

Preserving Coastal and Marine Resources: The Existence of Local Wisdom among the Bajau Tribe

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The Bajo or Bajau tribe is a tribe that lives and survives in the sea. In some countries, the Bajau tribe is known as Sama or Samal. The Bajo tribe is more widely spread in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Brunei, and Malaysia. Bajau as a maritime community certainly have hereditary habits relating to their lives in utilizing marine and coastal natural resources. On this basis, this research aims to determine the form of local wisdom of the Bajau tribe in utilizing marine and coastal natural resources, and second, to know the efforts made by the Bajau tribe to maintain local wisdom so that it remains sustainable now and in the future. This research was conducted using a post-positivism (qualitative) paradigm. The research location chosen was the Bajau tribe who inhabit the Spelman waters, precisely along the coast of the Tiworo Strait in Muna Regency, West Muna Regency, and Central Buton Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. The research involved around 17 people who were determined purposively, namely Tribal Heads. Research data comes from primary and secondary sources. Primary data resulting from in-depth interviews were then analyzed descriptively. It was found that the local wisdom of the Bajau tribe in preserving marine and coastal natural resources is sangal and pamali. The current efforts of the Bajau tribe to preserve local wisdom so that it remains intact is by upholding the advice of their ancestors and maintaining a figure (Tribal Chief) as the trustee of the source of ancestral knowledge. Therefore, the agenda for the future is the wisdom of the Bajau people which has been proven to protect the sea so that it can be replicated in other coastal communities. Regarding replication and conceptual models is a challenging discussion for future research.

Keywords: Bajau; Local Wisdom; Preservation; Natural Resources, Coastal, Sama or Samal tribe, Coastal and marine natural resources, Local wisdom, Sangal and pamali, sustainability, tribal chief, Muna Regency.

INTRODUCTION

There are interesting facts about coastal life in several ASEAN countries, namely the existence of the Bajau tribe. Since centuries ago, they have lived in the sea, which indicates that the Bajau tribe lives with the sea with their wisdom, so they are often referred to as a tribe that lives in the sea. Several references mention Bajo and *Bajau*, and if you look at history they are also called the *Sama* tribe or *Samal* (Maglana, 2016; Hoogervorst, 2012; Sather, 2006; Kazufumi, 2001; Nimmo, 1972). In this manuscript, we prefer to use the

Bajau language as it is often mentioned in several international articles.

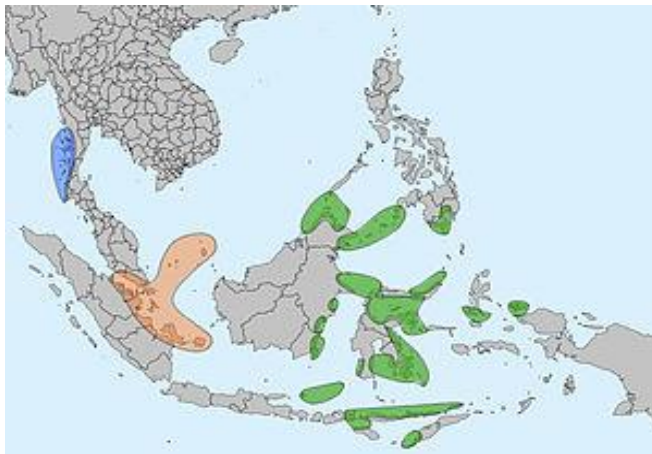
The Bajau are sometimes called "Sea Gypsies" or "Sea Nomads" (Liebner, 2012; Baskara and Astuti, 2011; Saidatul, 2008), a term also used for unrelated ethnic groups with similar traditional lifestyles, such as the "Moken" of the Mergui Archipelago, Burma-Thailand (Bramante *et al.* 2011; Kazufumi, 2001; Nimmo, 1972), and "Sea People" of southeastern Sumatra, and the Riau Islands of Indonesia. The term sama-bajau in Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, and



Indonesia in Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and in Nusa Tenggara (Mucha-Shim, 2012; Jubilado *et al.* 2011) (Fig. 1).

As can be seen in Figure 1, the Bajau tribe (Sama-Bajau) is the dominant tribe in the Tawi-Tawi islands, Philippines. They are also found on other islands in the Sulu Archipelago, coastal areas of Mindanao, and other islands in the northern Philippines (Daug *et al.*, 2013; Hoogervorst, 2012; Jubilado *et al.*, 2011; Jubilado, 2010; Nimmo, 1968). In Indonesia, it is found in northern and eastern Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and the entire eastern Indonesian archipelago (Kemkens, 2011). In the Philippines, they are grouped with the Moros of their same religion, and the Malaysian Sabah (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2010).

