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WOMEN'S LOCAL KNOWLEDGE ON PLANT UTILIZATION AND ITS RELATION TO FOREST CONSERVATION IN THE WAN ABDUL RACHMAN FOREST PARK

Melya Riniarti[1*], Inggar Damayanti[1] dan Dian Rahmalia[2]

[1]Department of Forestry, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Lampung, Jl Sumantri Brojonegoro No 1, Gd. Meneng Bandar Lampung, 35145, Indonesia; e-mail: melya.riniarti@fp.unila.ac.id ; e-mail: inggar.damayanti@fp.unila.ac.id
[21]Department of Agribusiness, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Lampung, Jl Sumantri Brojonegoro No 1 Gd. Meneng Bandar Lampung, 35145, Indonesia ; e-mail: dian.rahmalia@fp.unila.ac.id

Correspondet author : e-mail: melya.riniarti@fp.unila.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

The Tahura Wan Abdul Rachman area plays an important role in maintaining biodiversity and supporting the lives of the people of the buffer villages through various plant resources used in daily life. Local community knowledge of plant use is an important part of supporting forest conservation, especially through women's role as guardians of cultural and ecological knowledge. This research aimed to explore the role of women in preserving plant knowledge and forest conservation in Talang Mulya Village, a buffer village for Tahura WAR. The research was conducted using survey methods and semi-structured interviews with 65 female respondents. Data were analyzed descriptively, quantitatively, and qualitatively. The results showed that most respondents had high knowledge of the types of plants around the forest (83.10%), the traditions of plant use (90.77%), and the cultural and spiritual values associated with certain plants (78.46%). Most of this knowledge (75.38%) was obtained from parents and ancestors. Most respondents (57.11%) also replanted plants in the environment around their homes, although their involvement in formal forest conservation activities remained relatively low. This research shows that women play an important role in sustaining ethnobotanical knowledge and supporting local knowledge-based conservation in forest areas.

Keywords: Etnobotany, tradition, local knowledge, biopharmaceuticals, gender

ABSTRAK

Kawasan Tahura Wan Abdul Rachman memiliki peran penting dalam menjaga keanekaragaman hayati dan mendukung kehidupan masyarakat desa penyangga melalui berbagai sumber daya tumbuhan yang dimanfaatkan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Pengetahuan lokal masyarakat mengenai pemanfaatan tumbuhan menjadi bagian penting dalam mendukung konservasi hutan, khususnya melalui peran perempuan sebagai penjaga pengetahuan budaya dan ekologis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggali kearifan lokal para perempuan tentang manfaat tumbuhannya dan hubungannya konservasi hutan di Desa Talang Mulya sebagai desa penyangga Tahura WAR. Penelitian dilakukan menggunakan metode survei dan wawancara semi terstruktur terhadap 65 responden perempuan. Data dianalisis secara deskriptif kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar responden memiliki pengetahuan yang tinggi mengenai jenis tumbuhan di sekitar hutan (83,10%), tradisi pemanfaatan tumbuhan (90,77%), serta nilai budaya dan spiritual yang berkaitan dengan tumbuhan tertentu (78,46%). Pengetahuan tersebut sebagian besar (75,38%) diperoleh secara turun-temurun dari orang tua dan nenek moyang. Sebagian besar responden (57,11%) juga melakukan penanaman kembali tumbuhan di lingkungan sekitar rumah, meskipun keterlibatan mereka dalam kegiatan konservasi hutan secara formal masih relatif rendah. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa perempuan memiliki peran penting dalam menjaga keberlanjutan pengetahuan etnobotani dan mendukung konservasi berbasis pengetahuan lokal di sekitar kawasan hutan.

Kata kunci: Etnobotany, tradisi, kearifan lokal, biofarmaka, gender .

