
Ecofeminism in the Framework of Local Wisdom: Viewing the Existence of Mpu Uteun as a Forest Guardian

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Abstrak

Degradasi alam seperti illegal logging dan perburuan liar menyebabkan kerugian besar, terutama bagi masyarakat yang bergantung pada hutan. Perempuan, yang memiliki hubungan intim dengan alam melalui kebutuhan seperti air, pangan, dan tempat berlindung, menjadi kelompok paling terdampak. Dalam konteks ini, ekofeminisme muncul untuk memperjuangkan kesetaraan dan melawan dominasi terhadap perempuan dan alam. Manifestasi ekofeminisme terlihat pada komunitas Mpu Uteun di Damaran Baru, Kabupaten Bener Meriah, yang dipimpin oleh perempuan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif fenomenologi dengan lima responden terpilih melalui purposive sampling. Hasilnya mengungkap empat tema utama: Dependensi Alam (ketergantungan manusia pada alam), Kompetensi Feminitas (kemampuan perempuan menjaga hutan), Rekognisi (pengakuan terhadap Mpu Uteun), dan Eksistensi (well-being komunitas). Temuan ini menggambarkan peran perempuan sebagai penjaga hutan sekaligus agen perubahan yang signifikan dalam ekofeminisme.

Kata Kunci: Ekofeminisme; Kearifan Lokal; Eksistensi; Mpu Uteun; Penjaga Hutan.

Abstract

Environmental degradation, such as illegal logging and poaching, has caused significant harm, particularly to communities dependent on forests. Women, who share an intimate connection with nature through needs like water, food, and shelter, are among the most affected groups. In this context, ecofeminism emerges to advocate for equality and challenge the domination of women and nature. A manifestation of ecofeminism is seen in the Mpu Uteun community in Damaran Baru, Bener Meriah Regency, led by women. This qualitative study employs a phenomenological approach, with five respondents selected through purposive sampling. The findings reveal four key themes: Nature Dependency (human reliance on nature), Feminine Competence (women's ability to protect forests), Recognition (acknowledgment of Mpu Uteun), and Existence (the community's well-being). These insights highlight the role of women as forest guardians and significant agents of change within the ecofeminism framework.

Keywords: Ecofeminism; Local Wisdom; Existence; Mpu Uteun; Forest Rangers.

INTRODUCTION

Aceh is one of the provinces with the largest tropical rainforest area in Indonesia which is home to a wide variety of flora and fauna, both endemic and non-endemic (Manik & Rasnovi, 2023). However, Aceh is also included in the list of provinces that have experienced forest degradation due to massive illegal logging and land conversion (Purwanto & Anhar, 2023). Illegal logging and land conversion are driven by various tendencies, such as infrastructure development, mining concessions, the palm oil industry, and *illegal logging* that does not pay attention to ecological conservation aspects (Mardhiah et al., 2018). This is certainly very unfortunate, considering that forests in various dimensions can be defined as natural resources that concern the livelihood of many people so that they become vital assets (Rafiqi, 2021). Furthermore, this practice of environmental destruction ultimately has a direct impact on the escalation of natural disasters, such as the increase in the earth's surface temperature which is closely related to changes in the variation in the intensity of rain, floods, landslides, and others (Wahyuni & Suranto, 2021).

In Bener Meriah Regency, *illegal logging* and deforestation practices are generally driven by increasing agricultural needs and disproportionate infrastructure development plans that sacrifice forest integrity (Sloan et al., 2018). The loss of forest integrity not only has an impact on the emergence of natural disasters, but also gives birth to conflicts between humans and animals (Montero-Botey et al., 2024; Sugianto et al., 2023). Furthermore, indigenous peoples who coexist with forests (Dwijayani et al., 2023; Rachman, 2021) Women are also the most affected communities (Angraini et al., 2023). Therefore, this condition ultimately encourages the emergence of communal awareness, especially among women to participate in the process of forest management and conservation (Pratiwi & Boangmanalu, 2019) one of them is Mpu Uteun (Ekowati & Syamsudin, 2022).

