

## Ecological values and environmental sustainability in the Kuranding Lake folktale

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### ABSTRACT

Local beliefs in the myths surrounding Lake Kuranding are relevant to the lake's existence. This study aims to uncover the ecological values embedded in the Lake Kuranding folktale and their implications for environmental sustainability. This study uses an ecocritical approach, focusing on the social phenomena of the Tanjung Beringin Village community, South Bengkulu, regarding the ecological implications of the Lake Kuranding folktale. The ecological dimension of local narratives tends to be underexplored, even though these narratives are related to the construction of awareness in environmental preservation. This research is a major step towards understanding how the local narrative of the Lake Kuranding folktale represents environmental preservation. Data sources come from literature, interviews, and observations. The results indicate that the Lake Kuranding folktale contains ecological values, namely: (1) self-sufficiency and self-awareness, (2) knowledge of land allocation, and (3) preservation of water and soil sources. The implications of these three ecological values provide numerous benefits, such as the preservation of the lake ecosystem and water sources for two sub-districts in South Bengkulu, an abundance of fish resources, and a foundation for food security for the people of South Bengkulu. The mythical aspects of the Kuranding Lake folklore have transformed into ecological values that guide the community in preserving their natural environment. The existence of the Kuranding Lake folklore today is not only relevant to the oral folklore preservation practices of the Serawai ethnic group in South Bengkulu but also has implications for the lake's sustainability and plays a significant role in the social and economic aspects of the community in South Bengkulu.

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## Introduction

Culture comes from the word buddhayah which in Sanskrit means mind or reason. Culture means a thought, reason, cultural products, and about culture (Pusat Bahasa, 2008). Herkovits (in Setiadi, 2012) said that culture is part of the living environment created by humans. This creation culminates in cultural ownership as conveyed by Koentjaraningrat (2009) who said that culture is the entire system of ideas, actions, and human works in the life of society that are made human property through learning. In addition, Culture according to Tylor (in Tilaar, 2002) is a complex system that contains knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, abilities, and habits that humans have as members of society. A culture will survive

if humans as cultural actors still have the belief that there is a value content contained in the culture they are pursuing. The presence of cultural values can encourage spiritual constructs such as resilience, willingness to strive and work hard, tolerance, and mutual cooperation (Djamaris in Fanani et al., 1997). Poerwanto (2005) adds that culture, as a creation or legacy of community life, is the result of the creativity of its proponents in interacting with their ecology.

Koentjaraningrat (2009) also divides culture into seven elements: (1) language; (2) knowledge systems; (3) social organization; (4) systems of living equipment and technology; (5) livelihood systems; (6) religious systems; and (7) arts. Local wisdom or local knowledge is part of the knowledge system within cultural elements. Local wisdom is integrated with beliefs and norms present in society, transmitted through oral traditions, one of which is folklore. Folklore is part of traditional literature (Barone, 2011). Therefore, folk tales were born, lived and developed orally, were anonymous and collective for a long time (Sisyono, 2008).

The transmission of folktales occurs orally or through spoken word (Danandjaa, 2007; Djamaris, 2002). This is clarified by Fang (2012), who states that folktales are transmitted by mothers to their children or by village leaders who cannot yet read and write. In general, folktales typically contain cultural and cultural values believed in by a community. This aligns with Semi's (2012) opinion that folktales reflect the values of social relationships with other living beings. This is supported by the opinion of Sugiharti (2017) who said that through literary works, the institutions and traditions of a society are passed on to the reading public at that time, and to society in the future, both regarding ways of thinking, religious behavior, customs, history, and other cultural values.

It can be argued that folktales are correlated with cultural aspects and the social value system of a community (Hutomo, 1991). These values are local knowledge believed in and used by the community, reflected in traditions and myths passed down from generation to generation. As Giddens (2012) said, improving the ability to write and speak about ecological issues by individuals can be initiated. This aligns with the opinion of Gunawan et al. (2014), who state that local wisdom or local knowledge is life experience derived from adaptations within a community and communicated from generation to generation.

The existence and empowerment of local wisdom within society is not only due to efforts to pass it down from generation to generation, but also due to the continued relevance of the values contained within that local wisdom to its adherents. These values are related to messages and mandates, as stated by Ratih (2019), who stated that the inheritance of folklore is a strategy for transforming values deemed important. This is in line with research by Stalis et al. (2022) which shows that in the Legend of Bukit Perak there are cultural values regarding the relationship between humans and the universe, namely the utilization of natural resources. Furthermore, Rukayah (2018) defines folklore as anonymous or ancient stories that originated and developed within specific communities and were passed down orally and passed down through generations, using their respective regional languages as suggestions for conveying the message or mandate. In other words, the messages or mandates contained in folklore are still considered relevant and impactful to the communities that believe in them, for example, the ecological messages contained in folklore.