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I. INTRODUCTION

One of the important conservation areas in Lampung Province is Tahura Wan Abdul Rachman, which has an area of about 22,249.31 ha and plays an important role in maintaining the tropical forest ecosystem of Sumatra, including the hydrological functions and water systems of the surrounding area (Wicaksono et.al., 2025; Minarningsih & Murniati, 2020). This area has a diverse land cover, including primary and secondary forests, shrubs, reeds, and community agroforestry systems, thereby supporting a range of flora and fauna with high ecological, economic, and cultural value (Abidin et al., 2025). In addition to serving as a biodiversity conservation area, Tahura WAR also provides various resources used by the surrounding community to meet food, health, and socio-cultural needs. However, like other tropical forest areas, Tahura WAR faces various pressures from land-use change, deforestation, and human activities, which could threaten the sustainability of its ecosystems and biodiversity (Mayangsari et al., 2019).

Local wisdom and ethnobotanical approaches have proven to be important components in biodiversity protection and conservation efforts (Hidayah & Hakim, 2022). Local wisdom is the traditional knowledge and practice of the community in managing nature, providing valuable insights for sustainable environmental management. Meanwhile, ethnobotanical approaches, which study the relationships between humans and plants in cultural contexts, can help design effective conservation strategies that meet local needs (Dewi et al., 2023; Hidayah & Hakim, 2022; Ristanto et al., 2020).

Women have an important role in maintaining and transmitting local knowledge related to plant utilization and forest resource management to communities around conservation areas (Agarwal, 2009. In many rural communities, women not only meet household needs but also serve as guardians of knowledge about food plants, medicines, ritual plants, and various practices for using natural resources, passed down from generation to generation. This knowledge develops through daily interaction with the environment and forms an important part of local ecological knowledge that supports the sustainability of forest management and biodiversity conservation (Carvalho & Frazão-Moreira, 2011). Some recent research shows that women make a major contribution to sustaining culturally-based conservation practices, including through the protection of certain species, the replanting of exploited plants, and the transmission of ecological values to the next generation (Sood et al., 2016). In addition, local ecological knowledge possessed by women in communities around forest areas is considered to be able to strengthen the socio-ecological resilience of the community and support the sustainable management of conservation areas (Robert et.al., 2022; Sachde & Udhwani, 2025)

Although various studies have discussed biodiversity, plant utilization, and management of the Tahura Wan Abdul Rachman area, studies that specifically explore the role of women in maintaining plant knowledge and its relationship to forest conservation in buffer villages are still very limited. In fact, women are closely involved in the utilization of plant resources, the transmission of local knowledge, and cultural practices related to environmental management (Joshi & Bhardwaj, 2015). Talang Mulya Village, as one of the Tahura WAR buffer villages, has high interaction with forest areas, so it holds the potential of local ecological knowledge that is important to be studied (Mayangsari et al., 2019; Santoso et.al., 2023). However, information on how women understand, use, inherit, and maintain the sustainability of plants in forest areas remains poorly documented scientifically. Therefore, this research aimed to explore the role of women in preserving plant knowledge and forest conservation in Talang Mulya Village,

the Tahura Wan Abdul Rachman buffer area. This research is expected to contribute to the development of ethnobotanical and social forestry studies and to serve as a basis for supporting conservation efforts grounded in local community knowledge.

II. METHOD

The research was carried out in the buffer village of the Wan Abdul Rahman Forest Park, namely Talang Mulya Village, Teluk Pandan District, Pesawaran Regency. This village was chosen because it is directly adjacent to Tahura WAR. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling based on predetermined criteria, including married women, those aged over 20 years, native residents of the village, and individuals considered familiar with the use of plants in daily life.. Interview data collection continued until saturation was reached, indicated by repetitive responses and the absence of new information or themes from additional respondents (Morse 2015). The number of respondents obtained was 65 women. Women were chosen because, based on previous research, it is known that in terms of inheriting knowledge related to the benefits of plants, both as medicinal plants, food, and cultural benefits, more women do it. This is suspected because women's interactions with plants in daily life are more than men's.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews focuding on several aspects, including: (1) the characteristics of the community (2) knowledge about the types of plants that live around the forest (3) the existence of plants of spiritual value (4) the existence of traditions/rituals/customs about the use of plants (5) the existence of traditions in utilizing plants for food/medicine (6) the importance of plants in a culture (7) methods of inheriting local knowledge related to The use of plants from generation to generation (8) rules related to the use of plants (9) the habits of planting plants used (10) involvement in forest conservation and beneficial plants. qualitatively. Respondents' answers were categorized into three levels: know, uncertain, and do not know. A score of 1 was assigned when respondents were able to clearly recognize or explain the plants and their uses, a score of 2 indicated uncertainty or incomplete understanding, and a score of 3 indicated that respondents did not know or could not provide relevant information. The collected data were then analyzed descriptively using quantitative tabulation and qualitative interpretation

