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# Reading the Character of the Pata Dela Customary Law in Sustainable Forest Management and Food Security of the Ngadhu Bhaga Community

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## Abstract

**This study aims** to discover legal characteristics, namely behavioral norms in pata dela, particularly those related to sustainable forest development and food security.

**The method used** in this study is empirical legal research conducted in Rakalaba Village, West Golewa District, Ngada Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province. The approaches used in this study are legal sociology, philosophy, legal history, and conceptual approaches. The data used in this study are primary and secondary data. The data were processed and then analyzed using descriptive qualitative methods.

**The novelty** of this study focuses on the character of legal norms, namely the commands and prohibitions contained in the local wisdom of pata dela. These legal norms serve as guidelines for realizing sustainable forestry development that has an impact on food security.

**The results** of the study show that the Ngadhu bhaga customary law community has an oral tradition called pata dela or ancestral teachings. Pata dela contains primary legal norms, namely commands marked with the word bodha, which means mandatory. In addition, pata dela also contains prohibitions marked with the word ma'e, which means forbidden. Pata dela plays a role in sustainable forest development based on customary law. For example, in the command "Bodha sepe ne'e de kenge, latu ne'e de kabu" and the prohibition "Ma'e rawu dhapi kabu, ma'e sa'a dhapi tara". Through this oral tradition, the community can ensure that plants continue to grow. Pata dela also has implications for realizing food security for the Ngadhu Bhaga community. It contains commands and prohibitions that reflect an ecological understanding that food crops must be sustained so that they remain available over time. Food security is not only a matter of the availability of food at present, but also a guarantee that future generations will continue to have access to quality food sources.

**Conclusion** of this study is that Pata dela contains primary legal norms that include commands and prohibitions. Pata dela is still alive and is still used as a guideline in sustainable forest development to achieve food security.

**Keywords:** Legal Character; Local Wisdom; Pata Dela; Sustainable Forest Development; Ngadhu Bhaga Customary Law Community

## Abstrak

**Penelitian ini bertujuan** untuk menemukan karakter hukum yakni norma perilaku dalam pata dela khususnya yang berkaitan dengan pembangunan hutan berkelanjutan dan ketahanan

pangan.

**Metode Penelitian** ini merupakan jenis penelitian hukum empiris yang dilaksanakan di Desa Rakalaba, Kecamatan Golewa Barat, Kabupaten Ngada, Provinsi NTT. Pendekatan yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah pendekatan sosiologi hukum, filosofis, sejarah hukum, dan konseptual. Data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah data primer dan data sekunder. Data tersebut diolah dan selanjutnya dianalisis secara deskriptif kualitatif.

**Kebaruan** penelitian difokuskan pada karakter norma hukum yakni perintah dan larangan yang terkandung dalam kearifan lokal pata dela. Norma hukum tersebut menjadi pedoman dalam mewujudkan pembangunan hutan berkelanjutan yang berdampak pada ketahanan pangan.

**Hasil penelitian** menunjukkan bahwa Masyarakat hukum adat Ngadhu bhaga memiliki tutur lisan yang disebut sebagai pata dela atau ajaran leluhur. Pata dela memuat norma hukum primer yakni perintah yang ditandai dengan kata bodha yang berarti wajib. Selain itu, pata dela juga memuat norma larangan yang ditandai dengan kata ma'e yang berarti dilarang. Pata dela berperan dalam pembangunan hutan berkelanjutan berdasarkan hukum adat. Misalnya, dalam perintah "Bodha sepe ne'e de kenge, latu ne'e de kabu," dan larangan "Ma'e rawu dhapi kabu, ma'e sa'a dhapi tara". Melalui tutur lisan tersebut, masyarakat dapat menjaga agar tanaman tetap tumbuh kembali. pata dela juga berimplikasi dalam mewujudkan ketahanan pangan masyarakat Ngadhu Bhaga. Di dalamnya terkandung perintah dan larangan yang mencerminkan pemahaman ekologis bahwa tanaman pangan harus dijaga keberlanjutannya agar tetap tersedia dari waktu ke waktu. Ketahanan pangan bukan hanya soal ketersediaan bahan makanan saat ini, tetapi juga jaminan bahwa generasi mendatang tetap memiliki akses terhadap sumber pangan yang berkualitas.

**Kesimpulan** dari penelitian ini yakni Pata dela mengandung norma hukum primer yang berisi perintah dan larangan. Pata dela masih hidup dan masih dijadikan pedoman dalam pembangunan hutan berkelanjutan demi mewujudkan ketahanan pangan.

**Kata Kunci** : Karakter Hukum; Kearifan Lokal; Pata Dela; Pembangunan Hutan Berkelanjutan; Masyarakat Hukum Adat Ngadhu Bhaga

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with legal diversity. Literally, observers use the perspective of legal pluralism as an analytical tool to dissect the existence of legal systems that operate collaboratively or dominantly in meeting the legal needs of society. Legal pluralism is relevant to Indonesia because Indonesia has a variety of religions, cultures, ethnicities, and customs. Legal pluralism also functions as a framework that aims to redefine the interaction between the legal system and society. This legal pluralism can then be used to integrate different legal systems, including customary law, Islamic law, and state law (positive law), into a single integrated legal framework.<sup>1</sup> Cicero argued that ubi societas ibi ius, where there are people, there is law. There is no perfect narrative about law without connecting it to people.<sup>2</sup>

Sulistiyowati Irianto, in her dissertation, argues that the concept of legal pluralism refers

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<sup>1</sup> Muhammad Insan Tarigan and Raisha Hafandi, "Law Diversities for Climate Change : Legal Pluralism and Climate Governance in Indonesia" 14, no. 3 (2024): 589–605.

<sup>2</sup> Irma Fatmawati, Rahul Ardian Fikri, and Mhd Azhali Siregar, "Peradilan Adat Dan Restoratif Dalam Penegakan Hukum Di Indonesia," *Penerbit Tahta Media*, 2023.

to the fact that there is more than one legal system that coexists within the same social sphere. In the arena of legal pluralism, there is state law on one side, and on the other side is people's law, which in principle does not originate from the state, consisting of customary law, religious law, customs, or other social conventions that are regarded as law.<sup>3</sup> Other references also state that legitimizing multiple sources of law can open the door to diversity of legal ideas.<sup>4</sup> Research findings illustrate the continued strength of legal compliance with customary law systems alongside religious law as a reality, necessitating the strengthening of Indonesia's diverse legal identity. Legal pluralism is closely related to various aspects of community life, including forest management. In this context, forest management is not solely based on national law, but can also be carried out according to customary law, particularly by customary law communities that have traditionally had the authority and wisdom to manage forest areas.

