Cultural Synergy: Participatory Innovation in Maintaining the Sustainability of Muaro Jambi Temple

Putriya Asnia¹, Shagnik Saha², Gayan Madhusanka Wijesooriya³

¹Faculty of Law, Universitas Jambi, Jambi, Indonesia
²Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India
³Faculty of humanities and social sciences, The Open University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka

**ABSTRACT**

**Purpose of the study:** This research aims to see how the community participates in efforts to preserve the cultural heritage of Muara Jambi Temple.

**Methodology:** The method used in the research is a qualitative method with a naturalistic qualitative type. The locations in this research are the Jambi Cultural Heritage Conservation Agency as the manager and Muara Jambi Village, Maro Sebo District, Muaro Jambi Regency, Jambi Province. Qualitative methods rely on qualitative data, which can take the form of interviews, participant observation, field notes, or document analysis.

**Main Findings:** The results of this research show that the community already has awareness in preserving the cultural heritage of Muarajambi Temple, which can be proven by the existence of a community founded by the people of Muarajambi Village with awareness of the importance of protecting the environment around Muarajambi Village and the Muarajambi Temple environment. Several forms of community participation, in this case the participation of ideas/thoughts, are considered to be still low because they are not channeled enough. This has not been fully implemented due to a lack of coordination or approach between the community and managers. Various efforts have been made by the management and the community, including protection in the form of restoration, development and utilization of cultural heritage, which can be done through direct promotion or through social media, and Muarajambi Temple is also a scientific, religious, social and cultural institution.

**Novelty/Originality of this study:** The synergy between local culture, participatory innovation and the character of love for one's country is a strong pillar in maintaining the sustainability of Muara Jambi Temple, proving that preserving cultural heritage is a reflection of togetherness and unity in preserving heritage for future generations.

**Keywords:** Cultural Heritage, Muaro Jambi Temple, Preservation, Society Participation

---

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Indonesia has a lot of cultural heritage, especially prehistoric objects, which are spread across various provinces. There are many historical places and various other relics that need to be maintained and preserved so that they remain sustainable and provide benefits to the community [1]–[3]. Each existing relic has great potential and is unique.
The civilization of a nation can be seen from the remains of cultural heritage objects. Cultural heritage objects are objects that can be obtained by a group of people or a certain community which involve the results of a cultural work appropriate to its time [4]–[6]. There are various terms used in people's lives, including ancient objects, ancient objects, antique objects and historical relics [7], [8]. Like Indonesia, it has cultural heritage objects that have high cultural value.

Cultural heritage is a term used to refer to buildings, archaeological sites, art objects, or natural areas that have important cultural, historical, or archaeological value and must be preserved and protected [9], [10]. Cultural heritage can be historic buildings, archaeological sites, sacred places, artistic artifacts, historic parks, or even natural areas that have unique ecology and history [11]–[13]. Cultural heritage has an important role in maintaining the cultural identity of a nation or society, as well as as a legacy for future generations [14]–[16]. Cultural heritage preservation involves various efforts to maintain and improve its physical condition and preserve the cultural and historical values contained therein.

Cultural values are the principles, beliefs, norms, and concepts that are an integral part of the culture of a society or group. These values form the basis of morals, ethics and behavior in everyday life, and influence various aspects of social, economic, political and spiritual life [17]–[19]. Cultural values are very diverse and can differ from one society to another, and can change over time and social change [20]–[22]. Meanwhile, historical values refer to principles, beliefs and concepts that are based on understanding and appreciation of past experiences and events. Historical values are very important because they form the foundation of culture, national identity, and understanding of ourselves and our society.

The urgency of cultural values and historical values in the current context is very important because they form the basis of identity, understanding and action of society and individuals. Cultural values and historical values help maintain and preserve the cultural identity of a society or nation [23]–[25]. Cultural values and historical values teach respect for the diversity of cultures, religions, languages and traditions in our society and throughout the world. Cultural values and historical values can be a source of inspiration for innovation, creativity, and social and economic development.

In line with previous research Ruzdardi & Jazuli, 2015 [26] states that the success of preserving a cultural heritage is the community. Previous research conducted by Arrazaq et al, 2023 [27] who believes that Fort Cepuri Kotagede (one of the cultural heritage sites) has the potential to be used as a source for learning history in social studies subjects. This research also states that social studies lessons can use learning resources in the surrounding environment.