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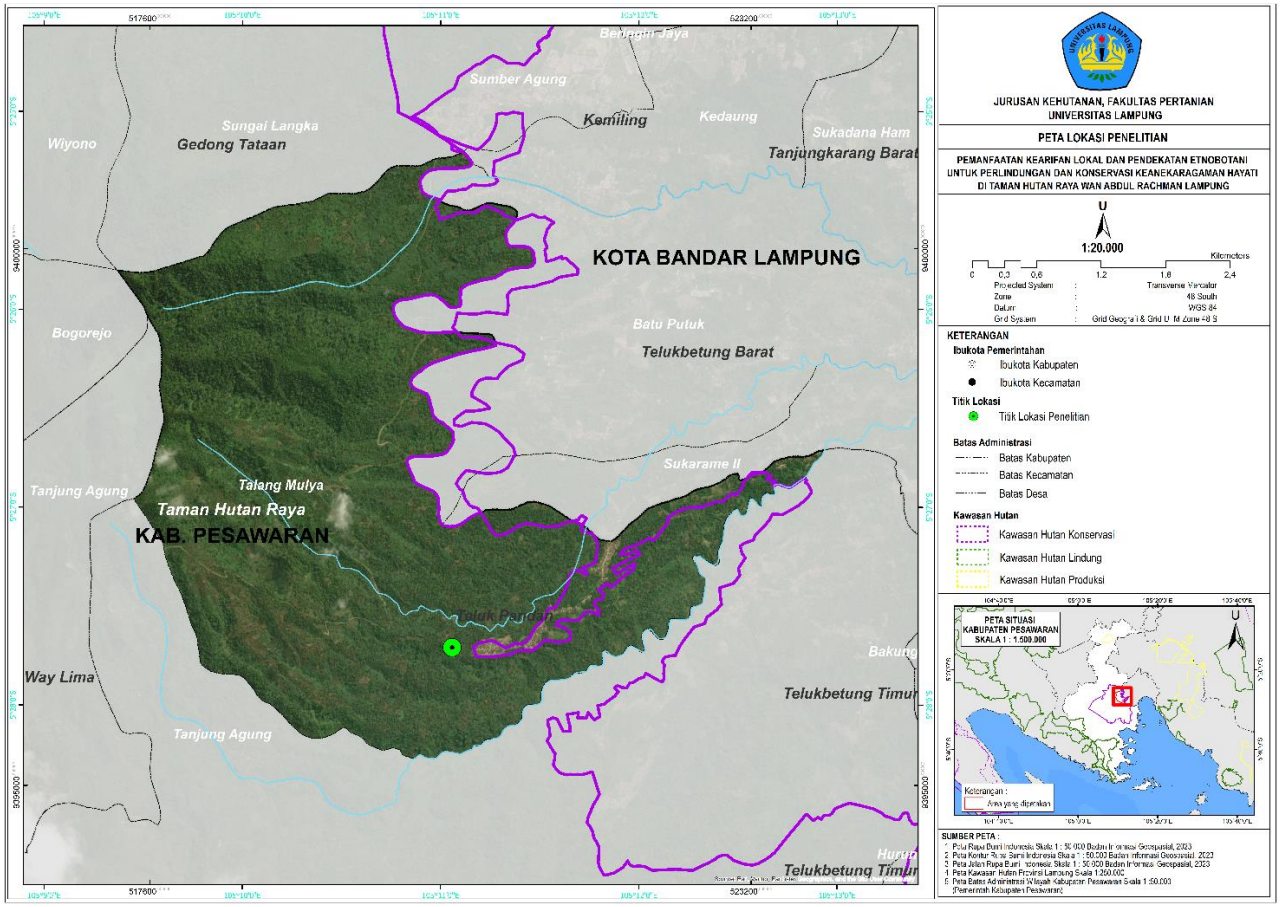

