



**SOSIO-RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF THE SASAK
COMMUNITY IN READING
A PUSPAKARMA MANUSCRIPT:
Islamic Community Development Perspective**

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Abstract: There has been intense debate over whether local practices and social engagement effectively contribute to *da'wah* and participatory community development. Referring to the study of a *Puspakarma* manuscript from Lombok, coded Gallery-50B Ciputat, the paper sheds light on the local socio-religious values that form the collective memory of Muslim Sasak communities on the island. It further argues that these values offer potential for participatory socio-religious development. The broader context of Sasak culture, as evident in the nineteenth-century *Puspakarma* text, provides a wider umbrella for the interpretation of elements of the manuscript's content and message. Data analysis employs Mead's Symbolic Interactionism using a person-in-environment model from the perspective of Islamic Community Development. The main findings of the study are that the collective memory of ethnic Sasak Muslims recognizes the supreme being, God, and cooperative social interactions as key to community harmony, just as respect for the ancestors and nature also ensures happiness. All of these views influence community well-being. Furthermore, the author's analysis demonstrates that each of these components found in the Sasak environment shapes the growth and development of the individual and their worldviews. This research offers fresh insight into how local development may contribute to closing the gap between cross-cultural policy and practice in Lombok and elsewhere.

Keywords: Character education, Person-in-environment model, *Puspakarma*, religious piety, locality development

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Introduction

RESEARCH findings demonstrate that the most effective goals for *da'wah* (religious propagation) and social development in communities are underscored by meaningful references to economic development, human capital, and the structure of neighborhood.¹ Cultural factors are not always seen as exercising a critical role in community well-being. Neither do generalised observational inquiries into socio-religious values ensure a more thorough understanding of *da'wah* and community development. The power of culture is regularly underestimated and perceived as being subordinate to economic dynamics and not as a mainstream driving force.

Such points of view fail to take into account a wholistic approach to understanding *da'wah* and community development. Culture profoundly shapes community oral traditions and its expression, inherited patterns of knowledge, and place-specific practices of social participation.² Local wisdom and their associated practices moreover present unique alternatives for enhancing neighbourhood welfare. This implies that with a thorough understanding of its own history, a community can reflect on past experiences and engage participatively with *da'wah*

¹World Bank GDP Growth. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG>, accessed 15 September 2023, focuses on these economic aspects of community development. 2020 These seem to be trending among others research such as Holden, Andrew. 2000. *Environment and Tourism*. London and New York, Routledge and. Easterlin, R. A. "The Economics of Happiness". *American Academy of Arts dan Science*, Volume 2 no. 133 (2004): 128-136.

² Da'wah and community development in its local context is explained by Anacleto Odiambo. *Research Into Local Culture: Implication For Participatory Development*. "Journal Of Development in Practice", Volume. 3 no. 1 (1993): 44-47. This is also in line with a report published by OECD. *Culture and Local Development*. 2018. 22-26. <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/venice-2018-conference-culture/documents/Culture-and-Local-Development-Venice.pdf>. The two articles strengthen a research report by Olanipekun Olubunmi Adebola in Adebola et al. *Assessing The Role of Local Culture in Community Development*. IJRISS, Volume VI Issue XI (2022): 414-418. And Penn State Extension. *Importance of Incorporating Local Culture into Community Development*. <https://extension.psu.edu/importance-of-incorporating-local-culture-into-community-development/>, accessed on 15 April 2024.

and goals for development. Ibrahim Ragab, an Islamic community development practitioner from Egypt, states that *da'wah* can be located within the framework of community development. Through this process, the latter profession becomes an authentic aspect of the nation's identity, its defining characteristics, and cultural and social realities. He observes that social practices are a form of *da'wah* both in action (*da'wah bil hal*) and in verbal articulation (*da'wah bil lisan*). The more *da'wah* is related to local knowledge, the greater is the tendency for community participation.³

Consequently, it is critical for community practitioners to consider the significance of culture in their endeavors to promote *da'wah* and well-being. By considering locality and respecting existing social values and conventions, more productive progress can be accomplished in these two fields. One way to more fully comprehend local knowledge and culture is by analyzing old manuscripts that continue to circulate in Sasak ethnic communities. The presence of these texts documents how the contemporary development of positive human behavior and ethics is a reflection of the good practices preserved in a community's collective memory. Their contents provide an opening to understanding the best conditions through which an indigenous society, like the Sasak, may genuinely participate in community development according to their own rights of self-determination and freedom.

The Sasak manuscript discussed in this case study is *Puspakarma* (The Flower of Good Fortune) that continues to be a living text today through its customary recitation during Sasak communal rituals. This Javanese-kawi language romance was written on Lombok in the nineteenth century or earlier and is

³ Ibrahim A. Ragab. "How Social Work Can Take Root in Developing Countries". *Journal of Social Development Issues*, Volume.12 no.3. (1990): 38-51. In an Indonesian context, see also Al-Makin. "Are There Any Indonesian Philosopher? Dealing With a Common Question and Possible Answer". *Ulumuna*, Volume. 20 no. 1 (2016): 1- 28. and Muchammadun. "Exploring The Integration-Interconnection Paradigm In The Indonesian Context Of Community Education And Practice". *Ulumuna*, Volume. 24 no. 1 (2020): 57- 76.

typically preserved as a *takepan* palm-leaf manuscript (*lontar*).⁴ The narrative tells the miraculous story of a young prince with magical powers who is abducted as a child yet dedicates his life to assisting others, including his parents, a king and various other communities, even the gods in heaven. A close examination of communal *Puspakarma* recitations reveals how Sasak collective memory offers opportunities for engagement in the day-to-day activities of *da'wah* and community development.⁵

The paper commences with outlining the Sasak setting for the case study and the theoretical basis of the person-in-environment premise. The authors analyse the performative aspect of *Puspakarma* through an interpretative approach based on how the narrative defines the qualities of human life. These components are then recontextualised in the contemporary milieu of community development and their implications for practitioners and participants. The research reveals the extent of religious piety in Sasak communities motivated by the *Puspakarma* text.

