

Nyinglar Sasalad Ceremony as a Local Wisdom of Cireundeu Indigenous Group in Dealing with Covid-19

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Abstract

Cireundeu village, a traditional village in South Cimahi West Java Indonesia has its own unique way of coping with Covid-19 pandemic. Despite being a traditional village, the residents of Cireundeu are in high mobility as workers in the nearby city, hence the exposure to Covid-19 was quite present. This article explores how the Cireundeu indigenous group dealt with the Covid-19 pandemic. This study employed a qualitative approach, particularly descriptive method. The data was conducted mainly by interviews with community figures. 'Governing the common' by Ostrom (2000) was used as a theoretical lens in analysing the data. This study found that the traditional group in Cireundeu were able to manage their local resources (from the nearby forests) for the benefit of their community members. They performed *Nyinglar Sasalad* ceremony as a symbol of communal attitude towards the plague, complemented with herb and Rasi (cassava-made rice) consumption to strengthen the immune defence. This study is expected to be a reference for a mitigative action in dealing with pandemic through the use of local tradition and ways of living.

Keywords: *Cireundeu Indigenous group, Sundaneese culture, local wisdom, Nyinglar Sasalad, herbal medicine, Covid-19*

Abstrak

Desa adat Cireundeu di Cimahi Selatan Jawa Barat Indonesia memiliki cara tersendiri dalam mengatasi pandemi Covid-19. Meski merupakan kampung adat, warga Cireundeu memiliki mobilitas tinggi sebagai pekerja di kota terdekat, sehingga paparan Covid-19 cukup tinggi. Artikel ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana masyarakat adat Cireundeu menghadapi pandemi Covid-19. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, khususnya metode deskriptif. Pengumpulan data terutama dilakukan melalui wawancara dengan tokoh masyarakat. Teori Ostrom tentang pengelolaan sumber daya bersama (2000) digunakan untuk menganalisa data penelitian. Studi ini menemukan bahwa kelompok adat di Cireundeu melakukan upacara Nyinglar Sasalad sebagai simbol untuk menghindari wabah, dilengkapi dengan ramuan dan konsumsi Rasi (beras buatan singkong) untuk memperkuat pertahanan kekebalan tubuh. Kajian ini diharapkan dapat menjadi acuan tindakan mitigasi dalam menghadapi pandemi melalui pemanfaatan tradisi dan cara hidup masyarakat setempat.

Kata kunci: Masyarakat adat Cireundeu, budaya Sunda, kearifan lokal, Nyinglar Sasalad, pengobatan herbal, Covid-19

Introduction

Coronavirus-19 (COVID-19) which quickly spread all over the world (Esposito dkk., 2020; Khan et al., 2021; Morens et al., 2020) and infected thousands of people in various states (Ciotti, 2020; Hussain et al., 2020; Sparks et al., 2020) can attack anyone (Sadeleer & Godfroid, 2020), and is found to develop to be a new and more deadly variant of viruses (Astuti & Mahardika, 2020; Pane, 2021; Velavan & Mayer, 2020; Yang et al., 2020). Indonesia's government endeavours to minimize the spread of the virus by implementing a health protocol including: mask wearing, hand-washing, physical distancing, eating alone, avoiding crowds and social distancing). In addition, specific regulations regarding lockdown, WFH (Work For Home), PSBB (Large-Scale Social Restrictions), to PPKM (Enforcement of Restrictions on Community Activities) were also introduced (Hasrul, 2020; Napitu, 2021; Srivastava, 2020) (Kemenko PMK, 2020).

Attempts to handle Covid-19 were not only carried out by the government through regulations and health measures, but also performed by the community through their local wisdom, as what practiced by the Cireundeu indigenous group. Cireundeu traditional group inhabits an area called Cireundeu traditional village, 3 KM from the city center of Cimahi, West Java. In the region of West Java commonly known as Tatar Sunda or Pasundan, this indigenous group can be easily found in many areas such as Kasepuhan Adat of South Banten located in Ciptagelar Village, Sukabumi (Deasy, 2022; Indrawardana, 2011; Suidat et al., 2021). Some of this group members also live in Naga Tasikmalaya village, Garut village, Urug village in Bogor, and Mahmud in Bandung (Barkah, 2019; Fadhilah, 2014; Pangestu & Zulkarnain, 2020; Sunjayadi, 2020). Cirendeau community was selected as the subject of study for it is an indigenous group that consistently maintains its culture, whilst coexisting and opening themselves with the developing era. For instance, this group has been consuming Rasi or cassava flour since 1918 until today.