Previous research conducted by Rozaq, 2021 [28] believes that the local wisdom of Sadranan culture can be used as a guide to life for the community because it contains character education values. character building. These values can be adopted as activities in teaching and learning activities at school. The local wisdom values of Sadranan discovered by researchers include religious values, gratitude values, tolerance values, love of the country, care for the environment, and mutual cooperation values.

The novelty of this research is that through this new approach, our research not only identifies the role of society in conservation, but provides new insights to stimulate innovation and increase the effectiveness of Muara Jambi Temple preservation efforts. This research is important to carry out because it can increase public understanding of the importance of preserving cultural heritage and motivate further participation. So the current research aims to determine the efforts made by the community in preserving it. With the latest research taking place in one of Jambi's cultural heritage sites, namely Muarajambi Temple.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1 Types of research

This research uses qualitative methods with a naturalistic type. Qualitative research is a research method based on the philosophy of postpositivism which is known as an interpretive and constructional paradigm which views social reality as something holistic or complete, full of dynamic, complex meaning and interactive symptom relationships [29], [30]. Naturalistic is research where the researcher goes directly into the field, that is, he is in the midst of the phenomenon he is observing [31]. This research is used to examine the condition of natural objects.

2.2 Research sites

The locations in this research are the Jambi Cultural Heritage Conservation Agency as the manager and Muara Jambi Village, Maro Sebo District, Muaro Jambi Regency, Jambi Province. Descriptive qualitative methods rely on qualitative data, which can take the form of interviews, participant observation, field notes, or document analysis. This qualitative data provides deep insight into the experiences and perspectives of individuals or groups. The aim of this research is to determine community participation in efforts to preserve the Muarajambi Temple cultural heritage as well as steps to increase community participation.
2.3 Data Collection Techniques

In qualitative research, the data source sample is selected using purposive sampling and is snowball sampling. Determining the data source sample in the proposal is still temporary, and will develop later after the researchers go to the field [32], [33]. The instruments used to collect data were observation sheets, interview sheets and documentation. Direct observation in this research is data collection by making direct observations. The objects of observation are the Jambi Cultural Heritage Conservation Center and Muara Jambi Village. This observation is to find data through real events that occur in the field. Meanwhile, interviews were conducted by asking questions structured according to guidelines to obtain information regarding community participation in preserving the cultural heritage of Muarajambi Temple.

2.4 Data analysis technique

Documentation is a data collection technique as a complement to primary data which can provide real evidence in the form of photos, videos or sound recordings, field notes and sources related to this research [34]. Data analysis based on Miles and Huberman's theory refers to a systematic approach to organizing, grouping, and interpreting qualitative data in research. Explained by Bayrakci & Karacaoğlu, 2020 [35] The following are several steps in data analysis based on Miles and Huberman's theory: data collection, data reduction, data display, data verification, interpreting data, making conclusions and continuing by reflecting on the results found. This approach helps researchers understand and explain complex phenomena in their natural context.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Muarajambi Cultural Heritage Area is located on the banks of the Batanghari River, which is the longest river in Sumatra, which originates in the Bukit Barisan Mountains and empties into the east coast of Jambi. In the past, until the end of the 1990s, the Batanghari River was still active as the main transportation route connecting upstream and downstream areas in Jambi, including when visiting the Muarajambi Temple National Cultural Heritage area.

In line with current development developments, getting to Muarajambi Temple can be reached by land vehicle. The Muarajambi Temple National Cultural Heritage Area received national cultural heritage status through the decree of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia No: 259/M/2013 with an area of 3,981 Ha. Located at 01˚ 26” 25.0” South Latitude, 01˚ 30”22.4” South Latitude and 103˚ 37”23.7” East Latitude, 103˚ 42” 45.4” East Longitude.

3.1 Community Participation in Efforts to Preserve the Muaro Jambi Temple Cultural Heritage

The success of the Muarajambi Temple preservation process cannot be separated from the participation of the Muara Jambi Village community. Community participation is very necessary to encourage the achievement of national and regional development goals. This shows that community participation in development can overcome problems and gaps for both local communities and stakeholders. In this case, BPCB Jambi as the manager, the Regional Government and the surrounding community play a very important role in preserving the Muarajambi Temple Cultural Heritage.

