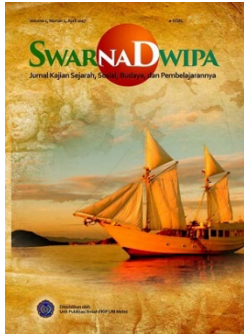


# The Maritime Culture of Coastal Communities Muncar Harbor

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## Abstract

Indonesia is an archipelago that is closely related to maritime activities. Muncar Harbor is one of the maritime centers known as the largest fish producer in East Java. This study aims to examine the maritime culture of the coastal community of Muncar Harbor, which has distinctive characteristics and has been inherited from their ancestors, such as their expertise in catching fish, building boats, and performing rituals to honor the sea that has provided life for them. The author uses various literary studies research techniques, including literature studies, and the stages of historical writing, as well as heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography in the form of written sources that form the framework of this research. The results show that the culture of the muncar community that has been passed down for generations has experienced acculturation between local culture and Islam. Nevertheless, culture for them is not just a habit but also a way for humans to survive.

## Keywords:

Culture, Community,  
Tradition, Muncar

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## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a marine country with vast waters. Indonesia has 17,504 small islands and an ocean area of 5.8 million km<sup>2</sup>, including 2.8 million km<sup>2</sup> of archipelagic waters, 0.3 million waters, and 2.7 million km<sup>2</sup> of economic zone waters. These waters have a variety of fish and marine life that can be optimally utilized. As a result, the water area exceeds the land area.

Historical records show that the ancestors of the Indonesian people were skilled sailors. This means that our ancestors were experts in sailing the sea. We can see evidence in the form of prehistoric sites and historical data that show that our ancestors were able to explore the vast oceans from one continent to another using their ships. Even so, Indonesia's territory consisting of many islands makes us easily influenced by other nations. Examples that we can see are archaeological discoveries in Indonesia such as temples in Java that show trade relations with other countries. In addition, we can also see cultural influences from other nations that entered Indonesia through sea trade. So, the history of our ancestors as master sailors shows how important the role of the sea is in the development of the Indonesian Nation.

Muncar Port is one of the major ports in East Java that is very important for the economy in the Banyuwangi area. The port not only functions as a place for ships to dock,

however, it can also be a tourist destination that provides economic, social and cultural benefits for the local population. However, its development must remain careful so as not to harm the surrounding community or environment. For example, when Muncar port develops, there will be increased economic activity around the port such as increased employment and income for the local community. However, it should also be kept in mind that the development of this port must be done with due regard to its impact on the surrounding environment, such as air and water pollution. Thus, a good handling of the Muncar port development process will bring enormous benefits to the community and the surrounding environment, while still paying attention to sustainability and the balance of economic, social and environmental.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The literature review is a description of the researcher's steps in reading and recording research information using several sources such as books, journals, and articles. The literature study method is a series of steps that require managing research resources, such as organizing information sources, reading and recording important information, and collecting data from libraries. Before conducting field research, the researcher conducted a literature study to select the research topic to be investigated and formulate the issues to be raised in this study.

This research uses historical research methodology (*history method*). Gottschalk defines the historical method as a method of studying and understanding history that involves critical investigation and analysis of historical documents and objects. This method can be used in historical research in various ways, including: heuristics, Source criticism, interpretation, and historiography is the last stage in the historical research steps.

Historiography means a historical writing or publication that discusses the chronology of events in the past. Koentjaraningrat defines library research as the collection of data and information from library sources. Library technique is one of the data collection approaches used in this research. Researchers can obtain data for their research by reading and obtaining information from these sources (Koentjaraningrat, 1983: 420).

The research method involved desk research, which collected data from secondary sources such as books and papers. The research involves four steps: topic selection, heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and history. Several studies have been conducted, including: (1) "The Life of the Fishing Community in Muncar" by the Department of Education and Culture (1991) This book generally explains the profile of Muncar, the pattern of community life, customs and community knowledge related to nature. (2) "Maritime Culture of Petik Laut Muncar" by Eko Setiawan (2016) explains that the ritual of Petik Laut Muncar is an acculturation of Islamic culture with local culture. (3) Madurese Language Variation in Muncar Banyuwangi by Istri May Hasusi, et al (2021) explains that there are differences between Madurese language in Muncar Sub-district and Madurese language in other places although the differences are not too significant. This is due to the influence of the geographical location of Muncar Subdistrict.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Culture

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Culture is all about the way of thinking, intellect and customs of a society. This includes the identity of a society in shaping the behavior and mindset of people in that society. In a culture, the form of its existence can be seen through artifacts or physical objects, as well as behavior or actions carried out by individuals in society (Koentjaraningrat, 1990: 74).