Figure 1. Map of Research Location.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

1. Characteristic of Respondents

This study involved 100% female respondents; respondents were almost entirely in the productive age group. Only 11% of respondents who reported their age were no longer productive (Figure 2). 54% of the female respondents in this study were housewives, while 32% also worked as farmers. The involvement of women as respondents in ethnobotanical studies is crucial because they often have a central role in managing plant resources in household and community contexts. Women are usually responsible for the collection, processing, and use of various plant species, especially those related to food, medicine, and other domestic needs. Therefore, they tend to have in-depth knowledge of the various local plant species used in daily life, from food plants to medicinal plants.

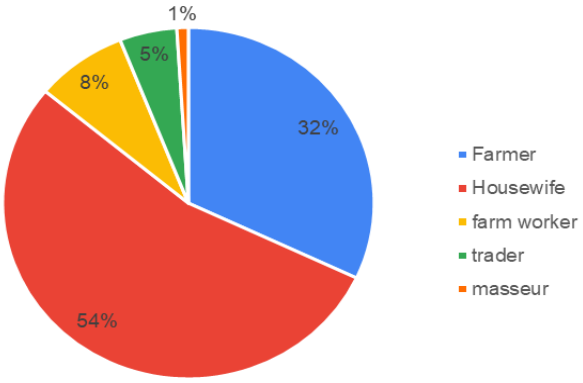

Figure 2. Characteristics of respondents based on age

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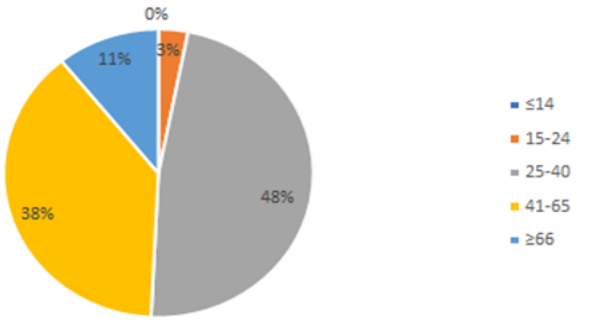

Figure 3. Characteristics of respondents based on occupations

2. Respondents' Knowledge of Plant Types and Uses.

The results of the interview on respondents' knowledge of plant types and uses are shown in Figure 4. The results showed that most respondents reported good knowledge of plants and cultural practices related to the use of forest resources. As many as 83.10% of respondents said they knew the types of plants that grow in forest areas, while only 1.50% said they did not have knowledge related to this. The respondents' knowledge of the traditions and use of plants for food and medicine was high (90.77%), indicating that the use of plants in daily activities is still very strong.

Respondents' knowledge of plants considered to have spiritual or symbolic value in the local culture is also relatively high, at 71.67%. In addition, 78.46% of respondents know certain plant species considered important for social and cultural life. These findings suggest that plants are not only viewed as economic and food resources but also carry cultural meaning that is still preserved by communities living around the forest.

Unlike other knowledge aspects, respondents' knowledge of certain rules or taboos regarding the use of forest plants shows lower value. Only 16.92% of respondents said they know about rules or taboos in forest plant use, while most respondents (83.08%) said they do not know. This condition suggests a possible decline or reduction of traditional practices related to customary forest resource management among communities around Tahura WAR

3. Traditions Carried Out Related to the Utilization of Plants

The results of interviews revealing various plant-related traditions still practiced by the community are presented in Table 1.