Such as the folklore study by Sriyono (2014) on local wisdom in the oral literature of the Papuan Moy tribe which shows the presence of ecological space in the oral literature, namely mountains as a source of water. Studies on oral folklore, particularly existing folklore, tend to focus on examining socio-cultural structures and functions; the ecological dimension related to human survival remains relatively underexplored. Research gaps that ignore the ecological dimension have the potential to diminish the essence of the structure and function of folktales within their user communities. Local narratives containing constructs of environmental awareness should be recognized early on, especially considering that folktales, passed down from generation to generation, enable the implementation of ecological values as part of the community's daily practices.

The urgency of caring for nature has become a crucial issue today, given the increasingly concerning state of Indonesia's natural resources. In fact, Indonesia ranks first in terms of several types of natural disasters (Madjid, 2018). Natural disasters are inevitable, but the lack of human ethics in exploring nature exacerbates the damage (Herlina, 2015). Research by Narendra (2009) shows that excessive land use has negative impacts such as flooding, erosion, and sedimentation, which have the potential to cause disasters and other problems. It can be concluded that Indonesia's natural resources are experiencing environmental deterioration, marked by the loss of land resources, the extinction of wild flora and fauna, and ecosystem destruction (Afifah et al., 2020; Larasati, 2020).

Awatara (2011) stated that environmental damage stems from humans' incorrect perspectives and exploration of nature. This statement is supported by Suwandi (2016), who stated that the cause of environmental damage is human activity itself. Naess (in Keraf, 2010) even stated that a radical and fundamental reconstruction of human thought patterns and behavior is the only solution to address the

environmental crisis. Environmental literacy encompasses three aspects: knowledge, attitudes, and skills (Ilhami et al., 2019). Furthermore, environmental education can improve students' knowledge and attitudes toward the environment (Napitupulu, et al., 2019).

The universe is like a teacher for humans (Nisa, 2019). Therefore, the younger generation must receive education on how to treat nature based on local wisdom, for example, through folktales that contain ecological content for environmental sustainability. Literature requires nature as its inspiration, while nature requires literature as a tool for its conservation (Wulandari, 2017).

Leavenworth & Manni (2020) noted that educational and literary research impacts the representation of nature, climate change, and students' reflections on nature through fiction. According to Sugiharti (2017), cultural ecology in literature comprehensively reveals events involving the environment as an object of study. Therefore, exploring nature in the cultural environment is a practice of exploring messages of cultural values that can serve as guidelines for life.

This paper focuses on analyzing folktales containing ecological values and their implications for the communities that tell the stories. For example, the ecological message contained in the lake-set folktale entitled Lake Kuranding. Lake Kuranding is a lake located in Tanjung Beringin Village, precisely located in Air Nipis District, South Bengkulu Regency. The name Kuranding itself is believed to originate from the name of the first human inhabitant of Tanjung Beringin Village. Bengkulu Province has several iconic lakes such as Lake Dendam Tak Sudah, Lake Tes, Lake Gedang, Lake Mas, Lake Nibung, Lake Suro, and others. These lakes play a significant role in supporting the economy of the surrounding community by becoming tourist attractions. However, unlike other lakes, Lake Kuranding has been less successful as a tourist attraction despite efforts by the local government.

Kuranding Lake is believed to be guarded by dragons and eagles by the local community. The preservation of Kuranding Lake is thought to be relevant to the community's belief in dragons and eagles guarding Kuranding Lake. The author will reveal the ecological values contained in the folklore of Kuranding Lake and the implications of these folklore for the people of Tanjung Beringin Village, South Bengkulu. There are several relevant studies regarding the analysis of ecological values in folklore, namely: 1) research by Fahmi (2017) which shows that myths and pemali speak carelessly and act arrogantly in the folklore of Situ Gede and Situ Cibeureum have implications for the preservation of the natural resources of the two lakes; 2) research by Rohman et al. (2022) which shows that the existence of the spirit of Dewi Sri contains ecological values such as respect for nature, the value of sustainability, and the value of non-vanity related to the lives of the people of East Java; 3) research by Nurmawati & Yulisetiani (2023) whose results show that the fable "The Desperate Squirrel" has ecological content and is relevant for use in literature learning in elementary schools and 4) research by Efendi et al. (2024) which revealed that protecting water sources through prohibiting the use of natural resources is a form of community effort to maintain ecosystem balance.