Traditions are part of human habits that show the development of a society's civilization. In tradition, we can see how the values and aspirations of a society are reflected through the works produced. Given that most of Java's coastal communities depend on the marine sector, many of them still preserve a variety of customs and cultures, as well as mysticism in the form of ceremonies performed on the water. Petik laut is one such custom that continues to survive and thrive in Muncar Banyuwangi.

Every Muharram or Suro month in the Javanese calendar, farmers and fishermen participate in the petik laut ceremony, where fishermen choose not to go to sea for days. This ritual is usually performed during the full moon, which falls on the 15th of the Javanese calendar. This is done because fishermen at that time feel that the sea is calm and going to sea is dangerous. Therefore, the community chooses to perform the petik laut ceremony as a symbol of respect and trust in nature. This ritual emerged after the Madurese arrived in Banyuwangi, where they were famous as sailors.

According to Sumarto (1996), since 1901, Muncar fishermen have followed the routine of harvesting marine products guided by shamans. Over time, however, the ceremony evolved to include the kyais and Islamic boarding schools in the Muncar area. As a result, the ritual incorporates many Islamic components. In the petik laut ritual, fishermen usually ask God for blessings and protection so that they are given abundant fish catches. The kyai and shamans also provide prayers and advice so that fishermen are always protected and blessed in going to sea.

Tambak Rejo Village has a ngasak ritual that has existed since ancient times and is still practiced today. This practice stems from the gratitude of landowners for the harvest they produce, so they are willing to allow the poor, usually women, teenagers, mothers, and parents who do not have rice fields, to enjoy their harvest. By picking up the grains that fall in the straw or on the ground. The term ngasak is known by various names in different regions. For example, in the Tambakrejo area of Banyuwangi, the term for picking up the rest of the harvest is usually ngasak, while in the Lumajang area the term is gresek. If "ngasak" is a tradition, then we can say that the tradition of "ngasak" is part of the culture of farming communities in Java (Lestiana, 2023).

Landlessness has become commonplace in rural settlements in Java that have little or no land. Ngasak is usually done by collecting leftover rice scattered throughout the farm. For the Javanese, Ngasak means "*nggoleki turahan sing duwe*" (looking for what is left). Leftover rice cannot be utilized by the owner.

Ngasak is an ancient ritual that is still practiced today, especially in Tambak Village, Muncar Regency. This practice stems from the landowner's gratitude for his crops so that he is willing to help underprivileged people, especially women, such as teenagers, mothers, and parents, who do not have a field to enjoy the harvest. This can be replaced by picking up the grains that fall in the straw or on the ground. This tradition is known by several names in various regions. The name in Tambakrejo Village specifically for collecting the

remaining rice harvest is *ngasak*, while in Lumajang it is called *gresek*. This custom has long been a part of farming communities in Java.

With the presence of Islamic elements in this ritual, fishermen believe that success in fishing is also supported by strong spiritual strength and prayer. On the other hand, the community believes that if this ritual is not performed, then the local community will cause a bad omen that can hit their area. The existence of this ritual is an important part of the identity and beliefs of the Muncar community that must be maintained and preserved for the next generation.

Thus, the sea picking ritual is not only a hereditary tradition in Muncar, but also a form of acculturation between local beliefs and Islamic values. This shows how important the relationship between daily life and spirituality is in the activities of fishermen in the area.

### **Language**

Madurese is one of the mother tongues spoken in Indonesia, especially by the Madurese community. Madurese has three levels: coarse language (*Enja'-Iyah*), middle language (*Enggi-Enten*), and fine language (*Enggi-Bunten*). The dialects used vary, including Sumenep, Bangkalan, and Pamekasan. The Sumenep dialect is considered the most inherited dialect; however, there are no inherited variants.

Madurese language is widely spread in Indonesia, so there are different variations of Madurese language in various regions. One of the regions in Indonesia that has Madurese ethnicity is Banyuwangi Regency. Although ethnic Madurese use Madurese when communicating with fellow ethnic Madurese, they can also communicate well despite using different languages. In Banyuwangi Regency, around 72.3% of the population are Madurese, 26.4% are Javanese, and 1.2% are Bugis, Makasar, and Chinese. The majority of Madurese, Bugis, Makasar and Javanese in this area usually work as fishermen, while the Chinese usually work as traders together with the Javanese (Budhisantoso, 1991: 19).