Forestry issues have long been a concern in various countries, especially regarding the condition of tropical forests in developing countries. In a number of developing countries, tropical forests have experienced various disturbances and damage, resulting in a reduction in forest area. Efforts to protect and preserve forests are a global issue, although each country has different causes for facing forestry problems. In Indonesia, forest damage or disturbance is triggered by, among other things, poverty and the demands of daily life, limited facilities and infrastructure, and the side effects of the development process.<sup>5</sup>

Based on these concerns, a new idea emerged, namely sustainable forest development. Globally, sustainable forest development correlates with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which focus on four pillars of sustainable development, namely social development, economic development, environmental development, and law and governance.<sup>6</sup> In addition, national laws have also sought to support sustainable forest development through regulations and policies as stipulated in Law No. 41 of 1999 on Forestry and Law No. 32 of 2009 on Environmental Protection and Management. However, long before these regulations and policies were implemented, indigenous peoples had contributed to the realization of sustainable forestry based on customary law and local wisdom, as practiced by the Ngadhu Bhaga indigenous community in Bajawa.

Sustainable forest development in the customary law community of Ngada Regency, Bajawa, NTT Province, particularly among the Ngadhu Bhaga community, is an important issue to study because it is closely related to the sustainability of the value system and local wisdom that exists within that community. Amidst the tide of modernization, population growth, and

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<sup>3</sup> Sulistyowati Irianto, *Perempuan Di Antara Berbagai Pilihan Hukum (Studi Mengenai Strategi Perempuan Batak Toba Untuk Mendapatkan Akses Kepada Harta Warisan Melalui Proses Penyelesaian Sengketa)* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Cesar Seminario Bazan, "Decolonising Legal Theory: The Rule of Law and the Legalisation of Legal Pluralism César Bazán Seminario," no. December (2024), <https://doi.org/10.37511/viaiuris.n36a2>.

<sup>5</sup> Nur Nashriany Jufri, "Perlindungan Hutan Dalam Rangka Pembangunan Berwawasan Lingkungan Berkelanjutan," *Legal Advice Journal Of Law* 1, no. 2 (2024): 43–68.

<sup>6</sup> Angga Natalia and Erine Nur Maulidya, "Aktualisasi Empat Pilar Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Di Perdesaan Kecamatan Natar Kabupaten Lampung Selatan," *JlIP: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pemerintahan* 8, no. 1 (2023): 21–41.

increasing economic needs, pressure on land availability is mounting. The need for agricultural land, settlements, and other economic activities often drives the massive clearing of forest areas. In this situation, forests are no longer seen solely as sacred and culturally valuable living spaces, but are reduced to land reserves ready for conversion. However, for customary law communities, forests have spiritual, social, and cultural dimensions that are intertwined with their identity and livelihood sustainability. Therefore, this research is important to encourage sustainable forest development that also has an impact on food security.

In the customary law community of Ngada Regency, Bajawa, NTT Province, known as the Ngadhu Bhaga community, there are various forms of local wisdom related to sustainable forest development, namely statements conveyed through oral traditions such as proverbs and sayings called Pata Dela. Pata = advice, Dela = Ancestors, who know better, so pata dela is translated as the teachings of the ancestors or statements of the ancestors. Or also as knowledge. In previous research conducted by Dhiu Margaretha, Pata Dela was interpreted as the local wisdom of the Ngada ethnic group, which contains noble values that need to be identified and analyzed for their implications in character education.<sup>7</sup> Pata Dela contains values that include obligations and prohibitions intended to educate individuals to behave well (modhe), correctly (molo), beautifully and cleanly (bila), and holily and purely (milo), which represent the values of character education, namely discipline, tolerance, hard work, creativity, independence, unity, cooperation, humility, respect for the rights of others, responsibility, thriftiness, caring for others, and caring for the environment.

In Ngada culture, important advice in Pata Dela is not only repeated during traditional rituals but also conveyed every day as an obligation and virtue of life known as Po Robha, Na'u Maru.<sup>8</sup> Pata Dela is also a form of unwritten law that lives and thrives in Bajawa society, serving to regulate the boundaries between permissible and prohibited actions. These provisions aim to maintain harmony in society, whether in relationships between people, between people and the natural environment, or between people and God.<sup>9</sup> The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to reposition Pata Dela not only as a cultural heritage or traditional social norm, but as a customary legal system that has strategic relevance in the framework of sustainable forest management and strengthening community food security. This study confirms that the function of Pata Dela in setting boundaries on permissible and prohibited behavior, particularly in forest resource management, is an effective and adaptive form of community-based ecological governance.

Research on the same topic was also conducted by Dhiu Margaretha, who studied the identification of local wisdom values in the pata dela speech of the Ngada people in character

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<sup>7</sup> Dhiu Margaretha, "Identifikasi Nilai-Nilai Kearifan Lokal Tuturan Pata Dela Masyarakat Ngada Dalam Upaya Pendidikan Karakter," *Sebatik* 26, no. 1 (2022): 106–14.

<sup>8</sup> Silverius Betu, "Pata Dela: Identitas Budaya Dalam Mendukung Toleransi Dan Kerukunan Antar Umat Beragama," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan*. <https://www.academia.edu/download/110823239/824.Pdf>, 2023.

<sup>9</sup> Gregorius Sebo Bito et al., "Konsep Harmoni Pata Dela Orang Bajawa: Implikasinya Dalam Pembentukan Integritas Akademik Di Perguruan Tinggi," *EDUKASIA Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran* 5, no. 1 (2024): 2079–88.

education efforts.<sup>10</sup> This study is similar to research conducted by other researchers in that it also examines pata dela. Although both studies examine the concept of pata dela, there is a fundamental difference in the focus of the issues being studied. The comparative study emphasizes the role of pata dela in the formation and strengthening of character education, particularly as a cultural value that shapes individual attitudes and morality in social life. Meanwhile, this study focuses on a different dimension, namely how pata dela contributes significantly to sustainable forest development and the strengthening of community food security. The novelty of this study lies in its attempt to discover and analyze the values of pata dela from a sustainable development perspective, so that it is not only understood as a cultural heritage or character education instrument, but also as a normative and practical foundation for sustainable natural resource management and strategies for maintaining food availability based on local wisdom.

Research on “reading legal characters in local wisdom pata dela in the context of sustainable forestry and food security” aims to discover and analyze legal characters, namely behavioral norms in pata dela, particularly those related to sustainable forestry and food security. Forest management is one of the most fundamental requirements for achieving sustainable development. To realize sustainable forests, it is necessary to strive for various multifunctional approaches that can also improve the quality and stability of forest ecosystems.<sup>11</sup> One approach that can be used is forest management and development based on local wisdom. In addition, food security is a crucial issue in efforts to achieve national prosperity. Currently, local food resources from regional diversity are very important and influential in achieving national food security.<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, local wisdom such as pata dela is needed to achieve food security and contribute to improving national food security. In addition, the legal characteristics of pata dela make it possible to be standardized as a legal protection instrument and are expected to strengthen legal diversity in Indonesia. In this case, it is important to examine and analyze the local wisdom of pata dela so that we can understand the legal characteristics of this local wisdom. Specifically, we will examine the relationship between the local wisdom of pata dela in Ngada Regency and its support for sustainable forestry and food security.

## **2. METHOD**

This research is a type of empirical legal research that aims to examine and analyze the application of law in society.<sup>13</sup> This research was conducted in Rakalaba Village, West Golewa

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<sup>10</sup> Margaretha, “Identifikasi Nilai-Nilai Kearifan Lokal Tuturan Pata Dela Masyarakat Ngada Dalam Upaya Pendidikan Karakter.”