This study attempts to fill a gap in literature by exploring how traditional ways of living could be used to deal with pandemic. Different from other traditional group, such as Badui Dalam whose mobility with outside world was limited, Cirendeau group was quite mobile. Additionally, this traditional group also follows the health protocols by the government. Finally, this study demonstrates how a traditional group regardless their social and technological constraints manage the pandemic by using their local wisdom.

Literature Review

Each tribe in Indonesia has some particular ceremonies performed similar to *Tolak Bala* (preventing and eliminating a plague). For

example, Baduy tribes could avoid the plague because they maintain their local wisdom through farming traditions and mechanisms as well as rules to construct buildings and forests as a protection sanctuary (Iskandar & Iskandar, 2016; Nugraha, 2020). Traditional villages that are members of two nationally based organizations such as AMAN (Alliance of Indigenous Peoples) and MLKI (Councils for Indigenous Religions in Indonesia) also sought to prevent outbreaks based on local wisdom such as utilizing medicinal herbs planted in the surrounding areas, implement health protocols as advised by the government which were thoroughly instructed in the website and webinars, and organized trainings and capacity buildings for their members (Fatimah, 2021; Ma'arif, 2021). In addition, some Dayak tribes in Borneo Island have undertaken a traditional ceremony for generations in response to the disaster they face ([Fatmawati & Dewantara, 2022](#); [Jumadi et al., 2022](#); [Loischofeer & Darmawan, 2021](#); [Uhai et al., 2020](#)).

Traditional ways of dealing with Covid-19 were also found in other countries. In Latin America, indigenous people migrated in large numbers from major cities and tourist sites back to their communities of origin since the Covid-19 pandemic began. In their villages, they strengthened the health system with a community-based approach. On top of that, some indigenous tribes banned the entry of foreigners, limited social events, and implemented strict home isolation to mitigate risks of the virus transmission (León-Martínez et al, 2020; Meneses-Navarro et al., 2020; Reinders et al., 2020). Similarly, In Canada, indigenous tribes throughout the pandemic asserted their own authority by setting up trailers for self-isolation, making roadblocks to control access to their areas, adapting their ceremonial events, intensifying

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public health campaigns, and staying connected to their communities virtually (Banning, 2020; Hillier et al., 2020).

Some indigenous groups in other parts of the world also experienced some challenges in countering the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on previous studies, the indigenous population marginalized in Latin America experienced authority mistrust of the pandemic's existence, along with the spread of false information and less empirical grounds beliefs. Additionally, the lack of infrastructure, such as water accessibility was a significant constraint for the indigenous population during social restrictions. Although hardly feasible in Amazon, home isolation was considered adequate for the indigenous tribes, so long as the foreigners were banned from entering and selectively permitting residents to social and trade support travels (León-Martínez et al., 2020; Meneses-Navarro et al., 2020).

Many indigenous communities worldwide have responded to the Covid-19 pandemic differently based on their traditions. As a plural and multicultural country, indigenous groups in Indonesia also have their way of tackling the pandemic, including in Cireundeu. In discussing the finding, Ostrom's principles of common resource management will be used. Ostrom provides eight principles of natural resources management in order to gain the benefit of the common (i.e. the safety and survivability of indigenous groups during the pandemic). The principles are (1) rules appropriately made to fit with resources condition (2) clear limit of area and the users (3) the accountability of monitoring system (4) sanctions are gradually imposed (5) low cost of conflict resolution (6) the involvement of related stakeholders to find mutual agreement (7) supporting leadership system (8) adequate facilities and infrastructure (nested enterprises) (Araral, 2014; Ostrom,

2000). This study specifically will explore how the indigenous people in Cireundeu deal with the Covid-19 pandemic based on Ostrom principles about governing the common.

Method

This study is based on a qualitative approach, involving interviews, observation and literature study. The data from in-depth interviews was conducted directly in the traditional village of Cireundeu and indirectly by phone. The direct interview was conducted before and during the pandemic, precisely on February 2019 and June 2021. The respondents were the traditional elder, RW (Rukun Warga, Indonesian: hamlet), and two people in charge of community public relations. During the visits, the authors made direct observation at the research site to see, recognize, and have direct interaction with the traditional community of Cireundeu. The indirect interview was done amidst the pandemic, in which the trip to the related village was not able to be done because the community could not accept any guest and still limit the visitors in the purpose of preventing the spread of the virus. Beside interviews, the elaboration and the data obtained from the literature, such as books and journals, were then used and analyzed descriptively.