As sea people, the Bajau live on the move or are called nomads. Because of this nomadic nature, they regionally live in several places across countries (Bracamonte *et al.* 2011; Beja, 2006; Kazufumi, 2001). The Bajau tribe in the world is spread across Southeast Asia with a population of around 1.3 million (2010 data). Until now, there have been no recent reports regarding the exact population of the Bajau tribe. According to data from the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2010), the population of the Bajau tribe is estimated to be around 437 thousand people. Then, according to data from the National Statistics Office of the Philippine Government (2013); Kusuma *et al.* (2017), the number of Bajau people in the country is around 450 thousand people. In the same year, the population of the Bajau tribe in Indonesia was around 345 thousand people, and in Brunei Darussalam around 12 thousand people (Larena *et al.*, 2021; Hoogervorst, 2012; Jubilado *et al.*, 2011; Pallasen, 1985).



Source: Sopher (1965); Clarkson, (1968); Kiefer, (1973)

Figure 1. Distribution of the Bajau Population According to Designation.

Almost the entire life of the Bajau tribe is spent on boats that continue to sail the seas. Their livelihoods depend heavily on the coast and sea (Ismail *et al.* 2015; Chou, 2016; Tahara,

2013; Bracamonte *et al.* 2011). This can be seen from the fact that all their sources of livelihood come from the sea, even their residences (houses) are built on the sea. The Bajau tribe also has its own ethical and cultural system. This system is a guide to life for the Bajau people (Waka, 2014; Flores, 2014; Field *et al.*, 2009; Stacey, 2007; Sather, 2006). This system has regulated the daily life of the Bajau people for generations.



Source: <https://en-m-wikipedia-org.translate.goog/wiki/Sama-Bajau>

Figure 2. Activities of the Bajau Tribe in Zamboanga, Philippines.

Marine and coastal resources as the "lifeflood" of the Bajau tribe are now under pressure due to damage caused by excessive use of resources (Setyaningsih *et al.*, 2023). Likewise reported by Dai and Manahung (2020); Hamzah *et al.* (2019); Hasrawaty *et al.* (2017); Clifton and Majors, (2012) with very diverse causes, ranging from oil exploration, industrial-scale fishing, and other community activities that are not environmentally friendly. Continuous pressure on coastal and marine resources can cause increasingly severe damage, all of which results in increasingly difficult survival for the Bajau tribe (Hoogervorst, 2012; Clifton and Majors, 2012).

Illegal fishing activities carried out by the Company's sea trawlers have raised concerns among the Bajau tribe about excessive fishing (Field *et al.*, 2009) and some of this produces waste that poisons marine biota (Stacey, 2007). At the same time, the Bajau have no alternative to compete with large fishermen (land-based and commercial fishermen) who have better equipment and earn enough income to support their families (Hoogervorst, 2012; Clifton and Majors, 2012). Damage to the marine biota of Sama-Bajau fishermen is often associated with (alleged) illegal and destructive practices, such as fishing with explosives, fishing with cyanide, coral mining, and cutting down mangrove trees (Clifton and Majors, 2012).

Like other tribes, the Bajau tribe certainly has a culture that has been passed down from their ancestors. What is unique is that the Bajau tribe as sea people will be different from the cultural values of other tribes on land (Setyaningsih *et al.*, 2023; Hasrawaty *et al.* (2017). So, an explanation of local



wisdom from the cultural values of the Bajau tribe will be very relevant, especially in terms of preserving natural and coastal resources. For example, [Artanto \(2017\)](#) in his research stated that the local wisdom concept of the Bajau tribe in the form of *Bapongka* teaches rules, prohibitions, and taboos in using the sea so as not to damage marine and coastal ecosystems. *Bapongka* to this day is still valid and implemented. Furthermore, *Bapongka* is not only a local wisdom mechanism for protecting the environment but is a way of life, cosmology, and spiritual beliefs of the Bajau tribe. Another local wisdom related to ethics and self-maturation is *patoba* ([Maulidyna et al., 2021](#); [Mustamin and Macpal, 2020](#); [Dalnia et al., 2018](#); [Utina, 2014](#)).