Various traditions related to the use of plants in social, cultural, and spiritual life that are still practiced by women in Talang Mulya Village are presented in Table 1. Various uses of plants in rituals such as weddings, childbirth, harvest thanksgiving, house building, offerings, and protection from misfortune or supernatural disturbances. The most commonly used plant is banana (*Musa* spp.), followed by several spice species such as *Kaempferia galanga*, turmeric (*Curcuma longa*), *Etlingera elatior*, and *Zingiber cassumunar*, which are used in traditional medicine and postpartum rituals. These findings suggest that local knowledge of plant use is still preserved and remains an important part of the cultural identity of the buffer communities around the Wan Abdul Rachman Forest Park (Tahura WAR), and has the potential to support plant conservation through cultural practices that are passed down from generation to generation.

4. Inheritance of Local Knowledge Related to Plant Utilization

The results of the interviews on the method of inheriting local knowledge of plant utilization are presented in Figure 5.

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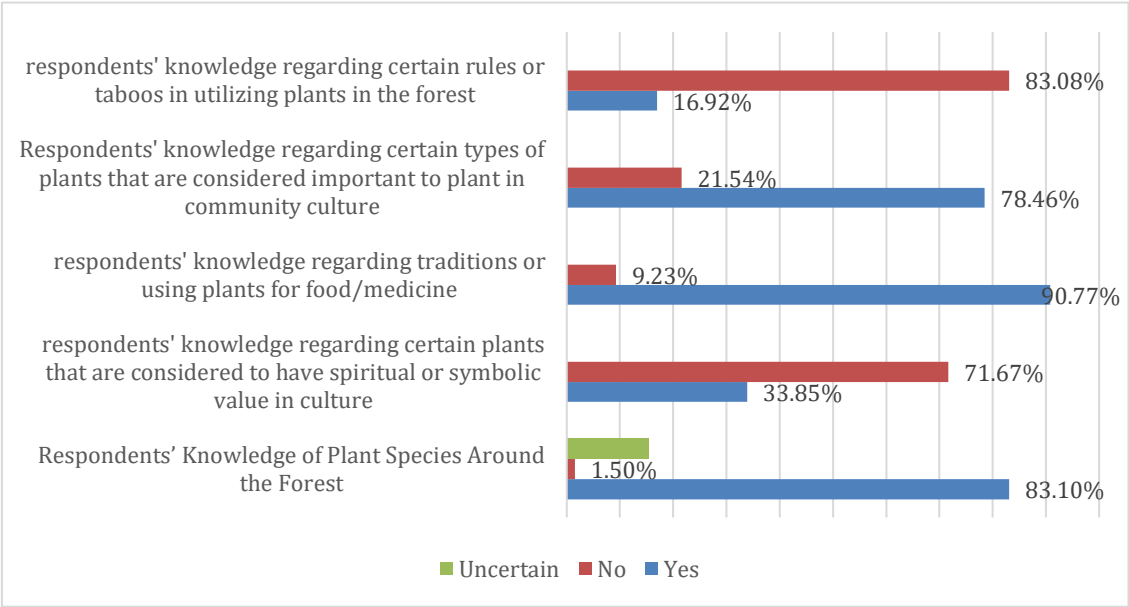

Figure 4. Figure 4. Percentage of women respondents' knowledge regarding plant species, traditional plant uses, spiritual values of plants, culturally important plants, and customary rules or taboos related to plant utilization in the forest area.

