

Assistance in Commemorating Ashura in Kampung Nangka Bugang: Efforts to Preserve Tradition, Meaning, and Social Cohesion

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Abstract

Purpose: This research aims to explore the implementation and significance of Ashura commemoration in Nangka Bugang Village, highlighting its role in preserving Islamic traditions and fostering social cohesion within the local community.

Method: The study utilized participatory observation and in-depth interviews with community leaders to understand the rituals and social values associated with Ashura in this region.

Practical Application: The findings emphasize Ashura's role in strengthening community bonds. This research can inform efforts to preserve cultural traditions and enhance social unity in similar communities.

Conclusion: Ashura commemoration in Nangka Bugang Village is both a spiritual and social event, contributing to cultural preservation and community solidarity. The study provides insights into the importance of religious observances in promoting social cohesion.



Introduction

The commemoration of the 10th of Muharram or Ashura is an important moment in the Islamic calendar. This day is observed to mark the martyrdom of Imam Husain, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad SAW, on the plains of Karbala. Across the world, Muslims observe this day in various ways, from fasting to special rituals (Basrowi et al., 2023). In Indonesia, Ashura commemoration varies depending on the local traditions of each region. Nangka Bugang Village in Pasuluhan Village, Walantaka District, is one such area with unique traditions for observing Ashura. This study aims to examine how the local community commemorates Ashura, as well as the meaning and values embedded in the observance (Basrowi et al., 2023). Studies on Ashura observance at the local level are still limited, particularly in Banten. Therefore, this research is expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of religious practices and local traditions in Indonesia (Gafur et al., 2023). Nangka Bugang Village, as part of the Banten region, has distinctive socio-cultural characteristics. This area is known for the strong influence of traditional Islam, blending with local wisdom. The Ashura commemoration here is interesting to study as it reflects the dynamics between Islamic teachings, local traditions, and the social development of the community (Rustandi et al., 2023).

In a broader context, this study is also relevant to the discourse on Islam Nusantara, where religious practices often blend with local cultures. The Ashura observance in Nangka Bugang Village can serve as a concrete example of how universal Islamic values are translated into meaningful local practices for the community (Purwaningsih, Santoso, and Basrowi, 2024). Additionally, this research is significant in the context of preserving intangible cultural heritage. The Ashura commemoration, with its unique rituals, is part of Indonesia's rich cultural heritage that needs to be documented and understood in depth. This aligns with government efforts to preserve the diversity of Nusantara cultures (Basrowi et al., 2024). Another interesting aspect to explore is the role of Ashura commemoration in strengthening social cohesion. Amidst modernization and globalization, traditions like this can serve as a social bond that unites communities. Therefore, this study will also explore how Ashura functions as a social mechanism to maintain the community's identity and solidarity (Sofiah et al., 2023). Considering these various aspects, this research is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of Ashura commemoration in Nangka Bugang Village. The results will contribute not only to academic understanding of local religious practices but also serve as a reference for policymakers in efforts to preserve and develop local traditions in line with Islamic and Indonesian values (Basrowi et al., 2023).

Table 1. Partner Issues, Priority Justification, and Solutions Already Implemented		
Partner Issue Areas	Points/Details of Prioritized Issues that Have Been Justified	Solutions Offered and Successfully Implemented by the Team
Low level of knowledge	The community of Nangka Bugang Village does not fully understand the meaning of Ashura commemoration.	The activity offered accurate information regarding the profound meaning of Ashura commemoration.
Lack of intensive socialization regarding Ashura commemoration	Lack of access to information and socialization regarding the Ashura commemoration, which holds many meanings.	There is a need for socialization that focuses on discussing the meanings behind Ashura commemoration, its history, and the significant events that took place on the 10th of Muharram, which should be remembered to motivate contemporary life.

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Partner Issue Areas	Points/Details of Prioritized Issues that Have Been Justified	Solutions Offered and Successfully Implemented by the Team
Influence of globalization	The influence of global culture can divert the community's attention from religious observances.	It is important to provide understanding about the changes occurring in the era of globalization, without erasing religious traditions that offer many benefits, ensuring these activities are sustained within the community.
Insufficient ability to absorb accurate information from social media	The community consumes more information from social media, making it difficult to discern what is true and what is false.	Socialization and guidance are needed on the wise use of social media and understanding which news is true or false.