<sup>11</sup> Chenchen Li et al., “Forest Carbon Sinks in Chinese Provinces and Their Impact on Sustainable Development Goals,” *Forests* 16, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.3390/f16010083>.

<sup>12</sup> Heru Drajat Sulisty, Meiyana Hikmawati, and Hari Soeseno Hardjoloekito, “Harmony of Food Security: A Study of the Legal Basis of Agrarian Law in Supporting Food Self-Sufficiency in Ngawi District,” *Journal of World Science* 3, no. 6 (2024): 599–611, <https://doi.org/10.58344/jws.v3i6.564>.

<sup>13</sup> Mary Grace Megumi Maran and Yohanes Leonardus Ngompat, “Sistem Lelen (Perjanjian Bagi Hasil) Di Kabupaten Sikka: Tinjauan Hukum Adat Dan Perbandingannya Dengan Hukum Nasional,” *Unes Journal of Swara Justisia* 9, no. 2 (2025): 347–60.

Subdistrict, Ngada Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province (NTT).

The approach used in this study is a sociological approach to law in order to interpret the character of customary law norms. In addition, a philosophical approach is also used to discover the value of *pata dela*. This study also uses a historical approach to law to discover the dynamics of the use of *pata dela*. This study also uses a conceptual approach to discover the parallels between the meaning of oral texts and the meaning of texts in written national legislation. The data used in this study are primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from the Ngadu Bhaga customary law community, who served as respondents, and customary leaders, who served as informants. Respondents were determined using purposive sampling. The secondary data used in this study consist of primary and secondary legal materials.

Data collection was conducted through: (1) in-depth interviews, (2) participatory observation, (3) document recording, (4) focus group discussions. The data obtained will be processed and then analyzed descriptively and qualitatively. Qualitative data analysis techniques were applied to words and actions, which could also be supplemented with documents or written data sources.<sup>14</sup> Analysis of primary data was conducted on data obtained from respondents and informants. With regard to primary legal materials, researchers conducted five stages: first, description of the positive legal norms that had been collected. Second, researchers systematized positive law. Third, researchers analyzed positive legal norms. Fourth, researchers interpreted positive legal norms. Fifth, the researcher will evaluate the positive legal norms.<sup>15</sup> Next is the analysis of secondary legal materials. In this stage, the author analyzes legal opinions obtained from secondary legal materials.

### **3. DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1. Legal Character of Statements (Uitspraak) in the Law**

The object and content of law contribute to the realization of certain objectives referred to as legal ideals, namely justice, certainty, and the usefulness of law. The characteristics of legal norms can be found in statements (*uitspraak*) containing obligations (commands), prohibitions, and the granting of authority. There are four characteristics of legal statements, namely:<sup>16</sup> a) Statements containing commands (*gebod*), these are general obligations to do something; b) Statements containing prohibitions (*verbod*), which are general obligations not to do something; c) Statements containing exemptions (*vrijstelling*, *dispensasi*), which are special permissions (*veriof*) not to do something that is generally required; and d) Statements containing permissions (*toestemming*), which are special permissions to do something that is generally prohibited.

There is a relationship that shows a certain logic between these statements, namely: First, a command and a prohibition are mutually exclusive (one excludes the other), because a person cannot at the same time bear the obligation to do something and the obligation not

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<sup>14</sup> Ahmad Rijali, "Analisis Data Kualitatif," *Alhadharah: Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 17, no. 33 (2018): 81–95.

<sup>15</sup> Sudikno Mertokusumo, *Mengenal Hukum Suatu Pengantar* (Yogyakarta: Cahaya Atma Pustaka, 2010).

<sup>16</sup> Bruggink alih bahasa oleh Arief Sidharta, *Refleksi Tentang Hukum* (Bandung: PT CITRA ADITYA BAKTI, 1999).

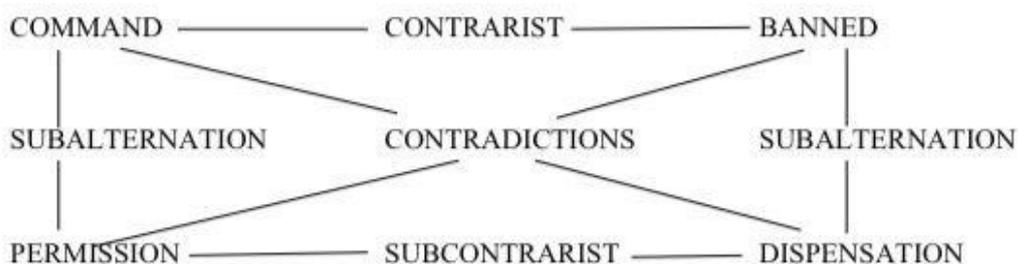
to do something. Here there is a contradiction between command and prohibition as contrary logic. A contrapositive relationship exists between two general propositions or universal propositions (both relating to general obligations), which differ in quality (one relates to having to do something, the other to not being allowed, or being prohibited from doing something).

Second, a command implies permission. If a person has an obligation to do something, then that person also has permission to do it. In the same way, a prohibition implies an exemption (dispensation), because if a person has an obligation not to do something, then that person also has permission not to do it. In this case, there is a respective implication between command and permission, and between prohibition and dispensation. This means that if a certain behavior is commanded, then the person also has permission to behave in that manner, and if a certain behavior is prohibited, then the person is also exempt (from the obligation) to behave in that manner. This legal logic is called subalternation. The subalternation relationship exists between a universal proposition and a particular proposition (a relationship in which there is a general obligation on the one hand and a specific permission on the other) that are of the same quality (either to do something or not to do something).

Third, a permission and a dispensation (exemption) do not "bite" each other, because a person can have permission to do something, and at the same time he can have permission not to do it. Between the two there is a "pseudo-contradiction." If a certain behavior is permitted, then it is possible that at the same time he is also exempt (from the obligation) to behave in such a way. It is impossible for a certain behavior to be prohibited and for a person to also be exempt (from the obligation) to behave in that way. This is called a subcontrastive relationship.

Fourth, a command and a dispensation, like a prohibition and a permission, cannot exist (apply) together. A person cannot have an obligation to do something while also being permitted not to do it. Likewise, a person cannot have an obligation not to do something while at the same time being permitted to do it. So, respectively, between a command and a dispensation, and between a prohibition and a permission, there is a "contradiction" (tegenspraak). If a certain behavior is commanded, then people cannot be exempted from it, and if a certain behavior is prohibited, then people cannot have permission to do it. However, it may happen that with regard to a certain behavior, there is neither a command nor a dispensation, or neither a prohibition nor a permission. This is called a contradiction.