This paper is inspired by research into local wisdom, particularly the importance of socio-religious capital in improving a community's quality of living.⁶ It utilises Mead's symbolic

⁴ *Takepan* is a term for old manuscripts written on palm leaves and written in Javanese-Kawi script.

⁵ The rationale of analyzing an old manuscript to reveal local knowledge for community participation has been argued by scholars such as Siti Baroroh Baried. *Pengantar Teori Filologi*. Yogyakarta: Research and Publication Faculty (BPPF), Faculty of Letters, Gadjah Mada University. 1994. In line with that argument also explained by Oman Fathurahman. *Filologi Indonesia: Teori dan Metode*. Jakarta: Prenada Media Group. 2015. They argue that the manuscript is one of the relics of the past owned by the Indonesian people. Furthermore, Baroroh Baried, argues that the manuscript contains past information that shows the thoughts, feelings, beliefs, customs, and values that prevailed in the past society. Baroroh also mentions that manuscripts have an aesthetic aspect, not only from the content of the manuscript but also from the illustrations and illuminations in it. As a cultural heritage of the past, it seems that research on manuscripts has not been proportional to the number of existing manuscripts. Manuscripts have a broader dimension and meaning because they are the result of a tradition that involves various cultural skills and attitudes.

⁶ The authors are indebted to Dick van der Meij whose dissertation entitled *Puspakrema: A Javanese Romance from Lombok*. Leiden: Research School of Asian African and American Studies Universiteit Leiden lays a foundation for this research and James Bennett which made the correspondence with Dick

interaction approach and the model of person-in-environment. Consequently, it not only touches on how humans help each other to contribute to community well-being but how they also relate to God and the unseen dimensions in their local environment. According to the notion of symbolic interaction, people interrelate through symbols which include signs and gestures, but most importantly through spoken and written words. This is clarified by the person-in-environment model, namely how human's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, are the results of their interaction with their surroundings.⁷ The paper's approach is descriptive-qualitative in order to understand the subject and the phenomena of Sasak behavior, perceptions, and motivations, in a social context. These are described in a systematic and factual manner.⁸

Theorizing person-in-environment

The decision to utilise the model of person-in-environment is based on studies by Adiansah et al and others.⁹ Their research findings offer key frameworks for community development practice as their work demonstrates that individuals can best be understood in the context of their environment, whether social, spiritual, political, or whatever.

possible. The results of the study are compared with another Puspakarma publication by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia in Soimun and I Made Suparta. *Kajian Nilai Budaya Naskah Kuno Puspakarma*. Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan CV. Eka Dharma. Jakarta. 1997. 61-111.

⁷ Paul. B. Horton dan Chester L. Hunt. *Sosiologi* (six edition), translated by Aminuddin Ram and Tita Sobari. Jakarta. Penerbit Airlangga. 1984. 17.

⁸ Lexy J. Moleong. *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung. PT. Remaja Rosda Karya. 2006. 6.

⁹ Adiansah, W., Setiawan, E., Kodaruddin, W. N., Wibowo, H. "Person-in-Environment Adolescents in the Era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0". *Journal of Social Work*, Volume 2 no. 1 (2019): 47-60. This is reinforced by the explanation given by Kondrat, Mary Ellen. *Person-in-Environment*. 2017. <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo9780195389678/obo-9780195389678-0092.xml>, accessed 15 September 2023, as well as Brenda Dubois and Karla Krogsrud. *Miley 2005. Social Work, An Empowering Profession*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

The person-in-environment model in community development is an approach that emphasizes the relationship between individuals (persons) and the environment in which they are located.¹⁰ This model recognizes that individuals cannot be fully understood without considering the surrounding social, cultural, and physical context. The person-in-environment theory recognizes that individuals and their environments mutually influence and intertwine with each other. This approach highlights the importance of understanding how environmental factors, such as family, community, culture, and social systems, can affect an individual's development, well-being, and life-challenges.

The model of person-in-environment has been conceived to more effectively understand how humans may raise the quality of their lives through negotiating the world around them. Person-in-environment considers both the individual and the multiple contexts within which the individual interacts. The person-in-environment model ensures that both the individual and environmental components share a reciprocal relationship.¹¹ The notion of relationship derives from the Ecological Systems Model, which was originally described by Bronfenbrenner (1986).¹² He elucidates a system of five levels, extending from smallest to largest, that contribute to the individual's quality of living.

To contextualize how the protagonists in *Puspakarma* interrelate with their environment, the following outline describes each level in detail. Firstly, there are the interactions that happen at the microsystem level. These are most intimate interactions that

¹⁰ Seymor Wapner and Jack Demick. Person-in-environment psychology: A holistic, developmental, systems-oriented perspective. In W. B. Walsh, K. H. Craik, & R. H. Price (Eds.), *Person-environment psychology: New directions and perspectives* (2nd ed). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers. 2000. 25–60.

¹¹ Bohar Soeharto. "The Reciprocal Relationship Between Humans and Nature". *Jurnal Mimbar*, Volume XX no. 1 (2004): 26-34. Such an argument is also explained in the article written by Rahmirin Datau. "Personality Relationship with Students' Pro-Environmental Behavior". *IJEEM*, Volume. 4 no. 1 (2019): 156-166. Brenda Dubois and Karla Krogsrud Miley. *Social Work, An Empowering Profession*. Boston, Pearson Education, Inc. 2005.

¹² Urie Bronfenbrenner. "Ecology of the Family As a Context for Human Development Research Perspectives". *Developmental Psychology*, Volume 22 no. 6 (1986): 723-724.

may involve the individual. They may include the home, work, school, and the various relationships within this system, including with family, friends, and caregivers. On the next level, the mesosystem is where each specific microsystem interconnects with the another and indirectly impacts the individual. For example, the work context and its associated demands may either positively or negatively influence the home context.¹³

By considering the significance of one's surroundings and its impact on individuals, the person-in-environment model helps community developers better understand the complexity of life and formulate more effective intervention strategies. Most importantly, the person-in-environment model emphasizes the significance of connecting individuals to their social, cultural, and physical worlds in order to fully understand the influences that shape their lives.