This research used an antropology-phenomonology approach. The data from the literature obtained by the authors is related to local wisdom, Sundanese culture, and herbal medicine. Local wisdom, as a part of the traditional knowledge system, was passed over generations and practised by society to deal with ever-changing challenges (Fakhriati & Erman, 2022). Herbal medicine has been regulated in Indonesia as an alternative to improve the health condition of communities since 1982 (Febriyanti 2021). In Tatar Sunda, this traditional treatment existed before the medical treatment existence. Nowadays, the earlier becomes

the first aid given before patients being treated medically. This paper was aimed to examine the local wisdom of the Cirendeu indigenous group in dealing with the pandemic Covid-19.

The initial hypothesis of this research are: (1) local wisdom was used and able to nullify to the impacts of Covid-19 in Cirendeu indigenous group, preserving this to be a culture inherited from the ancestors to the late generations, (2) Cirendeu group were able to practice what Ostrom (2000) called as ‘governing the common’, i.e. managing the local resources such as herbs and diet from the nearby forests to sustain their own community needs. Cirendeu traditional group was chosen because (1) their lifestyle has been influenced by the modernization of the times in as much as the area is close to the city centre, but still preserves Sundanese traditions, (2) they organize community resource management by preserving the natural environment combined with Sundanese culture.

Result and Discussion

The Indigenous Groups of Cirendeu

The traditional village of Cirendeu is a part of Leuwi Gajah Village, South Cimahi district, West Java province. This village is located at the top of a mountain and surrounded by mountains, such as Gajah Langu Mount and Jambul mount in the north, Cimenteng mount in the south, Puncak Salam mount in the east and Pasir Panji mount as well as Kunci mount in the west (Kusnadi & Gumilang, 2013).

Cirendeu traditional group is widely known as Sunda Wiwitan (Sofiana, 2019a) or religiously called as survivors of the Hindu-Sundanese tradition Islamicized remnants (Woodward, 2019). According to Ira Indrawardana, Sunda Wiwitan in Leuwi Gajah

Cimahi is a part of Adat Karuhun Urang (AKUR) or Indigenous Community Unit, as they are mentioned in different areas such as in Cigugur Kuningan, Susuru Ciamis Village, and Pasir Garut village (Fadhilah, 2014). Some people consider this group similar to other divine religions, such as Islam and Christianity, while the other views it as polytheism. From the perspective of the Cireundeu indigenous group, religion is *ageman* (Sundanese term), life guidance that cannot be separated from cultural understanding (Sofiana, 2019b). That being said, when an individual is religious, they indirectly and unconsciously carries out and interprets the culture attached to the religion they adhere to. This is corroborated by a Sundanese proverb which says that "*ulah poho kana kulah getih sorangan*" [to not forget the homeland or motherland and to remind of what justified actions to take] (Interview with Yana, 2019).

Another proverb as a reminder is "*budaya batur dimumule, budaya sorangan dipohokeun; cul dog dog tinggal igel*", the culture of other nations is preserved, while the culture of the nation itself is forgotten (Interview with Yana, 2019). The concepts of religion are that God is called "*Gusti sikang sakang sawiji wiji*", above all their creatures and "*mulih ka jati mulang ka asal*", every human being will return to God. There are no written books which are interpreted as "*Kitab tulis titis tulis*", carrying out teachings based on *pikukuh* (Sundanese: custom rules) which becomes laws of attitude along with the awareness on God's law which has outlined the nature of humans and nations based on natural values reflecting the sense of humanity and the sense of nationality respectively (Interview with Yana, 2019).

Cirendeudeu village consists of one RW (*Rukun Warga*, Indonesian: hamlet), namely RW 02 with five RT (*Rukun Tetangga*, Indonesian:

neighbourhood), which are inhabited by approximately 600 families or around 1,000 people (Sutiana, 2021). The traditional groups consist of 65 families or about 240 people living specifically in RT 02, RT 03 and RT 05. These indigenous groups live alongside other Cireundeu people and establish harmonious relationships, helping each other and building religious tolerance.