Other studies state that the Bajau tribe is very strong and adaptive to social change ([Suryanegara et al., 2015](#); [Obie, 2016](#); [Suliyati, 2017](#); [Rustan et al., 2018](#); [Satriani and Upe, 2018](#); [Nurhaliza and Suciati, 2019](#); [Mukramin, 2018](#); [Jasman et al., 2018](#)). They stated that, despite social dynamics and settlement reform, the Bajau tribe managed to defend against these dynamics. Their Bajau identity as sea people remains intact ([Dai and Manahung, 2020](#); [Obie, 2020](#); [Umar, 2019](#)), including how they utilize resources as a differentiator from other tribes on land.

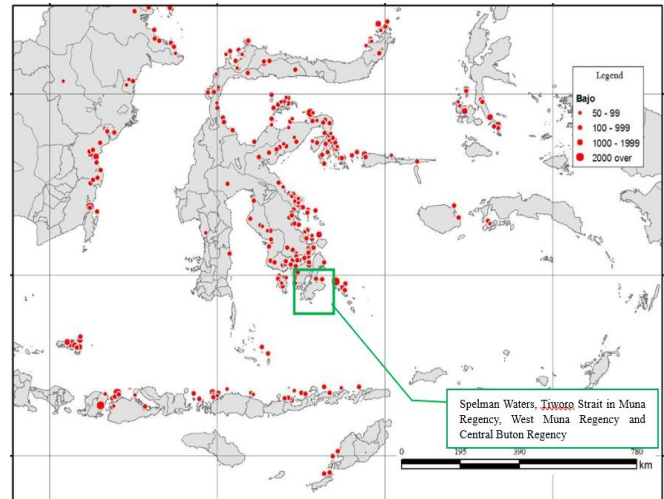
This research aims to determine the forms of local wisdom of the Bajau tribe in utilizing marine and coastal natural resources. The next objective is to find out the efforts made by the Bajau tribe to maintain this local wisdom so that it survives now and in the future. The urgency is as initial information to determine the role of the Bajau tribe in terms of the future of coastal and marine resources.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research was conducted using a post-positivism paradigm which is usually called qualitative research, with the consideration that this research captures original or natural facts regarding the wisdom of the Bajau tribe in preserving natural resources, as well as their efforts to preserve this wisdom. This is in line with opinions such as [Hasddin et al. \(2022\)](#); [Moleong \(2010\)](#) who stated that qualitative research is characterized by uncovering social phenomena, supported by (natural) narratives so that it can describe real situations according to real facts.

The study focused on the Bajau ethnic community who live in Spelman waters, precisely along the coast of the Tiworo Strait, which is administratively located in Napabalano District, Muna Regency; then in West Muna Regency in Napano Kusambi District, Kusambi District, Tiworo Islands District, North Tiworo District, and Central Tiworo District. In Central Buton Regency it is in East Wawasangka District. The research involved around 27 people who were determined purposively, namely Tribal Heads. The logical consideration for choosing a location in the Tiworo Strait is that the population of the Bajau tribe in the area is quite large,

between 1,000-2,000 people ([Maulidyna et al., 2021](#); [Nagatsu, 2013](#)). The research location is shown in Figure 3. Starting from entering areas in the Napabalano District, from the many people who were invited to discuss, 7 informants were found among figures and tribal chiefs who were able to understand and explain the research problems. The same thing was also done in West Muna so that 12 informants were obtained, and in Central Buton 8 people.



Source: Processed from [Maulidyna et al. \(2021\)](#); [Nagatsu, \(2013\)](#).

Figure 3. Research Location.

Research data comes from primary and secondary sources. Primary source data was obtained from in-depth interviews assisted by an interview guide. Secondary data comes from several reports and journals published online. These data were analyzed descriptively, with stages ([Maleong, 2000](#)); (1) Review of data and information from various sources resulting from interviews, observations, and documents; (2) Reducing information data by creating an abstraction as a summary of the essence of all statements so that they remain; (3) Arrangement of data and information in units; (4) Categorization of data and information; and (5) Reconfirm any data and information obtained.

RESULTS

As discussed in the review literature, the Bajau tribe has its own unique characteristics, one of which is that the language used and customs tend to be the same in all countries. On this basis, those expressing Bajau local wisdom at the research location (Tiworo Strait) are considered to represent the Bajau tribe everywhere.

