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Islamic ecological piety in the *Lubuk Larangan* tradition: Religious responsibility, customary rules, and social welfare

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Abstract

In the *Lubuk Larangan* tradition, communities temporarily close sections of a river to fishing before reopening them for communal harvesting. Reopening brings decisions about who can fish and how the proceeds should be used. Previous studies have examined customary rules and community welfare, while Islamic environmental ethics emphasizes stewardship and accountability. This study explores how these concerns shape Islamic ecological piety at *Lubuk Larangan Anak Yatim* in Tambangan Jae, Mandailing Natal, Indonesia. Drawing on a qualitative case study, the researchers interviewed 12 purposively selected participants and examined field observations and documents. Religious leaders described river protection as a trust (*amānah*) and a duty of human stewardship (*khalīfah*). Customary rules, community monitoring, and stories about sacred fish also gave the prohibition on fishing moral significance. When the river reopened, communal harvesting generated proceeds reportedly directed toward orphans and elderly residents. At Tambangan Jae, responsibility for the river continues when fishing resumes, as residents also face decisions about how to share its benefits. Further research could follow successive harvests to examine how residents observe the rules, how proceeds are distributed, and how river conditions change.

Keywords: Islamic ecological piety; *Lubuk Larangan*; customary river management; communal harvesting; social welfare.

Introduction

In Sumatra, communities practice *Lubuk Larangan* by prohibiting fishing in designated sections of shared rivers until an agreed communal harvest (Digdo et al., 2025; Prianto et al., 2024). Residents leave these sections undisturbed during the closed period and return to fish under collective arrangements after the prohibition ends. The tradition involves ecological, economic, and social concerns that influence its management (Gusmal et al., 2023). Maintaining the closure requires cooperation among residents, while reopening involves decisions about participation and the use of harvesting proceeds. Both activities carry responsibilities toward the river and the people who depend on it.

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Customary rules provide a basis for managing these responsibilities. They establish fishing restrictions and consequences for violations, while residents and local leaders participate in maintaining the agreements. In Mandailing Natal, communities use customary arrangements to regulate access to protected river sections (Rangkuti et al., 2024). Beliefs concerning sacred places may strengthen the moral significance of these restrictions (Lubis, 2009). However, knowledge of a prohibition does not always lead to consistent practice. Research in West Sumatra has documented differences between local knowledge and its application in *Lubuk Larangan* management (Masri et al., 2023). The practical challenge lies in maintaining collective restrictions on a resource that residents may also wish to use for their immediate needs.

Religious teachings may strengthen the reasons residents give for protecting shared natural resources. Islamic principles of trust (*amānah*) and human stewardship (*khalīfah*) connect care for nature with accountability before God (Al-Jayyousi, 2016). In this context, especially in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), religious leaders have encouraged environmental activities through Islamic teachings and community participation (Hasan et al., 2022). Religious piety has also informed environmental initiatives shaped by local knowledge and social concerns (Sulistyati, 2023). However, within customary traditions, Islamic teachings may coexist with inherited beliefs and community sanctions. Residents may respect the same restriction for different reasons, giving the protection of a shared resource meanings that extend beyond the rules themselves.

The *Lubuk Larangan Anak Yatim* tradition in Tambangan Jae Village, Mandailing Natal, provides a setting for examining these concerns. The community temporarily restricts fishing in a designated section of the river and later reopens it for communal harvesting. The reference to orphans in the tradition's name also places its intended charitable purpose alongside the regulation of fishing. Previous studies have examined environmental management at Tambangan Jae (Turmuzi et al., 2022), the welfare significance of *Lubuk Larangan* within Islamic legal thought (Yuslem et al., 2022), and the relationship between customary fishing rules and Islamic law (Zulfahmi, 2025). These studies establish the relevance of religion, customary regulation, and welfare to the tradition. The prohibition governs access to the river, while the charitable purpose concerns the use of its proceeds after harvesting resumes.