The traditional organization of Cirendeudeu group consists of a *sesepuh* or traditional leader (Abah Emen), *ais panganpih* or a representative of a traditional elder called *Abah* Widia, and *paniten* or secretary called *Abah* Asep (Widia, 2021). The location of this traditional village is close to the city of Cimahi resulting in the lifestyle of these traditional groups more modern and up to date. The inhabited houses are permanent building which still has a distinct feature of a traditional Sundanese house called *Imah Panggung*. Houses are usually located close to the *bale* or the hall where the traditional group performs traditional activities. Despite living amid modernization times, Sundanese traditions and customs which are the heritage of their ancestors, are still preserved until today, both in terms of daily life and in major ceremonies such as *Seren taun* ceremony (Purwasih et al., 2019; Research Team and Drafting Team, 1992; Widyaputra, 2019), in addition to typical ceremonies related with birth, death, funeral and wedding.

Nyinglar Sasalad as a Ceremony for Coping with Covid-19

Cireundeudeu traditional village members have high mobility. Many members of this traditional group work as factory and office workers in Cimahi and Bandung areas (Sutiana, 2021). When the pandemic began to hit Indonesia, indigenous groups could still carry out their usual activities, such as farming and working. However, when the

lockdown and massive social restriction were enacted, many of these workers were fired or worked from home. The leader of community then held a ceremony called the *Nyinglar Sasalad*, a Tolak Bala ceremony to avoid or resist the plague. During the data collection for this study, *Nyinglar Sasalad* ceremony was held in April 2020 and was attended by 40 traditional elders, youth representatives and women. The venue was *Imah panggung*, a house on stilts in Cireundeu traditional village.

“*Upami prakrakana dina upacara nyinglar sasalad aya sasajen sapuratina* (In the execution of Nyinglar Sasalad ceremony, offerings and its complementaries were found).”
(Interview with Yana, 2021)

The preparation for the ceremony was commenced by collecting ceremonial necessities such as *rurujakan*, various kinds of Rujak (a salad dish), such as rujak made of tamarind, basil, banana, and of coconut (*Kemplang rujak*), commonly called *rujak sasajen* which is made with soup. The second ingredient was *Cacaian*, various beverages such as sweet and bitter tea, sweet and bitter coffee and water. Another ceremony property was *lemareun* or complete betel nut ingredients consisting of a complete set of Pinang (*Areca catechu*) betel, with whiting, gambier, areca nut, and tobacco. Other prerequisites were various types of bananas, such as *Emas bananas* (*Musa acuminata* ‘Lady Finger’), *Tanduk bananas* (*Musa acuminata x balbisiana* (AAB Group) ‘African Rhino Horn’), and various kinds of flowers, which at least consisted of seven flower variants.

The remaining elements were Dugong oil or commonly called *Kolonyo* oil, which smells like roses, tobacco, *Kawung leaves* (*Arenga pinnata*), or palm leaves, Dawegan (young coconut), brown and rock sugar, frankincense. The frankincense was a mere symbol, which would not

be burnt amidst the process unlike other ceremonies. The last one was *Hayam Tulak* or *Tulak* chicken (the word *tulak* in Sundanese means a door lock). This chicken has one color covering the whole body, with only one feather having a different color. This chicken was the main requirement for the ceremony along with *manuk Tikukur* or *Tikukur* bird (a type of bird that tweets like "tikukur" which can still be found in Cirendeui). Inside the body of *Tikukur* bird, there are other species of lice which serve as a reminder to the indigenous group (Interview with Yana, 2021).

“Saatos nyiapkeun sasajen sareung sagala rupina, teras di silib simbul sindang siloka ku Hayam Tukak sareung manuk Tikukur, teras diupacarakeun sanduk-sanduk papalaku, ngarajah, ngadoa, teras ngijabkeun tujuan pamaksadan hoyong dikabul sapaneja (after preparing the offerings, it was followed with *Silib Sindang Siloka* with *Tukak* chicken and *Tikukur* bird as the medium, and wrapped with the ritual *Sanduk-sanduk papalaku*, praying while firmly stating the purposes sought upon the execution of this ceremony” (Yana, 2021)

After completing all mandatory elements, the ceremony started with *silib simbul sindang siloka* on the two main components of the ceremony, *Tulak* chicken and *Tikukur* bird. The purpose was to reflect what is illustrated or manifested in life. Followed by *sanduk-sanduk papalaku*, an introductory reading or prologue, *ngarajah* and *ngadoa* or praying session carried out systematically with *ngijabkeun*, the pledge of purposes of the ceremony with *Abah Wahyu* as the leader. After completion, the bird was symbolically caged as if to prison the death, while the chicken was left free (Interview with Yana, 2021).