Source: Processed primary data, 2024

Method

The subject of community service in this activity is the people of Nangka Bugang Village, Pasuluhan Village, Walantaka District. The location for the service was chosen based on the uniqueness of the Ashura commemoration tradition that is still maintained in this area, as well as the potential for developing the social and spiritual values contained in the commemoration. This community service activity involved 30 residents from Bugang Village, Pasuluhan Village, Walantaka District. The PkM (Community Service) activity was carried out using persuasive and participatory action methods, supported by the following stages (B. Basrowi et al., 2023). This socialization also served to align perceptions regarding current issues, which had previously been jointly justified. This method was used to motivate and deliver cognitive educational material, such as building awareness and knowledge about reproductive health and how to use social media as a source of health-related information. This method allocated 40% of the time for lectures or to present issues and proposed solutions, while the remaining 60% was dedicated to discussions and Q&A sessions. The result was a commitment and agreement between the partners and the proposers regarding the implementation of activities and the achievement of target outcomes for the partners (B. Basrowi et al., 2024). At the initial stage, a pre-test was conducted to uncover the knowledge, motivation, and urgent needs of the partners through brainstorming, followed by an intervention that included the provision of materials through the dissemination of key program items, followed by training and mentoring (Azhani Pricillia and Thayib Hasroel Moh, 2019).

Result

The training and mentoring activity was attended by 30 people from Bugang Village in Pasuluhan, Walantaka, and they were very enthusiastic in paying attention to the material presented by the mentor.

Figure 1. Presentation of material by the mentor, followed by the residents of Bugang Village



The community service team distributed questionnaires, and 30 residents filled out the questionnaire. Below are the results and discussion.

Table 2. Basic Understanding of Ashura Commemoration

Respondent's Answer		Pre-test		Post test	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Valid	1.00	2	7	0	0
	2.00	8	27	2	7
	3.00	8	27	4	13
	4.00	9	30	11	37
	5.00	3	10	13	43
	Total	30	100.0	30	100.0

Source: Processed primary data, 2024

Table 2 shows that before the community service activity, most of the people in Bugang Village did not understand the origins of Ashura commemoration. It can be seen that only 3 people (10%) had very high knowledge, 9 people (30%) had high knowledge, 8 people (27%) had sufficient knowledge, 8 people (27%) had low knowledge, and 2 people (7%) had very low knowledge. After the community service activity, the community showed a significant change. The majority of participants who attended now understand the basic historical origins of Ashura commemoration. Specifically, 13 people (43%) had very high knowledge, 11 people (37%) had high knowledge, 4 people (13%) had sufficient knowledge, 2 people (7%) had low knowledge, and no one had very low knowledge. Therefore, it can be concluded that the knowledge of the people in Bugang Village regarding the meaning behind Ashura commemoration has significantly increased.

Table 3. Understanding of the meaning of Ashura commemoration

Respondent's Answer		Pretest		Post test	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Valid	1.00	2	7	0	0
	2.00	6	20	0	0
	3.00	8	27	6	20
	4.00	11	37	10	33
	5.00	3	10	14	47
	Total	30	100.0	30	100.0

Source: Processed primary data, 2024

Table 3 shows that before the community service activity, most of the people in Bugang Village did not understand the meanings behind Ashura commemoration. Specifically, only 3 people (10%) had very high knowledge, 11 people (37%) had high knowledge, 8 people (27%) had sufficient knowledge, 6 people (20%) had low knowledge, and 2 people (7%) had very low knowledge. After the community service activity, the community showed a very significant change. The majority of participants who attended now understand the meanings behind Ashura commemoration. It was found that 14 people (47%)

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had very high knowledge, 10 people (33%) had high knowledge, and 6 people (20%) had sufficient knowledge, with no one having low or very low knowledge.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the knowledge of the people in Bugang Village regarding the meanings behind Ashura commemoration has significantly increased.