Bronfenbrenner's model identifies two further levels of interactions which he calls the macrosystem and chronosystem. The first explains the cultural, political, and economic components that affect the individual while the latter describes dynamic and time-dependent events, including how historical circumstances impact an individual's life. Community practitioners need consider both the person and these various components of their immediate environment in the assessment and planning of any intervention process.¹⁴ This is demonstrated in the following diagram:

¹³ S. A. A Ahmadi, B Mohammadpour, M, Rajabi, & F, Baghbani. "Effect of Person-Organization Fit on Organizational Commitment". *International Journal of Information Technology and Management Studies*, Volume 1 no.1 (2014): 33–43.

¹⁴ Lalu Agus Fathurrahman. *Kosmologi Sasak*. Risalah *Inen Paer*. Mataram, Genius. 2017. Furthermore, this can also be seen in the article oleh Kusnaka Adimaharja dan Purnama Salura. *Arsitektur dalam Bingkai Kebudayaan*. Jakarta, Architecture & Communication. 2004. and Abdul Wahab Syakhrani, and Muhammad Lutfi Kamil, "Budaya dan Kebudayaan: Tinjauan Dari Berbagai Pakar, Wujud-wujud kebudayaan 7 unsur kebudayaan yang bersifat universal". *Cross Border Journal*, Volume. 5 no. 1. (2017): 782-791.

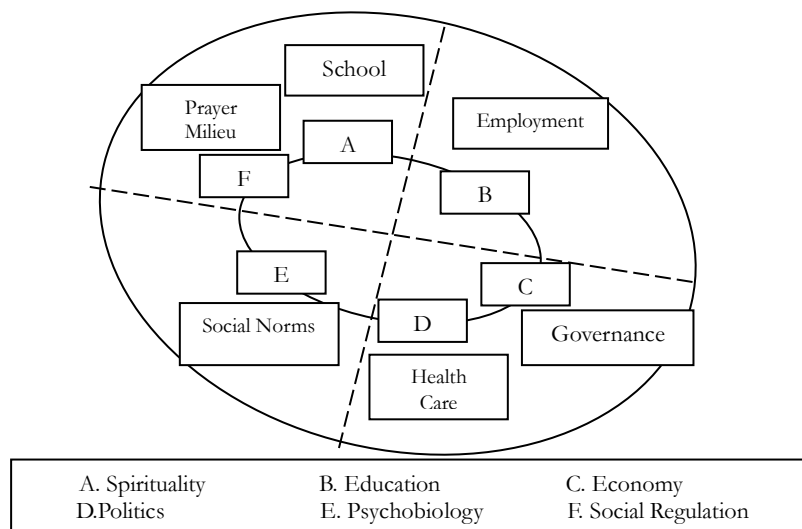


Diagramme 1: Person-in-Environment Model: Human in Interactions¹⁵

The Sasak tradition of religious manuscript recitation

Local wisdom is defined here as the worldview of a community in a particular region regarding the environment in which they live. This type of tacit knowledge eventually becomes established, over decades or even hundreds of years, as firmly-held beliefs.¹⁶ To maintain the continuity of local wisdom, the parents of each generation will inevitably seek to pass this knowledge down to their children and grandchildren. Hence local wisdom becomes so embedded in the worldview of individuals and families that it becomes difficult to separate from wider society.¹⁷

The Muslim majority of the Sasak population believe that the universe was created by an all-powerful God and is subject to the

¹⁵ Source: modified from Muchammadun. "Exploring The Integration-Interconnection Paradigm In The Indonesian Context Of Community Education And Practice". *Ulumuna*, Volume. 24 no. 1 (2020): 57- 76

¹⁶ M Hardi. *Literasi dan Kearifan Lokal*. <https://www.gramedia.com/literasi/kearifan-lokal/written>. accessed 12 September 2023.

¹⁷ Budiono Kusumohamidjojo. *Filsafat Kebudayaan: Proses Realisasi Manusia* (Revised), Yrama Widya, Bandung. 2017. This is also argued by Rintami Njatriani. "Kearifan Lokal Dalam Perspektif Budaya Kota Semarang". *Jurnal Gema Keadilan*, Volume 5 no. 1 (2018): 16-31.

fixed laws of divinity. The certainty of these beliefs nurture creativity in how people think and know. Through the potential of reason and the senses, humans learn and develop their sense of well-being. As Muhammad Iqbal declared, 'Yet it cannot be denied that faith is more than mere feeling. It has something like a cognitive content.'¹⁸

In the context of Lombok, local wisdom is believed to originate from the ancestors, who are said to have clearly understood their surroundings. Nevertheless, there is wisdom and good practices in old local wisdom that sometimes are difficult for the current generation to understand. Conversely, the adoption of an uncritical modernity has the potential to be damaging to cultural continuity, as well as impact on the surrounding natural ecology.¹⁹

The ability to activate a sense of the significance of inherited generational knowledge is not automatically possessed by every human being. It takes the endeavours of long-term learning to understand oneself, the environment, and the Creator. Sasak society seeks to nurture this understanding by building a good relationship with God and nature. This is apparent in the *pepaosan* tradition.²⁰

¹⁸ M. Iqbal. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, translated by Osman Raliby, Pembangunan Kembali Alam Pikiran Islam. Jakarta, Bulan Bintang. 1996. Compare how this belief is applied in Islamic Higher Education Knowledge Management. Khoirun Niam, et.al. "Knowledge Management Practices In Enhancing Academic Output: A Study Of Indonesian Islamic Universities". *Ulumuna*, Volume. 27 no. 2 (2023): 735-761.