According to Yana, Public Relations of Cireundeui Indigenous Group, this ceremony was the first to perform as it was the first time they witnessed the pandemic. The ceremony depicted that life will not only be in one state, comprising difficulties and joys. It was therefore

crucial to have sincere acceptance since it was unknown of who will be infected. The current era was illustrated as the era of *ayak-ayak beans* (*anu gede moncor, anu lemes cicing*), meaning that this era was like a process of winnowing rice grains, with only big ones coming out and the soft ones staying still. The rice in the winnowing process has the opposite purpose, removing the soft ones and leaving the big ones in place.

According to Abah Wahyu, a Cirendeu figure, *Tulak* chicken has a habit of looking for food by scratching leftovers (*kokoreh*) or on the ground by pecking the food. It was to symbolize that when the community was affected by the plague, they will not suffer too much, as long as they could obtain food from wherever, as the *tulak* chicken does. *Tikukur* bird served as a reminder that the plague would take some victims. Abah Wahyu emphasized that there was no guarantee that members of indigenous groups could survive the pandemic. However, it is highly encouraged to be careful and vigilant while obediently following government instructions (Interview with Yana, 2021). Therefore, this ceremony symbolized that illness was a part of the life cycle that must be gone through together.

“Upami pemahaman di warga adat sesuai intruksi/padika sepuh waktos Purwa Carita dina upacara tolak bala sasalad, nu kasebut panyakit pipanyakiteun teh bagian tina siklus hirup kasebut hukum kasimbangan keselarasan pepeling sangkan waspada bisa nganjang ka pageto, jasi bisa dibahasakeun teu kudu geruh, nya disyaratana ku silib simbol sindang sasmita ngalangkungan upacara tolak bala tadi [in local people understanding, in line with the elders’ instruction amidst Purwa Carita in Nyinglar Sasalad ceremony, the disease or the seeds are deemed as a part of the life cycle, termed as the law of balance and harmony, standing as a reminder that whoever can be inflicted with pain, sickness which was then narrated to calm down the community since silib simbol sindang sasmita had

been carried out during the ceremony] ” (Interview with Yana, 2021)

The ceremonial performance of the Cireundeu Indigenous community seemed to have similarity with Ritumpanna Walenrengge from Sulawesi, which means to cut down of the Walenreng tree, in terms of revealing the linkage of harmony between humans and nature (Aaisyah, 2018). Nyinglar Sasalad symbolized their nature closeness by respecting and preserving it well. Nature is a manifestation of a mother that does not bear a child, yet having similar roles as the one who does, which emanates the care of bringing life. Likewise in countering pandemic, symbols and elements required to hold Nyinglar Sasalad ceremony is originated from the nature.

Cirendeu indigenous group is a particular community renowned with their nature closeness by respecting and preserving it. For them, nature is a manifestation of a mother that does not bear a child, yet having similar roles as the one who does, which emanates the care of bringing life. Likewise in countering the pandemic, symbols and elements needed to hold Nyinglar Sasalad ceremony were sourced from the nature, which is their common resource. In Ostrom’s principle, this ceremony was observed to have rules appropriately made to fit with resource conditions. Furthermore, this ceremony also had good monitoring from *sesepuh* or the elders, because they attended, led, and involved in this ritual. As a consequence, the value of the ritual became a mutual agreement for all members of this indigenous group.

The Nyinglar Sasalad ritual also defined clear group boundaries, because the participants only came from the Cireundeu indigenous group and it involved all resource users. In other words, the member of Cireundeu indigenous group not only used the CPR (Common Pool Resources) such as the forest resources for their needs, but also used it

for decision-making, especially for handling Nyinglar Sasalad as the ceremony for facing the pandemic. This ceremony indicated the community autonomy in common management, and they were seen able to develop a conflict resolution mechanism through their CPR.

In addition to Nyinglar Sasalad ceremony, Cirendeu indigenous group also attempts other local wisdom-based activities, such as:

Traditional Diet

Sundanese people including Cirendeu community are known to consume certain raw leaves as dishes called *lalapan*. Consuming fresh leaves is believed to give many benefits. It is their tradition to eat rice made of cassava. In the early 1800s, the villagers of Cirendeu still consumed rice (from paddy) for their daily needs, but during the Dutch colonial period, the position of farmers was helpless due to the low selling price of rice. At that time, the Dutch only focused on selling products which were profitable in the market. In 1918, Haji Ali, a local leader began encouraging his family to switch from consuming rice to cassava. Local residents followed his way. Pangeran Sepuh or Panegran Madrais heard the expectation of Cirendeu inhabitants to make Haji Ali guide them to be independent physically and mentally, particularly in terms of producing rice. Around 1930, Pangeran Madrais came to Cirendeu after the Cirendeu elders came to Cigugur Kuningan (Interview with Yana, 2019).

