

# Constructing an indigenous ecological curriculum: educational practices of the Sedulur Sikep community

Dwi Ayu Ningrum<sup>1</sup>, Budiyo<sup>2</sup>, Yuli Utanto<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Faculty of Education and Psychology, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia

## Abstract

This study examines how Sedulur Sikep Community (Samin) in Pati, as one of the indigenous community units that still adheres to their principle of not sending their children to formal schools, designs, implements, and develops an ecological education curriculum. The approach used in this research is qualitative, which focuses on the hermeneutic phenomenology method to analyse the position of their ecological education curriculum from the perspective of social reconstruction. Data in this study were obtained by utilising the observation method and informal in-depth interviews. The discussion of the research findings centres around two major issues: First, since 2006, the development of the ecological education curriculum of Sedulur Sikep Community in Pati has been an effort in response to the cement factory establishment plan that threatens their lives and livelihoods as peasants. Second, in addition to the threat of ecological damage, the Sedulur Sikep Community is also dealing with the challenges of peasant regeneration, both within and outside the community, where peasants are ageing and the younger generation is reluctant to inherit their parents' way of life as peasants. This study offers a new insight by explaining the phenomenon of the indigenous community from the perspective of curriculum studies. Eventually, this article implies the need for Indonesia's national curriculum to address future ecological problems, besides the national and global food security challenges.

## ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 16 January 2025

Accepted 15 March 2025

## KEY WORDS

*Sedulur Sikep*, indigenous knowledge, ecological curriculum, socio-constructivism, peasant movement

## INTRODUCTION

Contrary to the Indonesian Government's policy of encouraging formal school participation (Satriyo & Mulyadi, 2022), *Sedulur Sikep*, or better known as Samin community in Pati, Central Java, Indonesia, is one of the few indigenous community units that persist with their traditional principle of not sending their children to formal schools (Benda & Castles, 1969; Supratikno & Adi, 2021). Samin Surasentika (pronounced: Surosentiko) and his followers believed that formal school was closely linked to Dutch colonialism (King, 1973) and was not suitable for *Wong Sikep* children, who were essentially content to be peasants (according to Sister A, July 9, 2024). In late 1901, the Colonial Government announced the implementation of the Ethical Policy, which included irrigation, transmigration, and education (Ricklefs, 2008). However, in 1905, the peasants' movement (including Samin and his followers) reaffirmed their refusal to participate in these programs (King, 1973; Vickers, 2011).

Besides the historical background mentioned above, this decision was also influenced by the path they chose as peasants, leading them to take full responsibility for their children's education (Putri, 2017a). Thus, inspired by Samin's teachings, parents at home designed, implemented, and developed an educational curriculum to meet their needs as peasants. This educational process has existed for over a century (Maliki, 2019). However, this steadfastness in principle has

✉ Corresponding author: [dwiayuningr@gmail.com](mailto:dwiayuningr@gmail.com)

often led them to be associated with negative stigma of backwardness and isolation (Sulistiyono, 2011). In addition, based on the public's assumption that educated people are those who have a degree and follow formal education, *Wong Samin* are also often labelled as uneducated and, therefore, in the past, they were often bullied for this (conversation with Sister G, May 24, 2024).

Essentially, their decision was founded on the historical context of schools being associated with Dutch colonialism (King, 1973). Moreover, in their opinion, formal schools are considered to be a place of socialisation of ideologies (including religion) and moral principles that are not in line with their teachings (Maliki, 2019). Based on this assumption, according to *Wong Sikep*'s understanding, formal schools are not the right place to learn for their children because they have the potential to negatively influence *Sedulur Sikep*'s principle of life, which is basically to work as peasants. This means that the house (*mondokan*) and cultivated land (*nggarapan*) or rice fields are the most suitable learning places for their children (Putri, 2017a). Parents become teachers as well as curriculum makers and developers, the complete educational authority responsible for their children's education.

This reality, as shown above, demonstrates that the Government is dealing with groups that are resistant to formal education, amidst its effort to continue to increase school participation rates through the promotion of the Smart Indonesia Program during Joko Widodo's administration (Antaranews.com, 2023). However, this does not mean that all *Wong Sikep* reject formal schooling for their children, because in another community unit in Klopodhuwur Village, Blora, *Wong Sikep* have adapted to a new "way of life" and no longer consider formal school education as a problem for their community (Wati, 2023). Similarly, the presence of the cement plant also gave rise to three camps within the *Sedulur Sikep* community in general, each with a different attitude: acceptance, rejection, and passivity or inaction (Putri, 2017a). It is interesting to investigate further: what makes one community unit with another, despite having the same historical roots and teachings, experience different perceptions about education and the presence of the cement factory.

Moreover, agriculture is the centre of *Wong Sikep*'s universe, so it is no wonder that their relationship with the land, water and all the elements that make up the Kendeng Mountains, Mother Earth, on which they depend, is intimate and integrated into their lives (Adam & Bagir, 2022). "*Ibu Bumi*", mother earth, is associated with a mother who gives, cares for, nurtures and preserves (Putri, 2017b). Consequently, humans who receive the kindness of Mother Earth should be responsible for maintaining its sustainability (Wardhani & Samsuri, 2020).