Table 4. Understanding of globalization changes affecting Ashura commemoration culture

Respondent's Answer	Pretest		Post test	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1.00	0	0	0	0
2.00	11	37	4	13
3.00	5	17	7	23
4.00	14	47	9	30
5.00	0	0	10	33
Total	30	100.0	30	100.0

Source: Processed primary data, 2024

Table 4 shows that before the community service activity, most of the people in Bugang Village did not understand how and what factors have caused Ashura commemoration to gradually fade away. Specifically, no one had very high knowledge, 14 people (46%) had sufficient knowledge, 5 people (17%) had moderate knowledge, 11 people (37%) had low knowledge, and no one had very low knowledge. After the community service activity, there was a significant understanding that globalization can affect traditions, such as the Ashura commemoration, which is being remembered less and less. It was found that 10 people (33%) had very high knowledge, 9 people (30%) had high knowledge, 7 people (23%) had sufficient knowledge, 4 people (13%) had low knowledge, and no one had very low knowledge. Thus, the level of knowledge of the community, particularly the participants in the PkM, significantly increased regarding the influence of globalization on the Ashura commemoration.

Table 5. Understanding the proper use of social media to obtain accurate information

Respondent's Answer	Pretest		Post test	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1.00	1	3	0	0
2.00	12	40	5	17
3.00	9	30	6	20
4.00	7	23	8	27
5.00	1	3	11	37
Total	30	100.0	30	100.0

Source: Processed primary data, 2024

Table 5 shows that before the community service activity, most of the participants did not understand how to differentiate between good and bad news related to the history of Ashura and the importance of commemorating Ashura. Specifically, only 1 person (3%) had very high knowledge, 7 people (23%) had high knowledge, 9 people (30%) had sufficient knowledge, 12 people (40%) had low knowledge, and 1 person (3%) had very low knowledge. After the community service activity, participants understood the importance of carefully reading social media and comprehending the meaning behind it, so they would not be misled or follow inappropriate cultures. It was found that 11 people (37%) had very high knowledge, 8 people (27%) had high knowledge, 6 people (20%) had sufficient knowledge, 5 people (17%) had low knowledge, and no one had very low knowledge. Thus, the participants' knowledge level increased significantly. The main activity carried out was mentoring and practical training on skills for human resources in using social media and obtaining accurate information related to the history and meaning of Ashura celebrations

(Sofiah et al. 2023).

Figure 2. Preparing for the Ashura commemoration event



Figure 3. Traditional food in the Ashura commemoration



The training and socialization on the meaning of Ashura and the commemoration held in Bugang Village have many benefits. The Ashura commemoration holds profound meaning for Muslims, both in terms of history and spirituality. Through this commemoration, Muslims are invited to remember and reflect on significant events in Islamic history, such as the sacrifice of Prophet Musa and the rescue of the Israelites from Pharaoh for Sunni Muslims, and the martyrdom of Imam Husain bin Ali at Karbala for Shia Muslims. By commemorating Ashura, Muslims can strengthen their relationship with Allah and take lessons from the steadfastness of faith and the struggle against injustice demonstrated by the prophets and important figures in Islamic history.

Furthermore, commemorating Ashura plays an important role in strengthening religious identity and solidarity within the Muslim community. Through the rituals, prayers, and reflections carried out during Ashura, Muslims are reminded of the importance of values such as obedience, justice, and sacrifice for truth. This commemoration also becomes a moment to strengthen social bonds within the community, through shared activities that strengthen relationships among fellow believers. Thus, Ashura commemoration is not only important as a reminder of history but also as a means to strengthen faith and unity in living religious life (Rustandi et al. 2023). Below are the details of the socialization stages:

- 1) Preparation of material explanation by religious leaders
- 2) Introduction to online media that can be used to obtain information about the history of Ashura commemoration
- 3) The practice process by reviewing participants' knowledge to explain again in the future regarding the material presented

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- 4) Question and answer process
- 5) Evaluation of understanding

At this stage, the mentor conducting the community service helped the participants, especially the residents of Bugang Village in Pasuluhan, to prepare mobile phones that could access the internet, open Google, and search for information related to Ashura commemoration, including its history, meaning, and the changes that have occurred (Muti'ah et al. 2023).