Due to strong motivation to be physically and mentally balanced, Haji Ali also saw that agricultural land would be narrower and realized that the source of energy was not only rice. Cassava, corn, and *hanjeli* (*Coix lacyma-Jobi L.*) also have immense potential to increase better social conditions in Cirendeu (Lembaga Pengkajian Kebudayaan

Nusantara, 2013). This resulted in the concept of *buhun* (extracts) which is still firmly believed by the Cireundeu indigenous group.

The concepts said "*keun bae teu bisa nyawah asal boga pare, teu boga pare asal bisa nyangu, teu bisa nyangu asal bisa dahar, najan teu dahar asal kuat*" [not having farmland is safe, so long as rice is guaranteed, having no rice is fine so long as there is something cooked, having nothing to cook is justified so long as there is something to eat and it is fine to not eat so long as the body is healthy]. This principle has now undergone a slight editorial change, "*teu boga sawah asal boga pare, teu boga pare asal boga beas, teu boga beas asal bisa nyangu, teu nyangu asal dahar, teu dahar asal kuat*" [it is necessary to have rice albeit no rice fields, as it is important to have rice albeit no paddy, as it is important to be able to cook rice albeit not having it, as it is good to eat anything if cooking is not possible, and as it is good to not eat as long as the body is strong]. Buhun principle strengthened the Cireundeu community to consume substitute resources other than rice.

Following the initiative of Haji Ali, Cireundeu indigenous group no longer set paddy as a staple food, they transitioned to consume cassava which was processed into flour called Rasi (beras singkong-cassava rice) (Mu'min, 2020). Cassava was chosen because it can be planted in any season, is easy to process, and its pulp can still be recycled into cassava rice (Tramontane, 2017). This eating culture sustained food security because cassava as the main ingredient of Rasi, is planted, cultivated, cropped, and consumed by and for Cireundeu indigenous group.

Indigenous groups processed cassava by grinding or filtering it, then washing it and settling it for a few days. The dregs were dried to become *aci* or *sago* after two to three days under the sun. After this

process, the cassava turned into coarse flour and when cooked will be in the form of small, round, brownish white (Interview with Yana, 2019). In contrast to *tiwul* (cassava-based dish made of chopped cassava), Rasi came from cassava juice pulp made with flour without any mixture. *Tiwul* became a staple food during the Japanese colonial period around 1960 in Java, especially Central Java, Yogyakarta and East Java. To this day, *tiwul* can still be an alternative to the main staple for Javanese tribes (Rembulan, 2019).

In consuming Rasi, the traditional Cireundeu group generally consumes 500 grams per day or the equivalent of 2,000 kcal for the whole family members consumption. Rasi is consumed twice a day, in the morning and evening, accompanied by various side dishes. The Cireundeu traditional village once achieved the MURI record for cooking 4.7 tons of Rasi, which was processed into 7,200 fried rice and red and white Rasi porridge. In addition, the Cireundeu traditional village obtained a title of a food security tourism village (Rembulan, 2019).

According to its nutritional content, Rasi has 98% carbohydrates and contains more carbohydrates than rice from paddy. Its high fibre properties can even eliminate the risk of diabetes, because of its low fat (0,3 gram) (Harsita & Amam, 2019). Every 100 grams of rice is equivalent to 175 calories, 4 grams of protein, and 40 grams of carbohydrates. Meanwhile, 100 grams of cassava contains 112 calories, 38 grams of carbohydrates, and 1.5 grams of protein. Carbohydrate in cassava is also complex, which makes them absorbed more slowly, the energy comes out slowly, does not get hungry quickly, and can avoid obesity. Compared to rice, its carbohydrates are simple, so the body absorbs them faster, increases sugar levels in the

body faster, produces energy more quickly, runs out quicker and feels hungry faster (Hasan et al., 2011).

The cassava used in Cireundeu village was not only used as a staple food, but also processed into various kinds of snacks such as *cireng*, *opak* (crackers), *kecipir*, eggroll, sponge cake, *simping*, cheese stick, onion chips, *saroja*, pastel and macaroni which are packaged and marketed as souvenirs that visitors can buy with the label 'all-round cassava' (Mu'min, 2020; Suminar, 2021).