The ecological education curriculum lived by *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati is a study that can be continuously developed. The momentum of the cement factory establishment plan in Sukolilo District, Pati Regency, became the starting point that encouraged *Sedulur Sikep*—both victims and actors—to organise peaceful and non-violent protests. Slightly different from the passive and non-violent "disobedience" movement against the Colonial Government, especially post-1914, which was carried out by Samin Surasentika (pronunciation: Surosentiko) and his followers (Korver, 1976). Although still non-violent, the resistance movement against the cement factory establishment plan initiated by *Sedulur Sikep* community in Pati is more proactive and open (Ba'asyin & Ba'asyin, 2014) and has shifted from private to public (Novianto, 2020).

Since the cement factory establishment plan, *Sedulur Sikep* were instantly able to gain the attention of the public because of their activism: how could people without formal education be able to mobilize the masses and echo the global narrative of the environment (ecology) as a weapon of their resistance to cement corporations, even be able to gain victory according to the PTUN (State Administrative Courts) decision in 2009 (Suharko, 2017). The establishment of the cement factory, for them, is the first stage of potential ecological damage around the North Kendeng Mountains, which will have a direct impact on their lives and livelihoods as peasants.

However, the Kendeng Mountains have crucial historical and spiritual value for the lives of *Sedulur Sikep* and the people around them. It provides sources of life such as soil, water (ca-

tachment) and groundwater basins as a source of water springs, oxygen, as well as diversity of flora and fauna that work within the web of natural food chains, also important materials such as caves, rocks, and other minerals as a shelter for animals besides sources of food for the entire ecosystem in it (Putri, 2017a). Water that irrigates rice fields and supplies the surrounding villages, as well as land for peasants to cultivate—obtained from Kendeng Mountains—are fundamental elements for the survival and sustainability of peasants (both *Sikep* and non-*Sikep* peasants) and the surrounding society.

Existing research on the education of the *Sedulur Sikep* (Samin) community has examined various aspects of their values and practices. For example, Roesminingsih and Nugroho (2018) explored the core character values taught and practiced within the *Sedulur Sikep* community in East Java, including modesty, honesty, solidarity, and harmony with others. Contrary to modern societal views that often equate happiness with material wealth and economic success, the *Sedulur Sikep* emphasize harmonious interaction with the environment, comfort in daily life, and the avoidance of conflict as key components of a fulfilling life. This worldview contributes to the uniqueness of the Samin community—both individually and collectively—setting them apart from mainstream society.

Kholiq et al. (2022), through their analysis of the implementation of the national education system (Sisdiknas), also found an effort to detribalize minority ethnic groups such as the Samin community in the Indonesian national education system. This is because the centralised national education system does not provide sufficient space for diversity. On the other side, from the perspective of Islamic education, Khoeroni et al. (2023) highlight the relevance between the education practiced by the *Sedulur Sikep* community in Kudus that takes place at home with the pillars of *i'tiqodiyah* (related to faith), *khuluqiyah* (teachings about morality) and *amaliyah* (related to share and maintain knowledge) in the values strived for in Islamic education.

Moreover, the ecological aspects lived by the *Sedulur Sikep* community in Pati have also been of concern to many researchers; however, the focus of their research has been more on movement activism, peasants' movement and the politics of resistance to cement factories, such as research conducted by Ba'asyin & Ba'asyin (2014), Putri (2017a), Maliki (2019), Adam & Bagir (2022) and Purnomo (2023).

This research offers a novel contribution to curriculum studies by examining how Indigenous communities—specifically the *Sedulur Sikep*—develop and enact their own educational practices in the absence of formal schooling. Framed within a social reconstructionist perspective (Schiro, 2013; Posner, 2004), the study investigates how the *Sedulur Sikep* community responds to ecological threats and external pressures through informal, culturally embedded modes of education. Rather than positioning curriculum solely within institutional settings, this research broadens the discourse by highlighting how Indigenous knowledge systems function as dynamic, responsive curricula rooted in lived experience. By addressing a significant gap in curriculum studies—which tends to focus on formal school-based education—this study contributes to ongoing efforts to recognize and integrate Indigenous ecological wisdom into broader educational frameworks, offering a critical lens through which to rethink sustainability and social justice in education.

## METHOD

The research was carried out using a qualitative approach with a method that emphasises hermeneutic phenomenology. Creswell (2007) revealed that qualitative research produces categorisations, patterns and themes departing from organised data. Qualitative research is more inductive (departing from specific things) to be drawn to a broader abstraction (Creswell, 2007). In this research, the researchers play a role as a key instrument in collecting and analysing data (Prastowo, 2017).

In addition, the hermeneutic phenomenology method used to analyse the data was chosen by the researcher to answer the interpretation of the meaning of the *Sedulur Sikep* community in Pati towards ecological aspects and how they develop an ecological education curriculum from the perspective of social reconstruction. Based on the existing phenomenon, this phenomenological research places special emphasis on how life (individual's worldviews and daily-personal experiences) is being experienced, that's why it can be related to humanistic research (Denscombe, 2007). Hermeneutic phenomenology involved extended activities of investigating, reflecting and describing the lived experiences (van Manen, 1990), while phenomenology prefers to put its focus on efforts on getting a clear abstract of the 'things in themselves' as people lived it (Denscombe, 2007).