This study examines Islamic ecological piety through the religious meanings, customary rules, and welfare commitments surrounding *Lubuk Larangan Anak Yatim*. Drawing on interviews with religious and customary leaders, management committee

members, and residents, together with field observations and documentary materials, it examines fishing restrictions, communal harvesting, and the use of harvesting proceeds. The article argues that ecological piety takes shape through residents' commitments to protecting the river and directing communal harvest proceeds toward social welfare. In this context, the connection between environmental care and human welfare reflects an understanding of Islamic sustainability grounded in stewardship and social responsibility (Al-Jayyousi et al., 2022). The Tambangan Jae case here brings the obligations surrounding communal harvesting into the discussion of Islamic ecological piety.

Literature Review

A temporary fishing prohibition depends on residents' willingness to observe a collective agreement over time. Communities must decide which activities are restricted, who monitors the protected area, and what consequences follow a violation. In Sumatra, customary leaders and residents make these arrangements through *Lubuk Larangan*, which also determines when communal fishing may resume (Digdo et al., 2025; Rangkuti et al., 2024). Yet knowledge of customary rules does not always translate into practice. Masri et al. (2023) documented differences between local knowledge and its application in *Lubuk Larangan* management in West Sumatra. Community participation also plays an important role in sustaining the tradition in Pasaman, where ecological, economic, and social conditions influence its management (Gusmal et al., 2023). Similar concerns appear in Indonesian marine protected areas, where local involvement and equitable governance have contributed to better conservation outcomes (Fidler et al., 2022). These experiences highlight the importance of everyday cooperation in maintaining restrictions on resources that residents also depend on for their livelihoods.

Customary prohibitions can acquire moral significance through the beliefs and obligations that communities recognize. Sanctions establish consequences for violations, while beliefs about sacred places may discourage activities that residents consider inappropriate or harmful. In Mandailing Natal, sacred river sites and inherited beliefs have long influenced customary restrictions on fishing (Lubis, 2009). Islamic legal reasoning offers another basis for explaining the protection of shared resources. In Minangkabau, customary prohibitions concerning sacred places and species have been examined through the Islamic principle of public benefit (*maṣlaḥah*) (Warman et al., 2026). Zulfahmi (2025) also discusses the relationship between Islamic law and customary fishing regulations in Mandailing Natal. Elsewhere in Indonesia, the *sasi* tradition of Maluku regulates temporary restrictions on resource use through customary practices and community cooperation (Saptenno & Timisela, 2024). Such traditions draw authority

from different moral and institutional arrangements. Sacred beliefs, customary sanctions, and Islamic teachings may encourage residents to observe similar restrictions, although the reasons they give for doing so can differ.

Reopening a protected fishing area involves decisions about the timing and conditions of renewed resource use. Communities may allow harvesting after a period of restriction, but the immediate results of fishing offer limited evidence of the resource's longer-term condition. This distinction appears in research on periodic octopus closures in Comoros and Madagascar. McCabe et al. (2024) recorded increases in catches following some closures, alongside less favorable long-term trends in parts of the study area. Marine fisheries differ from the rivers managed under *Lubuk Larangan*, and their ecological findings cannot be applied directly to customary river management. Nevertheless, the distinction between immediate harvesting results and longer-term resource conditions remains relevant. A productive communal harvest does not necessarily establish that fish populations have recovered or that the river's ecological condition has improved.

The benefits of reopening also depend on who participates in harvesting and who receives the proceeds. Residents may share responsibility for maintaining a fishing prohibition while experiencing its economic benefits differently. Household income and trust in community leaders, for example, were related to reported compliance with fishing closures in small-scale fisheries in Southeast Sulawesi (Kushardanto et al., 2022). In Zanzibar, periodic octopus closures affected the well-being of fishers and traders in different ways, particularly through access to fishing grounds, market conditions, and the distribution of benefits (Drury O'Neill et al., 2024). Community participation does not necessarily resolve these concerns. A study in Wakatobi identified weaknesses in benefit-sharing and fisheries monitoring despite substantial participation and compliance with periodic closures (Sahari et al., 2026). These experiences demonstrate the social importance of decisions made when fishing resumes. Where communal harvesting generates income for charitable activities, the management of proceeds also concerns people who may receive assistance without participating directly in fishing.