Mpu Uteun is a group of women forest rangers who are part of the Damaran Baru Village Forest Management Institute (LPHK) (Rafiuddin & Arkita 2023). Mpu Uteun's presence was driven by the trauma of the flash flood disaster due to massive forest degradation in 2015 which hit Damaran Baru Village (Manalu et al., 2022; Hajad, 2024). They patrol the forest, plant medicinal plants, and re-nursery forest areas that have been destroyed (Rafiuddin & Arkita, 2023). However, the deepening of the patriarchal culture

that has led to restrictions on women's involvement in governance and policy formulation in the forestry sector has created barriers to this ecofeminist movement (Maulana, 2017).

METHODS

Methodology deals with processes and methods by which the researcher acquires knowledge of the procedure (Addaeroby & Febriani, 2024; Creswell & Miller, 2000) which can be helpful in answering the research questions and objectives of this research (Khan, 2014). The research method used by the researcher is a qualitative research method as a systematic and subjective approach, focusing on life experiences and their meanings (Khan, 2014). The location of the research was carried out in Damaran Baru Village, Timang Gajah District, Bener Meriah Regency. Sampling was carried out by *purposive sampling* which focused on group representation. This sampling technique was chosen because it emphasizes *judgemental*, selective, and subjective assessment (Rai & Thapa, 2019). The research data collection was carried out by semi-structured interviews.

Furthermore, the analysis of research data was carried out using *Taguette software* for *coding* data collection which aimed at grouping research themes. *Taguette* is a free source that is used to provide *coding* for the data retrieval results obtained. The *coding stages* are carried out in two stages; *Open Coding* and *Axial Coding*. In the book "*Compendium for Early Career Researchers in Mathematics Education*", *Open Coding* is part of data analysis that focuses on conceptualization and categorization of phenomena. Initially, the data is broken down into small pieces to understand the core of each piece of data and develop code to illustrate the essence of that data. Meanwhile, *Axial Coding* is needed to analyze the relationship between the categorizations that have been developed in the *Open Coding process* (Vollstedt & Rezal, 2019).

After the main theme findings were obtained, the researcher conducted a *Member Checking* to reconfirm the results of the main findings of the research. *Member Checking* is carried out as a system that provides solutions for researchers to ensure an accurate depiction of respondents by providing an opportunity for respondents to reconfirm the interpretation of the data, thereby adding credibility to qualitative studies (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Then the researcher uses *Peer Debriefing* which supports the credibility of the data in qualitative research and provides a means towards the formation of overall

confidence in the findings by discussing the results of the provisional research findings with experts in order to achieve an analytical discussion (Spall, 1998).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

In the results of this study, 5 resource persons were obtained based on the sampling methodology. Respondents 1, 2, 3, and 4 are members of Mpu Uteun who are actively patrolling the forest. Respondents 1, 2, and 3 are female members of Mpu Uteun, while Respondent 4 is a male member of Mpu Uteun. Respondent 5 is not a member of Mpu Uteun, but actively participates in forest conservation activities and Mpu Uteun activities. Respondent 5 was taken in sampling to see the perspective of the community who are not actively involved and operating under the Damaran Baru Village Forest Management Institution.