The data collected is qualitative data, both primary and secondary resources. Primary resources gathered from field notes and interview notes with six members of the *Sedulur Sikep* community in Pati, three non-Sikep peasants and a retired civil servant (non-Sikep) conducted during the field study ( $n = 10$ ). All respondents' identities in this article are kept anonymous, and only initial names are used. Secondary data as complementary resources was also explored in order to enrich the analysis and further study, which was gathered from digital contents made by Wiji Kendeng (an art group which plays gamelan and *tembang*—Javanese traditional songs—and its members are *Wong Sikep's* children from *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati and Kudus) and also Kendeng Squad (a pop-punk music group, one of whose members is *Wong Sikep's* son in Pati).

The data in this study were obtained by using two techniques of data collection: field observations and informal in-depth interviews (open-ended and unstructured interviews). These two techniques are not conducted separately or sequentially, but complement each other and, at certain times, are conducted together. Field observations were conducted eight times from May 2024 to March 2025. In addition, the researcher also doing a short live-in for five days in a one of *Wong Sikep* household in order to confirm and validate the data, besides play the role of a participant observer, being part of the community, by bracketing perceptions, assumptions, and judgments of the research subject (Creswell, 2007), according to the principles of phenomenological research. Observation is mainly carried out on activities, phenomena, experiences, and events that occur at home (*mondokan*) and cultivated land (*nggarapan*) to understand how they interpret their experiences and daily lives. In parallel, observations and interviews were also conducted with non-Sikep villagers who were involved in the activism of the struggle against the cement factory.

Before conducting the research, the researcher compiled a list of key questions to explore the answers to the research problems, although in practice the researcher did not use structured questions and let the interview run informally to get a subjective picture (about thoughts, feelings, and experiences) from respondents with an atmosphere of empathic understanding (Smith et al., 2009). However, key open-ended questions were asked during the interviews.

During the live-in period, researchers suspend their perceptions, assumptions, and judgments about the research subjects (Creswell, 2007), in accordance with the principles of phenomenological research. As a step toward gaining the trust and comfort of the respondents, researchers also imitate the community by dressing and living their daily lives in the same way as they do, including in terms of language. In some expressions, the language used by the *Sedulur Sikep* community has specific terms that differ from standard Javanese. For example, when introducing themselves, they say, "*Tepangaken, pengaran kula ...*" (Please allow me to introduce myself, my name is ...). The term used is *pengaran* instead of *jeneng*.

Researchers positioned themselves more as learners (Prastowo, 2017) rather than evaluators. This could cause some biases, especially since the respondents in this study were opposed to the establishment of a cement factory in the Kendeng Mountains. Nevertheless, the limitation of this study is that the researchers are not in a position to affirm a stance of agreement or opposition to the establishment of a cement factory, but rather to explore their educational curriculum so



that they can arrive at a stance of opposing the cement factory establishment: what kind of ecological curriculum inspires them to respond to the ecological challenges they face.

The data obtained was then categorised into several important themes, including Samin's teachings and *Laku*, agriculture, the struggle against mining and cement factories, and *Sedulur Sikep*'s ecological curriculum. Based on these themes, the researchers conducted an analysis and sought connections among the themes (Smith et al., 2009) to find answers to the research questions. Data analysis was conducted using hermeneutic phenomenology to uncover the hidden curriculum of the *Sedulur Sikep* community and draw inspiration from it (Hardiman, 2015).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The traditional education curriculum of the *Sedulur Sikep* Community in Pati draws on the daily lives and experiences of individuals and communities. Therefore, experience and daily life (referred to as *laku*) have an important position in understanding the direction of their education curriculum. Furthermore, the ecological education curriculum of the *Sedulur Sikep* Community cannot be separated from the context of the peasant's experience as the only way of life, so that in its progress the momentum of the cement factory has more or less changed the landscape of the ecological education curriculum as well as the orientation of their activism regarding ecological aspects. These will be discussed one by one in this article.

### A. Experienced daily lives as *laku*

Fulfilling the teachings of Samin as a code of ethics and morals that contains the values of honesty, simplicity, sufficiency, independence, and critical attitude is one of the things practised and perpetuated in the *Sedulur Sikep* community. *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati has a guideline of life that continues to be upheld according to what was taught by their predecessor Samin Surasentika (Putri, 2017a):

*"Wong Sikep should not have drengki (malice); srei/kemiren (jealousy); panasten (irritability or hatred each other); bedhog (alleges); colong (stealing); pethil (miserly); jumput (take steal a little such as shoplifting); nemu (find and claim goods); dagang (trade); kulak (wholesale); blantik (broker); mbakul (sell); nganakna duit (moneylender); mbujuk (lie); apus (scheming); akal (being tricky); krenah (give bad advice); ngampungni pernah (not return favors); dahwen (accuse without proof); and nyiya-nyiya marang sepada (disgrace others)."*

Besides the things mentioned above, *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati, based on the statements of several respondents, can also be recognised through their profession as peasants, not attending formal school, not wearing long pants and *peci* (Indonesian felt cap, usually black) for men, and not being polygamous.