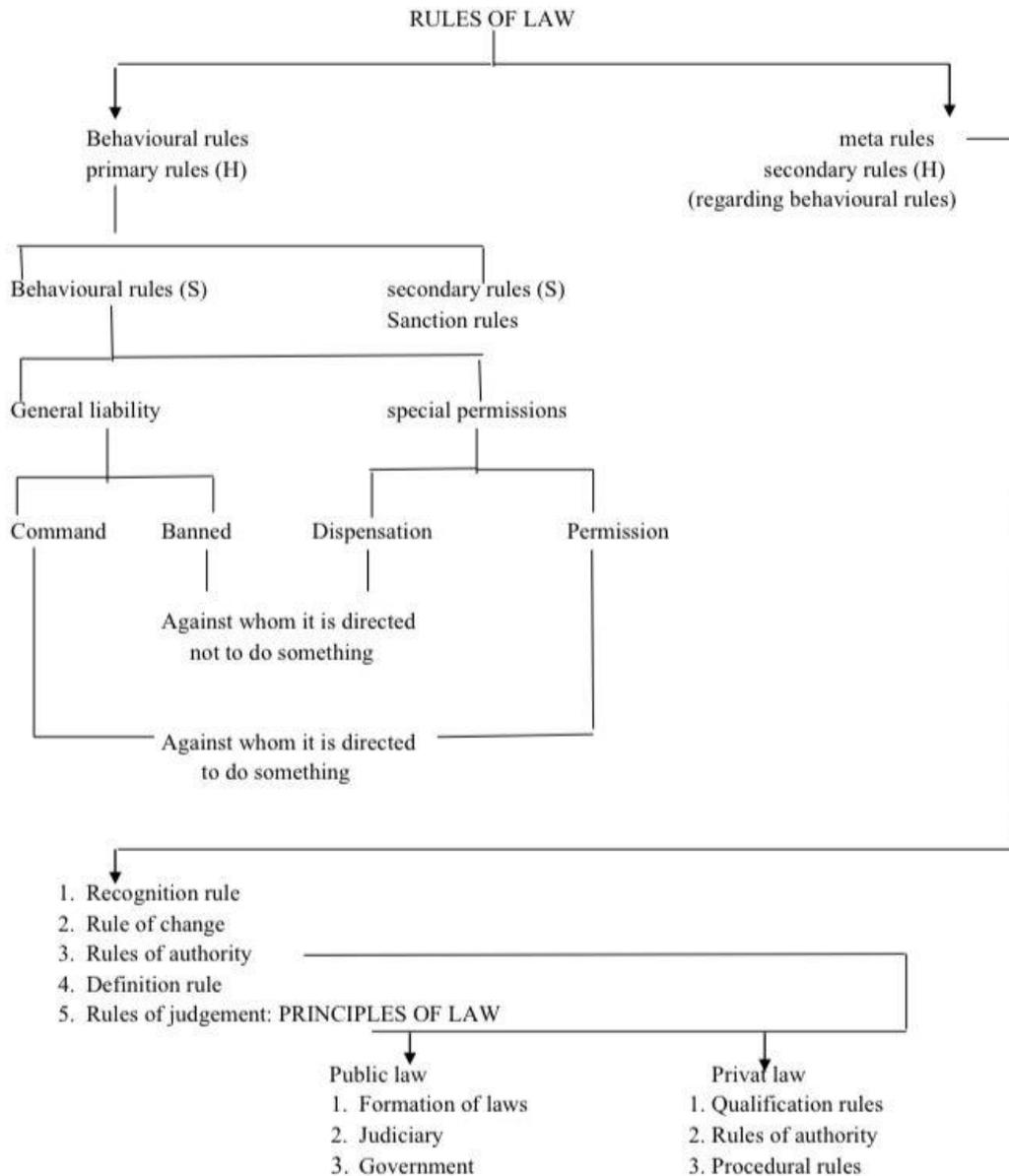
All of the intended relationships can be illustrated in the following diagram:



Reference: Secondary data from research in the book *Hukum Administrasi Negara* (State

Administrative Law) by Ridwan HR.<sup>17</sup>

Hart and Stromhol also distinguish between primary rules and secondary rules. Primary rules contain general obligations, namely commands and prohibitions, and specific permissions, which contain dispensations and permissions. Secondary rules relate to sanctions. Thus, secondary rules are rules that support the enforcement of primary rules. Commands and permissions are directed at doing something, while prohibitions and dispensations are directed at not doing something.



Reference: Secondary data from research in the book *Hukum Administrasi Negara* (State Administrative Law) by Ridwan HR.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Ridwan HR, *Hukum Administrasi Negara Edisi Revisi* (Depok: RajaGrafindo Persada, 2021).

<sup>18</sup> HR.

In the phase of formulating legal principles into legal rules, it appears that the most common are primary behavioral principles, namely commands and prohibitions. These behavioral principles are considered the core of the law, while the rest are secondary principles that regulate sanctions (related to the prototype of legal rules that distinguish them from morals).

As an area with an agrarian culture, examples of statements are taken from Law Number 5 of 1960 concerning Basic Agrarian Principles (UUPA). Article 5 is the basis for the parallelization of customary law provisions with the formulation of articles in the UUPA, namely the provisions of Article 5: The agrarian law that applies to land, water, and airspace is customary law, as long as it does not conflict with national and state interests, which are based on national unity, Indonesian socialism, and the regulations contained in this law and other laws and regulations, all of which take into account elements based on religious law. This provision clearly shows the diversity of laws in Indonesia, which provides space for customary law, state law, and religious law systems. There are four legal characteristics that are explicitly stated in this law, for example:

First, statements containing commands are expressed using the verb "must" (*moeten*), meaning obligatory or required, or with expressions containing "bound to". An example of this is Article 15 of the Basic Agrarian Law, which stipulates that maintaining land, including increasing its fertility and preventing its damage, is the obligation of every person, legal entity, or agency that has a legal relationship with the land, with consideration for economically disadvantaged parties. Basically, this article emphasizes that land is not merely an economic object, but a trust that must be preserved for sustainability. This norm places the responsibility for land management not only on the aspect of utilization, but also on the aspect of environmental protection and sustainability. This principle is in line with the values in Pata Dela as local wisdom that lives in the community. Pata Dela teaches that land must be used productively for the common good, but it is still necessary to preserve it so as not to cause environmental damage. From this perspective, land is seen as a source of life that has moral and social dimensions, so its management must be carried out wisely, responsibly, and with a long-term orientation.

Second, statements containing prohibitions. Prohibitive statements use words such as "not allowed"/"not permitted," "not authorized," "cannot," or "prohibited." An example is Article 7 of the UUPA, which stipulates that: In order not to harm the public interest, ownership and control of land beyond the limits is not permitted.

Third, statements for permission use the words "may" (*mogen*), "have the right to," "can," or "are authorized to." For example: Article 43 paragraph (1) of the UUPA stipulates that: As long as the land is controlled by the state, the right of use can only be transferred to another party with the permission of the authorized official.

Fourth, exemptions (dispensations) usually relate to the rejection of an order. Statements regarding exemptions usually use the words "not authorized to" or "not bound to," with

exceptions. For example, Article 10 paragraph (3) of the UUPA stipulates that: exceptions to the principle in paragraph 1 of this article are regulated in legislation.

### **3.2. The Character of Norms of Command and Prohibition in Pata Dela as Living Law**

Local wisdom is known through the traditional way of life in a particular community, which is a hereditary legacy.<sup>19</sup> This way of life is shaped by a system of knowledge, beliefs, understanding or insight, as well as customs or ethics that guide human behavior. Local wisdom is also synonymous with practices based on specific geography and specific communities, and is passed down from generation to generation.<sup>20</sup> This limitation results in an image of the environment that represents the uniqueness and diversity of horizontal relationship models, namely between humans and their environment, humans and other humans, and vertical relationships between humans and the highest authority.