After data collection with interviews, observations, and literature reviews, the findings of the research theme were as follows:

Table 1
Key Theme Findings

Theme	Meaning	Subtopic	Indicator
Nature Dependence	Basic human needs for the surrounding environment, such as food, water, shelter, and other natural resources. Especially women's needs for intensive nature.	Women's Need for Forests	Women's Sense of Responsibility for the Forest
		Conditions of Uncertainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Richness • Self-Awareness • Forest Conditions • Environmental Changes

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Attitudes in the Forest • Community Attitude to Protect Forests • Community Trauma to Disasters • Efforts to Protect Forests
		Forest Culture	Knowledge about forests
Feminine Competencies	Women's ability to lead and manage forest ranger communities and their conservation. This theme also includes women's resistance and resilience to break the traditional stigma of housewives/	Women's Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's Capabilities • Humanity for Women • Women's Leadership
		Mother Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of Belonging • Women's Resilience • Negative Public Reaction to Mpu Uteun • Female Forest Ranger Obstacle Course
		Skill Interpersonal Femitas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanist approach; Illegal Logger Compliance and Male Aggressiveness

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mpu Uteun Appearance
Recognition	A recognition and validation, both material and non-material from the community, agencies, and the media to get individual welfare.	Non-Material Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men's Reaction to Mpu Uteun • Gender Equality • Bureaucratic Accessibility • Mpu Uteun Achievements
		Material Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material Services Reply
Existence	The existence of Mpu Uteun as an individual and as a community that is sustainable and strives to achieve escalation	Individual Well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Economy
		Community Well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund Dependencies • Organizational Structure

The results of data collection show four main theme findings in the study that are summarized in such a way. The main theme explains about human dependence on nature, especially women who are bound to nature. This theme explains how women become the first victims when nature conservation is not maintained.

"We are also called women, there is a disaster called water, there is no water a day, we have already squeezed it at home, right? If men are different, if they have drunk coffee calmly, we are women who wash it, bathe children, it is very extraordinary women with water, right?" (W1, R2). "For us ourselves, women mean a lot of money, that initially the story of disasters and water shortages was very *complex* for women. Therefore the forest is very important for women" (W1, R2)

In the second theme, there is a theme that explains the ability of women and their role in protecting forests. This theme describes women's capabilities and how women's characteristics in running a community and their achievements.

“*What are you doing, mothers wandering in the forest?*” It's definitely people's ridicule, it's definitely something like that. *What are you looking for?* We don't know how to protect this forest other than we can see others like the fall of trees into the water. There are many things that can be told, but it seems that Mother told it a bit like that,” (W1, R1). “There have been many awards, from Kalpataru, from the 2020 APPI Award, if I'm not mistaken, (there are) 300 tourist villages, got a training center (from the APPI Award), and in America yesterday they also received an award from the Lotus Award.” (W1, R1)

The third theme explains about Recognition obtained by individuals and groups. This theme explains how material and non-material validation can be obtained because of the struggle and achievements of Mpu Uteun in protecting forests.

“Yes, that was earlier, because of the enthusiasm, because I had already planted it, so I wanted to get an award from the ministry.” (W1, R2). “Yes, there is, the term is to stem these rebellious people, more mothers who can do this. It is very necessary for women, wherever it is, women who guard the forest must be safe. Yes, including this person (mothers) whose mouth can't stop, we are just lazy to listen to it, if it has protested, it has nothing to do, it is also lazy for us to hear. So, there is no social gap, there is no commotion. We just take care of it (the forest).” (W1, R4)

The last theme in the research explains the existence of Mpu Uteun as a community and Mpu Uteun as an individual who is a member of the community. This theme describes how the Mpu Uteun community continues to run and *sustain* with consideration of the welfare of each individual who is a member of Mpu Uteun (*community well-being*). This theme also interprets how the existence of Mpu Uteun as a community also has an effect on the welfare of individuals with the recognition obtained,

so that there is a motivation to get more recognition for individual *well-being* and the achievement of the existence of members.

“So, with that achievement, it is possible that tourism (villages) can, well, get income, the work of the community with the potential in the village. Because if it can cover the existing potential, the village is more advanced with the arrival of many people, the village's income will increase, right.” (W1, R2). “We are also administrators who are not suitable or who are not smart, we learn again, how to survive and unite this institution, both from the administration, from the way it works, we have to improve it slowly, continue to invite others, be interested in us.” (W1, R3).