3.1.1 Forms of Community Participation

a) Participation is not real

1) Participation of ideas/thoughts

This participation in ideas or thoughts is participation in the form of opinions from the community to participate in preserving the cultural heritage in Muara Jambi Village, namely the Muarajambi Temple. This participation is the initial stage in planning and encouraging an activity, this can be seen from community involvement in preserving existing cultural heritage. The results of the interviews stated that the community had attended meetings or been invited and provided their opinions and suggestions. Apart from that, the community also had an awareness of preserving existing cultural heritage. However, there are also some people who have...
not actively provided suggestions or opinions because they have never been invited to discussion forums or meetings that discuss cultural heritage preservation. This participation is still categorized as low as conveying the community's ideas is not being channeled. This is due to a lack of approach between the community and the management.

2) **Partisipasi sosial**

Community participation that can be seen in this aspect is community involvement in every activity which indicates that they are part of the residents of Muara Jambi Village, such as community service and maintaining the cleanliness of the Muara Jambi enshrinement environment.

![Figure 2. Mutual cooperation between the custodians of Muaro Jambi Temple](image)

The custodian of Muarajambi Temple is on duty in the field to guard and care for cultural heritage. Implementation of its duties and functions is based on Republic of Indonesia Law No. 11 of 2010, namely concerning Cultural Heritage. This mutual cooperation activity is an activity carried out in the Muarajambi enshrinement area. This activity is a form of social participation where the caretaker is part of the community and part of the management, namely BPCB Jambi.

b) **Real participation**

   1) **Energy participation**

This form of participation can be seen from the community's activeness in contributing to and preserving existing cultural heritage. Participation is given in the form of personnel for implementation that can support the success of a program. In this regard, the researcher interviewed one of the people of Muara Jambi Village who is the chairman of the Muara Jambi Environmental Care Youth Community which mobilizes the Muara Jambi community and invites people from an early age to learn to care about the environment.

![Figure 3. PPLMJ activities (participatory waste program for visitors to Muaro Jambi Temple)](image)

Based on the results of the interview, it can be seen that the community already has the awareness to participate in preserving the cultural heritage of Muara Jambi Temple. This is proven by the existence of the PPLMJ Community which was founded on January 19 2015 with 43 members. Community participation is quite good, one of which is the Muara Jambi Environmental Care Youth community (PPLMJ) which is chaired by the Muara Jambi community itself. This community was created with community awareness, especially Muara Jambi youth, to care more about the environment, both Muara Jambi Village and Muarajambi Temple.

One of the existing programs is the participatory waste program for visitors to Muaro jambi Temple. The program implemented by PPLMJ is on big holidays such as New Year, Vesak and Eid, in which case visits to Muarajambi Temple increase. This program is to make temple visitors aware of the community and to dispose of rubbish in the right place so that the preservation of the temple can be maintained. Even though there are still some Muara Jambi village residents who cannot participate in activities because of their busy schedules, this certainly does not dampen the awareness that exists among Muara Jambi Village residents.

2) **Monetary participation/funding**

This form of participation is where the community is involved in providing donations in terms of funding as well as equipment and other items of personal property. Community participation in participation activities in donating money is a form of participation in material form, although the process can be indirect, but...
the implications can create an outcome in the form of physical development. There is no participation in the form of money because funding for cultural heritage preservation efforts comes from the management, namely BPCB Jambi, and if the land owned by the community contains cultural heritage, compensation will be given.

3) Representative participation
This participation is representation which is carried out by giving trust to the person elected as chairman or committee. In this case, Muara Village has a Village Head who is a village government official who has the authority, duties and obligations to organize the village household as its representative in the community.

4) Skills participation
This form of community participation can be seen from the willingness of the people of Muara Jambi Village to share their knowledge and skills in activities that support tourism and the preservation of the existing Muarajambi Temple Cultural Heritage. In this case, residents provide their skills in making superior products which will later be sold to visiting tourists and can improve the social welfare of the community. Regarding participation in this form of skill, the researcher interviewed one of the Muarajambi Temple souvenir activists. Based on the results of interviews, it is known that the community already has the skills to provide souvenirs as a characteristic or souvenirs that tourists bring when visiting a cultural heritage site, namely the Muarajambi Temple. In this case, it can support the economy of the surrounding community. Not only that, the community can also channel their skills and participate in preserving cultural heritage in the form of promotions through souvenirs that have been marketed.

