples' local knowledge has developed into a potent barrier to preserving and safeguarding the environment. The fort had previously been put to a rigorous test by the demands of modernity and globalization via the clearance of plantation lands owned by the government and the private sector which had taken their traditional or ulayat territory, disguised as "investment permits." The presence of indigenous peoples, whose positions are being squeezed more and more, is brought to light by this scenario.*

**Keywords:** *Indigenous Peoples; Local Wisdom; Environment; Traditional Knowledge*

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### INTRODUCTION

1. Method of Research
2. Learning Environmental Lessons from Traditional Knowledge of Kajang Tribe
3. Conclusion

### INTRODUCTION

In Bulukumba, South Sulawesi, Indonesia, the Kajang Tribe has traditional practices known as "Pasang Ri-Kajang," which include ethics and standards for forest management. Local knowledge has long preserved cultural values and environmental ethics, especially in relation to environmental preservation and protection. This has been supported by a number of studies, including one that found a contribution of Canadian aboriginal traditional wisdom to environmental preservation. The Anak Dalam people in Jambi benefit from and conserve the forest, and this shows that local communities still uphold their environmental principles. The Timorese population on Timor Island appreciates environmental management. Generally speaking, traditional knowledge for advancing environmental understanding is part of local wisdom.<sup>1</sup>

In the perspective of anthropology, Ahmad,<sup>2</sup> noted that the "pasang" as an absolute element in the belief system of the "Kajang". Ibrahim,<sup>3</sup> noted that " pasang" is a "verbal message that must be followed, complied with and implemented". The Ammatoa indigenous people from the Bulukumba province in South Sulawesi regard the "Pasang Ri-Kajang" as sacred, as neglecting to practice it in daily

<sup>1</sup> Surtikanti, H. K., Syulasmi, A., & Ramdhani, N. (2017). Traditional knowledge of local wisdom of Ammatoa kajang tribe (South Sulawesi) about environmental conservation. In *Journal of Physics: Conference Series* (Vol. 895, No. 1, p. 012122). IOP Publishing.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibrahim. 2001. *Community Ammatoa in Preservation of Forest Resources*. Makassar: Published Pustaka Reflection.

life leads to negative consequences, including the destruction of ecological balance and disorder in social systems.<sup>4</sup>

Land plays a significant role in community life. Environmental issues are constantly changing due to human behavior and needs. At times, laws and norms may not fully address current environmental needs, particularly in light of recent environmental crises. As Mahatma Gandhi once noted, the earth has the capacity to fulfill human needs, but not to sustain human greed. Environmental crises arise from both natural and human factors, including inadequate enforcement of environmental laws administratively, civilly, and criminally.<sup>5</sup>

However, in practice, when positive laws fail to address environmental crises, indigenous communities with customary laws (referred to as "indigenous peoples" by the United Nations) have demonstrated a way of life that is harmonious with nature and the environment for hundreds of years. For these indigenous peoples, humans and the environment are considered as one entity. An example of such a community is the Ammatoa Kajang customary law community.<sup>6</sup> This community cares for and manages the environment with its local wisdom, through a "*Passang ri Kajang*", a customary rule that is highly sacred by this community.

Important environmental conservation ideas are found in the "Pasang Ri Kajang" tradition, such as "*Anjoboronga Angkotai Bosia*," which means the forest asks for rain, and "*Punna nitabbangi kajua ri boronga Ang'ngurangi bosi, appatanrei tumbusu*," which states that cutting down trees in the forest will lead to less rain and dry up springs. To administer and protect the functions and regions of the forest, there are also traditional laws known as "*Patuntung*." For instance, the proverb "*Katuturi ririe'na, rigentenganna tala tabbua palaraya*" advises people to take good care of the forest while it is still there, before a crisis or famine strikes.