¹⁹ GKR. Wandansari. *Aktualisasi Nilai-Nilai Tradisi Budaya Daerah Sebagai Kearifan Lokal untuk Memantapkan Jati Diri Bangsa*. Prosiding Seminar Ikatan Dosen Budaya Daerah Indonesia. 2007. 1-7. Further explanation related to this can also be seen in the article Ernawi, I. S. *Kearifan Lokal Dalam Perencanaan dan Perancangan Kota untuk Mewujudkan Arsitektur Kota yang Berkelanjutan*. Malang, Group Konservasi Arsitektur dan Kota Jurusan Pendidikan Arsitektur Universitas Merdeka Malang. 2009.

²⁰ As observations that we have made during *pepaosan* in Penujak Village, Central Lombok Regency, Pengantap Village, Central Lombok Regency and Lingsar Village, West Lombok Regency in circumcision (*nyunatan*), seven-months pregnancy celebration (*bisoq tian*) and wedding night (*merarik*). Data are based on observations on May 12, 15 and 23, 2023.

The term *pepaosan* derives from *paos/paosan* which originally meant a place or a shelter in which to read.²¹ Nowadays, the meaning has shifted to the act of reciting a classical text like *Puspakarma*. The old Javanese-Kawi manuscript is typically declaimed aloud by a reciter called *pemaos*.²² Usually the *pemaos* will be accompanied by an interpreter, called *pujangge*, who best understands the archaic language.²³ The *pujangge* is the medium for understanding the nuanced narrative contained in the palm-leaf manuscript being read so that the listening audience can understand its contents.

In a *pepaosan* performance, one sentence read from the text can subsequently be interpreted at length by the *pujangge*. This commentary often even includes examples related to day-to-day life so that the audience become more deeply involved in the meaning of the ancient text. The *pepaosan* performance is one of the methods of education that has long existed in Sasak society. Hence, reading *Puspakarma* becomes both a form of entertainment as well as learning for the community.

On the occasion of a marriage, the night before exchanging the conjugal contract and following nuptial night (*begawe merarik*), the host (*siepen gawe*) invites many guests to attend the event.²⁴ The purpose is not only to entertain people but also to educate the youths who are present through the listening to the performance.

The *pemaos* who is recites the *Puspakarma* usually possesses a good voice so that the sentences are melodiously read. The tunes

²¹ *Pepaosan* comes from the words *maos*, *mepaos*, *pésan* (é taling like reading the Indonesian word *bèbèk*) read basically "means a place to read". Specifically, *pepaosan* is interpreted in the situation and place that is carried out, namely the reader of the script, whether it is a script on palm leaves or other texts. The *pepaosan* tradition is a literacy tradition of the Sasak people in reading ancient manuscripts. Interview with L. Abdurrahim, Mataram, 7 Mei 2023.

²² *Pemaos*, a traditional Sasak figure who is able to read ancient manuscripts in Javanese Kawi script using a tonal system called *tembang*.

²³ *Pujangge*, an interpreter/translator of ancient texts, usually accompanies a *pemaos* during the reading of the text. Interpretations are explained in Sasak and Indonesian according to the audience listening to the manuscript.

²⁴ Observation in a *Pepaosan* at Lombok Tengah, with Lalu Sadaruddin, Praya, 9 May 2023.

(*tembang*) used in a performance are unique. A Sasak culture leader has described them thus:

The *tembang* for reading the script that are used by the *pemaos* consists of eleven parts: *Mijil*, *Sinom*, *Kinanthi*, *Dandanggendis*, *Asmarandana*, *Durma*, *Maskumambang*, *Gambuh*, *Pangkur*, *Megatruh* and *Pocung*. In general the tones we hear in the *tembang* recitations are distinctive from those in Bali and Java.

(*Tembang sak te kadu isik pemaos nike arak pitug, napi doang sak pitug nike: Mijil, Sinom, Kinanthi, Dandanggendis, Asmarandana, Durma, Maskumambang, Gambuh, Pangkur, Megatruh dait Pocung. Lamun te indeng sak piakne bede dait Bali kance Jawa elek larasne.*)²⁵

The same spokesperson further explained that these songs represent the cycle of human life from the womb to the grave. So deep is the meaning behind each name, that once we listen to the song we will feel completely immersed. The first is *Mijil* which is interpreted as the human life commencing in the womb, resembling the union of the spirit with the fetus until his/her birth on earth. Next is *Sinom* which describes the development stages of childhood to adolescence. The charisma of the cultural informant, as a natural leader, was apparent as he emphasised the philosophy of life during this important period of human development. It was seen in his strong facial expression and pronounced vocal delivery when explaining these tunes.

Sinom is the child or young person. This youth can do everything.

(*Sinom iku sing anom, awak sing anom iku selapaukne baune gaweke.*)²⁶

Similarly, *Puspakarma* recounts the childhood of the Raja Putra *Jayang Angkasa*. After experiencing an infancy beginning to explore the world, Sasak children are then ready to move to next stages of life. This is *Kinanthi*, where they begin to know the world and interpret everything with logic and feeling and *Dandanggendis* where the young man or woman recognizes physical growth and aesthetics.²⁷

The last stages are *Asmarandhana*, *Maskumambang*, *Pangkur*, and *Megatruh* which symbolize adulthood and senior citizenship.

²⁵ Interview with Lalu Sadaruddin, Praya, 9 May 2023.

²⁶ Interview with lalu Budiman, Penujak, 9 May 2023.

²⁷ Interview with Lalu Budiman, 9 May 2023. Explanations related to childhood can be seen in the manuscript *Puspakarma* pupuh 2-30, while those related to early childhood to explore the world can be seen in pupuh 30-64.

For example, *Pangkur* refers to the phase where man draws closer to his Creator.²⁸ This was explained in the following interview comment by another Sasak cultural leader:

Man comes from the ground and returns to the ground. Human being should not be arrogant. Rather, they must obey God.