In its course of development, in addition to *laku*, Samin's teachings, and all things related to agriculture, *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati expanded their *laku* with ecological environment aspects: that being *Wong Sikep* should be based on respect for ecology, which is manifested through their experiences and daily lives. This starts from a simple habitus, such as being "friendly" with waste and contributing to the best solution to the waste problem, at least in their closest environment. Organic waste, for example, is reprocessed into useful items. Fruit peels are recycled into eco enzyme that can be used as dish soap. In addition, cow faeces are also processed into biogas as fuel for cooking.

The momentum of cement has changed many things in the life of *Sedulur Sikep* Community in Pati. Their three-year struggle to defend the Kendeng Mountains area from the potential threat of damage posed by the establishment of the PT Semen Gresik cement company (now renamed PT Semen Indonesia) in the 2006-2009 period, and thereafter, as happened in Kayen and Tambakromo Districts in Pati and also in Rembang Regency, Central Java, became the momentum for the revival of a community that was initially often made a mockery of. Before the

cement factory was socialised, *Wong Sikep* was known as a closed community (Widodo, 1997), but after the cement factory, they began to open up to the “outside world” and even participate in community activities (according to conversation with Brother K and Sister G, February 18, 2025). Their consistency and persistence in living life as an independent community and free from the co-optation of authority is an important study that needs to be explored further.

Although the *Sedulur Sikep* community in Pati has begun to engage with the “outside world,” they demonstrate a strong ability to filter information and contextualise knowledge in ways that align with their cultural values and are internalised within their families and community. For instance, their knowledge of organic farming is not solely acquired from academic sources but also developed through hands-on experimentation and trial-and-error processes aimed at finding the most effective methods. Another example, based on the researchers’ observations, is the behaviour of young *Sedulur Sikep* individuals. While online gaming culture is widespread among youth more broadly, *Sedulur Sikep* adolescents show a notable capacity for self-regulation, avoiding excessive dependence on digital devices. Their consistency and commitment to living independently and self-reliantly present a valuable subject for further investigation.

## B. Peasants as dharma of life

Working as a peasant is a practice that is also lived by the *Sedulur Sikep* community as a non-negotiable discourse. Being a peasant is interpreted as a life calling, their “*dharma*” in the world. The word “*Dharma*”, according to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, is defined as “the basic principles of cosmic or individual existence; divine law”, which refers to a code of conduct that guides a person to achieve their purpose of life. They believe that their role as peasants is a form of spirituality that transcends rationality, which considers profit and loss.

In reality, life as a peasant is not easy at all, even when it comes to meeting domestic needs (Reuter & MacRae, 2024), but *Sedulur Sikep* remain faithful to their choice. One thing they firmly believe is that being a peasant is a noble choice because modern humans cannot survive without peasants. Additionally, their ancestors have taught and set a good example as peasants who sustained future generations. This also emphasises that by working as a peasant, it means *Wong Sikep* follow the teachings of Samin, who is also a peasant (conversation with Sister G, March 7, 2025).

*Sikep* Peasants in Pati rely on the nature of North Kendeng Mountains as the land where the seeds of rice and other crops, such as secondary crops and horticultural crops, are sown. The Religion of Adam, as the spirituality of *Wong Sikep*, is an important factor that informs their practice. The Kendeng Mountains, seen as a figure of Mother Earth, is a figure of a woman, a mother, who must be guarded, cared for, respected, and treated well, similar to how they treat rice fields and cultivated land with all their hearts. For them, without the presence of Mother Earth, there would be no new life. This is where humans play a role in cultivating the land that nature provides to make it fertile. This state of mind and body then forms a unity between life, livelihood, and their virtues as peasants. Mother Earth is a conjunction to express gratitude to the Creator, just as the Creator manifests the love through the nourishing presence of nature.

Therefore, *Sedulur Sikep* will do various ways to protect and defend Mother Earth from all kinds of threats. There is a kind of conjunctional and reciprocal relationship between human and nature. Nature is a manifestation of The Giver’s love for all creatures on earth. In turn, humans express their gratitude to The Giver through efforts to care for and maintain it. By hurting Mother Earth, it is the same thing as hurting peasants and anyone else who relies on Her for their livelihood.

## C. Cement factory as a symbol of the threat of nature destruction

Originally, the *Sedulur Sikep* community in Pati interpreted ecological aspects as limited to the scope of agricultural work, such as recognising the characteristics of cultivated land and what crops are suitable for planting, what is the right fertiliser, when is the right season to plant

and so on. In other words, the ecological aspect is also interpreted as the work ethic of the peasants who are *nrima ing pandum*, accepting what is given, like Mother Earth, who always gives without demanding. Regardless of the condition of the crop, for example, when it is stricken by disease, Sikep peasants still take good care of it. If in the end the results received are not as expected, Sikep peasants are still grateful for it. They have experienced this when, in 2022, their rice fields were flooded, causing them to suffer crop failure several times a year. This situation did not lead them to complain or protest, as the disaster was beyond their control, but nature itself.