Local wisdom of the Bajau tribe in preserving coastal natural resources: The Bajau tribe really understands the function of conserving marine biological resources in a



sustainable effort to ensure life in the future. In this regard, the research results reveal several traditions and other activities by the Bajau tribe on the coast of the Tiworo Strait in an effort to preserve biological resources, namely Sangal; and Pamali in the meaning of Prohibition, and the meaning of taboo (eating turtle meat).

The results of the search revealed that apart from *Sangal* and *Pamali*, there are other traditions such as *Parika*, namely the tradition of protecting and maintaining marine ecosystems. It's just that this tradition is no longer practiced by the Bajau tribe on the coast of the Tiworo Strait.

Sangal: *Sangal* is a ritual in the form of releasing fish whose populations are decreasing, or types of fish that they think are protected and prohibited from being caught. The *Sangal* ritual is usually carried out during the fish lean season in the hope that they can get through this period and restore a healthy fish population so that they can reproduce again in large populations.

This is as stated by one informant: The problem of the Bajau ethnic/tribe in Latawe Village is the release of fish (catch) whose population is decreasing. *Sangal* is also carried out on types of fish that they think are protected and prohibited from being caught (Interview results, with Mr. Meda, 2022).

Furthermore, another informant added: This *sangal* ritual is usually carried out during the fish lean season in the hope that the fish can get through this period and restore the fish population to thriving in the hope that the fish can reproduce again (Interview results, with Mr. H. Mansyur 2022).

Sangal by the Bajau tribe on the coast of the Tiworo Strait is only done at certain times, for example looking for types of fish or fish that have never been known or encountered before. This type of fish will be released back into the sea. From the information gathered, the *Sangal* ritual carried out by the Bajau tribe is carried out solely because they refuse (reject) reinforcements, because they believe that the type of fish that steps is the incarnation of their ancestors or is considered a fish that is stepped on. sea guard.

The *Sangal* ritual has great conservative value as an effort to preserve marine resources in general and maintain the diversity of fish species in particular. This means that the Bajau tribe not only takes marine products, but also protects other biological resources (fish).

Other information states that *Sangal* is starting to be threatened with abandonment, as conveyed by the information in the following quote,

Sangal in the Bajau community in Latawe Village is rarely found because it is only done at certain times (fish shortages or disappearance and migration of the kana population) because this belief is only held by certain old ethnicities/tribes who still hold this belief, whereas nowadays it tends to easy to catch fish with seines/nets (Results of interviews with Mr. Mannu and Mr. Uking Djassa, 2022).

Sangal in the Bajau community on the coast of the Tiworo Strait is rarely found, and is only carried out at certain times

(fish shortages or disappearance and migration of kana populations) and only among certain groups who still adhere to this belief. Another reason is because of the existence of fishing gear technology, namely trawls/nets, and the existence of motorboats so that they can easily reach places that have fish populations.

Pamali: The Bajau tribe pays great attention to harmony, harmony and balance between humans and humans, humans and the environment as seen in the various taboos in question, namely [Setyaningsih et al. \(2023\)](#); [Dai and Manahung \(2020\)](#); and [Hasrawaty et al. \(2017\)](#) are taboos and other forms of prohibition that lead to the "sacredness" of the sea.

The Bajau people still hold *Pamali* very firmly. They believe that if this is heeded, it will provide maximum results in fishing. Likewise, if the *pamali* is ignored it will bring bad luck in fishing activities such as not getting the desired catch. More than that, they also believe that if they don't pay attention to the *Pamali*, they will be in danger and even threaten their safety.

This fact was conveyed by the informant in the following statement,

We, the Bajau tribe here and Bajau tribes everywhere, have always believed in not speaking and even being reprimanded when we step from the house to the boat to go to sea. There is a tradition of prohibiting obstructing and reprimanding fishermen if Bajau fishermen want to board a boat to sail. Another etiquette for going to sea is that once on board, you are prohibited from returning or even talking to or calling other family members on land. Bajau fishermen are prohibited from speaking dirty or rude words while at sea, if they violate this, they are believed to attract the attention of sharks. When going to sea, Bajau fishermen are prohibited from fighting between fishermen. The last thing we still believe in is the prohibition on throwing or taking water or rinsing recycled furniture into the sea. If these things are violated, it will result in little luck at sea (dalle) or can bring danger such as storms and bad luck when at sea (Results of interview with Mr. Mannu, 2022).