(*Manusia sino asalne lemah tulak malik jok lemah. Ndekn te kanggo pongah, sengak Si Epeyang Ita ya sik te dengah.*)²⁹

Seen from symbolic interaction perspective, each tune recited during a performance of *Puspakarma* becomes a unique experience for each member of the audience. As the audience listen, they travel through the stages of their own lives in the nuanced progression of *tembang*. Understanding the meaning revealed between the lines of the text, the listeners awake to an awareness of life's cycles and what nature provides each individual so that they can sustainably interact with their surroundings.

Hence, understanding nature is part of literacy skills that Sasak people customarily were required to possess. Nature is the 'book of life' that must be continuously studied and understood during our lifetime. Skill in understanding the signs and omens present in the natural world is something that is not easy to attain hence they require a life time. This understanding is certainly not sole cognitive learning but enters more into the affective domain. The Sasak knows this as *subawe*.³⁰ Only those truly pure in heart

²⁸In the Sasak community there are several terms known in the mention of God, one of which is *Si Epeyang Ita*. This is revealed in an interview with Raden Sawinggih North Lombok in September 2023. *Epeyang Ita* is one of the expressions explaining that human life is in the control of the Almighty Creator.

²⁹ Sentence expressed by Raden Sawinggih during the interview, 12 September 2023.

³⁰ If traced from the meaning of the word, it can be referred to through the root of the word where *Subawe* comes from Sanskrit *su* means all that is good and *bawa* means wisdom/wisdom related to taste (the taste referred here is sense/instinctive sensitivity). Petrus Josephus Zoetmulder. *Kamus Bahasa Jawa Kuna*. Jakarta, Balai Pustaka. 1995.

can feel *subawe*.³¹ It is the sense of innocence that appear in the humblest or most lowly of people (*semai*q).³²

Concerning this lowliness, also there is the state of being known as *pemole* that is said to make *subawe* manifest in Sasak society.³³ *Pemole* are the social practices where the community avoids collective greediness and honors the natural world as if it was their oldest brother. Hence, all customary rituals glorify nature as well as expressing human submission to the Creator, Allah SWT. These interrelated components confirm the Sasak's belief in efficacious means for contributing to community well-being.

Puspakarma epitomises the above stages, commencing from innocent childhood to becoming a social functioning adult, where the poem's narratives may be analysed as follows:³⁴

Table 1: Summary of *Puspakarma* Manuscript

Stages of Life	How Interaction Happens	Sources In Pupuh, Stanza and the key words
Beginnings (CI.1) and childhood (CI.2)	CI.1.1: Humans love their children. Parents provide a support system. Children complete the need for love and well-being from parents. CI.2.1: Toys are a form of affection. Carved animal toys are representations of nature. Implication: human interaction with nature. CI.2.2: Educating children	Sinom 2-64 Love: <i>Asih, Adarma-darma, Prapti/Prapta</i> Education: <i>Kamasan, Iwaq Kencana, Dinar Tigang Dasih, Meraq Kencana.</i>

³¹Interview with Raden Sawinggih, Traditional Leader of Bayan Community. North Lombok. September 21, 2023

³² *Semai*q is a word in the Sasak language that has the equivalent of the word *Paut* which means something that is appropriate and not excessive.

³³ *Pemole* or memuliakan is a procedure that must be owned by the Sasak community.

³⁴ Dick van der Meij. *Puspakrema: A Javanese Romance from Lombok*. Leiden, Research School of Asian African and American Studies Universiteit Leiden. 2002. The results of the study are reinforced by literature issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Soimun and I Made Suparta. *Kajian Nilai Budaya Naskah Kuno Puspakarma*. Jakarta, CV. Eka Dharma, 1997.

	and their supervision is a parental obligation.	
Searching (CII.1) and Wandering Periods of life (CII.2)	CII.1.1 Supervision and guidance requires a variety of means and media. CII.1.2 A well-educated child will positively impact on the environment. CII.2.1 Courage and persistence to face adversity of life.	Dandanggula 65-109 Psychomotor: <i>Ngalap biyu, nuluh lunga, Ngalap woh-wohan, tanasari wus rawuh.</i> Prayer: <i>Bapa mangke wruhanira, Tumurining prawata, Asih Ibu/Bapane, Pada ngulati sang adji.</i>
Completing the Mission (CV.1)	CV.1.1 Nurturing one's personal integrity and authenticity.	Pangkur 219-236 Integrity: <i>Aderebe mantuluhung, wluting raja putreki, Kang jumeneng ing luhur puneki, ikmat tinimpa aglis, Ngungsi nagara tinurut dening detya.</i> Authenticity: <i>Tinutupan ikmat tanansati, Nulya bununtel asruh, Glancange ika, sinampa dera nrapti.</i>
Goal Achievement (CVI.1)	CVI.1.1 Perseverance and zeal leads to success in overcoming life's adversity and trials.	Asmarandana 208-309 Perseverance and Zeal: <i>Mijil saking lawang langit, Akehe tanpa wilangan, geger aneng padesan, Rame pinupuh durma.</i>

Source: Authors' analysis

The above table encapsulates how the human condition is described in *Puspakarma* and highlights each stage relating to the person-in-environment model discussed earlier. Even more nuanced references to aspects of Sasak religious piety is embedded in the text. The stages of human life related in *Puspakarma* are divided into four types of relationships as described in the following:

Human relations with the Creator

It is human interaction in life that leads to the establishment of community. The community group, in its journey, faces challenges and adversity, many of which are beyond its power and resources to resolve. Consequently, humanity develops dependence on the

Supreme Creator (God Almighty) which is expressed through various means of devotion.

In the context of Sasak ethnicity, communities also demonstrate their devoutness to God and recognition of His presence. This is apparent in the colophon in one *Puspakarma* palm-leaf manuscript (Gallery-50B Ciputat):

I begin with praise/mentioning the name of Allah/the Most Gracious in this world / the Most Merciful in the hereafter/ endlessly praised/He who controls the universe / praised by the Prophet Muhammad./ I began to write [date] on Monday in the Month of Fasting (Pupuh Asmarandana, stanza 1).