Islamic teachings give environmental care a moral significance that extends to human welfare. The principles *amānah* and *khalīfah* express responsibilities toward the natural world within a broader understanding of accountability before God (Al-Jayyousi, 2016). These responsibilities also concern the consequences of human actions for others, especially where communities depend on shared resources for their livelihoods. Islamic discussions of sustainability connect environmental care with social welfare and the

ethical obligations that accompany resource use (Al-Jayyousi et al., 2022). Such principles provide a basis for explaining why people regard environmental protection as a religious duty. However, their meaning in communal life depends on the responsibilities people recognize and the practices through which they seek to fulfill them.

Religious leaders can influence environmental practices through teaching, community involvement, and the expectations they encourage among members of their institutions. In East Java, *pesantren* leaders (*kiai*) promoted environmental engagement through Islamic teachings and local participation (Hasan et al., 2022). *Kiai* in Banten incorporated environmental responsibilities into pesantren activities through Islamic environmental jurisprudence (*fiqh al-bīʾah)*, helping develop ecological piety among members of their communities (Putri et al., 2024). Sulistyati (2023) further demonstrates the significance of religious piety, local knowledge, and social concerns in an ecological movement within a *pesantren* community. These studies illustrate different ways religious commitments influence environmental activities. Customary river management involves other institutions and forms of cooperation, making the relationship between religious teachings and local rules equally important to examine. Ecological piety gains meaning through the obligations people recognize and the activities they undertake, although religious commitments alone provide no assurance of lasting environmental improvement or equitable social benefits.

The religious, customary, and social dimensions of *Lubuk Larangan* already have a place in scholarship on Mandailing Natal. Yuslem et al. (2022) examined the tradition from the perspective of the purposes of Islamic law (*maqasid al-shariah*) and its contribution to community welfare, while Zulfahmi (2025) explored the relationship between Islamic law and customary regulation. Environmental management and community activities at Tambangan Jae have also received attention (Turmuzi et al., 2022). These studies provide important explanations of the tradition and establish the relevance of its religious, legal, and social dimensions. However, the temporary nature of the fishing prohibition brings these concerns into successive decisions about restricted access, communal harvesting, and the use of proceeds. At Tambangan Jae, the intended support for orphans adds a social purpose to the management of a shared river. The relationship between these activities offers a basis for examining Islamic ecological piety through the religious meanings and customary obligations that residents recognize in communal resource management.

Method

This study used a qualitative case study approach to examine Islamic ecological piety in the *Lubuk Larangan Anak Yatim* tradition in Tambangan Jae Village, Mandailing Natal, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The community temporarily prohibits fishing in a designated river section before reopening it for communal harvesting. Tambangan Jae was selected because the tradition combines customary fishing rules, religious meanings, and activities intended to support local welfare. The main fieldwork took place between February and May 2026, followed by additional observations and documentation in August and September 2026.

The unit of analysis was the communal management of *Lubuk Larangan Anak Yatim*, particularly the practices surrounding fishing restrictions, reopening, and the use of harvesting proceeds. The study examined three aspects of these practices: religious responsibility toward the river, customary arrangements regulating fishing, and social commitments concerning communal benefits. These aspects provided a basis for examining Islamic ecological piety within the same tradition.

The study drew on interviews, field observations, and documentary materials. Twelve participants were purposively selected according to their involvement in *Lubuk Larangan Anak Yatim*. They included three customary leaders (AR, SN, NN), two religious leaders (ML, ZA), three management committee members (MS, AP, AA), the village head (JL), and three local residents (NH, YT, DS). These participants provided different perspectives on religious teachings, customary regulations, community participation, and welfare activities. Documentary sources included customary-rule materials (*awuran*), management records, and available financial records concerning communal harvesting and welfare assistance.

The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews concerning the religious meanings of the fishing prohibition, customary sanctions, community monitoring, communal harvesting, and the use of proceeds. Field observations focused on the protected river section, community activities, and customary practices surrounding fishing restrictions and reopening. Additional documentation recorded the site's physical features, including its identifying monument and donation box. The researchers also examined available documents to compare participants' explanations with information recorded by the management committee. Participants provided written or verbal informed consent, and the researchers used informant codes to reduce identification risks when presenting their statements.

