

The Symbolic Meaning of Gagar Mayang in the Death Ceremony of the Javanese Tribe in Langkat as a Source for Social Education

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Abstract: This study aims to reveal the symbolic meaning of the Gagar Mayang tradition in the funeral ceremonies of the Javanese community in Langkat Regency and to examine its potential as a learning resource in Social Studies. Gagar Mayang is a cultural symbol that is not only aesthetic in nature but also carries spiritual, social, and educational values. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation involving traditional leaders, educators, and local communities. The findings show that Gagar Mayang holds symbolic meanings that reflect beliefs in life after death, respect for ancestors, as well as the values of communal cooperation (gotong royong) within society. Its creation process, which involves family members and neighbors, represents strong social solidarity in Javanese culture in Langkat. Furthermore, the existence of Gagar Mayang also reflects local wisdom that holds high educational potential, especially in introducing Social Studies concepts such as cultural diversity, social values, and tradition preservation. Through a local culture-based learning approach, students not only understand theories but are also able to build connections between the subject matter and real-life contexts in their environment. This study recommends integrating local culture into the curriculum and encouraging collaboration between schools and indigenous communities to create more meaningful, reflective Social Studies learning that fosters students' cultural character.

Keywords: Gagar Mayang, Social Education, Symbolic Meaning

A. Introduction

Referring to the book titled *Natural Cultural Social*, the term 'culture' comes from the Sanskrit word *buddhayah*, the plural form of *buddhi* which means intellect or mind, thus culture can be interpreted as everything related to human thought and creativity

(Daulay, 2010). According to Herskovits in Indonesian Culture, culture is viewed as a heritage that is transmitted from one generation to the next. This concept is then known by the term *superorganic*, which emphasizes that culture is not merely an individual possession, but rather the result of collective accumulation and development within a society (Dora., 2022).

Quoted from a book titled 'Death from an Anthropological Perspective' (Koesbardiati, 2016) Every society that has its own culture and customs has different ways of interpreting death and what happens after death. The ceremonies held to commemorate the deceased serve as a form of respect for the individuals who have passed away. In Javanese society, the ritual conducted to commemorate the deceased is referred to as '*slametan*'. Death ceremonies are part of beliefs that have existed since the time of ancestors and are passed down from generation to generation until now. This tradition encompasses various aspects, including how society treats death. Bungaran Antonius Simanjuntak, in his book titled '*Tradisi*', defines tradition as one of the elements in the cultural system of a society (Shill, 2022)

Every society that has its own culture and customs has different ways of interpreting death and what happens after death. The ceremonies held to commemorate the deceased serve as a form of respect for the individuals who have passed away. In Javanese society, the ritual conducted to commemorate the deceased is referred to as '*slametan*'. Death ceremonies are part of beliefs that have existed since the time of ancestors and are passed down from generation to generation until now. This tradition encompasses various aspects, including how society treats death. Bungaran Antonius Simanjuntak, in his book titled '*Tradisi*', defines tradition as one of the elements in the cultural system of a society.

This research is conducted because in the Javanese ethnic community in Langkat district, many misunderstand the symbolic meaning of '*gagar mayang*'. Even the people of Langkat district often refer to '*gagar mayang*' as '*kembar mayang*'. The terms '*gagar mayang*' and '*kembar mayang*' have the same meaning but in different contexts, where '*gagar mayang*' is actually intended for deceased individuals because '*gagar*' means to fall or fail.

In the context of social studies education, the Gagar Mayang tradition can be used as a relevant learning resource. Social studies, as a subject that examines the relationship between humans and their social and cultural environment, aims to instill moral, social, and national values. By making Gagar Mayang part of the learning material, students can better understand the cultural diversity of Indonesia and the importance of preserving cultural heritage. This tradition also contains values that are relevant to social studies learning, such as mutual cooperation, respect for ancestors, and awareness of the cycle of life. These values can be integrated into the curriculum as concrete examples that support culture-based learning (Yamin, 2017).

Although the Gagar Mayang tradition has deep and significant symbolic value in the death ceremonies of the Javanese people in Langkat Regency, its existence currently faces significant challenges. Modernization, urbanization, and the influence of foreign cultures threaten the sustainability of this tradition. Many young generations are starting to lose understanding of the symbolic meaning of Gagar Mayang, so the values contained within it are at risk of disappearing. This is concerning, considering that this tradition is one of the cultural heritages that reflects the identity and local wisdom of the Javanese community.