Discussion

Women's Dependence on Nature

Women have a very strong spiritual bond with nature and how both *stakeholders* need each other in their existence. Further, (Hidayati & Sunandar, 2024) explained that women are important actors in forest conservation because they are the most intimate victims when environmental degradation occurs. This is also the main driver of Mpu Uteun's involvement in protecting the forest (Ekowati & Syamsudin, 2022). Flash floods in 2015 in Damaran Baru have made the women's community aware of their dependence on nature (Rafiuddin & Arkita, 2023). Furthermore, women's dependence on nature is also inseparable from women's water needs, which are three times more than men's. This is because in traditional societies, women are often positioned as family water and food providers (Pratiwi & Boangmanalu, 2019).

Feminine Competencies in Protecting Forests

Basically, the feminist and ecological movements have a harmonious goal, where feminism forms a new perspective on patriarchal and androcentric practices, while ecology is the right to life of other creatures without being arbitrarily needed (Sumarsono, 2013). This equation ultimately gave birth to a new view related to feminine competence in protecting forests. From the perspective of ecofeminism, female femininity has the privilege of being able to rule men (Maulana, 2017). This privilege plays an important

role in the forest patrol process carried out by Mpu Uteun. But (Wahyuningroem, 2005) In her writing, she mentioned the context of social interaction in Aceh, women are in a subordinate position to men, this is due to the interpretation of cultural and religious values with a patriarchal net that prioritizes men over women.

Apart from that, history can prove that women are a pillar in the creation of the identity of the Acehnese people into a collective ethnic unity. So that the initiative of Acehnese women to gather in a congress called *Duek Pakat Inong Aceh* in 2000 resulted in demands for women's participation in various dynamics of social, political, and economic changes. The tangible form of the results of this agreement is decision-making through the provision of a minimum of 30% of the votes. This is encouraged and motivated by how women's leadership is implemented in the history of royal leadership in Aceh, where the government is controlled and held by women. Not only in political power, women are also given a forum to express themselves on the battlefield called *the Inong Balee* army which consists of the widows of soldiers who died in battle. The Kingdom of Darussalam has been led by women for more than 50 years who have succeeded in providing protection for women with various policies that function to equalize women's welfare (Hasjmy, 1977). So, it is felt appropriate for Mpu Uteun, a community of environmental guardians led by competent women to lead. If women are given opportunities and *platforms* to develop, then women will take advantage of this by maximizing their abilities in order to gain recognition and existence from the environment.

Furthermore, Mpu Uteun also has good communication skills. They often use a humanist communication approach, so that communication goals can be achieved well (Mukoyimah & Hermawan, 2021). Therefore, it is not surprising that Mpu Uteun's involvement is able to overcome the intensity of *illegal logging* massively (Angraini et al., 2023). This correlates with the conflict management applied by women in the Mpu Uteun community. There are significant differences in how women and men can manage conflicts (Dildar, 2017). In the research conducted by (Brahnam et al., 2005) Regarding "*A Gender-Based Categorization for Conflict Resolution*" explains that women use productive and collaborative conflict management patterns, while men tend to use patterns that seem more aggressive and disturbing. Research conducted by (Hidayah & Hariyadi, 2019) regarding "Differences in Early Marriage Conflict Management Based

on Gender" revealed that women have better conflict management skills than men. In the ability to compromise, women are also rated better than the approaches taken by men, such as threats and violence. On the contrary, women use strategies to soften conflicts, so it is not surprising that Mpu Uteun is known for her humanist approach in reprimanding illegal loggers or illegal *logging* perpetrators and resulting in compliance from the perpetrators (Mardianto et al., 2000).