Table 1. Traditions regarding plants used in the community

No.	Plant Species/Material	Traditional Practice and Cultural Use
1	Coconut leaves (*Cocos nucifera*)	Young coconut leaves (janur) are commonly used in traditional celebration ceremonies and community feasts.
2	Raja banana (*Musa paradisiaca*)	Raja banana is hung inside houses or on rooftops as a symbol to ward off misfortune or negative spirits.
3	Areca nut palm (*Areca catechu*)	Areca nut is used in wedding ceremonies as a symbol of hope and harmony for married couples.
4	Aromatic ginger (*Kaempferia galanga*) and turmeric (*Curcuma longa*)	Kencur and turmeric are traditionally used in childbirth rituals to protect mothers and newborns.
5	Raja banana and Mas banana (*Musa* spp.)	Bananas are commonly served during traditional ceremonies such as weddings and circumcision celebrations.
6	Banana (*Musa* spp.)	Bananas are used as offerings in traditional ritual ceremonies.
7	Yellow bamboo (*Bambusa vulgaris*)	Yellow bamboo is believed to protect children from misfortune or negative supernatural influences.
8	Bangle (*Zingiber montanum*), ponglai, and turmeric	These plants are used in traditional healing practices for postpartum recovery and spiritual disturbances.
9	Banana (*Musa* spp.)	Bananas are hung on rooftops during house construction rituals for protection and safety.
10	Seven-flower mixture	Mixed flowers are used in blessing rituals for newly purchased vehicles.
11	Raja banana (*Musa paradisiaca*)	After harvest, communities conduct thanksgiving ceremonies by serving Raja bananas.
12	Bangle (*Zingiber montanum*)	During initial land preparation, bangle is chewed and sprayed onto the land as part of a traditional ritual.
13	Kembar mayang flowers	Kembar mayang flowers are used in funeral ceremonies for unmarried men or women.

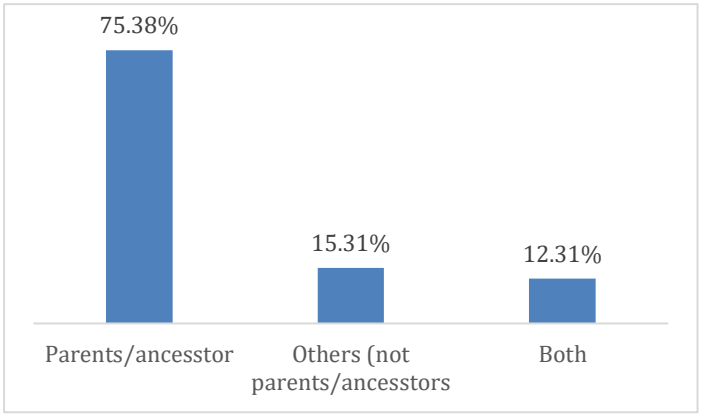

Figure 5. Methods of inheriting local knowledge related to the use of plants

The results of interviews on local knowledge of plant use (Figure 5) indicate that most information is transmitted intergenerationally within families. As many as 75.38% of respondents reported obtaining their knowledge of plants from parents or ancestors, and 15.31% admitted to learning from others outside the family, such as neighbors, the surrounding community, or personal experience. And as many as 12.31% of respondents said they obtained their knowledge from a combination of these two sources. These results show that families still play a major role in transmitting local knowledge about plant use downward. This process of passing on knowledge across generations is an important factor in maintaining the sustainability of ethnobotanical knowledge among the buffer communities of the Wan Abdul Rachman Forest Park (Tahura WAR).

5. Involvement In Forest and Environmental Conservation

The results of the analysis of forest conservation involvement, as reported by respondents, are presented in Figure 6. The questions asked were (1) how often do you replant frequently used plants, and (2) how often are you involved in forest and environmental conservation activities.

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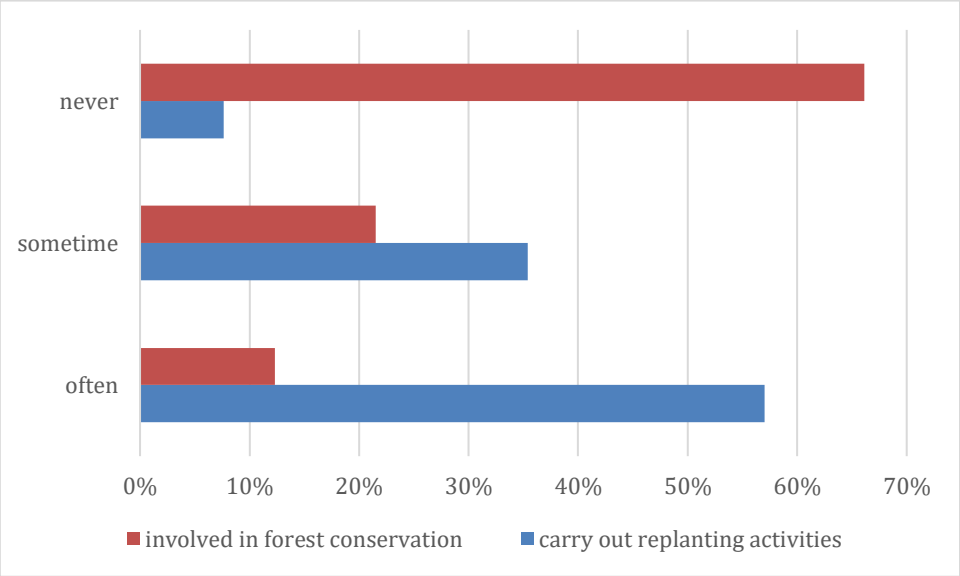