The researchers analyzed interview transcripts, field notes, and documents using data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles et al., 2014). They identified recurring references to religious responsibility, customary rules, sacred-fish beliefs, community monitoring, and welfare distribution. The analysis organized these materials into three themes: religious meanings of the fishing prohibition, customary regulation of river use, and social responsibilities surrounding communal harvesting. Comparisons among participant statements, observations, and available documents helped identify similarities, differences, and the evidentiary basis for each interpretation. The researchers examined sacred-fish narratives as local beliefs and used field observations to describe visible river conditions. These materials supported an analysis of religious meanings and communal practices but did not establish changes in fish populations, water quality, or the consistency of welfare allocations over successive harvests.

Results

Religious Responsibility and the Meaning of the Fishing Prohibition

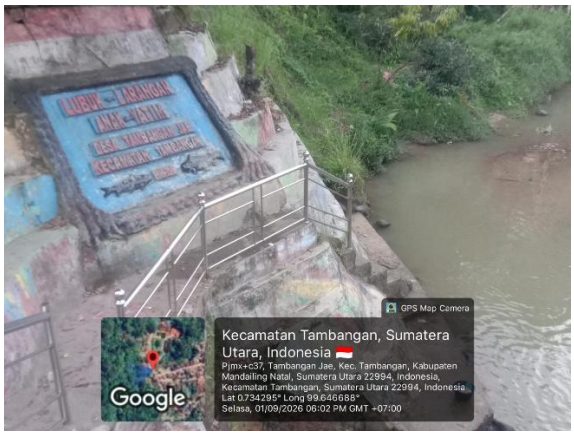
Religious leaders in Tambangan Jae explain the fishing prohibition through Islamic teachings on *amānah* and *khalīfah*. ML and ZA describe the river as a shared resource that residents have a responsibility to protect. For ML, this responsibility involves accountability before God and concern for the welfare of local orphans. He explained:

> *Lubuk Larangan is not ours to use however we please. It is a trust from Allah, and as human beings, as khalīfah, we have been entrusted to care for and protect what He has placed in our care. This includes Lubuk Larangan, which holds sacred significance for our village. One day, we will have to answer to Allah for how we have cared for it. We also named it Lubuk Larangan Anak Yatim because we want it to support the orphans in our village. So, Lubuk Larangan is more than a village rule; it is also part of our worship* (ML, religious leader, personal interview, 2026).

The religious significance of the tradition also appears in the community's activities and public spaces. A permanent monument beside the river identifies the protected area as *Lubuk Larangan Anak Yatim* (Figure 1). Religious practices accompany communal harvesting as well. Field observations recorded a local religious teacher (*ustadz*) leading a prayer before residents began fishing during a communal opening. The monument identifies the tradition within the village, while the prayer places communal harvesting within a religious setting. These activities provide further context for the responsibilities expressed by religious leaders.

Figure 1

Riverside Monument Identifying Lubuk Larangan Anak Yatim



Note. Authors' field documentation at Tambangan Jae Village, Mandailing Natal, September 2026.

Some residents also explain the prohibition through beliefs about the sacred status (*keramat*) of fish within the protected river section. Stories about unauthorized fishing describe misfortune that reportedly followed violations of the customary restriction. NH, a local resident, recounted one such story:

> *Everyone here knows the story of a man from a neighboring village who took fish from the lubuk at night. Soon afterward, his family became ill, and they recovered only after he confessed to the elders and paid a fine to the mosque. Stories like that keep our nets dry until the proper time* (NH, local resident, personal interview, 2026).

YT and DS also recalled versions of this story, indicating that it circulates among residents. The narrative warns against fishing before the agreed time, although the reported illness and recovery do not establish that violating the prohibition caused the family's misfortune. ML explains river protection through accountability before God, while NH's story conveys the consequences that some residents believe may follow unauthorized fishing. Both explanations give the prohibition moral significance, but they draw on different understandings of responsibility. Customary rules provide the practical restrictions that residents are expected to observe.