In research (Sholihah et al., 2023) researching "Women's Resistance to Family Social Institutions in the Heart of a Wife" using the perspective of Feminism, Wolf's Power explains that women have free space to move and do not have to depend on male dominance. This is what supports the housewives in the Mpu Uteun community – with all the obstacles that exist, to persistently carry out forest patrols and reduce the incidence of illegal logging. There was a negative reaction from the community that Mpu Uteun accepted just because women entered the forest guard community, but Wolf's perspective reveals that women still dare to face all obstacles and have a strong defensive force – this is one of the *innerbeauty* that women have and is a source of resilience for women (Sholihah et al., 2023). He further explained that there is resistance in our women, they try to equalize their position with men by defending their opinions. (Wolf, 1994).

Mpu Uteun as a community that has been moving for 5 years is considered consistent in carrying out their goals from the beginning, so that recognition such as national and international awards is achieved as a persistent form and self-determination of the manifestation of women's competence. Wolf further explained that the brave attitude that exists in women makes them able to set their hearts regardless of the dangers and challenges they face. This certainly reflects Mpu Uteun who remains consistent in protecting the forest, despite the uncertain conditions that exist in the forest, such as steep roads, landslides, and so on, does not dampen Mpu Uteun's enthusiasm to continue patrolling, even though there is no guarantee that they will survive when they are in the forest.

Mpu Uteun's Recognition in Protecting Forests

Recognition in Mpu uteun results from stimuli obtained so as to produce positive experiences that can be perceived and felt by individuals and groups. Pavlov (Safira et al., 2024) explained that stimuli received continuously will continue to provide strong

reinforcement to individuals. This strengthening can be interpreted as negative and positive strengthening. In this case, Mpu Uteun gets material recognition; incentives, certification of forest management legality, and non-material recognition; validation of success by the community, gender equality, achievement known by the global community, to bureaucratic accessibility. Positive reinforcement that makes a group or individual interpret that the experience they feel produces good results, so that positive reinforcement produces certain and specific behaviors to regenerate the positive reinforcement (Safira et al., 2024).

Positive and negative reinforcement can be explained in B.F. Skinner's behavioristic theory of *Operant Conditioning*. In the reinforcement given, such as an award for the achievements obtained by Mpu Uteun, it will encourage individuals or groups to strengthen the stimulus by reappearing behaviors that produce positive reinforcement (Addaeroby & Febriani, 2024; Safira et al., 2024). Thus, Mpu Uteun members feel a feeling of enthusiasm for getting awards and recognition globally. The achievement obtained by Mpu Uteun is a positive reinforcement that produces a strong stimulus for Mpu Uteun to continue to be encouraged and protect the forest in order to get the desired recognition. Therefore, positive reinforcement, such as Mpu Uteun's experience, encourages Mpu Uteun to gain recognition. The recognition obtained by Mpu Uteun includes recognition from men of how women with their capabilities can take care of women. In the study, it was also found that Mpu Uteun received recognition for his ability to protect forests and lead the community.

Recognition was obtained on the basis of Mpu Uteun's success in increasing collective participation and empowering women in protecting forests. The key to achieving recognition is awareness and involvement of the importance of building emancipation to encourage women to be involved in the escalation process, as well as the involvement of individuals in participating collectively and mastering the skills needed to protect forests (Xi, 2024). Women's participation in protecting forests is considered important for resources that can affect the social integration of society, so that the standard of living can be spelled out from the attachment of individuals and their environment to form an ecological movement and the constant strengthening of feminism.

Mpu Uteun's achievements reflect how the ecofeminism movement continues to run and gain recognition from the public. This success indicator is also supported by the

current global environmental conditions that continue to support women to be able to progress and develop. Women in general are much more diligent and communicative with a much more humanist approach that prioritizes feelings (Muslimah, 2021), so it is appropriate that Mpu Uteun can take a humanistic approach to illegal loggers that involve feelings.