Evidence of taboos or *Pamali* that the Bajau community believes in as expressed by other informants is,

I once unknowingly collected water from the sea using a pan, not long after a storm came and hit our boat. Seeing the ferocity of the storm, we immediately went home, if we had survived, we might have been drowned by the storm at sea, so when we returned to land, we had no fish to bring home (Interview Results with Mr. H. Akbar, 2022).

Other taboos that the Bajau tribe is not allowed to observe when going to sea or while at sea include not being able to do anything that is believed to bring bad luck to the husband or children who are going to sea, for example; When the sun goes down, there is no noise and it is not allowed to throw kitchen ashes under the house.

Meanwhile, the Bajau tribe underwent *mammia kadialo* (going to sea), and there were restrictions for families left



behind and those going to sea. These taboos include; *First*, the prohibition on throwing into sea waters such as sea cucumber washing water, wood charcoal or kitchen ash, cigarette butts and ash, chili juice, ginger, and orange juice, as well as the prohibition on washing cooking utensils (pots) in the sea waters. Wash water and these materials must be collected and thrown ashore.

Second, there is also a taboo on eating turtle meat, if it is violated it can bring disaster, storms, evil spirits, and even no results at sea. Turtles are believed to help many people who experience disasters, therefore these animals should not be killed. *Third*, another tradition carried out in mamia kadialo activities in preserving biological resources is that the processing of catch (fish) is carried out by looking for the nearest land. If this cannot be done (land is still far away) it is usually done on the reef but with the condition that it does not damage coral reefs. This processing activity is only carried out to meet food needs during pongka while other catches are stored on the boat to be sold when they reach land.

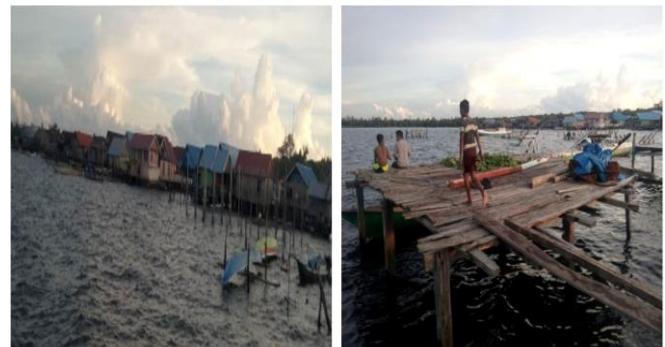
This is supported by the information conveyed by the informant that,

If the Bajau tribe/ethnicity does have taboos when going to sea, such as a prohibition on throwing (toxic) rubbish into the sea, eating turtle meat because we still believe that turtles have ancestral ties with us, and also a prohibition against not eating turtle meat. grilling or cooking fish in the sea is permitted in waters near corals or beaches (Results of interviews with Mr. Tello, 2022).

The tradition (abstinence/prohibition) in question is still "sacred" by the Bajau tribe on the coast of the Tiworo Strait, but the Bajau tribe admits that this tradition is now slowly starting to be eroded by a group of people who just ignore it, because they have not seen the consequences directly. caused (Bala). In line with Maulidyna *et al.* (2021); Basri *et al.* (2017a); Basri *et al.* (2017b) that the Bajau tribe still adheres to *Pamali* so that when they use it to conserve natural resources they feel watched over, and each of them keeps this tradition sacred.

Bajau Tribe efforts to preserve local wisdom: The results of the research, as stated previously, show that there are several forms of local wisdom in the use and preservation of biological natural resources. To maintain its existence, each society has its own way of preserving this tradition, through an inheritance system. In terms of inheritance activities, this can be done through; 1) Traditions and customs that have an element of obedience to each adherent (individual community), and 2) Advice from ancestors and maintaining the figure of the Tribal Chief who is the guardian and inheritor of the wisdom of the Bajau tribe. These two things are as expressed by the informant in the following statement quote, *To preserve the form or model of inheriting the wisdom of the Bajau community in Latawe Village, namely maintaining traditions and customs; and holding the advice of ancestors*

and elder figures (Tribal Chiefs) (Results of Interview with Mr. Ambo Tuo, 2022).



Source: Author 2023

Figure 4. Activities of the Bajau Tribe in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia.