After the socialization, material briefing, training, mentoring, and facilitation, a post-test was conducted to determine whether the material was effectively absorbed and understood by the partners, and if it could be operationalized by the partners. This evaluation also assessed whether (1) the partner's knowledge had truly increased, (2) they were able to use online information media, and (3) there was an improvement in understanding that the Ashura commemoration has profound meaning related to the recognition of Islam for the events that took place on the 10th of Muharram (Basrowi et al. 2023).

The evaluation was conducted three months after the activity ended and was then periodically monitored to observe progress until the end of the community service program period.

Figure 4. The atmosphere of the socialization and Ashura commemoration event.



Discussion

The community engagement activities conducted in Kampung Nangka Bugang demonstrate the crucial role of education and social empowerment in preserving cultural and religious traditions. The commemoration of Ashura, which holds both spiritual and historical significance, was found to be underappreciated or misunderstood by many residents prior to the intervention. This highlights the impact of modern challenges such as globalization and unfiltered information from social media, which can gradually erode local religious practices and communal values.

Through a series of targeted socializations, training sessions, and mentoring, the program successfully increased participants' understanding of the history and deeper meanings of Ashura. Post-activity evaluations showed a significant rise in awareness and knowledge across multiple areas—including the origin of Ashura, its spiritual symbolism, the effects of globalization on religious practices, and the proper use of social media to access reliable information.

More importantly, the activities fostered a sense of collective identity and strengthened social cohesion. The shared learning experience and community-led events became a unifying platform that reinforced solidarity among residents. By involving local religious leaders, leveraging participatory methods, and incorporating digital literacy, the program bridged traditional knowledge with modern tools, empowering the community to take ownership of their cultural and spiritual heritage.

The success of this initiative also reflects the importance of culturally sensitive and community-based approaches in sustaining intangible cultural heritage. It demonstrates that religious commemorations like Ashura are not only spiritual events but also social instruments that can enhance community resilience, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and moral values.

In a broader context, this case contributes to the discourse on Islam Nusantara—a localized interpretation of Islam that harmonizes religious values with Indonesian culture. The Ashura commemoration in Kampung Nangka Bugang exemplifies how religious practices can be preserved and adapted meaningfully within a changing socio-cultural landscape, ensuring that tradition remains relevant and vibrant in the lives of future generations.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of data before and after the community service activities, it can be concluded that: (1) The issues related to the understanding of the Ashura commemoration, its meaning, and its relevance to current life have been effectively addressed through continuous education, training, assistance, and facilitation; (2) The detailed findings are as follows:

- 1) The community of Kampung Bugang showed a significant improvement, with the majority of participants demonstrating an understanding of the historical origins of the Ashura commemoration. Specifically, 13 people (43%) had very high knowledge, 11 people (37%) had high knowledge, 4 people (13%) had moderate knowledge, 2 people (7%) had low knowledge, and none had very low knowledge.
- 2) The community also showed a significant improvement in understanding the meanings embedded in the Ashura commemoration. It was found that 14 people (47%) had very high knowledge, 10 people (33%) had high knowledge, and 6 people (20%) had moderate knowledge, with no participants showing low or very low knowledge.
- 3) The community significantly understood that globalization can affect longstanding cultural traditions, including the declining awareness of the Ashura celebration. It was found that 10 people (33%) had very high knowledge, 9 people (30%) had high knowledge, 7 people (23%) had moderate knowledge, 4 people (13%) had low knowledge, and none had very low knowledge.
- 4) The community of Kampung Bugang recognized the importance of critically reading information on social media and understanding its meaning to avoid being misled or adopting inappropriate cultural practices. It was found that 11 people (37%) had very high knowledge, 8 people (27%) had high knowledge, 6 people (20%) had moderate knowledge, 5 people (17%) had low knowledge, and none had very low knowledge.

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