However, it was different in 2005 when the socialisation of the plan to establish a cement factory in Sukolilo District, Pati, began to be echoed. *Sedulur Sikep* refused to remain silent. The presence of the cement factory was perceived as a threat to the sustainability of Mother Earth as well as their survival as peasants, because the mining activities to be carried out by the cement factory could trigger more massive environmental impacts such as erosion, flash floods, reduced springs and water catchment sources, threats to animal extinction that have an impact on the natural food chain network, and reduced oxygen supply.

The presence of the cement factory also has a direct impact on the sociocultural existence of *Sedulur Sikep* as a community that relies on agriculture and other non-Sikep peasants (Putri, 2017a). This was confirmed by the respondent, "If there are no more peasants, there will be no more *Sedulur Sikep*." In a broader scope, threats to ecology and agriculture also mean threats to the sustainability of life, because after all, all living things, including humans, need food to survive.

If in the past Samin Surasentika and his followers faced the challenge of injustice through taxation, in the present times *Sedulur Sikep* face the real challenge of environmental exploitation and natural destruction caused by human actions. This must threaten their lives and livelihoods and those of the next generation, which can also be interpreted as ecological or environmental injustice (Purnomo, 2023). Through the space of reflection, *Sedulur Sikep* then made efforts to save Mother Earth from the threat of destruction. They began to "come out of their shells", appear as frontliners, and network with the "outside world" to contextualise knowledge that was once foreign to them.

This starts from their previous "interactions" with academics, scholars, environmental activists, non-governmental organisations, and non-Sikep peasants around Pati Regency as the best ammunition in formulating an open but non-violent resistance strategy. Interaction with the surrounding environment, including the outside world, is a key word in the process of reconstruction or social change (Brameld, 1956). This reality contradicts their characteristics in the past, which tended to isolate them and avoid conflict, so their resistance is more passive (Benda & Castles, 1969; Widodo, 1997).

In the terminology of social resilience popularised by Markus Keck and Patrick Sakdapolrak, the *Sedulur Sikep* is one of many communities that have survived because of their adaptive, flexible and dynamic attitude towards change (Keck & Sakdapolrak, 2013). This statement is in accordance with the words of Sister G, March 6, 2025, "*Wong Sikep iku kudu empan papan* (*Wong Sikep* must be able to adapt) which shows their adaptive attitude towards changing times. *Sedulur Sikep* realises that if they continue to isolate themselves and be passive towards an unfair and oppressive order (such as when Samin Surasentika and his followers were resistant to the Colonial Government), sooner or later, a community will be eroded and eventually perish (Toynbee, 1948).

#### D. Ecological education curriculum development as a social reconstruction initiative

Fundamentally, according to Brother K's account on March 7, 2025, *Sedulur Sikep* already had an ecological education curriculum focused on agriculture and related matters, such as the right time to plant, the most suitable crops to plant in certain seasons, the right fertilizers to use for specific purposes, how to practice crop rotation in order to restore soil fertility, do not littering and dispose of waste in rivers, do not kill the rats because they are considered fellow living beings that also need food, and so on. This curriculum was implemented and developed through everyday education at home and the cultivated land.

*Wong Sikep* in Pati also practices the *brokohan ritual* (known as slametan in other language

ges) in their farming activities to ask for blessings for safety and a successful harvest. This ritual is performed before the planting season and after the harvest season as an expression of gratitude for the blessings. According to Brother K's account on February 18, 2025, Brokohan is also a manifestation of hope that everything planted and harvested brings collective good for both humans and other living beings, and also Mother Earth herself.

The transitions made by *Sedulur Sikep* in post-2006, in addition to open movement activism (originally closed and passive), are also evident in the development of their agricultural curriculum, which leads to more ecologically oriented organic farming, especially in the post-cement era. The educational curriculum, as an integrated part of the value of Samin's teachings, agriculture, and later added with ecological aspects, is a social reconstructive initiative to fulfil the principle of unity between *laku* (what is practised) and *ucap* (what is told), according to conversation with Sister G, May 24, 2024.

Along with the narrative of ecological environment that was echoed as a weapon of resistance to the cement company, *Sedulur Sikep* received input and affirmation from outsiders (academics, scholars, environmental activists, non-governmental organisations) to practice more environmentally friendly agriculture instead of using chemical pesticides. This shows that social reconstruction initiatives are addressed through the formation of experiences through socio-cultural relations to respond to problems and injustices for the sake of creating a better society (Taba, 1962).

Curriculum as a reconstruction of experience and knowledge allows learners to grow and have the authority to control the knowledge and experience that will emerge in the future (Ellis, 2013). Thus, the planning and implementation of the ecological education curriculum is not narrowed down through specific subjects as happens in formal schools, where the organisation of the curriculum tends to be separated or correlated, but rather integrated subject curriculum (Beane, 1986).