Maintain traditions and customs: The results of the interviews revealed that maintaining traditions and customs has become an obligation for every tribe. The Bajau tribe is very steeped in tradition, especially in its interactions with the sea. The way to maintain traditions and customs, especially for the Bajau generation, is to involve their children in fishing activities.

Based on the results of interviews with informants, they said that local wisdom values need to be internalized, especially in the lives of contemporary Bajau society. This is as seen in the following statement,

An inventory of the noble values of the Bajau people which are considered to have experienced a decline in values or local wisdom which has been abandoned by the Bajau people both in carrying out activities at sea or traditions in daily life, so that these traditions remain among the next generation of Bajau. We realize the need to revitalize the cultural values of the Bajau people in a planned, sustainable, and attractive way for the young Bajau generation. The thing that is often done is Iko-iko (Results of interviews with Mr. Ambo Tuo, 2022).

In another view, Iko-Iko is considered a medium for maintaining tradition. Iko-Iko is a tradition that is still maintained, an oral tradition that contains advice regarding the balance of humans and nature. Iko-iko is also interpreted



as maintaining harmony between the universe, such as climate and weather dynamics as a result of human actions on land. Iko-Iko is a reflection of the perspective and attitudes of every Bajau person, therefore this tradition continues to be explored in children's education, families, and the social environment, as evidenced by the following statement,

Maintaining the Iko-Iko tradition is the responsibility of the head of the Bajau ethnic family. Here, we, the Bajau tribe in Latawe Village, are still doing this and several times I have invited our brothers and sisters to continue doing this because the sea is our home, where we live. This spirit continues to live as the identity of us Bajau people (Results of interview with Pak Suparling, 2022).

Hold firmly to the advice of your ancestors and the messages of traditional elders: As humans who adhere to a cultural system, ancestry is a certain belief that is the basis for continuing or passing on the culture they have so that their identity will always live on in society. The Bajau people are a society that still upholds ancestral values. This is proven by the fact that there is still an attitude of obedience towards elders who in everyday life are called tribal chiefs.

Based on the results of the interview, it was revealed that the Tribal Chief for the Bajau people is considered the name of their ancestors so that the element of obedience is still inherent in the Bajau community, including on the coast of the Tiworo Strait. Through the Tribal Chief, the tradition of utilizing and preserving biological natural resources is also still alive in Bajau society, such as how to read natural signs, prohibitions (*Pamali*), and other rituals. Tribal Chiefs also have an obligation to pass on knowledge from their ancestors to their generations so that these traditions remain alive.

This is proven by the existence of an obedient attitude toward older people (Tribal Chiefs) in the daily life of the Bajau people. This is based on the results of interviews with informants,

For the Bajau people, the appointment of the tribal chief (Lolo) of the Bajau tribe/tribe is considered a legacy from our ancestors so that the element of obedience remains inherent in us. Through the Tribal Chief, the tradition of utilizing and preserving biological natural resources is still alive in Bajau society, such as reading natural signs, prohibitions (Pamali) and other rituals. Tribal Chiefs also have an obligation to pass on knowledge from their ancestors to our generation so that these traditions remain in the lives of the Bajau people (Results of interviews with Pak Jusman, 2022)

The information above shows that the Bajau tribe really respects the existence of the Tribal Chief (*Lolo*). For the Bajau tribe, *Lolo* is considered a heritage from their ancestors that must be respected as well as a form of respect for their ancestors. Therefore, the advice given by *Lolo* is adhered to as a form of obedience which is still maintained today and will be passed on to his generation.

The role of the tribal chief (*Lolo*) is also related to advice/counsel regarding the Bajau tribe's interaction with

nature. Culture respects biological resources as a form of gratitude as a source of life. The tribal chief's advice is still available to the Bajau tribe on the coast of the Tiworo Strait to this day, such as how to read natural signs, prohibitions (*Pamali*), and other rituals.

The Tribal Chief himself, also has an obligation to pass on knowledge from our ancestors to our generation so that these traditions remain in the lives of the Bajau people. On every occasion or during a traditional event, the Tribal Chief always uses this media to convey the teachings of the ancestors which must be maintained.

The results of searching for information, both efforts to maintain traditions and maintain the advice and character of the tribal chief, are manifested in a tradition called *Iko-Iko*. Because *Iko-Iko* is not only based on maintaining traditions, but furthermore teaches symbolic messages at each event to serve as a guide or philosophy of life for the Bajau tribe so that there is harmony between the use of resources in the sea and their sustainability so that they are maintained.