Unlike the four previous studies, this study focuses on examining the ecological implications of the Kuranding Lake folktale on the lives of the people of Tanjung Beringin Village, South Bengkulu. This study comprehensively integrates ecological values and implications by demonstrating how folktales play an active role in environmental sustainability. Besides the fact that this topic has not been widely studied, this study aims to interpret the ecological content within the Kuranding Lake folktale. Exploring ecologically charged folktales can be considered an effort to understand the expression of local wisdom in traditional communities regarding their treatment of nature.

The interaction between traditional communities and nature is based on and regulated by local wisdom ethics, which respect the existence of nature itself. Considering Indonesia's natural conditions and frequent natural disasters, a fundamental reconstruction of mindsets is necessary for the sustainability of life for future generations. Therefore, this research is urgent because this knowledge is crucial for modern society living in a damaged ecosystem, especially for future generations who are expected to become agents of environmental damage prevention.

## Method

This study uses a phenomenological approach related to literary ecology by observing the social phenomena of the Tanjung Beringin Village community, South Bengkulu, related to the implications of the Kuranding Lake folktale. This approach will reveal information about the phenomena in the environment where the phenomenon occurs (Kuswarno, 2009; Borg, 2002). The research data is in the form of the Tanjung Beringin Village community's folktale, namely Lake Kuranding. Data collection was carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. In qualitative research, the research instrument is the researcher themselves or human instruments. Researchers must have broad insight so they are able to ask questions, photograph and analyze the social situation being studied. Based on the data collection

techniques above, the instruments used by the researcher are a list of questions, a recording device in the form of a device and other writing tools to record answers from the informants interviewed. After the data was collected, the researcher then carried out the data transcription process and analyzed the ecological content in the Kuranding Lake folktale. Furthermore, the analyzed data for ecological content was linked to the community. The researcher focused on finding the implications of ecological values in the Kuranding Lake folktale with community efforts to preserve the environment. The following is a summary of the research methodology; 1) Collection of data on the folklore of Lake Kuranding, 2) Transcription of the folklore of Lake Kuranding, 3) Analysis of the meaning of the folklore of Lake Kuranding, 4) Analysis of the ecological content in the folklore of Lake Kuranding using a literary ecology approach, 5) Phenomenological analysis of the folklore of Lake Kuranding (experience, awareness and meaning of Lake Kuranding for the community), 6) relevance of the folklore of Lake Kuranding to the social reality of the community, 7) Conclusion.

## Results and Discussion

Lake Kuranding is a type of folktale that falls into the category of legend. Danandjaya (1991) states that a legend is a folktale that actually happened, the story is connected to historical figures and spiced with miracles, supernatural powers, and special features of the events. The author's interview with a source who is a village elder, the folktale of Lake Kuranding begins with the presence of a man named Kuranding who was born in a lost hamlet (now called Sebakas hamlet and considered sacred by local residents).

One day, Kuranding intended to propose to his beloved girl, Kuraduk, as his wife. The proposal was accepted, but with the condition that the dowry be one kulak (liter) or three kilograms of fish. Kuranding agreed to the condition. While searching, he found a small river about four meters wide. Kuranding jumped into the river, but suddenly felt an itch on his body where the water had come into contact. He got out of the river and, out of curiosity, explored the itchy river. Until finally, he found the upstream of the itchy river. The people of South Bengkulu call this upstream the telubung river, and now the river is called the Air Gatal river. In this telubung, Kuranding found thousands of fish of various types. Feeling that the dowry of two kulaks was enough, Kuranding hurried home and carried out his marriage to Kuraduk.

Initially, they lived upstream in the Air Itchy River, but eventually moved to a high hamlet, now known as Tanjung Beringin Village. The riverbed where Kuranding found thousands of fish widened until it finally became a lake. This lake was guarded by Kuranding and Kuranduk, until they disappeared, and the local community named it Lake Kuranding. The local myth holds that Kuranding and Kuranduk did not disappear; they simply transformed into a dragon and an eagle, which guard Lake Kuranding.