Madurese is still used in family communication. Communication is important in Javanese families. Husbands and wives often speak in Javanese and the Madurese language is also very similar to the Madurese dialect. Family members rarely use Javanese greetings or salutations, instead preferring Madurese greetings. This is not only feared by parents, but also by their children, both those who live with parents and those who live with other children. Even children seem to be more fluent in Madurese because the environment where they usually use Madurese. For example, children from Javanese families often call their mothers "embu" or "aba", even if they come from Javanese ethnic families. In contrast, their mothers usually refer to their mothers as "Ibu" or "simbok" and their fathers as "bapak". Thus, piila mostly use Madurese when dealing with others.

Almost all residents of Muncar Hamlet speak Madurese and then speak Javanese. Javanese people in this hamlet also speak Madurese. In Javanese, people use Madurese dialect when talking to neighbors. Thus, most community members can speak both Madurese and Javanese, or at least understand them (Budhisantoso, 1991: 21).

### **Technology Development**

Technology is an important part of culture. When we talk about maritime culture, we have to discuss everything related to vessels and certain procedures used by coastal communities. The development of fishing gear technology is very important to obtain large

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quantities of fish according to the needs of the community. This shows that the more advanced the technology of fishing gear, the greater the chance of catching large quantities of fish. For example, if a fisherman uses a traditional fishing net, he may only be able to catch a few fish in one net. Modernization is the process by which a society undergoes a change from a traditional way of life towards a more advanced and sophisticated one. Modernization involves a complete change in traditional life towards a more modern way of life. Thus, modernization brings about more advanced changes in various aspects of people's lives (Wilbert, 2011: 34).

However, it is important to note that each fisherman may have different fishing gear technology. This can be influenced by many factors, such as the location where the fisher operates, the size of the vessel, or the budget available to invest in the technology. Thus, while all fishermen have the same goal of catching a large number of fish, the methods and technologies they use may vary.

Thung Ju Lan distinguishes two categories of fishermen: traditional and contemporary. Traditional fishermen use makeshift fishing gear. Small boats of less than seven meters include fishing rods, seines, nets, spears, swords, harpoons, sero, and seke. They often use fishing techniques passed down from generation to generation. In addition, traditional fishermen still use ancient ways of catching fish.

On the other hand, modern fishermen are people who use sophisticated equipment in catching fish. They have bigger boats, different types of nets such as payang, gill net, or purse seine, and motor engines to assist in the fishing process. They can usually catch fish in larger quantities and more efficiently than traditional fishers.

### **Tidal Science**

In Muncar, the fishing community uses the terms "air lampek" when the tide is high and "nyorot" when the tide is low. These terms are used to describe the high and low tides in the coastal area. Air lampek and nyorot are associated with Javanese calendar calculations based on the circulation of the moon. Each day, lampek and nyorot water recedes for about 30 minutes. The occurrence of lampek and nyorot water does not happen immediately, but gradually until it reaches its peak at high tide and lowest at low tide.

In a month, fishermen only go to sea for approximately 25 days, from the 18th to the 12th of the following month. This is because there is a black moon for 25 days so fishermen cannot go to sea. Fishermen do not go to sea during the bright moon or full moon, which occurs between the 13th and 17th of each month. This is because the bright moonlight makes it difficult for them to see fish in the sea water.

### **Seasons and Natural Phenomena**

As people who live in coastal areas, their lives are highly dependent on the sea. They make their main living from sea products. One of the most common occupations is being a fishing laborer. This job does not guarantee a steady income every day because it depends on weather conditions and fish catches. For example, if the weather is bad, they may not be able to go to sea and their income will be reduced. Thus, the lives of coastal communities are greatly influenced by natural and marine conditions.

The rainy season occurs from November-April. During the rainy season, it is noted that the wind blows from the west, also known as the "West Wind". This situation is

considered a sign of danger because the wind is accompanied by fog so that it can interfere with the activities of fishermen when catching fish.

Basically, strong winds do not only blow during the rainy season, but also during the dry season. The dry season lasts from May to October. The people of Muncar call it the east wind which is often accompanied by the dangerous north wind, resulting in large waves in the waters of the Bali Strait, including in the waters of Muncar.

## CONCLUSION

Muncar Harbor, located in East Java, plays an important role in the lives of coastal communities. The culture that emerges is characterized and has been used as a guideline in survival through hereditary traditions. As a coastal community, the lives of the people of Muncar depend heavily on the sea. For them, having a profession as a fisherman is a way to survive around the coast because the sea is the main source of income. Along with the times, many cultures experience cultural acculturation so that this becomes a tradition that is a cultural heritage in the region.

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