(Semaran/ngusan amimity amuji/ anebut nama ning Allah// kang murah ing dinya ta reko/ ingkang ngasih ing aherat/ pinuji natan pegat/ kang rumakseng alam iku/ amuji Nabi Muhamat//nunulis tanggal ando senen bulan puasa.)

From this stanza, we can see one example of communal piety. This is commencing all activities by invoking the name of Allah SWT. This statement recognises the relationship of humanity to the Creator as His servant. This acknowledgement is evidence of the belief humans are the lowest in the eyes of the Creator, and everything that is done is needs the blessing of God. It is also implicitly illustrated in the following further excerpt from *Asmarandana*, stanza 193:

Like puppets on a screen/ the servant sits in the back row/like Hyang Semara apparently/happy for the king/smiling....

(Kadi citra mugeng kelir pawongan atap ing untat /luwir Hyang Semara yang tinon/ suka tyasa sang natal mesem...)

The religious piety of the Sasak community is further explicitly seen in a conversation involving the hero in *Puspakarma* (*Durma*, stanza 327) where the protagonists surrender their efforts to the will of the Almighty:

If so, I will try it/ hopefully it will work/there is the blessing of Hyang Suksma"/ the patih also said/ "If so my son/ well, let's go/ with us.

(Yan mangkana sun cobanana/piya pulih kreni/saking asih Hyang Suksama/pun patih aris mojar/ Yan mangkana anak mamil/lah lumaris/kalatwan mami.)

The reference above to *Hyang Suksma* is a reminder that the Sasak people recognize Allah SWT also with various additional

names as explained by the Sasak cultural leader, Lalu Abdurrahim:

The Sasak people recognize God with various expressions, namely calling Him also Nene' Nene' Kaji Saq Kuase, Si Epeyang Ita. Everything is a form of human servitude as a creature to the Creator.

(Masyarakat Sasak itu mengenal Allah dengan berbagai ekspresi, yaitu menyebutNya dengan sebutan Nene'³⁵ Nene' Kaji Saq Kuase,³⁶ Si Epeyang Ita.³⁷ Semuanya itu bentuk kehambaan manusia sebagai Makhluk kepada Sang Khalik.)³⁸

This observation conveyed in an interview with Abdurrahim accords with the various names for God stated in *Puspakarma*, such as: Allah (*Asmarandana*, Stanza 1); *Hyang Semara* (*Samarandana*, stanza 193); and *Hyang Suksama* (*Durma*, stanza 326).

The names of other gods mentioned in the manuscript are a recognition of diversity as well as a manifestation of the diverse relationship that exists between humans and the Divine where humans of any condition need the Creator.³⁹

Human relations with their ancestors

Communities gain benefits by advancing their well-being through sustainably utilizing their resources. Through utilizing this socio-cultural capital, humans develop trust in cooperation with others. As trust becomes the key to further enhancing socio-

³⁵A reference to God. The word Nene' is written in quotation marks with the mention of emphasis.

³⁶ God The Almighty

³⁷ The human creator, as described further by Raden Sawinggih, a prominent cultural leader in Bayan, 5 May 2023.

³⁸ Interview with Lalu Abdurrahim, Mataram 13 May 2023.

³⁹ In the contemporary context, Fathurrahman, a Sasak cultural leader, (2017) argues that God is believed to be the origin and return of all things, who, with His infinite power, created the world and its contents (*jagad gedhé/macrocosm*), including humans (*jagad cilik/microcosm*), with His loving majesty. God is the ruler above all rulers who have ever existed in the world. God cannot be described by any similarity (*tan kena kinaya apa*). Further, predecessors' creations vary in form and degree, change, and are temporary, even humans living in this world are only temporary as if they are just stopping for a moment to sip water, while God is the True Reality (*Kasunyatan Jati*) which is Ancient and Eternal, with no beginning and no end. Please check Lalu Agus Fathurrahman. *Kosmologi Sasak*. Risalah Inen Paer. Mataram, Genius. 2017. 36-45.

cultural capital, certain strong traditions that are passed down from former generations to the present become regarded as fundamental to community prosperity.

An analysis of *Puspakarma* conveys this sense of generational interdependence in the following expressive *Sinom*, stanza 47:

Sadness penetrated his heart/men and women cried/felt his emptiness /
Nothing was told by the king / because he was too fond of his son / Now the
King Putra's condition is told / after a few days in the sky / King Putra then
said / 'Eh, I can't live in the sky!'

(*Kalalar kebeking raga/ wir minangsi jalu istri/ malah belek anganira/ nengakna sri
bupati/ lintang kangen ing siwi/ Raja putra kang kawuwus/ pirang dina aneng
tawang/ raja putra angling aris/ "Eh kola tanana ing ngwang."*)

Here it is revealed King Putra, whose heart is so empty from the absence of his son, cannot live alone even when floating in the sky. These lines testify to the belief that the nature of humanity is always to be connected to past and present generations. *Dandanggula*, stanza 107 relates:

It was me who told Ki Patih/ because I felt sorry for my master/ if it wasn't
me who told him/ I would have told him/ because I felt sorry for him, pity
for my master/ if I don't tell him/inevitably my master will die/ smiled the
king and said/ Ananda continue/ you are my uncle/ find me medicine/ so
that I can have a child/ and me medicine / so that I get a child / and I will
take you as my daughter-in-law in the future.

(*Tuhu amba awawarteng patih/ karana amba olas maring Twan/yan tan hamba
pitutur reke/ tan wande tuwan lampus"/ asemu guyu sang nata angling/ "kaki den
tulusi iral/ arerama rengsun/ulatna tamba ning wang/ lamun ingsun/ dwe anaki
denireki/ sunaku mantu sira.*)

Remembering the ancestors and passing down collective memories connect the present to the future so that the lessons learned by past generations can be evaluated and good practices adopted as a guide for future living. This accords with the following words of a Sasak cultural leader interviewed regarding *Puspakarma*, during the authors' research:

One of the legacies of our parents is the reading of this manuscript (*pepaosan*), which we continue to maintain and preserve until now.