## Ecological Values of the Kuranding Lake Folklore

The existence of a dragon and an eagle as guardians of Lake Kuranding is believed by the local community to be the reason for the lake's existence to this day. Locals believe that Kuranding and Kuranduk, who transformed into a dragon and an eagle, still frequently appear as a form of protection over the lake. According to informants, when the dragon appears, only its body and scales are visible, whereas when the eagle appears, its entire body is clearly visible. Informants said the story of Lake Kuranding is known throughout the community in Tanjung Beringin Village, even for newcomers, the story of Lake Kuranding is mandatory for them to know. The goal is clearly to ensure the community has an understanding and does not pollute the environment around Lake Kuranding. From the results of interviews with young people, almost all informants said that Lake Kuranding is not their favorite tourist destination. This is because the distance is quite far, about an hour from the city area, and the situation around Lake Kuranding which directly borders the Riki Hill protected forest, making the lake seem isolated and less attractive to people for tourists.

The myth surrounding the guardian of Lake Kuranding is believed to maintain its pristine beauty. This pristine nature is correlated with a secure water supply for residents, both for daily life and for irrigation of rice fields, which benefits not only Tanjung Beringin village but also the communities in Air Nipis and Seginim districts. The community's belief in the guardian myth of Lake Kuranding contains a message and mandate for the lake's sustainability and benefit for the surrounding community.

The Tanjung Beringin village community's ethics in treating nature are a key element in the ecological values of Lake Kuranding folklore. Glotfelty & Fromm (1996) argues that positioning nature from an environmental perspective means recognizing that its existence is not merely to meet human needs but also as an entity that must be respected, as current exploitative actions will impact the lives of future generations. Long before the rise of conservation and green practices, the people of Tanjung Beringin village, South Bengkulu, had long implemented ethical use of nature based on local wisdom through the Lake Kuranding folklore.

The myths surrounding Lake Kuranding not only serve to maintain community behavior but also indirectly protect the lake's existence to this day. Therefore, the ecological values contained in the folklore of Lake Kuranding are important to the people of Tanjung Beringin village. The presence of dragons and eagles, as guardian symbols of Lake Kuranding, believed by the community to always be present when humans exploit the lake excessively, makes the lake's existence sacred and respected. Furthermore, human attitudes arising from the myths of Lake Kuranding relate to the sustainability of community life in various aspects, especially in relation to human needs for nature. Next, we explain the ecological values contained in the folklore of Lake Kuranding and how they impact the people of South Bengkulu.

### Self-Consciousness and Self-Awareness

The presence of the Kuranding character is central to the Kuranding Lake folktale, especially in terms of the character's desire to feel content with the abundance provided by nature. In the Kuranding Lake story, the Kuranding character is told to fulfill a dowry in the form of fish eyes as much as one kulak (two liters) or three kilograms to marry his beloved, Kuranduk. After experiencing obstacles in the form of itching he felt from diving into the river water to look for fish, Kuranding finally found a patch of water source which turned out to be a telubung or river head containing thousands of types of fish. Kuranding stopped his action of fishing in the river after he felt that the fish he had collected had weighed one kulak or three kilograms.

Kuranding's decision to stop fishing after he felt his catch weighed three kilograms is what correlates with a wise attitude towards the environment. The folklore of Lake Kuranding teaches the importance of self-awareness in utilizing nature. Although Kuranding saw thousands of species of fish, he only took three kilograms according to his needs. The people of Tanjung Beringin village have also long implemented this, villagers only take what they need. The ethics of local wisdom in utilizing fish that live in Lake Kuranding as a source of human food is an implication of the folklore of Lake Kuranding, especially in the part of the story where Kuranding only took three kilograms of fish when in front of him were thousands of fish.

This value of sufficiency is also implemented by fish farmers who cultivate tilapia and carp using a floating net cage system. This traditional method reflects a sense of contentment with the results of traditional breeding without damaging the fish's natural habitat, Lake Kuranding. Not only farmers but also anglers practice self-awareness (a sense of sufficiency) when borrowing the benefits of Lake Kuranding. The people of Tanjung Beringin village believe that a dragon, a large snake that lives in the lake, is harmless to humans, but this dragon will appear if the angler has a bountiful catch but does not stop fishing. The appearance of the dragon is believed to be a sign asking anglers to be self-aware and feel content, so that the fish in the lake can be preserved.