**Table 1** An overview of the comparison between Sedulur Sikep's ecological curriculum before and after the cement factory establishment in 2006

No	Element	Pre-2006	Post-2006
1	Goals	- Work guidelines in the field of agriculture	Work guidelines in the field of agriculture -Preservations of the Kendeng Mountains - <i>Laku</i> Internalization -Build ecological awarness among the community about the threatsof natural damage and exploitation.
2	Materials	- Knowledge of farming activities (how to hoe,weed,apply fertiliser, irrigation systems, plant identification, planting methods, etc.) - <i>Brokohan</i> ritual for mutual prosperity -Prohibition of throwing garbage into the river -Water conservation -Processing agricultural waste -etc.	-Material from pre-2006 with addition -Climate change and how to adapt -Management and utilisation of organic waste into eco enzyme, biogas,etc. -Community participation in waste participation in waste management activities. -Reducing the use of single-use plastics -Organic farming practices - etc.
3	Strategy (approaches and methods)	Everyday education at home and cultivated land through practical experiences.	Everyday education at home and cultivated land through practical experiences.



In particular, the cement company as a common “enemy” or “threat” is also to awaken the community’s collective awareness of its inherent ecological essence that has never been disrupted from outside. *Sedulur Sikep* then gave a reinterpretation of the teachings of the Religion of Adam, which states, “*Wong sikep weruh tèké dhéwé*” (He who embraces knows what he has) (Benda & Castles, 1969), which also means that they do not like to interfere in other people’s affairs. It is only to their wives and children that the responsibility rests, meaning that their sphere of authority is within their own “home” or family (Sindhunata, 2024).

However, as time goes by, *Wong Sikep* have begun to move out of their homes and transmit themselves to the outside world to awaken the ecological awareness that has begun to fade. This was pursued, for example, by campaigning and educating the public about “not throwing trash in the river”, which had been an unsavoury habit practised by local villagers. In addition to being the initiator to clean the river of rubbish, *Wong Sikep* also attempted to procure rubbish bins in each house (originally there were none) and manage them collectively through the neighbourhood association, as well as waste sorting practices starting from their community.

In the realm of inheriting knowledge about ecology, *Sedulur Sikep* has prepared the younger generation to have awareness and sensitivity to the ecological environment. Not only in the world of agriculture, the young generation of *Sedulur Sikep* is also actively involved in voicing environmental sustainability through a gamelan and *tembang* art group called “*Wiji Kendeng*”. For a long time, the medium of *tembang* (usually *tembang macapat*) has been used by *Sikep* families to pass on the noble Javanese cultural values both implied and expressed through the verses of the song. Later, especially after the threat of cement companies came, the lyrics were modified with emphasis on environmental (ecology) and Samin teaching themes.

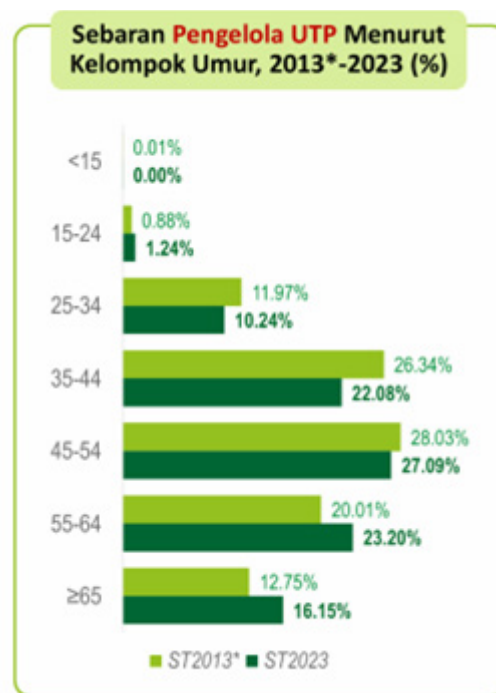
In addition to performing gamelan art and *tembang*, *Wiji Kendeng* is also active on the social media platform Instagram to socialize environmental conservation, one of which is pursued by planting activity in the Kendeng Mountains area every Wednesday. Another music group involving one of *Wong Sikep*’s children also voices environmental and agricultural issues with a more “naughty” pop-punk genre typical of young people. The group is called “Kendeng Squad”, where the vocalist is *Wong Sikep*’s son.

Although the regeneration of *Sedulur Sikep* peasant seems to be going smoothly, in reality, over time, the community that has existed for more than a century has gradually encountered challenges due to their contact with technology and modernisation. Despite insignificance in number, *Sedulur Sikep* acknowledges that the tantalising offer of modernisation and materialism has caused anxiety, which cannot be neglected. Furthermore, in a wider network with non-*Sikep* peasants around Pati Regency, they also felt the concerns experienced by fellow non-*Sikep* peasants who were unsure about the future of their agriculture.

In addition to the ageing of the non-*Sikep* peasants, their children and grandchildren are no longer interested in continuing their way of life as peasants. This picture below shows that in addition to the environmental crisis, peasants in general are also faced with an unexpected situation: peasant regeneration. This analysis is supported by data released by the Central Statistics Agency in 2023, as shown in Figure 1.