Figure 6. The involvement in forest conservation.

From Figure 6, it can be seen that most female respondents still have concerns about the sustainability of plants through planting activities around them. A total of 57.14% of respondents stated that it is their habit to replant the plants they use, although only 35.71% do so occasionally, and only a small number never do so, because they can buy them or ask their neighbors to get them. These results show that plant maintenance and cultivation are still carried out primarily by women in Talang Mulya Village to meet household needs and preserve plant resources.

The results of the interviews showed that respondents' involvement in direct forest conservation was relatively low. Most respondents (66.15%) said they had never participated in forest conservation activities, while only 12.31% reported being involved frequently, and 21.54% being involved occasionally. This is interesting because it suggests that, although women have a close relationship with the use and maintenance of plants, their participation in formal forest conservation activities remains limited. This situation appears to be due to the lack of access, opportunity, and involvement of women in community-level forest conservation programs

B. **Discussion**

The results showed that women in Talang Mulya Village have a high level of knowledge about the types of plants in the forest area, including their uses in daily life, cultural traditions, and local medicinal practices. Plant diversity in Talang Mulya Village is still high because it is a fruit producer (Herwanti, 2016) and a producer of medicinal plants (Mayangsari et al., 2019). This condition has been reported in various studies that calculated plant diversity in Tahura WAR (Maulita & Asmarahman, 2022; Abidin et al., 2025; Asmarahana et al., 2023), where plant management is based on the agroforestry system. The respondents' high knowledge of plants shows that the buffer village community still has a strong attachment to forest resources and the surrounding environment. This is similar to the results of research by Kristin et al., (2018) which showed that the people living around Tahura WAR have high interaction related to land and plant utilization. Local *ecological knowledge* (LEK) is an important part of supporting the sustainable management of natural resources because it is formed through long-term interactions between people and the environment in which they live (Aswani et al., 2018). In the communities around forest areas,

this knowledge is not only about identifying plant species but also about their utilization, management, and cultural values. The existence of this local knowledge is considered important in supporting community-based conservation and maintaining the sustainability of biodiversity in tropical forest areas (Rizki & Asteria, 2023).

According to Aluko (2018) women have an important position in preserving and passing on local knowledge related to plants to the next generation. Most respondents reported obtaining knowledge about plant use from parents or ancestors, indicating that the family remains the primary channel for transmitting local knowledge. This is consistent with what Wicaksono et al. (2024) found regarding the family's role in the palm sugar business in Tahura WAR. The results of their research also found that knowledge of the palm sugar business was passed down from generation to generation, thereby strengthening its sustainability. The process of inheriting knowledge from generation to generation generally takes place through daily activities, traditional medicine practices, the use of food plants, and women's involvement in the community's domestic and socio-cultural activities. Recent studies show that women in rural areas and forest buffer areas often serve as guardians of local ecological knowledge because they have intensive interactions with plant resources, particularly for food, health, and cultural rituals. In addition, women also contribute to maintaining the socio-ecological resilience of the community through practices based on local wisdom and traditional conservation (Dovie et al., 2008)