This kind of diet has been a tradition for Cireundeu community and is still preserved now. Based on Ostrom's principle, this tradition fits with their resource condition. The community members planted, processed, and consumed this cassava rice and *lalapan* themselves on their own land. Furthermore, this tradition required low cost, even the people could earn money from selling the cassava rice and other cassava products to visitors or researchers. Cireundeu indigenous group could also establish their autonomy in providing food, so they do not depend on the government for their food security, and they were not affected by rice import policies or other problems related to rice.

Traditional Medication

Besides conducting the Nyinglar Sasalad ceremony and maintaining the tradition by consuming *Rasi*, Cireundeu inhabitants consumed herbal medicines such as beverages made of turmeric, ginger, honey, and *cacing kalung* (traditional cuisine) flour, boiled bay leaves and *kumis kucing* (*Orthosiphon aristatus*). Alternatively, their ancestors had an effective way to reduce fever and flu with an alternative medicine method called *leuhang*. *Leuhang* is a Sundanese-style sauna. During and after the *leuhang*, the body produced a lot of sweat.

Common sauna or steam bath usually used charcoal and fiber (Ilmiasari, 2021; Polii et al., 2016; Purnawan et al., 2015). On the other hand, *leuhangs* used leaves. *Leuhang* was done by preparing a pot, fireplace or stove, 4 to 5 thick blankets, *jojodog* or small chair, sarong, and *Honje* leaves (*Etlingera elatior*), *Kluwih* leaves (*Artocarpus camansi*), soursop leaves (*Annona muricata*) and guava leaves (*Syzygium aqueum*).

Honje is also known as *kincung* (Medan), *kinjuang* and *sambuung* (Minangkabau), *siantan* (Malaya), *Daalaa* (Thailand), *Kecicang* (Bali), *Wualale* (Sulawesi), *patikala* or *kecombrang*. Honje leaves are usually consumed in various dishes or as fresh vegetables because they contain carbohydrates. Some studies have found some benefits of honje leaves. Honje leaves are proven to be effective in reducing fever for all ages (Jabbar et al., 2019). In addition, honje leaves can reduce the risk of cancer such as breast cancer, colon cancer, uterine cancer, etc (Yusron & Muhammad, 2018). They are also helpful for maintaining and increasing stamina, fitness and health, lowering cholesterol, helping cure diabetes and high blood pressure, and increasing vitality and antioxidants. The latter benefit was mainly used by the Cirendeu community to overcome the Covid-19, as the virus attacked the body immune system.

Kluwih is usually fried or cooked as a soup and used as an ingredient in flour and bread. The leaves can be processed into herbal drinks or herbs. Kluwih leaves are finger-shaped and shiny, light green and will turn dark green when the leaves are old. The benefits of kluwih leaves are efficacious as a natural fever medicine, to prevent stroke, as a medicine for indigestion, nausea, inflammation, pain and weight gain. Other than healing the pain in joints, muscles and bones, they function

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for overcoming anaemia, stress medication, preventing heart disease, lowering cholesterol and blood pressure, and accelerating blood circulation to cure to cure cramps (Amelia & Sogandi, 2020). In terms of dealing with the virus, kluwih leaves serve as the substance to reduce fever, muscle pain and inflammation.

Soursop fruit contains many carbohydrates, vitamins B and C. Its leaves contain annoh exocin, anonol, acetogenins, annocatacin, anomurine and annomuricin which can treat cholesterol, cancer, diabetes, gout, lungs, ovaries cysts, increase fertility, and improve the digestive system. They can become a back pain reliever, eczema and rheumatism, smoothens the breathing, relieves stress, nourishes the skin, strengthens the immune system, and boosts energy (C. Wullur et al., 2012). Its function to boost the immune system was really needed to overcome the coronavirus. Finally, the leaves of water guava, *Syzygium aqueum*, are proven effective in reducing heat. The aroma of the leaves can stimulate peace, neutralize the smell of sweat and work as eye and digestive medicine (Anggrawati & Ramadhania, 2016).

Then, the prepared leaves were boiled. The stew was stored in front of a short chair, and the person applying the *leuhang* method sat without wearing clothes but a sarong. The blankest was used to cover the body and the pot containing the cooking water. This method was done for an hour in the middle of the day (Sofiana, 2020). This method was effective in overcoming chills, fever and flu.