Based on Figure 1, the age of active peasants over the past decade (2013-2023) has experienced aging with a decrease in the percentage of the number at a younger age (less than 55 years old), while in the age range of 55 years and above, there has been an increase in the proportion of numbers. The data shows that nationally, President Prabowo Subianto’s Administration deals with food security and sovereignty, which are urgent to be addressed. According to several respondents’ confessions, *Sedulur Sikep* has fulfilled the Samin teachings by creating a generation of peasants, while at the same time, the issue of peasant regeneration is getting stronger. Eventually, peasants are unsung heroes who “feed” many people. Thus, an integrated educational curriculum is needed within the national curriculum that can address the challenges of peasant regeneration, as well as the serious agrarian issues.

**Figure 1** Distribution of Individual Agricultural Business Managers (UTP) By Age Group (2013-2023) (Retrieved from: Badan Pusat Statistik. *Rilis Hasil Pencacahan Lengkap Sensus Pertanian 2023*)



This reflects how fragile and vulnerable the regeneration of peasants (especially staple food peasants) is in Indonesia's agricultural world, which is paradoxically known as an agrarian country. This is also a strong alarm for President Prabowo Subianto's administration (2024-2029), which is committed to building national food security and sovereignty (indonesia.go.id, 2025). The government needs to rethink how to build and maintain sustainable agricultural infrastructure, including providing incentives for the agricultural sector and preparing human resources (peasants) who are on the verge of twilight by creating the related curriculum, especially for the younger generation, and integrating it into the national curriculum, if possible.

The threats of exploitation, environmental degradation, and the crisis of peasant regeneration among the youth are real issues faced by *Sedulur Sikep* Community in Pati. If left unaddressed, these issues will undoubtedly threaten the community's existence amid the onslaught of modernisation. The Reconstructionists believe that education is a powerful tool for restoring the situation (Schiro, 2013). Similarly, the *Sedulur Sikep* Community in Pati has taken steps to address these challenges.

## CONCLUSION

The ecological curriculum of the *Sedulur Sikep* community, initially focused on traditional agricultural practices, has transformed in response to growing ecological threats, particularly the planned cement factory in 2006. This shift marks a move from local to global environmental awareness, where knowledge from outside the community is critically filtered and adapted to align with their values. The unity of *laku* (practice) and *ucap* (speech) underpins their adoption of sustainable methods like organic farming and their active participation in environmental campaigns. Rather than resisting modern knowledge entirely, the community exercises epistemic agency—preserving cultural integrity while engaging with broader discourses on ecological justice.

This study contributes to the field of curriculum studies by positioning *Sedulur Sikep's* lived

educational practice as a socially reconstructive model of indigenous ecological curriculum. In contrast to formal schooling that often fails to instil ecological responsibility, the *Sedulur Sikep* demonstrates how community-based education rooted in cultural, social, and ecological realities can foster resilience, critical awareness, and intergenerational commitment. Their educational stance offers a powerful critique of the dominant system's inadequacies and expands the conversation on what it means to educate for sustainability, particularly in indigenous and rural contexts.

## REFERENCES

- Adam, R., & Bagir, Z. A. (2022). The Indigenous Politics of Justice: the Case of the Sedulur Sikep Movement in Central Java. *Jurnal Kawistara*, 12(2), 181–199.
- Antaranews.com. (2023). *Kemendikbudristek: Angka Partisipasi Sekolah di Indonesia Sudah Baik*. <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/3843216/kemendikbudristek-angka-partisipasi-sekolah-di-indonesia-sudah-baik>
- Ba'asyin, A. S., & Ba'asyin, M. A. (2014). *Samin: Mistisisme Petani di Tengah Pergolakan*. Gigih Pustaka Mandiri.
- Beane, J. A. (1986). *Curriculum Planning and Development*. Allyn and Bacon, Inc.
- Benda, H. J., & Castles, L. (1969). The Samin Movement. *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde*, Deel 125, 207–216, 218–240.
- Brameld, T. (1956). *Toward a Reconstructed Philosophy of Education*. Dryden Press.
- Counts, G. S. (1932). *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?* Southern Illinois University Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (2nd Edition). Sage Publications.
- Denscombe, M. (2007). *The Good Research Guide: For Small-Scale Social Research Projects* (3rd ed.). Open University Press.
- Ellis, A. K. (2013). *Exemplars of Curriculum Theory* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Hardiman, F. B. (2015). *Seni Memahami: Dari Schleiermacher sampai Derrida*. PT Kanisius.
- Indonesia.go.id. (2025). *Presiden: Kerja Keras dan Komitmen Kunci Utama Bangun Ketahanan Pangan*. Indonesia.Go.Id. <https://indonesia.go.id/kategori/economic-business/9150/president-hard-work-and-commitment-key-to-building-food-security?lang=1>
- Keck, M., & Sakdapolrak, P. (2013). What is social resilience? lessons learned and ways forward. *Erdkunde*, 67(1), 5–19. <https://doi.org/10.3112/erdkunde.2013.01.02>
- Khoeroni, F., Syukur, F., & Nurhadi, A. (2023). Resistance to Formal Education of the Sedulur Sikep Kudus Community (The Relevance of Islamic Educational Values to the Educational Values of Sedulur Sikep). *Edukasia: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Islam*, 18(2), 371–386. <https://doi.org/10.21043/edukasia.v18i2.22097>
- Kholiq, A., Mutohar, A., & Sumintono, B. (2022). The tribal education in Indonesia: Detribalization challenges of Samin tribe. *Cogent Education*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2022.2136861>
- King, V. T. (1973). Some Observations on the Samin Movement of North-Central Java: Suggestions for the Theoretical Analysis of the Dynamics of Rural Unrest. *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*, 129(4), 457–481. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-90002714>
- Korver, A. P. E. (1976). The Samin Movement and Millenarism. *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*, 132(2), 249–266. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-90002642>
- Maliki, M. (2019). *Local/Global Disruption: The Response of the Samin Movement to Modernity*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis Charles Darwin University.
- Novianto, A. (2020). Berebut Saminisme: Artikulasi Politik Masyarakat Adat dalam Konflik Pembangunan Pabrik Semen di Pegunungan Kendeng. In W. Kumorotomo & Y. Purbokusumo (Eds.), *Kebijakan Publik dalam Pusaran Perubahan Ideologi: Dari Kuasa Negara ke Dominasi Pasar?* (p. 271). Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Posner, G. J. (2004). *Analysing the Curriculum* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill.