However, conflicts with plantation firms, however, put the Ammatoa Kajang indigenous population and their traditional forest at risk. Since 1919, one of these businesses, PT. London Sumatra (Lonsum), has been growing rubber in what the Kajang natives consider their traditional forest. This long-running dispute is a result of PT. Lonsum's use of state law through Plantation Cultivation Rights to counter the claims made by the Ammatoa Kajang community based on customary law (HGU).

The Ammatoa Kajang traditional community's steadfast attempts to protect their rights to their customary forest via both legal and illegal tactics have paid dividends. According to a 2013 court decision (No. 35/PUU-X/2012), customary woods no longer qualify as state forests since they are located in traditional territory. The Bulukumba Regency Regulation Number 9 of 2015, which affirms and defends the rights of the Kajang customary community, was enacted with the help of civil society groups.

Additionally, cultural degradation poses a threat to the survival of indigenous people and their traditional knowledge.<sup>7</sup> This is because of several factors; 1) Indigenous peoples are forced to choose between preserving their way of life and giving up their land due to the rise of industries that need land and frequently result in the sacrifice of forests, which are their homes; 2) conflicts between corporate land squatters and indigenous peoples, the latter of which are supported by state-issued permissions; 3) Some indigenous people were forced to leave their homes and work in cities due to a lack of land, which had an impact on the community as a whole. Some people's perception of

<sup>4</sup> Syarif, E., Fatchan, A., & Astina, K. (2016). Tradition of "Pasang Ri-Kajang" in the forests managing in system mores of "Ammatoa" at District Bulukumba South Sulawesi, Indonesia. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(6), 325-325.

<sup>5</sup> Aspan, Z., & Yunus, A. (2019). The right to a good and healthy environment: Revitalizing green constitution. Paper presented at the *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 343(1) doi:10.1088/1755-1315/343/1/012067 Retrieved from [www.scopus.com](http://www.scopus.com)

<sup>6</sup> Husein Alting, 2010. *Dinamika Hukum dalam Pengakuan dan Perlindungan Hak Masyarakat Hukum Adat atas Tanah*, (ogyakarta: LaksBang PersSindo, p.31.

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traditional and local knowledge as antiquated and primitive is influenced by modernisation and urban culture.<sup>8</sup>

While forests in South Sulawesi have suffered significant damage, those located in the indigenous communities of Bulukumba in the province are still stable and even thriving. This calls for further examination of why this is the case. Previous studies have been done on the subject, such as Yakib's research in (2003) which found that forest conservation in the Kajang indigenous community is due to their adherence to the principle of Pasng Ri-Kajang and Tallase Kamase-Mase. Lureng's (1991) research also found that Pasang Ri-Kajang is a legacy of traditional values passed down from ancestors and still practiced today.<sup>9</sup>

It is undeniable that the existence of local wisdom is currently in a weak position. Hence, this causes destroying traditional wisdom marked by changes in the social order, lack of humanist values, moral poverty, dependency or reduced community independence, and degradation of natural resources and the environment that support human life.

## 1. Method of Research

The methodology used in this article is socio-legal research, which focuses on how laws are applied in practice. The approach combines qualitative and quantitative techniques from different social sciences and views law as a social occurrence. The collected data were categorized based on the research goals and analyzed using qualitative descriptive methods.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. Learning Environmental Lessons from Traditional Knowledge of Kajang Tribe

The indigenous Ammatoa and Kajang community is situated in Tana Towa Village in the Kajang Subdistrict of Bulukumba. The entrance to the community acts as a dividing line between the modern and traditional way of life of the Kajangese. The Ammatoa community has decided to live without any modern technology, as part of their way of life.<sup>11</sup> Thus, it's rare to find any electronic devices within their community and the use of motor vehicles such as cars and motorcycles is not allowed in the traditional village area.