The character of love for one's country plays a key role in efforts to preserve Muara Jambi Temple as a cultural heritage. Conservationists, whether local communities, government or private parties, are sincerely and consciously connected to the noble values of Indonesian culture which are reflected in the temple. Love for one's homeland is the main driver for understanding and appreciating the nation's rich history, feeling the urgency of preserving it as a form of respect for the heritage of one's ancestors [36]–[38]. In the context of Muara Jambi Temple, the character of love for the homeland is reflected in concern for historical heritage which is the nation's identity. The local community, with its love of culture and history, is actively involved in preservation programs, such as monitoring, maintenance and education regarding the history of the temple. They realize that through preserving Muara Jambi Temple, they are helping to maintain the cultural roots that shape and empower national identity. The importance of the character of patriotism is also reflected in collaborative efforts between the government, society and the private sector [39]–[41]. In the spirit of mutual cooperation, they united to protect the Muara Jambi Temple so that it remains majestic and stands strong as a silent witness to Indonesia's historical journey. By preserving this cultural heritage, the character of love for one's country becomes not only a spirit of sacrifice, but also pride in the legacy that is passed on to future generations.

3.2 Preservation of Cultural Heritage
The cultural heritage in Muara Jambi Village is not only protected by the government, but also the local community. Maintenance by the local community is necessary considering that cultural heritage objects are historical heritage and indicate that the area has potential. Preserving cultural heritage objects is very necessary considering that these objects are national assets that can be used for a long time. Preservation of cultural heritage objects is related to activities for the maintenance, protection, management and development of cultural heritage objects which are ultimately aimed at attracting tourists to visit the area where the cultural heritage objects are located.

a) Protect
The protection activity for Muarajambi Temple is basically an effort made to prevent and overcome cultural heritage from damage, destruction and destruction by means of rescue, security, zoning, maintenance and restoration. In relation to cultural heritage areas, zoning is the most important protective measure. This protection is not only carried out by the manager, but the people of Muara Jambi Village also participate.

One concrete form that can be taken to increase community participation in protecting cultural heritage is saving cultural heritage objects. This effort aims to prevent cultural heritage from being damaged, destroyed or destroyed. In this case, the researcher interviewed one of the people of Muara Jambi Village who is also a BPCB Jambi conservation technician.
Based on the results of the interview above with Mr. Asril as the Muara Jambi Temple cultural heritage technician, if the public finds cultural heritage objects, the community can report it to the management, namely the Jambi Cultural Heritage Conservation Center for research and there is a team of Alleged Cultural Heritage Objects whose aim is to provide outreach to discoverers and reporters regarding the preservation of cultural heritage. A concrete manifestation of efforts to save cultural heritage objects is the existence of a museum located in the Muara Jambi temple area, which aims to ensure that if cultural heritage objects are found, they can be preserved and saved by placing them in a museum. Furthermore, security measures for cultural heritage objects are an effort to protect and prevent cultural heritage objects from being threatened or disturbed.

Regarding security, efforts that can be made include placing a custodian to monitor the security of the temple from activities that damage the integrity of the temple. The custodians are the local community who are part of BPCB Jambi and there are security guards to guard the Muara Jambi temple area. Furthermore, regarding the restoration of cultural heritage, this is an action to restore the physical condition of cultural heritage objects, cultural heritage buildings and damaged cultural heritage structures in accordance with the authenticity of the materials, form of layout or workmanship techniques to prolong their life. Researchers interviewed Muara Jambi Temple cultural heritage technicians. It was explained that efforts to preserve cultural heritage in restoration activities are currently being carried out by the Jambi Cultural Heritage Conservation Center and the people of Muara Jambi Village who are working together to restore the original form and strengthen the structure. This activity is carried out as a program every year, in which the people of Muara Jambi participate.

b) Develop

The development of the Muara Jambi Temple cultural heritage in the context of conservation development efforts is defined as increasing the potential value, information and promotion of cultural heritage as well as its utilization through research, revitalization and adaptation. This development activity must maintain the principles of benefit, safety, maintainability, authenticity and the values attached to it. The direction of development is to spur economic development, the results of which will be for the maintenance of cultural heritage and the welfare of the people of Muara Jambi Village.