- Prastowo, A. (2017). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif dalam Perspektif Rancangan Penelitian* (M. Sandra (ed.)). Ar-Ruzz Media.
- Purnomo, A. B. (2023). *Model Kepemimpinan Ekoteologis Interreligius Sesuai Ensiklik Laudato Si' dalam Konteks Komunitas Pegunungan Kendeng Utara (Issue June)*. Universitas Katolik Soegijapranata.
- Putri, P. S. (2017a). *Re-Claiming Lost Possessions: A Study of the Javanese Samin (Sedulur Sikep) Movement to Maintain Their Peasant Identity and Access to Resources*. Unpublished Master Thesis, University of Oslo.
- Putri, P. S. (2017b). The Meaning Making of an Environmental Movement: A Perspective on Sedulur Sikep's Narrative of Anti-Cement Movement. *PCD Journal*, 5(2), 297. <https://doi.org/10.22146/pcd.30471>
- Reuter, T., & MacRae, G. (2024). *Petani Kecil untuk Ketahanan Pangan Global: Kejatuhan dan Penemuan Kembali Sistem Pangan Berdasar Ekologi Moral di Indonesia*. Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia.
- Ricklefs, M. C. (2008). *A History of Modern Indonesia Since C. 1200*. Macmillan Education.
- Roesminingsih, M., & Nugroho, R. (2018). Local Wisdom of Samin Community: Core Values to Building Character. *1st International Conference on Education Innovation (ICEI 2017)*, 173(ICEI 2017), 196–198. <https://doi.org/10.2991/icei-17.2018.52>
- Satriyo, M. Y. W., & Mulyadi. (2022). *Program Indonesia Pintar, Angka Putus Sekolah, dan Angka Partisipasi Sekolah di Indonesia*. Unpublished Bachelor Thesis Universitas Gadjah Mada.
- Schiro, M. S. (2013). *Curriculum Theory: Conflicting Visions and Enduring Concerns* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications, Ltd.
- Sindhunata. (2024). *Ratu Adil: Ramalan Jayabaya dan Sejarah Perlawanan Wong Cilik*. PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Smith, J., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research*. SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Suharko, S. (2017). Masyarakat Adat versus Korporasi: Konflik Sosial Rencana Pembangunan Pabrik Semen di Kabupaten Pati Jawa Tengah Periode 2013-2016. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik*, 20(2), 97. <https://doi.org/10.22146/jsp.24776>
- Sulistiyono, S. T. (2011). Saministo Phobia. *Jurnal Sejarah Citra Lekha*, 16(2), 31–44.
- Supratikno, A., & Adi, S. (2021). The Samin Community in the Globalization Era: Role the Religion of Adam in the Post-Cement Industry Advocacy. *International Journal of Arts and Social Science*, 4(1), 47–55. [www.ijassjournal.com](http://www.ijassjournal.com)
- Taba, H. (1962). *Curriculum Development: Theory and Practice*. Harcourt Brace Johanovich, Inc.
- Toynbee, A. J. (1948). *A Study of History* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for Action Sensitive Pedagogy* (P. L. Smith (ed.)). State University of New York Press.
- Vickers, A. (2011). *Sejarah Indonesia Modern*. Insan Madani.
- Wardhani, P. S. N., & Samsuri, S. (2020). Melestarikan Prinsip-Prinsip Dasar Kehidupan sedulur sikep (Samin) dalam Keberagaman Budaya di Indonesia. *Jurnal Antropologi: Isu-Isu Sosial Budaya*, 22(2), 256. <https://doi.org/10.25077/jantro.v22.n2.p256-263.2020>
- Wati, D. A. W. (2023). Education and Discourse Modernization of the Samin Indigenous Community (Sedulur Sikep) in a Citizenship Perspective. *Proceeding of the 3rd International Conference on Social Sciences and Education (ICSSE 2023)*, ICSSE, 88–94.
- Widodo, A. (1997). Samin in the New Order: The Politics of Encounter and Isolation. In J. Schiller & B. M. Schiller (Eds.), *Imagining Indonesia: Cultural Politics and Political Culture* (pp. 261–287). Ohio University Press.