(Pengadek adek dengan toak te sak laek, harus tetap te jagak, marak pepaosan nike pengadek-adek sak masih jangke semangkinan niki.)⁴⁰

Building a good relationship with one's predecessors means maintaining all the best practices that are passed down from ancestral generations while selecting the meaningful lessons learned. The recitation of *Puspakarma* at a communal event represents a ritualized tradition that has become a medium of remembrance for future generations.

Social Support System

Humans in their own understanding often call themselves 'social creatures'. The *Qur'an* (*Surah: Al-Isra'*, verse 7) states:

إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ ۖ وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا ۚ فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ
الْآخِرَةِ لِيَسُئَرُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَلِيَدْخُلُوا الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا دَخَلُوهُ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ
وَلِيُتَبَرَّوْا مَا عَلَوْا تَتْبِيرًا

(And said), "If you do good, you do good for yourselves; and if you do evil, (you do it) to yourselves." Then when the final promise came, (We sent your enemies) to sadden your faces and to enter the temple in Jerusalem, as they entered it the first time, and to destroy what they had taken over with (total) destruction.⁴¹

Humans are also said to be creatures with rational powers of thought that making them different to other sentient beings. Furthermore, humans possess the potential to develop themselves in order to achieve whatever they wish. To reach those goals, when humans are born and grow they require the assistance of others until their journey reaches the peak of maturity. From birth to the end of his or her life, humans need to engage and contribute to their social geography, which we call 'community'. This is reflected in the following interview with a senior Sasak informant:

Indeed, we are one and come from one. If we want a good life, then we must be able to do good with everyone.

⁴⁰ Interview with Lalu Sadaruddin, Mataram, 12 May 2023.

⁴¹ *Qur'an* translation from Shahih International *Surah: Al-Isra'*, Verse:7, accessed 16 September 2023.

(Lamun te mule inget manusi sino sak, tulak jok saq saq. Lamun te mele irup solah, harus te saling tao kance selapukan.)⁴²

Social interaction ensures humans live functionally in society. It is impossible to live together without social interconnectedness. In addition, maintaining good relations between fellow humans is also emphasised in the *Qur'an* (*Surah Al-Hujurat* verse 10:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوِيكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

The believers are but brothers, so make a settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy.⁴³

The same nuanced understanding of social interaction is also conveyed in *Puspakarma* in *Sinom*, stanza 2:

There is a story / about a king / in the land of Puspakarma / all his people were virtuous / he was fair to all citizens / compassionate to the villagers / to the servants, and because of that / they praised his majesty as the king./ All citizens no one was upset in the heart.

(Sing// Wnten Carita winama/ carita nira sang ngaji/ ing negara Puspakarma/ ebek bala ngibudi/ adil ing bala wargi/ asih ikang kawula dusun/ kawula pan mang kana/ amuji ing Sri Bupati/sawadayane tan hana kasel ing manah.)

This narrates the condition of the ruler and people in the kingdom of Puspakarma. The king understands the responsibility of his position and conversely his followers/servants are obedient to the king. Consequently, the kingdom is peaceful and there is no conflict because all the citizens greatly love their ruler. This is a symbolic interaction, where every community member is committed to function as a social being in order to mutually support others, thus creating a realm of harmony and peace.

A reflection of these social values is clearly expressed in *Puspakarma* where the character of Raja Putra adheres to the responsibility social and humanitarian mandates. The narration continues in *Dandanggula*, stanza 108:

King Putra smiled and said/ Yes, I will find a cure/ if I don't find it/ so that you can have medicine / if I don't find it / so that you can have a child have a

⁴² Interview with Lalu Sadaruddin, Mataram, 13 May 2023.

⁴³ *Qur'an* translation from Shahih International Surah: Al-Hujurat, Verse:10, accessed 16 September 2023.

child/ because if I find it/ surely you will get a child / but, I was quite long / looking for the medicine /because it is very far/ where the medicine is...⁴⁴

(*Raja Putra mesem sruwi angling/ lnggih hamba/ ngulati usada/ yen tan hamba ngulati mangke/ twan anderbe sunu/ yen kawula ngulati/ pasti twan anderbe putra/ anging lama ambeku/kawula angulati usada/ pan adoh/ prenahhe usada iki/ sang nata ngandika...*)

Furthermore, *Puspakarma* also conceives social relations as a system through which people mutually support each other. If humans respect, honor, and love each other then harmony and security can be formed easily in community networks.

Therefore, in building a good social relationship, there is a need for commitment and putting trust in realizing optimal relationships. This includes keeping promises and being loyal to everyone in order to avoid conflict. This is underscored in an episode in *Puspakarma* in *Durma*, stanza 141:

Because the medicine is very far away / I tell you my son/ is with my visitor/ he is from Malig(y)a/ named Ikmat (kamandalu) / the size of a candlenut...

(*Apan doh prenahe punang usada/ sun warah sira kaki/ egene punika/ ana ing gustining wang/ ipun saking Maligeki/ arani ikmat/agunge sakameri.*)

So in the life of the Sasak people, the individuals are meant to support each other and maintain mutual respect towards neighbouring communities. Various customary ritual activities hone social life by encouraging families to selflessly work together. Sasak community life in principle prioritizes public interests over personal needs. Many people consider this to be one of the treasures of their social life.

Human relations with nature

The reciprocal relationship between humanity and nature is determined by the ability of humans and nature to sustain a reciprocal relationship. Wise environmental management preserves animal and plant species, and ensures biodiversity through their reciprocal interdependence. It can also ensure the prosperity and wellbeing of humanity. The *Qur'an* (*Surah: Ar-Rum*, verse 41) records:

⁴⁴ This sentence explains King Putra's commitment in finding medicine for King Sangsyang. Pupuh *Durma*. Stanza 108.

