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Utilization of Palm Leaf as a Mat (*Taker Rakara*) in Lembung Barat Village, Lenteng District, Sumenep District

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Abstract Indonesia has a diverse biodiversity based on the Wallace line, the Weber line, and the Lydekker line. With this variety, Indonesia is a country with an abundance of natural resources that humans may use. One of its applications is the use of palm leaves in handicrafts. This research is a qualitative study that use a descriptive technique. This is field research, which entails travelling directly to the research location. The research was conducted on March 22-23, 2023, at West Lembung Village, Lenteng District, Sumenep Regency. Data is gathered by observation and documentation. According to study, residents in Lembung Barat Village, Lenteng District, Sumenep Regency frequently utilize palm leaves as the major raw material for manufacturing handicrafts in the shape of mats (*Taker Rakara*) using basic ways. When the tobacco harvest season approaches, this easy procedure produces a product in the shape of a mat that may be used as a tobacco wrapper.

Keywords: Palm leaf, Mat, Taker rakara, Lembung barat village, Lenteng district, Sumenep district

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a tropical archipelago with a tropical climate. With an astronomical location of 6°N-11°S and 95°E-141°E, it is located between two continents (Asian Continent and Australian Continent) and two oceans (Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean). In terms of geology, Indonesia is considered as a nation with numerous active volcanoes or the "Ring of Fire," making it prone to earthquakes (Elizabeth, 2014). The division of bioregions is equally essential as the divide of Indonesia. A

bioregion's development is defined by its component flora and fauna. The presence of a plant and fauna community in a location is the outcome of a lengthy process.

There are plants and fauna that are tolerant of a broad variety of temperatures and may thus be found in numerous locations across the world (Zid & Hardi, 2018). The biogeography of flora and fauna, which is spread owing to the Wallace lines, Weber lines, and Lydekker lines, is used to divide bioregions (Elizabeth, 2014). This section demonstrates that Indonesia is rich in flora and fauna, with unique traits in each area.

The diversity of flora and animals implies that Indonesia has a high level of biodiversity. This can bring a variety of benefits to humans by assisting them in meeting their everyday demands. For example, numerous organic household materials can be converted into fertilizer (Nasution & Rizka, 2022; Sari et al., 2020) or hydroponic nutrients (Farihah et al., 2021). In terms of biodiversity management, each area in Indonesia has its unique peculiarities. Natural selection has resulted in the community developing the ability to manage biodiversity in their environment, which is dependent on technology (Zainal, 2020). When it comes to biodiversity management, as in rural regions, traditional approaches are still used.

One example of biodiversity usage may be seen in West Lembung Village, Lenteng District, Sumenep Regency on Madura Island. The Lontar Tree, also known as the Siwalan Tree, is an item utilized for biodiversity exploitation. Lontar trees are members of the Palma (are-nut) family and may be found across Southeast Asia and South Asia (Palmweb, 2017). The Latin name for this tree is *Borassus flabellifer* Linn, but the Madurese call it Bungkana taal.

Lontar plants have a smoother, blackish stem surface and are woody, unbranched, and cylindrical in form. In sap-producing trees, the base diameter is roughly 60 cm, with a height of around 15-30 meters. Palm leaves are complex leaves with leaflets linked to one another and situated at the end of long and stiff petioles; moreover, thorns can be found on palm leaves. Palm leaves are squiggly and spiky, with a spherical form like a fan. Lontar plants have thick, rigid leaves that are 2.5-3 cm in length (Arsyad, 2015 in Bernadina, 2011).

The Lontar tree is known as the Tree of Life since all of its components provide several advantages, ranging from the roots, stems, leaves, fruit, and blossoms, which may be tapped and drunk straight as legen (sap), fermented into palm wine, or processed into sugar (a sort of brown sugar).

The sap and palm fruit are the principal products of the palm tree. Meanwhile, by-products such as handicrafts can be produced (Nasri et al., 2017). Based on the foregoing, a direct research of the usage of palm lontar plants in West Lembung Village, Lenteng District, Sumenep Madura Regency is required. The purpose of this research is to uncover the local community's traditional use of lontar plants. Traditional use is centered on its use during the Tobacco harvest season, which occurs once a year.

METHOD

This study is characterized as qualitative using a descriptive methodology. The descriptive method entails actions such as assessing, describing, and summarizing various circumstances and scenarios based on data that has been acquired, specifically in the form of observations concerning problems that are directly investigated in the field (Afrizal, 2016).