Knowledge, beliefs, perceptions, ethics, and conventions that govern human conduct in a society that lives in harmony with the environment are all examples of local wisdom.<sup>12</sup> Local wisdom covers all of these many types of knowledge. Communities that adhere to the principles of customary law are good examples of it. The social norms and beliefs of a society that make it possible for that group to successfully cohabit with nature are referred to as "local wisdom."<sup>13</sup> These standards and ethics are represented in a set of rules, skills, values, and ethics that regulate the social order of society. They are passed down from one generation to the next as part of a tradition.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Fibri, Dwi Larasatie Nur, Siham Ayouaz, Rohmah Fitri Utami, and Dimas Rahadian Aji Muhammad. "Current situation and future direction of traditional foods: A perspective review." *Canrea Journal: Food Technology, Nutritions, and Culinary Journal* (2022): 112-126.

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Local wisdom in environmental protection and preservation is closely related to the life of the “customary community” or “customary law community” community which currently still exists amid the crush and pressure of modernization. The terminology used in this article is “customary law community”, to distinguish it from “customary community”. Customary law community is a technical juridical definition which refers to a group of people who live in a certain area, where they live and live in a certain environment, have wealth and a leader who is in charge of protecting the interests of the group (outward and inward), and has a legal system and government.<sup>15</sup> These communities are territorial or genealogical units that possess wealth, have distinct citizens, and can act as independent legal entities, governing themselves both internally and externally.<sup>16</sup>

The existence of indigenous peoples is further strengthened by the decision of the Constitutional Court no. 35/PUU-X/2012 (dated June 16, 2013), in the Judicial Review of Law 41/1999 on Forestry proposed by AMAN<sup>17</sup> and 2 indigenous communities. The court ruled those traditional territories are home to Customary Forests, which are no longer considered as state-owned forests. Also, the existence of indigenous and tribal peoples is also internationally recognized. In 2007, the United Nations (UN) initiated the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous People (UNDRIP).

The Regional Regulation and the Decree issued by the Minister of Environment and Forestry demonstrate the state's obligation to respect, defend, and uphold its citizens' human rights. This acknowledgment creates a setting where customary rules may be followed in protecting their ancestral lands from outside influences that could upset the long-standing balance between justice and the environment.

Several indigenous tribes still exist and work to protect their way of life in the face of the threats that industrialization and globalization pose to their existence. This is true despite the difficulties they encounter. Based on their traditional legacy, which is symbolized by pairs, the Ammatoa Kajang community's land tenure and usage system in the Kajang MHA region. Both collectively held lands and privately owned lands are managed and used in the Ammatoa Kajang traditional region.

The Ammatoa Kajang indigenous community is governed by *Passang ri Kajang*, a traditional rule that must be followed by all members in their interactions and utilization of natural resources. As documented by Salle, the local customs practiced by this community are referred to as “*kamaseasea*”, which encourages living a simple and modest lifestyle.<sup>18</sup> The teachings of *Passang* emphasize maintaining balance in the world created by “*Turie' A'ra'na* (God Almighty)”, especially with regards to the forest. As a result, the forest must be properly managed and given special care to prevent any damage. The significance of forests to the Kajang indigenous people is highlighted in a piece of advice in *Passang*, which states:

*Jagai linoa lollong bonena*

*Kamayaytoppa langi'ka, rupa tau siagang boronga*


(Take care of the world and all that is in it, the sky, humankind and the forest)

<sup>15</sup> Karim, H., Pagarra, H., & Ernawati, E. (2016). Exploration of Plant Species in Traditional Ceremonies Kajang Tribe in Bulukumba Regency South Sulawesi. In *Proceeding International Conference on Mathematic, Science, Technology, Education and their Applications* (Vol. 1, No. 1).

<sup>16</sup> Hildayanti, A. (2020). Manifesting Locality and Identity in Traditional Houses in Response to Environmental Change. In *3rd International Conference on Dwelling Form (IDWELL 2020)* (pp. 132-136). Atlantis Press.