The local wisdom of the Cireundeu group in dealing with Covid-19 was shown in a preventive measure by conducting *Nyinglar Sasalad* ceremony which provided comprehension and reminders for all communities of the preparation of mental in encountering the pandemic situation. Another step taken by the indigenous group was to

preserve their culture to stay close with nature. It involved doing gardening, farming while keeping dietary habits, consuming traditional medicines and being obedient to government regulations. One of the community spokesperson said:

“We are following the government’s policy to avoid Covid-19, such as wearing a mask, providing disinfectant and hand washing facilities, being vaccinated and not accepting guests and visits during the pandemic.” (Interview with Yana, 2021)

For Cirendeuh community members who lived in Cimahi area near Bandung, the capital city of West Java, Yana said: “We only accept guests when both local government or the task force allow with the condition of providing reports to the chief of the neighbourhood (RT) and the proven negative result of Covid check”. In this community, a person who was infected by the virus was said to have “*sepuh*”, meaning someone who is examined (by God) while putting some internal and external endeavours to be healthy. External acts involved asking the experts who know the disease well, while internal ones are self-evaluation or contemplation (Interview with Yana, 2021). Yana further said:

“Nu ka uningaan ku abdi da kantos ngobrol, selain ka dokter biasana ngaleueutan minuman herbal cai jahem sareung loba moyan, teu keungeng liar, tapa di imah.” (As far as I’m concerned after having a discussion, other than going to doctor, we usually drink an herbal beverage containing ginger, sunburn, and do not go outside the house, stay at home) (Interview with Yana, 2021).

The interview excerpt strongly affirms that what has been done by the indigenous group when being infected by the virus was to combine compliance to government protocols and application of local wisdom, resulting the nature closeness (traditional medication intake), the quarantine and medical diagnosis altogether.

A number of methods were applied by this community to cope with pandemic including harnessing the natural resources. This was critical especially when the mobility of people was restricted during the lockdown or social restriction. Ostrom argues that people could survive by optimally equipping themselves with sustainable management of natural resources. Hence, the utilisation process does not have to be state-centred, but more about the depth and the urgency of understandings toward situation as well as factors of the natural resources (Araral, 2014; Ostrom, 2000). The Cireundeu community in this discussion, is a group of people who were well protecting and nurturing their nature, particularly as a way to resolve pandemic issues.

The natural resources of this community come from three forests surrounding their area, including Larangan forest, Tutupan forest and Baladahan forest. Larangan forest was prohibited to be intervened by humans in any means. It was left growing naturally and becoming the barrel of the earth or a water catchment area. The width is approximately 20 to 30 acres. The second is Tutupan forest whose plants are allowed to use but must be substituted with replacement trees. The last is Baladahan forest that is used for this community to garden (Interview with Yana, 2021). The classification of this forest has been established since their predecessor time and keep being maintained until now. Larangan forest is a no man's land, while the other two could be fully utilized, acting as the solutions for this community to deal with pandemic with local wisdom basis.

Conclusion

This study finds that Cireundeu indigenous group's way of dealing with Covid-19 was derived from their local wisdom, taking advantage of what nature has provided and maintaining their traditions, such as

consuming herbal medicine and Rasi. Besides perusing their traditional wisdom, this traditional community also complied with government policies by following pandemic-based regulation such as lockdown, working from home, and wearing masks. The study suggests that local wisdom plays important role in overcoming the pandemic, especially for traditional community who had limited access to public information by the government disseminated through the internet. Ceremony served as a symbol, a shared communal effort to eliminate the pandemic collectively. Traditional herbs and diet were local resources that traditional community was accustomed to and had accessed to.

The present study also suggested that traditional group like Cireundeu was able to govern the common (Ostrom, 2000), indicated by their ability to independently sought solution and resources to deal with the pandemic. Forests as the common resource was well used by the community to provide food and herb sources that they used as their diet and traditional medication during the pandemic. The presence of monitoring of the elders also indicated that this community had its system to manage their common resources.

With these findings, the present study implies that traditional community was able to have their own local ways in dealing with the pandemic by perusing and managing their own resources. It suggests that government could acknowledge traditional ways practiced by local communities, so that the campaign to eliminate Covid-19 pandemic could be involving traditional practices or nutrition. Practically, besides promoting the health protocols which involve medications and medic-related procedures, local government could also promote the use of local resources which function similarly to the medical substances.

More studies need to be conducted to examine the correlation between the use of local wisdom to the low mortality rate caused by Covid-19. Another aspect to be explored is other traditional community contexts in dealing with pandemic, which could be enriched the scarce literature on the topic.

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Interviews

Interview with Sutiana. (2021)

Interview with Widia. (2021)

Interview with Yana. (2019)

Interview with Yana. (2021)