### Land Allocation Knowledge

In the folktale, after their marriage, Kuranding and Kuranduk settled near the telubung or headwaters of a river inhabited by thousands of fish. However, it is also said that the husband and wife eventually moved to Tanjung Beringin village. The story does not explain the reason, but the author sees the husband and wife's move as related to ethics in allocating land use. It is said that the headwaters, which were initially a small area, grew larger and eventually became a lake. In other words, the source of fish that breed in it also increased many times over, but Kuranding and his wife chose to move their residence away from Kuranding lake. Kuranding and his wife's move to a high village (Tanjung Beringin village) reflects knowledge of land allocation where there are territorial boundaries for the preservation of nature and also human life.

Nature and humans can coexist but within safe boundaries where human presence must not cause environmental degradation in the future. Local knowledge from the Kuranding Lake folklore regarding the Kuranding's awareness of limiting its presence from nature has implications for the current situation around Kuranding Lake. Local knowledge of not planting oil palms in water source areas, not clearing land, and also cutting down trees and not clearing the land at the base of the lake is implemented by the Tanjung Beringin village community. Kuranding's actions away from the water source in the folklore implicitly indicate limiting human activity around the water source. Furthermore, Kuranding Lake directly borders the Riki Hill protected forest with no nearby settlements, this demonstrates how well-maintained land allocation around Kuranding Lake area. Allowing nature to grow in a comfortable environment is tantamount to improving the quality and quantity of human life around it.

### Safeguarding Water and Land Resources

The myth of the guardians of Kuranding Lake, the dragon and eagle, believed to be the incarnations of Kuranding and Kuranduk, evokes both fear and obedience among the Tanjung Beringin villagers, who

adhere to ethical practices in utilizing the lake's resources. Kuranding Lake is bordered by the Riki Hill protected forest, which contributes to the quality of the lake's ecosystem, including the availability of water for the community's livelihoods. The preservation of Kuranding Lake benefits not only the community's daily needs but also the community's economy through agriculture and fisheries.

The total area of Kuranding Lake covers approximately 18 hectares, with water accounting for approximately 10 hectares of the total area. Kuranding Lake is a vital water source for the people of South Bengkulu, benefiting hundreds of thousands of people. The lake irrigates approximately 3,000 hectares of rice fields in two sub-districts: Air Nipis and Seginim. Furthermore, Kuranding Lake is the primary water source for hundreds of community-owned fish ponds. Fish farming is also practiced in the lake area, but the method used is traditional, using cages, and the number of fish farmers in the area is also limited. Furthermore, public awareness of not overfishing also contributes to preventing lake water pollution. Although compliance stems from residents' fear of the myth of the lake's guardians that will arise if they act greedily, this myth is effective in disciplining residents to maintain the lake's water resources and ensure their sustainability.

The source stated that local residents are afraid and worried that Kuranding Lake will be damaged and no longer be able to irrigate their rice fields, ponds, or meet their daily needs. They see Kuranding Lake as their last remaining water source. This fear is understandable, as many of the water sources, known as ulu tulung (water springs) by the people of South Bengkulu, have dried up. Most of the existing ulu tulung (water springs) have been converted into oil palm plantations, thus reducing the availability of natural springs. In contrast, Kuranding Lake remains well-preserved and even serves as a primary water source for agriculture in South Bengkulu.

Folk tales passed down orally through family approaches have become an effective way to maintain the existence of local wisdom of Lake Kuranding in the form of protecting water sources and the surrounding land. This is a strong reason why the myths of Lake Kuranding remain attached and believed by the community, besides having an impact on maintaining the lake's ecosystem, it is also related to the residents' dependence on the lake so that awareness of maintaining the lake's sustainability is a primary obligation that residents must have. Efforts to maintain water and land sources were also explained by the head of Tanjung Beringin village, Mr. Sabirin, where the village community realized how important the existence of Lake Kuranding was, therefore one of the efforts made was planting mahogany trees on the edge of the lake to prevent erosion.

### **Ecological Value Implications of the Kuranding Lake Folktale**

The ethics and practices of the Tanjung Beringin village community in utilizing Kuranding Lake wisely and responsibly are a manifestation of the implications of ecological values contained in the Kuranding Lake folklore. The pattern of oral transmission of folklore from the older generation to the younger generation serves as a strategy for introducing the Kuranding Lake myth, which encourages community obedience and self-control in utilizing Kuranding Lake. A sense of sufficiency and self-awareness becomes the identity of the Tanjung Beringin village residents when practicing the use of Kuranding Lake. The implications of the values of sufficiency and self-awareness are evident in the habits of residents when fishing individually or in fish farming practices in the lake area. Where fish farmers use traditional methods using cages to maintain the aquatic ecosystem. Furthermore, for individuals, it is evident in how anglers only take fish as needed. The existence of local knowledge that dragons and eagles will appear when humans are greedy for lake resources, makes the Tanjung Beringin village community understand the concept and practice of sufficiency and self-awareness when receiving benefits from Kuranding Lake.