Based on research conducted by Satino et al., local wisdom is referred to in foreign languages as local wisdom, meaning local/regional wisdom, or local knowledge, meaning local/regional knowledge, or local genius, meaning local/regional intelligence.<sup>21</sup> According to Nurma Ali Ridwan, local wisdom is an effort by humans to use their intellect to act and respond to something, an object, or an event that occurs in a certain space.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, according to I Ketut Gobyah in a book written by Maria Theresia Geme, local wisdom is defined as spirituality related to belief: a combination of the sacred values of God's word and various existing values (I Ketut Gobyah).<sup>23</sup> Based on these definitions, the author concludes that local wisdom is the wisdom and knowledge that develops within a local community as a result of the use of reason and life experience, which is reflected in attitudes, values, and spirituality that combine beliefs and cultural norms to regulate human relationships with their environment.

The results of a survey conducted by Maria Theresia Geme, et al. for the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) through the NTT Counterterrorism Coordination Forum found that the most widely used form of local wisdom in the daily lives of the people of NTT is oral traditions such as songs, proverbs, sayings, advice, and mottos, which are embedded in everyday behavior. Local wisdom functions well as a group identity. The good practices of local wisdom in daily behavior distinguish them from other groups. Local wisdom has the power to unite people and act as a buffer against radicalism. Local wisdom is an instrument for expressing community concern or active tolerance, as well as a filter against the presence of foreign order.<sup>24</sup>

To compare laws (statutes) with local wisdom in the form of oral traditions, this

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<sup>19</sup> Hilmi Maulana Yusuf, "Nilai-Nilai Kearifan Lokal Tradisi Nyalin Di Situs Samida Desa Sirnajaya Kecamatan Rajadesa Kabupaten Ciamis" (Pendidikan Sejarah Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Galuh, 2025).

<sup>20</sup> Maria Theresia Geme, *Mengapa Kearifan Lokal; Menemukan Nilai Kerukunan Dalam Kearifan Lokal* (Yogyakarta: Tonggak Media, 2021).

<sup>21</sup> Hermina Manihuruk and Marina Ery Setiawati, "Melestarikan Nilai-Nilai Kearifan Lokal Sebagai Wujud Bela Negara," *IKRA-ITH HUMANIORA: Jurnal Sosial Dan Humaniora* 8, no. 1 (2024): 248–66.

<sup>22</sup> Nurma Ali Ridwan, "Landasan Keilmuan Kearifan Lokal," *Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Budaya* 5, no. 1 (2007): 27–38.

<sup>23</sup> Geme, *Mengapa Kearifan Lokal; Menemukan Nilai Kerukunan Dalam Kearifan Lokal*.

<sup>24</sup> Maria Theresia Geme, *Menemukan Nilai Kerukunan Dalam Kearifan Lokal Di NTT* (Yogyakarta: Tonggak Media, 2020).

discussion uses the classification of local wisdom by Duka et al., who view local wisdom as rules/guidelines for communal living (communion), customary norms, behavioral guidelines, guidelines, community life, rules for relating to others (vertical and horizontal).

The definition of local wisdom according to experts seems to confirm a common perspective in interpreting local wisdom as a specific phenomenon that usually becomes a characteristic of a community. Local geographical elements, or the emphasis on the term "certain communities" in the interpretation of local wisdom and customary law, indicate the limits of cultural respect within communities, which is the driving force behind local wisdom teachings.<sup>25</sup> The principle of local wisdom is not merely a formal meaning or textual introduction, but further explains the way of life, mindset, values, and culture, ideology that is manifested in the ethical behavior of Indonesian society. This also includes its relationship with the environment, which is guided by spiritual principles that shape and lead to "cosmic consciousness." Through this cosmic consciousness, cultural pluralism becomes an invaluable asset in protecting and preserving the environment.<sup>26</sup>

Local wisdom has a very strategic function in strengthening community identity as a gateway that opens up isolation based on geographical settings and respect for the culture of the community that embodies it. For Indonesians, local wisdom is a "living space" that demonstrates the symbiotic relationship between humans, the Creator, and the universe. It is a tangible relationship that humans, in establishing their relationship with the universe, must pay attention to spiritual values. God, the creator of the universe and humans, is at the top of the relationship that serves as a reference for interactions that will take place in a place. The relationship between humans and water, fire, wind and air, animals and plants is guided by ethics or morality in their relationship with the creator.<sup>27</sup> More specifically, local wisdom is also an instrument for expressing concern or active community tolerance, as well as a filter for the orderly presence of communities that are foreign to the community.<sup>28</sup> For the people of NTT, cultural respect for local wisdom must remain part of education within the family and in the mass education environment. This requires perseverance in organizing scheduled cultural performances as a learning space for future generations and the masses.

In the oral tradition of the Bajawa customary law community, pata dela refers to the teachings of the ancestors. Pata dela is a statement that contains legal characteristics in the Bajawa customary law community, which is hierarchically structured from values, principles, norms, and behavior as experience. Because the title of this research focuses on forestry and food security, pata dela or local wisdom pata dela is limited to local wisdom related to these two fields.

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<sup>25</sup> Geme.

<sup>26</sup> Mella Ismelina Farma Rahayu, Anthon F. Susanto, and Amad Sudiro, "The Meaning of the Principle of Local Wisdom in Management and Protection Law Environment Indonesia," *Journal of Lifestyle and SDG'S Review* 5, no. 2 (2025): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.47172/2965-730X.SDGsReview.v5.n02.pe02958>.

<sup>27</sup> Rahayu, Susanto, and Sudiro.

<sup>28</sup> Geme, *Mengapa Kearifan Lokal; Menemukan Nilai Kerukunan Dalam Kearifan Lokal*.

The interpretation of oral traditions that contain primary legal norms is carried out in the following stages:

First, it begins with the daily behavior (experiences) of the community, for example, how they cultivate, utilize, and maintain the land according to the teachings of Pata Dela, such as not damaging the land and maintaining its fertility. Second, from these experiences, the norms that serve as references are identified, namely the norms that command the productive maintenance and utilization of land and prohibit the destruction of the environment, as implied in the oral traditions of Pata Dela. Third, the principles and values underlying these norms and behaviors are explored, such as the principles of sustainability, balance, and intergenerational responsibility. These principles and values form the philosophical basis of Pata Dela and serve as a reference for the norms and practices of the community.

Values are abstract, broad, and noble, so they must be upheld. Therefore, a value always conveys its meaning in a principle. Although principles are the concretization of a value, they are still abstract and broad in nature, similar to values. It is very difficult to distinguish between values and principles because neither clearly requires action or behavior. Furthermore, principles must be further derived into norms. Norms contain behavioral requirements or indicators of actions to be taken. This study focuses on primary norms, which contain commands and prohibitions.