Therefore, this research is expected to contribute significantly to the preservation of the Gagar Mayang tradition, the development of social studies learning materials, and to enhance community understanding of the importance of maintaining cultural heritage. This tradition is not merely a form of respect for the deceased, but also reflects noble values that can be passed on to future generations. Based on the understanding from the background, the researcher is interested in further examining this through a study titled *The Symbolic Meaning of Gagar Mayang in the Death Ceremony of the Javanese Ethnic Group in Langkat Regency as a Source for Social Studies Learning*.

B. Methods

This research uses a qualitative method, which aims to understand a phenomenon in depth by emphasizing meaning, experiences, and perspectives of individuals or groups. This approach focuses more on non-numerical descriptive data, such as interview results, observations, and document studies (Creswell, 2022). According to Lexi J. Moleong (Moleong, 2019), The purpose of qualitative research is to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects, including behaviors, perceptions, motivations, and actions, using words and language to describe them.

The data collection method is a very important stage in research, as the success of a study depends on the researcher's skills in obtaining accurate and complete data (Hardani, 2020). In this study, data collection was carried out using several instruments, namely observation, interviews, and documentation, which were complemented by data analysis techniques to support the validity of the research results.

Data analysis is one of the most crucial stages in research, as the research results heavily depend on the researcher's ability to sort and present the data optimally. In this study, the data analysis was performed based on the approach developed by Miles and Huberman, which divides the analysis process into three main stages that occur simultaneously (Sugiono, 2016) namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The technique for checking data saturation in this study is by extending the research duration, continuous observation, triangulation, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and data validity.

C. Results and Discussion

Traditional ceremonies are an inseparable part of a society's culture, which holds historical, philosophical, and educational values. In the context of the Javanese community in Langkat Regency, North Sumatra, one of the traditions that still survives to this day is the use of the Gagar Mayang symbol in death ceremonies. Mead emphasizes that self-awareness and social reality are not formed directly, but rather through a process of symbolic communication between individuals, particularly through language and other symbolic signs (Carter, 2016). These values serve as an important starting point for further examining how local traditions can contribute to the educational process, particularly as a source of learning in the study of Social Sciences (IPS), which emphasizes an understanding of cultural diversity and local wisdom.

The Symbolic Meaning of Gagar Mayang in the Death Ceremony of the Javanese Tribe in Langkat Regency

Gagar Mayang umumnya digunakan dalam prosesi adat pernikahan maupun death. Over time, this term became better known as Kembar Mayang among the Javanese people. According to Gondowasito in (Mulyadi., 2006) Kembar Mayang consists of a series of young coconut leaves (janur), areca flowers, and various other foliage arranged to resemble a bouquet. Based on the interviews conducted by the researcher, there are several points that the author can present regarding the symbolic meaning present in the gagar mayang in the Javanese funeral ceremony in Langkat Regency as follows:

Philosophical and Spiritual Meaning

According to Sindoesastro in the book 'the procedures for Javanese wedding' (Purwodadi, 2004) Mayang twins symbolize the blooming of the betel flower, representing the transition to a new life as an adult in society, thus being able to contribute and serve for the surrounding environment. On the other hand, Gagar Mayang signifies the end of childhood or adolescence. Then Kawindosusanto in (Oktaviana, 2022) According to him, there has been a mistake or 'misconception' in the use of the term Kembar Mayang. This was conveyed by Mbah Menek in an interview with the researchers.

Mbah Menek: 'Gagar Mayang is not just an ordinary decoration. In our tradition, Gagar Mayang is a very important symbol, especially in funeral ceremonies. It is made from a banana or bamboo stalk, decorated with young coconut leaves, and some other elements. Gagar Mayang symbolizes a bridge or connection between this world and the spirit world. So, when someone passes away, Gagar Mayang acts as a guide for the soul so that it does not get lost on the way to the afterlife.'