The impact of preserving local wisdom in the Kuranding Lake folklore is also related to community knowledge of land allocation. The implications of knowledge of land allocation have an impact on the sustainability of the Kuranding Lake area. In the folklore, the Kuranding character decides to distance himself from the Kuranding Lake water source, this reflects that nature must be given a very sufficient and comfortable area to maintain its sustainability. Currently, Kuranding Lake borders directly with a protected forest area called Riki Hill. The community believes that by not planting oil palms around the lake, not clearing land, and not cutting down trees will keep Kuranding Lake sustainable. In addition, the implications of local knowledge on land allocation in the Kuranding Lake folklore make the Kuranding Lake area far from residential areas, thereby minimizing water source pollution.

Next is the ecological value of protecting water and land sources, reflected in the folklore of Lake Kuranding, which has implications for the daily need for water and the economy of residents in the fields of agriculture and fisheries. The indigenous tribe of South Bengkulu Regency, namely the Serawai tribe, calls the spring water source Ulu Tulung. There are two types of ulu tulung: ulu tulung telagau di ghimbau (ulu tulung lake in the jungle) and ulu tulung beghaik (ulu tulung flowing water). These ulu tulung are used by

residents for farming and household needs, but the number of ulu tulung is increasingly limited and tends to dry up, causing natural spring water sources to decrease day by day.

Kuranding Lake is a major source of irrigation for agricultural activities in South Bengkulu. Furthermore, its location in the upstream area plays a crucial role for farmers downstream. One source stated that the presence of Kuranding Lake allows farmers to rely on their rice fields for their livelihoods. They cannot imagine a situation where Lake Kuranding's upstream area dries up, as the water supply to the rice fields would be depleted; Lake Kuranding is the source.

The community's stewardship of water and soil resources has implications for agricultural yields. Farmers in the Air Nipis and Seginim sub-districts can harvest twice a year, reaching 12,600 tons per year. Data from the Statistics Indonesia (BPS) of South Bengkulu Regency from 2019 to 2023 shows that nearly 23% of rice production in South Bengkulu Regency is from rice fields whose water source originates from the upstream of Lake Kuranding. In fact, rice production in these two sub-districts is among the highest quality in Bengkulu Province. The residents' dependence on Lake Kuranding has created a strong awareness of the importance of preserving the lake. This awareness did not emerge spontaneously; local knowledge, derived from local folklore about Lake Kuranding, plays a significant role in maintaining the lake's ecosystem.

The community is not uninterested in converting rice fields to oil palm plantations with its more promising economic benefits. However, the residents of Tanjung Beringin village realize that the upstream of Lake Kuranding is a crucial source of water and land, not only for daily life but also for the local economy. The community understands that if the protection of Lake Kuranding's water source is compromised, a domino effect will be felt, ranging from social to economic problems. Efforts to prevent the decline in the quality of Lake Kuranding's ecosystem include not only protecting the water source but also preserving the land surrounding the lake. The community has also tried planting mahogany trees to prevent erosion near the lake's edge, and even planting spring-friendly but economically valuable plants such as durian, breadfruit, guava, and avocado.

## Conclusion

The Kuranding Lake folklore reflects the local wisdom of the Tanjung Beringin community in preserving the lake ecosystem through myths and traditions passed down across generations. Community beliefs regarding the dragon and eagle as guardians of the lake encourage ethical behavior and prevent excessive exploitation of natural resources. These ecological values function as a form of social control that shapes the community's awareness of environmental conservation, contributing to the sustainability of Lake Kuranding and its important role as a water source for agriculture in Air Nipis and Seginim Districts. Consequently, the folklore is not only relevant for preserving cultural heritage but also has significant implications for environmental sustainability, food security, and the social and economic life of the South Bengkulu community. Furthermore, the Kuranding Lake folklore can serve as an environmental-based learning medium for younger generations and as a means of revitalizing local wisdom values related to nature conservation.

## Declarations

- Author contribution** : Fina Hiasa was responsible for the entire research project. She also led the writing of the manuscript and the collaboration with all authors. Ngudining, Melia, Emi, Nesa, Yeni, and Candra participated in the data collection, transcription and analysis. They also revised the manuscript. All authors approved the final manuscript.
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