Although abstract in nature, values function as an umbrella and a reference for legal norms. In customary law societies, there are several values, namely religious values, communitarian values, abstract values, and concrete values. Their abstract nature requires further elaboration into concrete, measurable statements. In the Bajawa customary law community, there is an oral tradition called pata dela, which functions as a value that encompasses the principles and all customary legal norms, namely the value of religiosity. In addition, there is an oral tradition that says "Dewa zeta nitu zale," which means God is in a high place. He is above all that can be observed by human senses and experience, such as clouds, rain, the moon, stars, and the sun. Yosef Tua Demu writes that Dewa is synonymous with God, the presence of God in the Catholic sense, namely a Person who has power beyond human power. And Nitu zale is understood as a caring, loving person who pays attention to human joys and sorrows, who is humanistic and more familiar with humans and closer to humans, living in the deepest place, namely in the bowels of the earth, zale ulu nitu. Dewa zeta Nitu zale should not be interpreted separately because it is a unified concept to name the perfect persona who organizes human life.<sup>29</sup>

Father Silverius Betu wrote that Dewa zeta nitu zale is the principle of recognition of the highest being who is addressed as God who rules the heavens and the earth. God is great and God is familiar. The author then quotes Father Hubert Muda SVD's opinion that God is great and familiar, as revealed in the Dewa Saga Telu poem with the names Dewa Wawo, Dewa Sao, and Dewa Jao, namely God in Heaven, the Most High, who transcends human thought; God

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<sup>29</sup> Yosef Tua Demu, *Mutiara-Mutiara BUDAYA NGADHA Dalam Proses Pembangunan Masyarakat Dan Gereja* (Ardent Publishing, 2011).

on earth who gathers humans in fellowship, in a house of togetherness; God who is personal, who accompanies humans personally and who is pleased to dwell in the hearts of humans. This principle makes the Ngada people a religious society.<sup>30</sup>

He is light, as expressed in the pata dela 'meko da tere tolo', dara se ulu roro; light from a high place, reaching everywhere so that no place is hidden. He is holy, as expressed in the pata dela 'go milo olo'. He is tall and majestic, his feet are the earth and his head is the sky, as in the saying 'Dewa jaga lizu tana'. God is rich, Ngai dhu olo-olo, eternal forever. It can be said that the religious values of the Ngada people are a manifestation of the principle of the One God.

Based on interview data with one of the traditional leaders of the Ngadhu Bhaga community, it is known that religious values, as expressed in "Dewa zeta Nitu Zale", are confirmed by the vertical relationship between God and everything below Him. This is revealed in pata dela: Bodha molo ngai go kita ata. As good as all creatures on earth are, humans are the chosen ones. Father Silverius wrote that humans are far more valuable than material wealth and that humans themselves are invaluable treasures. Humans and humanity must be placed in the highest position. In the agrarian customary law culture of the Ngada community, uwi (sweet potato) represents other natural resources as well as objects or means to realize horizontal relationships. Humans are creatures that represent all others. To express this vertical relationship, there is a teaching called "puy loka oja, pei tangi lewa bama Dewa wi dhoru dhegha," which means "clean the sacred place and build a tall ladder so that God will come down." Humans are also sent to validate horizontal relationships with other creatures.

In order to maintain a harmonious vertical and horizontal relationship, various rules were established, known as Gua, peu pado peda pena. The ancestors laid the foundations of the gua (rules/way of life) of the Ngada people. The founder of these rules was an ancestor named Sili, as revealed in the teachings about the first human, Sili ana wunga da nuka per gua. Sili was the first ancestor of the Ngada people who taught gua (rules) in living life. The Ngada people commemorate him through the Reba ritual. The figures of Sili and Uwi, which are chanted repeatedly during the Reba celebration, are believed to be a celebration to maintain the harmony of vertical and horizontal relationships.

Reba is a space and time to socialize gua, peu pado, peda pena, which contain values, principles, norms, and experiences or behaviors, whether apparent in spoken language or pata dela, which require the Ngadhu Bhaga community to refer to the knowledge and experience of their elders or knowledgeable people. Past experiences are remembered and repeatedly recounted to all members of the tribe to serve as guidelines for life, as practiced by their ancestors. Pata dela oral traditions appear in the form of legal norms containing commands, obligations, or requirements that must be carried out, as well as pata dela in the form of prohibitions that must be obeyed. First: Pata Dela has the character of a primary norm

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<sup>30</sup> Rm.Silverius Betu, *Pata Dela Dalam Upacara Adat Reba: Kearifan Lokal Masyarakat Adat Ngada Sebagai Identitas Budaya Dalam Mendukung Toleransi Dan Kerukunan Antar Umat Beragama Di Kabupaten Ngada* (Yogyakarta: Tonggak Media, 2021).

containing legal obligations. Behavior that takes advantage of the seasons and the agricultural calendar (pape/estimates) such as: a calendar containing the names of the seasons, such as the season for planting crops, planting corn, rice fields and fields at the right time.

Accurate seasonal predictions prevent the threat of drought and crop failure. This local wisdom includes the cultivation of seeds from the new harvest, called sili ngawu, where sili means to select or sort, and ngawu means seed. The behavior of preparing or clearing land (woka/wasi) in accordance with the type of crop, such as corn and secondary crops, rice and fields, long-term crops such as coffee, coconut, cocoa, cotton, bamboo, and others. The requirements for this behavior refer to norms that are characterized as commands or obligations (bodha = must), such as:

**Bodha ne'e de toni tebu, ne'e de mula bhuga:**

Bodha = Must, should.

Ne'e = With or while, at the same time.

Toni = Selecting old plant material, which is short-lived food crops.

Mula bhuga = Planting new plants, Perennial plants.

This teaching requires indigenous communities to plant crops from old reserves or short-term food crops, along with long-term crops. The word toni means a verb that covers the steps in planting short-term food crops (grains). Meanwhile, the word mula refers to the act of planting long-term crops in the form of cuttings or seedlings. Examples include planting coffee, coconut, cotton, candlenut, bamboo, cloves, eucalyptus, mango, or woody plants (forest).

**Bodha ne'e dele rebha, ne'e dele riri.**

Bodha = must, should

Ne'e = with, at the same time.

Dele = by

Rebha= scatter

Riri = sowing

There must be types of plants whose seeds are scattered, such as millet (wete and ghedho), and there are types that are sown in rows, such as pumpkin and others.

**Bodha sepe ne'e de kenge, latu ne'e de kabu**

Bodha = must, should

Sepe= left behind, deliberately reserved.

Kenge = the tuber part as the bud of a new plant.

Latu = available, always available

Kabu = roots of new plants

Pata dela refers to a primary norm that contains the obligation or requirement to leave new plants in the same hole during harvest. The observed behavior is the wisdom of digging up tubers, including sweet potatoes, which are always carried during reba as food crops that will not become extinct. This norm refers to pata dela, which contains principles such as the teaching poem to honor uwi plants, uwi o o uwi, sui koe-koe ano

koe, sui moki-moki bhai moli; which means sweet potatoes, eaten by wild boar pests but will not become extinct, will grow again and again. This principle is an elaboration of the values of forest sustainability and food security.

**Bodha kedhu sebu pusi sebu.**

Bodha = must, should.