Cosmological Meaning

The tradition of gagar mayang originates from the traditional marriage ceremony of noble children in ancient times, conducted with full sanctity, grandeur, majesty, and beauty. This tradition is considered to hold a very deep meaning, thus regarded as sacred and compulsory to perform. In the wayang stories, the beginning of this tradition is related to Dewi Sembrada, the sister of Kresna, who is willing to be proposed by Arjuna from the Pandawa family under certain conditions, namely the provision of 'bebana.' One of these conditions is Klepu, Kalpataru wood, which is regarded as a symbol of life and has a beneficial influence in the environment. Dewi Sembrada greatly desires this tree. Fortunately, the Pandawa can borrow Kembar Mayang from Betara Guru, the lord of the celestial realm (Musman, 2017). The Gagar Mayang composition at the Yogyakarta Palace consists of various natural elements, such as banyan leaves, grasses, sea almond (kedondong laut), andong leaves, croton leaves, lancuran, and golden rain leaves. In addition, the janur is shaped into various ornaments, such as twists, flower arrangements, whips, outer ketupat, and paired decorations. The pudak flower is an important element in this arrangement, but if unavailable, it can be replaced with woven janur (Muchtar, 2006)

More than just a symbol for the spirits of the deceased, Gagar Mayang also reflects the Javanese cosmological view of the cycle of life and death. Its presence in the death procession serves as a final tribute to the departed, as well as a reminder for the living about mortality and the importance of maintaining harmony in relationships with the universe and ancestors. The motifs in Gagar Mayang, such as flowers, birds, and other geometric shapes, represent hopes for purity, peace, and the liberation of the soul. In accordance with what has been presented by:

Mbah Menek: 'Traditions like Gagar Mayang reflect how the Javanese people greatly value spirituality and the balance of life. The physical world and the spiritual world are not two separate things for us.'

Further conveyed by Wak Gito, *'Gagar Mayang is like a symbol of harmony between humans, nature, and God. The Javanese never see death as an end, but as a transition to another realm. That is why every symbol in Gagar Mayang is made with intention and full of respect.'*

The Symbol of Death in Singleness

as stated by Cassirer in the book on social research methods (Suyanto, 2022) that Humans are symbolic creatures (animal symbolicum) who always strive to find meaning in their lives, according to what they believe. Humans connect with the world through symbols reflected in language, art, myths, and religious rituals. Based on an interview conducted on April 20, 2025, with Mbah Menek (58 years old, an elder of the Javanese community in Jasa Makmur Village), it was found that Gagar Mayang is an important symbol in death ceremonies, especially for those who die single. Gagar Mayang is made from janur (young coconut leaves), flowers, and other ornaments such as banyan leaves, puring leaves, and andong flowers. It is not merely an ornament, but a symbol of purification and the final tribute that holds deep spiritual and philosophical value. Mbah Menek (a 58-year-old traditional elder) explains that:

'kalok gagar mayang means fallen, so gagar mayang is for the deceased because it signifies that the deceased was unmarried. Meanwhile, kembar mayang is for married people; kembar means two, so it represents two people united as one. The number of janur, leaves, grasshoppers, fans, etc., in gagar mayang must be odd, while for kembar mayang it must be even. The number must be odd because it signifies that their life in this world has failed.'

Each element in Gagar Mayang has a deep symbolic meaning, reflecting the values of life and philosophy in Javanese culture. According to Sumardi in his work *Nebus Kembar Mayang*, the term 'mayang' refers to flowers, thus 'kembar mayang' can be interpreted as artificial flowers arranged using banana stems as a base. This arrangement consists of branches of janur or young coconut leaves, as well as various leaves such as andong leaves, girang leaves, and banyan leaves, with the king banana tree at the pinnacle of the crown. The arranged Gagar Mayang resembles a bouquet, symbolizing the tree of life that brings blessings and hope (Karsono., 2022). When a single person or girl passes away, a Gagar Mayang is placed on the grave as a sign that the person died before getting married (Masail, 2023). In the gagar mayang arrangement, there are several decorative elements woven to form decorations resembling animals, objects, and plants, which contain the meaning of life teachings with advice. For families in mourning, this becomes a sign that the deceased is someone who is still single or unmarried (Tilaar, 2017). According to Flavianus Narvin in the book of Islamic thought by Nurcholis Madjid (Munawar, 2022) Death is something certain and unavoidable. Grandmother Mitun explained that:

Grandma Mitun: 'The Gagar Mayang rises up, symbolizing the journey of the soul to the higher realm. Janur means purity, flowers represent the fragrance of deeds, and the binding of janur is a symbol of family unity that lets go sincerely. All of this has its philosophy. It is not just made carelessly.'

From the presentation of the interview above, it can be understood that the Javanese community in Langkat, although living far from their ancestral land, still maintains this tradition as part of their identity and respect for customs. The elements found in Gagar Mayang are not arbitrary; each has its own meaning. Janur symbolizes purity, the banyan leaf represents protection, the croton leaf symbolizes the colorful aspects of life, and the bird serves as a reminder that no matter how far a person goes, they must return (both physically and spiritually). Wak Gito (41 years old, a traditional leader of the Javanese community in Barak AII Village), expressed that.