The Existence of Mpu Uteun as a Community and Individual

The existence of the Mpu Uteun community was born from the social interaction of people who care about forests so that they cause changes in feelings and impressions, to further awaken collective consciousness (Amalia et al., 2021). This self-awareness ultimately encourages Mpu Uteun to present solidarity that urges existence to be present in the Mpu Uteun community. The process of forming this social solidarity is based on the development of the Mpu Uteun community which pays attention to the aspect of contribution to become a catalyst for ecofeminism. The development process of Mpu Uteun is created from the bottom (*bottom-to-top management*) so that each member of Mpu Uteun can develop a self-help character and identity as a forest guard (Hanif et al., 2022).

The contribution made by the Mpu Uteun rangers evokes a collective impact that can be felt by many people, even people outside the village of Damaran Baru. Changes on the basis of the contributions made by Mpu Uteun have given birth to much better-quality self-welfare for Mpu Uteun members themselves (Brown et al., 2019). One of the individual welfares obtained from Mpu Uteun's contribution is the source of economic income of the Damaran Baru community which is much more varied and independent. Contributions that also have an impact on individual welfare can be felt by Mpu Uteun members in their lives. In the approach to the Psychological *Well-Being theory*, there is an aspect of Environmental *Mastery* which is a leap to achieve self-actualization (Satryo et al., 2023). Environmental Mastery is seen by the extent to which the environment is available to the individual, or the individual who benefits from the environment (Nufus, 2024). In this case, how can Mpu Uteun as a forest guard protect and take advantage of the forests that they have managed and protected.

In this case, the Mpu Uteun Community provides a new spirit for members to continue to protect forests and manage forest wealth for material benefits such as

individual economy and independence. In addition to material benefits, the existence provided by Mpu Uteun in a non-material way is how members can feel the achievement of Mpu Uteun's success in the form of rewards. The experience gained by Mpu Uteun members finally motivates members to always be able to repeat achievements that provide positive reinforcement to individuals and achieve self-actualization (Sholeh, 2023). The motivation obtained by individuals comes from existing motives and strengthening. So that thoughts, encouragement, and attention are more to achieve motivation causing certain behaviors to gain recognition. This explains why Mpu Uteun is still persistent in carrying out his activities to protect the forest because of the award they want to get.

In the hierarchy of needs theory approach, Maslow explains that humans need a sense of self-esteem, such as being valued and appreciated, the freedom to be independent, known (recognized) by their environment and relatives ((Simons et al., 1987; (Munir, 2022). So that the need for individuals to get awards is necessary with the aim of gaining recognition as an actualized individual as a member of the Mpu Uteun forest guard community. Actualization and welfare are also obtained as a community, should achieve *sustainability* in a much more prosperous and developed community. The well-being of a community can describe something more than just the sum of a few parts or just a few individuals, but as something united that appears in community *well-being*. Assessments of community cohesion, values of unity, belonging and ownership of community and community processes can reflect the collective mood which is a subjective form of *community well-being* (Sirgy, 2011; Bramston et al., 2022; Sung & Philips, 2018, in Atkinson et al., 2019).

Furthermore, *community well-being* is a combination of social, economic, environmental, cultural, and political conditions that individuals and their communities identify as essential for them to thrive and fulfill their potential (Wiseman & Brasher, 2008). In the book "*What is Community Wellbeing?*" (2017) there are 4 important elements that are aggregated into *comprehensive community well-being*; *Individual Subjective Well-being* (ISWB), *Individual Objective Well-being* (IOWB), *Community Subjective Well-being* (CSWB), and *Community Objective Well-being* (COWB). ISWB means how individuals can interpret happiness and satisfaction in their own life, while IOWB focuses on the material and social conditions of a person's life that are the

benchmark for living a good and actual life. In CSWB, its well-being refers to the collective perception of community members about the level of happiness and life satisfaction of those living in a community. Meanwhile, COWB is defined as material and social conditions that are considered crucial to live an actual life in a community (Atkinson, 2017). In the Mpu Uteun community, the well-being of individuals and communities is achieved and actualized, but there are still some conflicts regarding how the achievement of *community well-being* is obtained; objectively or subjectively.