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ
الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by (reason of) what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of (the consequence of) what they have done that perhaps they will return (to righteousness).⁴⁵

Islamic teachings, and environmental knowledge demonstrate how humans can foster reciprocal relationships, both among themselves and for the natural world. The mandate of the Creator manifests in the signs of greatness and power that are evident in *sunatullah*⁴⁶ or natural laws. The relationship between humans and nature cannot be separated because humans cannot survive without nature and a healthy environment. It is expressed in a cultural Sasak leader's declaration:

Humans should be grateful to the trees, soil, water, and air. Because with this environment humans can live.

(*Manusie nike harus ne matur tampiasih lek loloan, lek lemah, lek aik, lek bayu. ye sak miak manusie irup.*)⁴⁷

Part of building good character in traditional life-styles is not to destroy the environment in which the community thrives. The place where an individual lives must be well maintained because by preserving a healthy environment, humans preserve their lives and the lives of their descendants.

Human lives gain meaning from their ongoing interconnection with the surrounding environment. The same nuanced acknowledgement of social interaction with the natural world is found in the *Puspakarma* (*Durma*, stanza 119) text:

Then King Putra said as before/ all the scorpions got out of the way/ then King Putra passed/ then met another field/ which contained a dragon snake/ and wanted to peck King Putra.

(*Sasambate kadi ruminant /Kalajengking piak samil/ ya ta luwital/ raja putra lumampah/ ya ta magih tegal malih/ isining naga/ arep pada cokotin.*)

⁴⁵ Qur'an translation from Shahih International Surah: Ar-Rum Verse: 41, accessed 16 September 2023.

⁴⁶ Everything that happens in life is the destiny of the Almighty.

⁴⁷ Interview With Lalu Abdurrahim, Mataram, 12 May 2023.

The verse describes the relationship built by Raja Putra with his environment where there was a sense of mutual understanding. The story explains that the scorpion, which is a wild poisonous animal that preys on humans, became obedient to Raja Putra. This is due to the mutual respect created between the King's son and his environment, as described in the following excerpt (*Sinom*, stanza15):

Make him / a good goldfish / as a game / for my son / how much gold is needed / dinars to make a gold fish./ said the goldsmith / Yes, thirty dinars/ sri baginda said softly.

(*Iku den karyahakna/ iwak kencana den bcik/ minaka pamengamenga/ ing anak ingsun niki/ hana pira akeh neki/ dinar dadi iwak kencana iku/ matur Ki Kmasan/ Singgih dinar tigang dasih/ Sri Nalendra alon di nira ngandika.*)

Humans are creatures sent by the Creator to be his caliphs on earth so must be able to carry out His commands well. For the Sasak people, the commandment is elaborated in every activity of their lives (*laku urip*) so what is done does not conflict with natural laws. The greedy desire to exploit nature ought to be discarded so that everything taken from nature is returned to nature. This is viewpoint validated by a Sasak cultural leader.

Nature is the one that gives life. If this nature is alive and well preserved then humans can live well.

(*Jagat iku sopok manehi urip. Jagat urip manusie urip.*)⁴⁸

In addition, each individual in society is understood to possess characteristics that distinguish him or her from other individuals, so likewise each culture are distinguished from other cultures by following their own morality in everyday life. For example, in the Sasak community group, we can see that they still maintain springs as a source of life, and their yard is planted with many shady trees. This is also expressed in *Puspakarma* (*Durma*, stanza 134):

Like the Mayura lake / how big / who has this lake / then King Putra / walked again / facing the person on the mountain / he saw / he smelled the fragrance of flowers.

(*Luwir telaga mayura kayang ngapa agung neka/ kang ngadwe uuh neki/ ya ta Raja Putra/ amlih sira lumampah/ amedek dasang ring ngukir/ cingak punika/ gongas gandaning jalmi.*)

⁴⁸ This sentence was expressed during the interview with Lalu Budiman, Penujuk, 5 May 2023, in his home gazebo *berugaq*.

Displaying a responsible character towards the natural environment is a basic value that contributes beneficially to shaping society. The goal is to build a civilization that is a country that gathers the goodness of nature and the goodness of the behavior of its inhabitants (*baldatun thoyyibatun warabbun gafur*).

Conclusion

Both da'wah and local community development emphasize communal participation and initiatives that promote social well-being. Many resources development from local initiatives create shared socio-cultural capital which also involves a shared understanding of collective memories.

However, collective memories are not automatically passed down from generation to generation. It requires effort through education, to which da'wah and community development programs can beneficially contribute. A cross-cultural perspective that recognizes tacit knowledge and local wisdom – and indeed also recognizes its opposite which is local ignorance – ensures a positive work ethic for practitioners in community development.

From the viewpoint of Islamic community development analysis, the philosophy and methods of the profession is to some extent limited to the world of empirical, sensory realities. Whereas humans, by nature, are both sensory (physical) and non-sensory (spiritual, metaphysical). A selectively chosen historical Islamic text, such as Puspakarma, can become a tool to bridge the gap between these two realms.

Through the study of Puspakarma, which the Sasak community in Lombok still holds as a living text around which their traditions and rituals are expressed, this paper strives to offer fresh insights into Islamic community development. Humans are central to the advocacy of da'wah, community development, and well-being. However, the thoughts and actions of how humans express their belief in the Supreme Being and their relation to the collective memories of their ancestors are the key to successful local development. Also just is how humans interact with nature and sustainably respect it, and cooperate with others on the basis of authentic trust.

There are two implications from the study of Puspakarma for the potential of successful da'wah and locality development. Firstly, da'wah and community practitioners need to be prepared to work in a cross-cultural context and genuinely recognize diversity. This is possible through exploring into the targeted community's collective memories and literary heritage as these reflect the character, mentality, and culture of the community and its religious traditions.

Furthermore, growing academic interest in Sasak community collective memories will also lead to the systematic documentation of intuitive or previously unstructured tacit knowledge. Closer acquaintance with this tacit knowledge as part of socio-capital will in turn enhance the quality of da'wah and community development so as to nurture greater levels of community participation.

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