"When people see Gagar Mayang, they immediately know that the house is in mourning. But it is not just any mourning. There is sacredness, there are prayers. Those who come to the house of mourning are also calmer because they know that the customs are respected. This symbolizes that the deceased is 'released' properly and deserve"

Symbols of Identity and Cultural Preservation

The use of Gagar Mayang by the Javanese community in Langkat is still preserved even though they live far from their ancestral land. This tradition is considered a part

of their identity that is still maintained by the diaspora community. Even if conditions do not allow them to create a large Gagar Mayang, the community still strives to make a smaller version as a symbol of the existence of their customs. According to Komarudin Hidayat in his book titled *Psychology of Death* (Hidayat, 2020) The belief and concept of death will not disappear from human consciousness, whether individually or collectively. Scholars define death as the absence of life, which means that death occurs when the soul separates from the body (Ummah, 2019). The symbolic elements of Gagar Mayang are explained in detail by Wak Gito.

Wak Gito: the young coconut leaves symbolize purity and a new beginning, flowers represent the good deeds of the deceased, and the knots of the young coconut leaves symbolize the ties of family that remain intact even after one has passed away.

An interview with Mrs. Wiwik (39 years old), a customary figure of the Javanese community in Banyu Urip village, Langkat Regency, conducted on May 9, 2025, reinforces the position of Gagar Mayang as a central symbol in death ceremonies.

Mrs. Wiwik: 'Without Gagar Mayang, the funeral ceremony feels incomplete. Because Gagar Mayang serves as a marker that death is not the end, but the beginning of the spirit's journey to the next realm. This symbol also unites everyone present, both family, neighbors, and relatives, in a shared spiritual awareness. So Gagar Mayang is like a bridge, between the living and the deceased.'

In detail, the elements of Gagar Mayang mentioned by Mrs. Wiwik are as follows:

The keris symbolizes vigilance in living life. The ketupat symbolizes protection and simplicity. The whip signifies that life has rules and limitations. The banyan leaf indicates protection and shade. The andong leaf, with its various colors, symbolizes the diversity of life situations. The banana king illustrates that everyone who has passed away becomes a 'one-day king' in their final honor. The arrangement that rises upwards signifies that the spirit is heading towards the higher and sacred realm, that is, the afterlife.

Based on the results of the research observation regarding identity symbols and the preservation of customs, the use of Gagar Mayang by the Javanese community in Langkat Regency shows an important role as a marker of cultural identity as well as a medium for preserving traditional values. Gagar Mayang is not only used in death ceremonies but also reflects the community's attachment to ancestral heritage that is rich in symbolic meaning. Each element of Gagar Mayang has a specific meaning that represents respect, sadness, and hope for the deceased, thus serving as a cultural education tool for the younger generation. Field observations reveal that the process of making and installing Gagar Mayang involves collective community participation, which strengthens the sense of togetherness and group identity.

Gagar Mayang as a Source of Learning in Social Science Education (IPS)

Based on the results of the interviews conducted by the researcher, there are several points that can be found in the field that Gagar Mayang can be used as a learning resource in Social Studies education.

Gagar Mayang strengthens the contextual and locally based approach in the Merdeka Curriculum.

The use of Gagar Mayang as a learning resource also strengthens the contextual and local cultural-based approach that is an important part of the Independent Curriculum. With this approach, students not only learn the material theoretically but also connect with their own environment and culture. Death also gives rise to the tradition of pilgrimage or visiting graves, which is a ceremony conducted by the bereaved family to pray for and provide ease for the deceased in their afterlife. (Karim, 2017). Death is seen as a return to the origin of life, or the source of existence (Sudarta., 2022). In Javanese society's belief, death has a profound meaning and is an inseparable part of the journey of life (Raharjo, 2019). Death becomes a moment of meeting with God, whether in a state of being blessed or being angry with Him. Therefore, in Javanese culture, a deceased person receives great attention from family and the surrounding community (Aufa, 2017).

Mbah Menek said that: "This tradition can be used as a concrete example in social studies learning, especially on the theme of cultural diversity in Indonesia. By studying the meaning of Gagar Mayang, students can understand noble values such as respect for parents, life after death, and mutual cooperation. In addition, this can broaden their perspective on the importance of preserving local cultural heritage."

The Gagar Mayang tradition reflects a unique local wisdom and expands students' understanding of Indonesia's cultural diversity.