Kedhu = revoke

Sebu = Sebu tree

Pusi = introducing new plants.

This custom is a norm that requires or obliges people to replant the same crop in the same hole when harvesting. This obligation aims to prevent the extinction of woody/forest plant species.

**Bodha bugu kungu uri logo.**

Bodha= must, should

Bugu = blunt

Kungu= fingers

Uri = scratched by thorns and brambles,

Logo= back, bugu=fingers that are calloused from hard work.

This pata dela contains the primary norm of having to work hard even if it means blunting your fingers and getting scratches on your back and rear.

**Bodha fuka moe muku wae, bo moe tewu taba.**

Bodha= must, should

Fuka = growing

Muku = banana

Wae= water, mud

Tewu taba = sugar cane, a type of cane.

This pata dela contains the obligation to maintain the fertility of plants so that they thrive like banana plants on the riverbanks and multiply like sugar cane. This norm is combined with the subordinate clause *Se toko nenga wunu woso; se widha nga tara wira.*

**Bodha wasi ne'e go wae, puy ne'e go loka.**

Bodha= must, should.

Wasi= weed

Ne'e= with, together with

Wae= Water, rivers, springs

Puy= sweeping

Loka = sacred place

Wasi wae is a mandatory requirement of the Bajawa customary law community to regularly clean springs of dirt or pests, while wasi/puy loka is a behavioral requirement in the activity of cleaning loka (sacred places). The purpose of this primary norm is to describe the harmony of the vertical relationship between God and humans as read in

the norm Bodha pu ne'e go loka oja, pe'I tangi lewa raba Dewa wi dhorro dhegha, which means the obligation to cleanse the loka, sacred places, to lean/stand on high stairs so that God will come down to visit, pass by, dhegha = play. God comes to visit and pass by humans, bringing blessings of fertile land and abundant harvests. The actual behavior of Ka Maki Loka is part of the reba ritual, in which the men of the Bajawa customary law community from each customary house and tribe bring offerings and then eat together at a sacred place called loka.

**Bodha toka se alu, resi se alu.**

Bodha = must, should

Toka = extracting something from bamboo,

Se= One

Alu= section

This proverb contains the wisdom of always behaving frugally. A statement that is in line with frugal behavior is bodha toka se ngeo, tore se ngeo: The obligation to maintain food reserves, do not be wasteful or bodha ne,e de rora ne'e de rimo, which means that some things are given or shared with others, and some things must be stored neatly as reserves for one's own needs.

Second, after identifying and interpreting the characteristics of primary norms that contain requirements or obligations, primary norms that contain prohibitions marked by the word ma'e, which means "don't" or "prohibited," will then be identified and interpreted. For example:

**Ma'e rawu dhapi kabu, ma'e sa'a dhapi tara :**

Ma'e = no, prohibited

Rawu = Pulling out shrubs, grass, and weeds

Dhapi= simultaneously

Kabu = root

Sa'a = carrying the harvest of a type of bamboo, woody.

Tara= shoots that can be replanted.

This saying means that you should not harvest the roots, and you should not take home the branches and twigs that will grow into new plants. Leave the roots and branches behind as they will grow into new shoots.

**Ma'e seda toko, ma'e sa'e wole**

Ma'e = no, prohibited.

Seda= harvesting the crop by breaking the tree, like harvesting corn or rice, etc.

Toko= plant stem

Sa'e = Harvesting, breaking off to separate the grains, or pulen from the stem.

Wole = grain, fluffy.

This pata dela contains a prohibition against stealing from other people's gardens. The pata dela that is consistent with this prohibition is Mae toro gogo awe rede, which

means do not steal other people's belongings. Ma'e sagho salu, ma'e laga lange, means do not violate other people's property boundaries or rights.

**Ma'e lobo mobo ma'e oge melu.**

Ma'e = no, prohibited,

Lobo = upright plant shoot.

Mobo= failure to thrive.

Oge= tops for climbing plants.

Melu= Withered

This means that it is prohibited to damage or hinder the growth or destroy the shoots of plants.

**Ma'e moe go bheto de ili tiki**

This means: do not damage bamboo seedlings so that they do not grow in clumps.

They will live alone and be threatened with extinction.

**Ma'e dhoa bo, Ma'e naka tai ka ngata**

Contains a prohibition on stealing other people's crops, especially those stored as food reserves in warehouses.

The oral tradition described above is a pata dela oral tradition that can be said to contain primary norms of obligation (bodha) and primary norms of prohibition (ma,e). These norms continue to exist in the oral tradition of the Bajawa customary law community, also known as the Ngadhu Bhaga community. This oral tradition can be observed directly in everyday behavior, for example when parents give advice to young people as in the oral tradition of po robha na'u maru. Po robha na'u maru is an ancestral teaching that parents should continuously and repeatedly advise their children in the morning or before nightfall. This is not a utopia because it can be observed through the behavior of members and communities of the Ngadhu Bhaga customary law community, as read in the principle of tey zi'a ghe be mera. Tey = to see, zi'a ghe = already, be = new, can; mera = to make an analogy. This oral tradition can be considered a primary norm, namely a command that must or is obligatory if the word bodha is added, thus becoming bodha tey zi'a ghe be mera, to see and experience firsthand before making an analogy. Almost all myths in the Bajawa customary law community are reinforced by stories in the form of legends about the lives of ancestors in the past or through numu nange, storytelling, and storytelling. With reference to this teaching, people are prohibited from fabricating information or bearing false witness.

In classifying the meanings of pata dela, what still needs to be done is to categorize permission and dispensation. Some of the oral traditions of pata dela take the form of proverbs containing invitations or recommendations, "should." Usually, they begin with wi or le. For example: Wi po ne'e robha, wi na'u ne'e maru. One should provide education and guidance every day. Robha = morning and maru = evening. Wi Yie sama jara ngaza, kako sama manu jago, one should be like ... or There is so much local wisdom in the form of pata dela oral traditions that contain ancestral teachings that are obeyed as rules to protect rights and

obligations in communal life.<sup>31</sup>

### **3.3. The Role of Pata Dela in Customary Law-Based Sustainable Forest Management**

Environmental wisdom values are essentially moral and cultural guidelines that shape people's perspectives on forests and the surrounding nature. Forests are not understood solely as an economic resource, but as a living space with historical, spiritual, and ecological significance. Therefore, human interaction with forests is based on an awareness of the need to protect, care for, and preserve them as a legacy to be passed on to future generations. The belief in the importance of forest conservation has given rise to various rules and taboos. The prohibition on cutting down trees in forest areas reflects efforts to maintain ecosystem balance and prevent widespread damage. Not taking fallen wood shows respect for nature, allowing natural processes to take place without excessive interference. Similarly, the obligation to maintain cleanliness, avoid inappropriate behavior, and not disturb wildlife is a form of ethical responsibility to maintain harmony between humans and the environment.<sup>32</sup>

Sustainable forest management is essentially regulated in Law No. 41 of 1999 concerning Forestry, specifically Article 3, which states that forestry management aims to achieve fair and sustainable prosperity for the people. This objective is realized by ensuring the existence of adequate and proportionally distributed forests, optimizing conservation, protection, and production functions in a balanced manner, increasing the carrying capacity of watersheds, empowering communities in a participatory and environmentally conscious manner, and ensuring the fair and sustainable distribution of forest benefits. However, long before these regulations were implemented, the Ngadhu Bhaga customary law community had been practicing sustainable forest management based on customary law through the application of pata dela.