There are activities carried out by the community in the form of promotions both through the media and directly, which in this activity cannot be separated from community participation. This promotion is carried out to strengthen cultural identity and improve the quality of life and income of the community.

c) Utilize

The existence of Muara Jambi Temple close to community settlements can provide benefits to the surrounding community. Utilization of this cultural heritage is the utilization of cultural heritage for the greatest benefit of the welfare of the people of Muara Jambi Village, such as social, educational, scientific, cultural and tourism interests while maintaining its sustainability. The government and regional governments facilitate utilization in the form of granting utilization permits, support from conservation experts, financial support and training. Apart from that, facilities are also provided through the promotion of cultural heritage to strengthen cultural identity and improve the quality of life and income of the community.
The use of the Muarajambi temple is for social education, science, learning, research by archaeologists and local, national and even national history experts. The existence of Muarajambi Temple close to the community can provide opportunities for the community to interact with visiting tourists. Muarajambi Temple is a Buddhist religious service, but the community really appreciates and together protecting the Muarajambi temple area is a real manifestation of mutual support in preserving cultural heritage. Utilizing Muara Jambi Temple as a means of education is a smart step that not only increases understanding of history, but also fosters a sense of love for the country. This temple can be used as an open historical laboratory, where students can be directly involved in exploration, research and direct learning at this historical site. In addition, using Muara Jambi Temple as a learning resource can create an impressive and comprehensive educational experience, stimulate curiosity, and create awareness of Indonesia’s rich cultural heritage.

The preservation of cultural heritage has great significance, both from historical, cultural, social and economic perspectives [42], [43]. Cultural heritage reflects the cultural and historical heritage of a society or nation. Preserving cultural heritage helps maintain cultural identity, strengthens a sense of community pride and solidarity, and encourages respect for cultural diversity [44], [45]. Cultural heritage is a source of data and research for scientists, historians, archaeologists, anthropologists and other scientific disciplines [46]. Information and knowledge gained from cultural heritage can help develop a better understanding of human civilization, environmental change, and cultural developments in the past and present [47], [48]. Local wisdom-based learning in social studies subjects has a number of significant interests. This not only enriches students’ learning experience, but also makes a major contribution to a deep understanding of history, culture and social dynamics at the local level. By incorporating local wisdom into social studies learning, schools can create a learning environment that is more interesting, relevant, and empowers students to become knowledgeable and responsible thinkers towards their communities.

Local wisdom-based learning in character education has a number of fundamental interests. By pioneering the values and norms that grow in local culture, this learning makes a major contribution to the formation of student character. Local wisdom often reflects universal moral values such as honesty, cooperation and mutual respect. This learning provides a strong moral foundation to shape students’ character. Learning based on local wisdom helps link character to social conditions and values valued in local society. This makes character education more relevant and has a real impact on students’ daily lives.

This research is in line with research conducted by Pramartha (2022) [49] who believes that the value of local wisdom can be represented in historical heritage. Local wisdom values can be integrated into various areas of human life. Education based on local wisdom can be used as a medium to preserve regional potential.

This research is in line with research conducted by Hetarion et al., 2020 [50] which states that these local wisdom values can be implemented in social studies subjects and other subjects. It is hoped that educational and teaching practices in schools are able to equip students with the introduction of understanding, awareness, inheritance, development and safeguarding of socio-cultural philosophical values of life both locally and nationally.

Cultural synergy creates a solid foundation to maintain the sustainability of Muara Jambi Temple through participatory innovation. In efforts to preserve this cultural heritage, a collaborative approach involving local communities, government and archaeologists is the main key. Through dialogue and active cooperation, joint efforts are realized in combining traditional knowledge with modern technology. In this way, an innovative solution is created that not only maintains the physical nature of the temple, but also revives the cultural values contained within it. Cultural synergy and participatory innovation is not just a concept, but a historic step that ensures the sustainability of Muara Jambi Temple as an inseparable part of its proud cultural heritage.

This research can provide a better understanding of how communities engage in conservation. The results can be used to improve the effectiveness of conservation strategies and identify areas requiring improvement. However, the research results may only apply to the Muara Jambi Temple context and cannot be directly applied to other cultural sites. Therefore, limited generalization may be a limitation.
4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research that has been carried out and analyzed carefully, it can be concluded that the efforts made to increase community participation in preserving this cultural heritage are various activities or programs that have been carried out for Muarajambi Temple, namely protecting, developing and utilizing. This protection can be done by rescuing, securing and restoring cultural heritage. The development of this cultural heritage is the utilization of cultural heritage for the greatest benefit of the welfare of the people, in this case it can be used for religious, social, educational and scientific purposes. Through learning local wisdom, students can better understand and appreciate the cultural diversity that exists around them. Local wisdom is often closely related to the values and norms of society. This learning can be used as a medium to teach and strengthen positive characters such as respect, honesty, responsibility, and concern for the environment and others.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to express his sincere thanks to all parties involved and who have supported the ongoing research.

REFERENCES


Cultural Synergy: Participatory Innovation in Maintaining the Sustainability of Muaro Jambi