This tradition is rich with teachings about mutual cooperation, respect for ancestors, the spiritual values of life, and togetherness in the village community. The Gagar Mayang tradition gives students a real experience of the living local culture, not just text in books. This is consistent with the results of the interview with Mbah Mitun.

Grandma Mitun: "In my opinion, it is very possible. This can be included in social studies lessons about local culture, local wisdom, or diversity. From Gagar Mayang, children can learn about symbols, spiritual values, and social functions in society. It can also teach tolerance and mutual cooperation."

A similar point was made by Mrs. Nurmala, *'If social studies teachers can incorporate this into their lessons, I think the children will be more interested because they can participate in making it, see the process directly, and experience the values themselves.'*

Gagar Mayang has social and spiritual dimensions that can shape students' character.

Gagar Mayang also encompasses local history and the economic activities of the community such as the provision of ceremonial materials, the production of ornaments, and the distribution of agricultural products used in celebrations.

According to the interview results with Mrs. Nurmala, a teacher in Langkat Regency: *"It is very possible. Gagar Mayang covers various aspects of social studies: culture, social values, local history, and even local economy. We can create an environmental-based learning project (PBL) where students directly research in the community, interview local figures, or create ethnographic reports."*

Mrs. Nurmala's statement as one of the social studies teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Sei Lapan above states that the Gagar Mayang tradition is very relevant to be used as a learning resource in the subject of social studies because it encompasses various important aspects such as culture, social values, local history, and local economy. According to her, Gagar Mayang can serve as an entry point for the implementation of the Project-Based Learning (PBL) model, where students are invited to conduct direct research in the community, interview cultural figures, and compile ethnographic reports.

In the Project Based Learning process related to the utilization of Gagar Mayang as a research object, students can do several things as follows: Directly researching the cultural practices of Gagar Mayang, Conducting interviews with traditional leaders, Compiling ethnographic reports or audiovisual documentation, Reflecting on the meaning of that culture in modern life.

Gagar Mayang becomes a bridge for cross-disciplinary learning in Social Sciences.

The resource person also revealed that Gagar Mayang is not only relevant in cultural and social aspects, but it also has connections to local history and economy. This tradition can serve as a gateway to studying the history of the local community as well as the economic activities related to the implementation of the tradition, such as the production of ornaments and ritual materials. Thus, Gagar Mayang can become a cross-disciplinary learning source in social studies that connects various aspects of community life.

This was stated by Mr. Gito: "When we talk about Gagar Mayang, it's not just a culture, but it has become part of the economic life of the people here. For example, there are residents who specifically plant flowers and banana trees just for ceremonial needs. Then we, who create the decorations, can also earn income from that."

According to the source, the process of making Gagar Mayang is not just an art job, but also involves ancestral skills that are passed down through families. He mentioned that in one month, there are at least two to three requests for making Gagar Mayang ornaments, both for funeral purposes and other traditional ceremonies.

Based on the results of observation and direct monitoring at a school in Langkat Regency, it was found that the Gagar Mayang tradition during the funeral ceremony

of the Javanese community in Langkat Regency has great potential as a source of learning for Social Studies. This potential is not only found in the visual aspects and its physical form, but also in the cultural, social, and moral values contained within it. The relevance of Gagar Mayang to Social Studies material is evident from its ability to introduce the cultural diversity of Indonesian society, demonstrate social interaction through community cooperation in the implementation of the ceremony, and instill social and cultural values such as mutual assistance, tolerance, and cultural preservation. This tradition can be utilized as a source of contextual learning, where teachers link social studies material with local traditions in the students' environment, and as a visual learning medium through photos, videos, or replicas of Gagar Mayang to clarify explanations. In addition, field-based learning such as field studies or interviews with cultural figures and cultural projects in the form of reports, posters, or documentary videos about the meaning of Gagar Mayang can actively enhance students' understanding.

The Relevance of the Values Contained in Gagar Mayang to Enrich Students' Understanding of Cultural Diversity in Social Studies Learning

Based on the results of the interviews conducted by the researcher, there are several points that can be found in the field regarding the relevance of the values contained in gagar mayang to enrich students' understanding of cultural diversity in social studies learning.

The Gagar Mayang tradition contains spiritual values that are relevant in social studies learning.