<sup>17</sup> Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN) is a social organization that brings together various indigenous communities from various regions in Indonesia

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The "Pairs System" of the Kajang indigenous society is an important part of a culture that includes traditional viewpoints and ancestors' laws regarding how community members should interact with nature and the environment. The Kajang place the utmost significance on "Passang," which directs their behavior in both this life and the next by defining what is "good" or "bad" and "permitted" or "prohibited."

The Kajang community holds the forest in high spiritual regard, believing it is guarded by ancestral spirits. They refer to the forest as "*pammantanganna sikamma to riolonta*" and make a conscious effort to preserve it. This significance is reflected in their adherence to the Passang, showcasing their deep connection to their traditional forests.

*Talakullei nisambei kajua, lyato' minjo kaju timboa. Talakullei nitambai nanikurangi borong karamaka. Kasipalli tauwa a'lamung-lamung ri boronga, Nasaba' se're wattu la rie' tau anngakui bate lamunna.*

(You can't replace the wood. That's all the wood that grows. You can't add or subtract from the sacred forest. People are forbidden to plant in the forest because one day someone will recognize the former plants).

The forest holds a sacred status for the community as it is believed to be the place of their creation according to ancestral beliefs passed down through generations. The community believes that the unauthorized cutting of wood, taking forest products, or destruction of the forest by a community member or outsider will result in disaster and anger the ancestral spirits, leading to curses such as illness, death, and drought. The Kajang community is concerned about these effects because they will have a cascading effect on others who rely significantly on forest goods for their existence.

If someone violates the prohibition against taking forest products in the sacred forest, they will face sanctions known as "*Poko' Ba'bala*". This could include a fine of IDR 1,200,000 (translated as "*sampulonua real*") and a white cloth. If the violation involves taking wood or rattan, the products must be returned. Severe violations include cutting wood, taking shrimp, taking rattan, and burning beehives. If the accused doesn't confess, the "*Tunu Passau*" ritual will be performed. If the accused is found guilty, they may face additional consequences such as illness or death. There are also social sanctions, which in the Kajang community carry a greater weight than the monetary fine. Social sanctions include ostracism, even for multiple generations, and are considered a form of "*Poko' Ba'bala*".

The *Ammatoa ri Kajang* community's way of life, centered around protecting the environment and forests, is accompanied by various restrictions and *pamali'*, as they believe in upholding the Pasang and guarding it socially. Thus, restrictions and *pamali'* are imposed to prevent activities such as cutting down trees, harvesting rattan and ropes, fishing, hunting, and disturbing children within the boundaries of the *Borong Karama'* forest.

In the *Ammatoa* community, the traditional sanctions imposed are affecting the way its members use the forest and the wood in their daily lives. Despite being aware of *Ammatoa's* rules for forest utilization and environmental preservation, or showing respect for the forest, members prefer to obtain wood from outside of Kajang's sacred forest for building homes and fulfilling household needs. They keep the sacred forest intact and only use it for traditional rituals. The Sacred Forest (*Borong Karama'*) is believed to be protected by sacred spells and is associated with stories of curses.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Riley, E. P., & Priston, N. E. C. (2010). Macaques in farms and folklore: exploring the human-nonhuman primate interface in Sulawesi, Indonesia. *American Journal of Primatology*, 72(10), 848–854. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajp.20798>

### 3. Conclusion

The wisdom of local indigenous communities in Indonesia has proven to be a strong shield in preserving and protecting the environment. However, this defense has faced a major challenge from the forces of modernization and globalization, with companies clearing plantation lands, including government and privately owned, that are located on the indigenous peoples' customary or ulayat territories, using "investment permits". This is causing increased pressure on the livelihoods of indigenous peoples. Protecting and preserving the existence of indigenous peoples and their ulayat territories is not only a constitutional obligation of the state but also represents a responsibility to safeguard them. This means making sure that legal instruments do not harm the customary environmental ecosystem of these communities.

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