This research also shows that various plant species still hold strong cultural and spiritual value for the people of Talang Mulya Village. Several plants, such as bananas, areca nuts, janur, turmeric, kencur, and yellow bamboo, are used in various traditions, including weddings, births, harvest thanksgiving, house construction, and rituals for personal and family protection (Hidayat, 2018; Wang et al., 2026). These findings show that plants are not only seen as biological resources, but also have social and symbolic functions in people's cultural systems. The cultural values inherent in plants play an important role in sustaining the use and preservation of certain species, as communities tend to maintain plants considered culturally and spiritually important. It seems that this is what keeps the forest condition in Tahura WAR classified as good, according to the results of research by Safei et al. (2020). Santoso et al. (2023) also revealed that the management model in Talang Mulya Village is an agroforestry system that supports the community's economic needs. Ethnoecological research in several Indonesian conservation areas also shows that local wisdom and community cultural values can indirectly support plant conservation practices and forest area protection (Abas et al., 2022; Mulyadi et al., 2022; Yasir et al., 2022).

However, the results of the study showed a tendency to decrease public knowledge of customary rules or taboos regarding the use of forest plants. Most respondents stated that they were not aware of any special rules or restrictions on the use of plants in forest areas. This condition indicates social and cultural changes that may affect the sustainability of the community's traditional knowledge. Several studies show that modernization, lifestyle changes, and increasing external influences can lead to declines in local cultural practices and ecological knowledge in rural communities (Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Spaargaren & Van Vliet, 2000). The loss of local knowledge can lead to the reduction of traditional conservation practices that have helped maintain the sustainability of biological resources and ecosystem balance (Aswani et al., 2018). Therefore, the documentation and preservation of local community knowledge are important as part of a culture-based conservation strategy in forest areas.

Interestingly, most respondents stated that they often replant plants in the environment

around their homes, yet their involvement in formal forest conservation activities remains relatively low. This condition shows that women actually have concern for plant sustainability, even though they are not much involved in institutional or institution-based forest conservation programs (Bocci & Mishra, 2021). This is in line with the findings by Mufidah et al (2024), who examined the supporting and inhibiting factors that hinder the effectiveness of conservation partnership programs in Tahura WAR. The role of women is seen as one of the supporting factors that need improvement for the program to be successful. The practice of planting plants in the yard and the surrounding environment can be seen as a form of local-scale conservation that contributes to the preservation of plant diversity and the sustainability of biological resources (Sood et al., 2016). Sarker & Das (2002) had shown that women's involvement in forest area management and community-based conservation can strengthen community socio-ecological resilience and increase long-term conservation effectiveness. Therefore, strengthening women's participation in conservation activities and forest area management should be a priority in the development of community-based social forestry and conservation programs around Tahura Wan Abdul Rachman.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

A. Conclusion

This study shows that women in Talang Mulya Village have a fairly high level of local knowledge about plant types, their uses, and various cultural and spiritual values related to the community's life around the Tahura Wan Abdul Rachman area. This knowledge is mostly inherited from parents and ancestors, thus showing that the family still plays an important role in the transmission of ethnobotanical knowledge within the community. Various plants are not only used for food and health, but also in traditional rituals, social traditions, and spiritual practices that are still maintained today. This condition shows that women have an important role as guardians of the local knowledge and cultural identity of the village communities that buffer forest areas.

This study also shows that most of the respondents replant plants in the environment around the house as a form of plant resource maintenance. However, women's involvement in formal forest conservation activities is still relatively low. In addition, public knowledge about customary rules or taboos in the use of forest plants began to decline. These findings indicate social changes that could affect the sustainability of local knowledge and traditional conservation practices of communities around forest areas.

B. Recommendation

There is a need to increase women's involvement in forest conservation activities and community-based natural resource management in the Tahura Wan Abdul Rachman area. Social forestry, environmental education, and local plant conservation programs should involve women as the primary actors, as they possess strong local knowledge of plant utilization and management. In addition, documentation and inheritance of local ethnobotanical knowledge needs to be encouraged through education, training, and strengthening the role of families and indigenous peoples so that cultural values and traditional conservation practices are maintained and can support the sustainability of forest areas in the future.

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