The Gagar Mayang tradition holds various noble values that are highly relevant to enriching students' understanding of cultural diversity in social studies learning. According to Nursid in the book cited by (Endayani, 2018), Social Studies education is a combination of various social science disciplines that are structured and scientific in order to achieve educational objectives. A similar perspective was expressed by (Somantri, 2001), Social Studies (IPS) is the result of the selection and integration of various disciplines of social sciences presented comprehensively to make learning more meaningful for students. According to the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) in the book Basic Concepts of Social Studies (Susanti, 2018) Social Studies is a study that focuses on social sciences and humanities to achieve educational goals. Therefore, the development of Social Studies learning, both in terms of concepts and practices, is very important to be carried out (Surahman, 2017). The spiritual values contained within it teach that society still believes in life after death, which is reflected in symbolic forms as honors and accompany the spirits. One cultural tradition that has a wealth of social values and character is gagar mayang, which can be used as a source of learning to connect the real experiences of society with the material of social studies (Febriani, 2022). This value can be an entry point for

students to understand the dimensions of trust. In accordance with the results of an interview with one of the informants:

Mother Wiwik: 'There are many values that can be drawn from this Gagar Mayang tradition. Spirituality: it shows that the community still believes in an afterlife. Family and mutual cooperation: the making of Gagar Mayang is done together by family and neighbors. Respect for the deceased: as a form of 'farewell' with full respect. Preservation of culture: by continuing to create and understand this symbol, we are preserving our ancestral heritage.'

The preservation of local culture is part of the values of multicultural education

The value of honoring those who have passed away and the preservation of the culture contained in Gagar Mayang is very important for building the character of students who appreciate ancestral heritage.

This was conveyed by Mrs. Nurmala: "This tradition teaches us how to honor those who have passed away in a meaningful and symbolic way. It contains values of empathy, respect, and a sense of responsibility towards our ancestors' heritage."

The symbols in Gagar Mayang reflect the spiritual and philosophical dimensions of culture.

The Gagar Mayang tradition has a very rich symbolic meaning and is potential to be explored in the context of social studies learning in schools. From an educator's point of view, this symbol represents deep spiritual values, such as the community's beliefs in life after death and respect for ancestors. These symbols teach students that culture is not only manifested in physical forms, but also holds philosophical and spiritual meanings that shape the worldview of a society.

According to what Mrs. Nurmala said: *'Traditions like Gagar Mayang are very much in line with the goals of social studies, which are to shape students who have character, empathy, and appreciate cultural diversity. Through this tradition, students can learn to understand their own society and build a tolerant attitude in a multicultural life. So, this is not just about history or culture, but also character education.'*

The Gagar Mayang tradition opens up space for cross-topic learning in social studies

Although the Gagar Mayang tradition has not been formally included in social studies textbooks, the teaching practices carried out by teachers in the field show an effort to introduce local culture as a source of learning. In the teaching process, teachers often use Gagar Mayang as an example when discussing topics about cultural diversity and local wisdom. The introduction of local culture that comes from the students' surrounding environment makes learning more meaningful and contextual.

This was conveyed by Mrs. Wiwik: *"Indeed, it is not yet in the textbook, but I often use Gagar Mayang as an example when discussing the theme of cultural diversity or*

local wisdom in class. Because this is a culture that is close to the students' lives, they are immediately interested and feel more connected."

D. Conclusions

Based on the exposure above and the results of the research conducted by the researcher, it can be concluded as follows. Gagar Mayang in the death tradition of the Javanese community, including in the diaspora such as Langkat Regency, has a profound symbolic meaning as a guide for the spirit to the afterlife and as a form of final respect. Its elements such as janur (young coconut leaves), flowers, kris (dagger), and bananas represent spiritual, social, and life philosophy values. This tradition also reflects mutual cooperation and respect for ancestors, but it currently faces challenges of regeneration due to the lack of understanding among the younger generation. The Gagar Mayang tradition has strong potential to be used as a learning resource in social studies education because it contains elements of local culture that are rich in values and social meanings. As a cultural heritage of the community, Gagar Mayang not only provides an understanding of customary practices but also opens opportunities for students to learn through real experiences. This supports a contextual and environmentally-based learning approach, which can make students more active, critical, and connected to the social realities around them. The values contained in the Gagar Mayang tradition, such as spirituality, mutual cooperation, respect for ancestors, and cultural preservation, are very relevant in strengthening students' understanding of the cultural diversity of Indonesia in the social studies subject. These values not only enrich the learning material but also instill character and social attitudes that reflect the nation's identity. By studying Gagar Mayang, students are invited to appreciate local culture, understand the symbolic meanings in cultural practices, and realize the importance of preserving ancestral heritage amidst the currents of modernization.

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