Qualitative research defined as "research that produces descriptive data in the form of observable writing or behavior." Field research, or travelling directly to the location to be investigated, is the sort of study. On March 22-23, 2023, data was collected in Lembung Barat Village, Lenteng District, Sumenep Regency.

This town was picked because it frequently utilizes palm leaves in handicrafts, one of which is Tikar, also known as Taker Rakara by the locals. The data gathering procedure begins with direct survey operations in the field to collect data regarding the process of creating palm leaf mats. Furthermore, data collecting is aided by accessing additional sources of information such as journal publications, books, and government papers pertaining to the usage of palm leaves as the primary material for crafts.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION



Figure 1. Palm leaves.

Based on direct surveys in the field, it can be seen that the people in Lembung Barat Village, Lenteng District, Sumenep Regency use lontar plants as handicrafts that have use value. The part of the Lontar Plant that is used as a craft is the leaves. Handicrafts made from palm leaves are mats. Madurese people often call it Taker Rakara.



Figure 2. Mats from palm leaves.

Lontar or Siwalan trees (*Borassus flabellifer* L.) can be found growing wild at elevations of 500 meters above sea level. Lontar trees are said to have originated in India and Sri Lanka before spreading to Arabia and Southeast Asian nations such as Malaysia, Thailand, Burma, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, and Indonesia (Sukamaluddin et al., 2016). This plant is common in the Indonesian provinces of East Nusa Tenggara, Bali, and Madura. The lontar tree has a trunk that is virtually identical to an areca nut (it has a huge diameter) and leaves that resemble enormous fans grouped together.

It is apparent that palm leaves offer several advantages. Palm leaves may be employed as a writing medium for historical, religious, and literary texts, as well as a traditional medicinal element capable of curing a variety of maladies. Furthermore, palm leaves may be utilized to make handicrafts such as masks, purses, pencil cases, and mats. This can assist the community in generating cash through the process of purchasing and selling palm leaf goods.

The Madurese, particularly those in Lembung Barat Village, Lenteng Subdistrict, Sumenep Regency, frequently use lontar plants as the primary raw material for crafts. The leaf is the component of the palm plant that must be used. People collect fresh palm leaves from palm trees and dry them in the customary manner, drying them in the scorching sun for 1 to 3 days until the leaves are totally dry. A faded yellow tint is associated with dry palm leaves.

After drying, the palm leaves cannot be used directly as crafts; instead, they must be separated from the sticks that are still attached to the palm leaves and cut to the same size, or *elas* or *eyelas* in Madurese. After a lengthy procedure, the palm leaves are ready to be weaved into handicrafts such as mats, or *taker rakara* in Madurese.

Expertise and accuracy are required during the mat weaving process in order to make products with great aesthetic value. The dried palm leaves will be separated and braided into mats one by one. The bigger the size of the mat, the more huge leaves are required. This indicates that the size of the mat is proportionate to the

quantity of dried palm leaves required. A palm leaf mat might take 1 to 2 days to process, depending on the pace and size of the machine.



Figure 3. Mat making process.

Residents of Lembung Barat Village, Lenteng District, Sumenep Regency make mats that are commonly used as tobacco wraps. As a result, the demand for mats will rise as the tobacco harvest season approaches. According to the information acquired, the usage of lontar leaf mats was not limited to wrapping tobacco, but these mats were also utilized as mats and even as a substitute for shrouds in ancient times. However, these carpets were solely utilized as tobacco wraps over time and were priced at IDR 50,000 per piece depending on size. As a result, this craft has a high economic value and is extremely profitable, particularly for the artisans in Lembung Barat Village, Lenteng District, Sumenep Regency. Local knowledge, as this case, must be conserved and safeguarded, particularly that which has the potential to be helpful to society and the environment (Nasution, 2021).

CONCLUSION

According to our findings, inhabitants in Lembung Barat Village, Lenteng District, Sumenep Regency utilize palm leaves as handicrafts in the shape of mats, known as Taker Rakara in Madurese. When the tobacco harvest season begins, Taker

Rakara is commonly employed as a tool for wrapping tobacco. Taker Rakara has monetary worth, particularly among the handcrafted people in Lembung Barat Village, Lenteng District, Sumenep Regency. We encourage more study to increase the quality of the community's products.

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