Pata dela in the Bajawa customary law community is not just a traditional expression, but rather an ancestral teaching that contains legal values and guidelines for life that have been passed down from generation to generation, including its role in sustainable forest management. Pata dela is a normative statement structured hierarchically, starting from basic values that are believed to be true, developing into principles that guide collective thinking, then transforming into norms that regulate communal life, and finally manifesting in the actual behavior of the community as a daily life experience. Thus, pata dela is not just an abstract concept, but an ethical and practical foundation for managing social life and the natural environment.

Pata dela serves to regulate the boundaries between what is mandatory and what is prohibited. These provisions aim to maintain harmony in three main dimensions of relationships: relationships between humans, relationships between humans and nature, and relationships between humans and God. These three are understood as an inseparable whole. Violations of one of these dimensions are believed to disrupt the overall balance of life.

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<sup>31</sup> Yosef Tua Demu, *Mutiara-Mutiara BUDAYA NGADHA Dalam Proses Pembangunan Masyarakat Dan Gereja*.

<sup>32</sup> Alghazali Hafidz et al., "Pendekatan Ekologi: Relevansi Mitos Onggoloco Dalam Pengelolaan Hutan Berkelanjutan Di Jawa," *Kulturistik: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa Dan Budaya* 8, no. 2 (2024): 84–91.

In the context of the relationship between humans and nature, pata dela plays a role in sustainable forestry based on customary law. For example, the oral tradition “Bodha sepe ne'e de kenge, latu ne'e de kabu” contains a primary norm that requires a person to leave new seedlings in the same hole after harvesting. This teaching demonstrates a deep ecological awareness: every activity that utilizes natural resources must be followed by regeneration efforts. This principle is in line with the modern concept of sustainability, which emphasizes that the utilization of resources should not eliminate nature's ability to renew itself.

Similarly, the prohibition contained in the oral tradition “Ma'e rawu dhapi kabu, ma'e sa'a dhapi tara” teaches not to harvest crops down to their roots and not to take home the branches and twigs of new plants. This prohibition contains a strong message of conservation. By not uprooting plants, communities ensure that they can grow back. By not taking parts that have the potential to become new shoots, communities allow space for the natural regeneration of forests. This reflects the precautionary principle and the restriction of exploitation in order to maintain ecosystem balance.

Pata dela can also be understood as a form of local wisdom that internalized the idea of sustainability long before the term became widely known. Sustainable forest development requires forest management that takes into account ecological, social, and spiritual aspects. In the teachings of pata dela, these three aspects are integrated. In this case, there is a moral obligation to maintain the sustainability of resources (ecological aspect), a collective responsibility for mutual welfare (social aspect), and an awareness that nature is God's creation that must be respected (spiritual aspect).

Therefore, pata dela functions not only as local wisdom, but also as the foundation of environmental ethics that supports sustainable forest development. Through compliance with the obligations and prohibitions inherited from their ancestors, the Bajawa customary law community ensures that the forest remains sustainable, productive, and able to be passed on to the next generation. From this perspective, sustainable forest development is not a new concept for the Ngadhu Bhaga customary law community, but rather an inherent part of the value system and way of life that has long been practiced.

### **3.4. The Implications of Pata Dela on Food Security in the Ngadhu Bhaga Community**

Pata dela, which means ancestral teachings, is a guideline for life that not only regulates social relations but also directs how humans treat food sources. In this case, pata dela also has implications for realizing food security for the Ngadhu Bhaga customary law community. As a statement with legal character, pata dela is structured hierarchically from values, principles, and norms, to its manifestation in real behavior as everyday life experiences. It contains primary norms in the form of binding obligations and requirements, one of which is reflected in the saying, “Bodha sepe ne'e de kenge, latu ne'e de kabu,” which teaches that every time there is a harvest, new plants must be left in the same hole. This message emphasizes that taking from nature should not break the cycle of life, but must be accompanied by regeneration efforts.

This principle is evident in the practice of digging up tubers, including sweet potatoes, which is done with great care so that some of the tubers or roots remain planted. Even in the

expression “*uwi o o uwi, sui koe-koe ano koe, sui moki-moki bhai moli,*” there is a lesson to honor sweet potatoes as a resilient food source. Even though they are eaten by pests such as wild boars, *uwi* are believed to be indestructible because they are able to regrow. This belief is not merely symbolic, but reflects an ecological understanding that food crops must be sustained so that they remain available over time.

The same is emphasized in the prohibition “*Ma'e rawu dhapi kabu, ma'e sa'a dhapi tara,*” which requires that the harvest not be taken to the roots and that branches or buds not be taken home. Roots and branches must be left as a source of new growth. This prohibition demonstrates the principle of self-restraint in utilizing nature, so that food sources are not depleted in a single planting season.

*Pata dela* actually contains a very strong sustainability strategy. Food security is not only a matter of the current availability of food, but also a guarantee that future generations will continue to have access to sufficient, safe, and sustainable food sources. By requiring plant regeneration and prohibiting excessive exploitation, *pata dela* maintains the continuity of food production in a natural way. This teaching shapes a collective awareness that the community's survival depends heavily on its ability to maintain the cycle of food crop regrowth. Thus, *pata dela* functions not only as a customary norm but also as the foundation of an ecological ethic that supports sustainable food security.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

There are four types of legal statements that can be included in legislation, namely commands, prohibitions, exemptions/dispensations, and permissions. The Ngadhu bhaga customary law community in Ngada Regency has various oral traditions known as *pata dela* or ancestral teachings. *Pata dela* that are characterized as legal norms contain primary norms, which are commands marked with the word *bodha*, meaning must or obligatory, and there are also *pata dela* that contain primary norms in the form of prohibitions marked with the word *ma'e*, meaning forbidden, do not, or must not be done. *Pata dela* plays a role in sustainable forest management based on customary law. For example, the oral tradition “*Bodha sepe ne'e de kenge, latu ne'e de kabu*” aims to ensure that every activity involving the use of natural resources is followed by regeneration efforts. Similarly, the prohibition contained in the saying “*Ma'e rawu dhapi kabu, ma'e sa'a dhapi tara*” teaches that one should not harvest crops down to their roots and should not take home branches and twigs that will grow into new plants. *Pata dela* also has implications for achieving food security for the Ngadhu Bhaga customary law community. It contains primary norms in the form of binding obligations and requirements, one of which is reflected in the saying “*Bodha sepe ne'e de kenge, latu ne'e de kabu,*” which emphasizes that the harvesting of natural resources must not disrupt the cycle of life, but must be accompanied by regeneration efforts. The same is emphasized in the prohibition “*Ma'e rawu dhapi kabu, ma'e sa'a dhapi tara,*” which requires that crops not be harvested down to their roots. Food security is not only a matter of the availability of food today, but also a guarantee that future generations will continue to have access to sufficient, safe, and sustainable food sources.

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