DISCUSSION

The research results have revealed the traditions of the Bajau tribe in efforts to preserve biological resources in the form of *Sangal*; and *Pamali*. *Pamali* in the meaning of prohibition, and the meaning of taboo (eating turtle meat). There are other traditions related to the use of natural resources such as *parika*, *sasakai*; *mana*; and *maduai pinah* only rarely done, whereas, at the time of the research, these two traditions seemed to be mandatory for every Bajau tribe when going to sea.

The next finding relates to the preservation of local wisdom (such as *Sangal*; and *Pamali*) which ensures that every Bajau community adheres to their customs and their steadfastness in keeping the advice of their ancestors. This is indeed what differentiates the Bajau tribe from other tribes around the coast.

Linked to empirical facts, the Bajau tribe's efforts to preserve marine resources specifically fisheries are in line with the development of contributions to the regional economy. For example, in Muna Regency, fisheries production in 2019 was around 17,804 tons, becoming 17,894.90 in 2020, and in 2021 it was 18,418.24 tons (Muna Regency Central Statistics Agency, 2024). Fisheries production in West Muna Regency is quite good according to its increase, where in 2019 it was around 9,152.98 tons; then in 2020 it became 9,153 tons and in 2021 it became 11,369.09 tons (West Muna Regency Central Statistics Agency, 2024). Central Buton Regency also shows the same thing, where fisheries production in 2018 was around 17,393.18 tons; then in 2019 it became 20,921.88 tons and in 2020 it became 21,027.49 tons (Central Statistics Agency for Central Buton Regency, 2024).

The facts that occur around the waters of the Tiworo Strait seem to correct the negative perception addressed to the Bajau



tribe who carry out illegal and destructive practices, such as fishing with explosives, fishing with cyanide, coral mining, and cutting down mangrove trees (Clifton and Majors, 2012). We can explain that the Bajau tribe's accusation of destroying natural resources is supported by Hoogervorst, (2012); Clifton and Majors (2012) that this accusation cannot be separated from competition for marine natural resources (fish) which forces the Bajau people to limit the territory they own. It is true, the Bajau people lack the resources and alternatives to compete with land-based and commercial fishers who have better equipment and enough income to support their families. However, for the Bajau tribe, this does not really affect their attitude as a maritime community that maintains its identity. Even if there are reports that differ from these findings, at least we have created new evidence that the practice of destroying natural resources and fisheries ecosystems is not found among the Bajau tribe on the coast of the Tiworo Strait. However, the debate regarding whether or not this research argument is true or not is not that important, it is much better to regulate fairly the use of marine and coastal resources so as not to harm other parties, especially the Bajau people who are not very familiar with modern fishing gear. At the same time, we suggest that a local wisdom approach will be better in maintaining the continuity of marine natural resources. It is not wrong to learn from the Bajau tribe who have proven to be more familiar and able to protect marine resources.

Conclusion: The local wisdom of the Bajau tribe in preserving biological resources in the waters of the Tiworo Strait which is still practiced is *Sangal*, and *Pamali* in the sense of prohibition and *Pamali* in the sense of abstinence. *Sangal* by the Bajau people can maintain fish populations, because they identify types of fish whose populations are abundant and limited. Types of fish whose populations are starting to become limited will soon be released into the sea. This act is related to *Pamali*, so that when fish and other resources are limited, the chief (called *Parika*) gives directives to prohibit their use. These two local wisdoms are still maintained today. So there are several efforts made by the Bajau tribe to preserve this wisdom. The first effort is to maintain traditions and customs by directly involving the next generation, especially children, in every fishing activity. All the customs and values contained in it continue to be passed down. *Parika* as tribal chief plays an important role in this inheritance. The next effort is to teach about obedience and/or submission in following the advice of ancestors and elder figures (Tribal Chiefs). This still applies to the Bajau tribe to this day, and also differentiates them from other tribes who live on the coast. *Parika* as the holder of the ancestral trust is obliged to maintain and pass on ancestral knowledge in the use and conservation of biological resources.

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Conflict of Interest: This research is purely the author's initiative, there are no other parties involved as funders and sponsors, so all funding is the author's responsibility. Secondary data from various sources is quoted in the dissertation with sources. On this basis, we ensure that this manuscript is free from conflicts of interest.

SDG's Addressed: Life Below Water, Life on Land, Zero Hunger.

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