Subjective well-being is assessed based on predetermined qualities and attitudes, i.e. a way of life that effectively determines what society wants to refer to the norms in society, while *Objective well-being* refers to measurable conditions that contribute to a decent life, focusing on the material conditions that are fulfilled so that individuals and groups can thrive. The material conditions achieved can vary, ranging from sanitation, budget procurement and facilities, to job security and transportation, such as Occupational Safety and Health (K3). In these conditions, Mpu Uteun is still struggling to get objective welfare in the community or *Community Objective Well-being* as a form of existence (Voukelatou, 2021). Ideally, this welfare should be balanced to achieve good community resilience, so that it is not only concerned with subjective achievement to obtain welfare, but also objective achievement that helps community resilience be achieved. So it is undeniable that a priori in the community to continue to exist is material dependence.

There is an approach to Resource Dependency Theory explained by Barney and Ulrich (1984) in a book entitled "*The External Control of Organizations; A Resources Dependence Perspective*" that sustainability in the community exists and depends on how the organization can utilize its power in obtaining resources. Scott (1998) in the book, it is explained that the use of *power* by external parties (in this study, permanent donors Mpu Uteun) for the resources needed, will limit management and thwart the process of achieving organizational goals, this can threaten the existence of a community or organization (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2015).

The reflection on the power limitations obtained by Mpu Uteun is clearly illustrated when there is external intervention as a constant donor for Mpu Uteun. When Mpu Uteun wants to improve the objective welfare of the *rangers*, but it is limited because of the power of external parties that limit the achievement of the goals of the Mpu Uteun

community itself. So that there is a conflict in the community, regarding how the imbalance of power exists between the Mpu Uteun community and external parties who have a position of providing greater material resources than Mpu Uteun, then the balance between the relationship between the two is fairly crucial and there is no need for a position of dominance over each other (subjective and objective welfare) to achieve the actual existence of the community (Febrianti et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

In nature conservation and its protection, women are the most crucial actors in preserving nature because of the relationship between the two. Women are the first victims to feel forest damage due to their dependence on nature. Researchers feel that women will be able enough to hold the pillar of nature protection because of their abilities that are quite competent and different from men. Quite different competencies are how women are skilled in communicating humanistically and empathetically in solving problems and achieving resolutions. In this case, it can be seen from how the community of women forest rangers, Mpu Uteun from Aceh can minimize the incidence of *illegal logging* and *hunting* that occurs in the forest with a negotiation and compromise approach by providing a competent enough solution to restore forest sustainability.

External support from outside parties provides Mpu Uteun with validation and recognition that continues to be achieved and pursued because it is a positive experience that has a tremendous impact on Mpu Uteun and its forests. This recognition continues to be pursued and fulfilled so that Mpu Uteun continues to survive and get the recognition they deserve, this is considered fundamental to give birth to the existence of Mpu Uteun and achieve prosperity for individuals and communities in a balanced and overall manner. Existence is considered essential for community resilience and its role in protecting forests, it is a dynamic of how ecofeminism plays a role in Mpu Uteun to try to make the Mpu Uteun community live and exist. However, it should be noted that the importance of two aspects; individuals and communities need to be in line to avoid conflicts of interest in roles and powers that occur, so comprehensive consideration and discussion are needed regarding all *stakeholders* who play a role inside and outside the Mpu Uteun community. If a women's community like Mpu Uteun cannot highlight its existence, then

important movements such as ecofeminism will not live and rotate to maintain natural balance and gender equality at the same time.

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This support not only motivates us to continue to innovate, but also provides researchers with the opportunity to develop their potential and skills in the field of research. The researcher hopes that the results of this study can make a positive contribution to forest management and its relationship with women and can be a valuable reference for other researchers in the future. Again, thank you for your trust and support.

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