Customary Rules and the Regulation of River Use

Customary rules known as *awuran* regulate fishing within the protected section of *Lubuk Larangan Anak Yatim*. Residents are prohibited from catching fish during the closed period, and the rules also restrict destructive practices, including poisoning and electrofishing. Field descriptions and interviews indicate that the protected section extends approximately 500 meters, with fishing generally suspended for one to two years before the community agrees to reopen it. During field observations, the water appeared

relatively clear, and fish identified locally as *jurung* were visible beneath the surface (Figure 2). These observations describe conditions at the time of fieldwork but do not establish changes in fish populations or water quality.

Figure 2

Protected River Section at Lubuk Larangan Anak Yatim



Note. Authors' field documentation at Tambangan Jae Village, Mandailing Natal, September 2026. Fish are visible beneath the water surface.

Management committee members described residents as taking part in monitoring the protected river section and reporting unauthorized fishing. The arrangement relies on community knowledge of the prohibition and the consequences of violating it. MS, a member of the management committee, explained the role of residents in maintaining the restriction:

> *Everyone in the village knows that Lubuk Larangan must be protected. They also know that taking fish from it will have consequences. There is no real need for a guard here because the community itself serves as its guardian, so the area does not need to be watched twenty-four hours a day. Fear of consequences that no longer need to be discussed keeps people from casting a hook or net, whether during the day or at night* (MS, management committee member, personal interview, 2026).

Customary sanctions provide a further basis for enforcing the prohibition. According to the customary-rule information reported during fieldwork, unauthorized fishing may result in a penalty of IDR 1,000,000 or one sack of cement. These penalties establish consequences for violations, while MS's explanation emphasizes the expectations that residents share concerning prohibited fishing. The committee thus describes river protection as a communal responsibility supported by customary sanctions and local awareness of the rules. However, the available interviews do not establish the frequency of violations, the actual imposition of penalties, or the extent of compliance among residents.

The community periodically reopens the protected section for communal harvesting, known locally as *buka lubuk*. Customary arrangements determine the timing of these openings and allow residents to resume fishing before another period of restriction begins. The rules consequently govern both the temporary prohibition and the agreed return to fishing. Reopening also creates opportunities to collect proceeds for communal purposes, connecting the regulation of river access with welfare activities.

Table 1

Customary Arrangements Governing River Use at Lubuk Larangan Anak Yatim

Arrangement	Reported practice	Source of evidence
Fishing prohibition (*awuran*)	Fishing is restricted within an approximately 500-meter river section for a reported period of one to two years; poisoning and electrofishing are prohibited.	Field descriptions, interviews, and reported customary rules
Community monitoring	Residents participate in watching the protected area and are expected to report violations.	Interviews with management committee members, including MS
Customary sanctions	Unauthorized fishing may result in a reported penalty of IDR 1,000,000 or one sack of cement.	Customary-rule information reported during fieldwork
Communal reopening (*buka lubuk*)	Residents collectively resume fishing at agreed intervals before another closure period.	Management interviews and field descriptions of communal harvesting

Note: The table summarizes customary arrangements reported through interviews, field observations, and customary-rule information collected during the 2026 fieldwork.

Communal Harvesting and Social Welfare

Communal harvesting, known locally as *buka lubuk*, allows residents and visitors to fish in the protected river section after the prohibition ends. At *Lubuk Larangan Anak Yatim*, the management committee organizes the opening and collects revenue through fishing tickets and auctions of selected catches. Visitors may also contribute voluntary donations (*infaq*) through a box on the viewing bridge. During a communal opening, committee members displayed receipts on a public whiteboard and announced allocations for community welfare. The opening thus involves decisions about both fishing activities and the management of communal income.

The management committee directs part of the proceeds toward assistance for orphans and elderly residents. According to the committee's financial ledger, proceeds from the preceding harvest cycle supported the provision of school uniforms for twelve orphans and health assistance described as monthly for five elderly widows. The donation box bears the inscription *Kotak Santunan Anak Yatim* (orphans' welfare box), making

the intended charitable purpose visible at the site (Figure 3). JL, the village head, explained the importance of the river for residents who depend on this assistance:

> *We take good care of Lubuk Larangan because we know it is one of the lifelines of our village. As long as we care for and protect it, the river feeds our orphans and cares for our elderly* (JL, village head, personal interview, 2026).

Figure 3

Donation Box for Orphan Assistance at Lubuk Larangan Anak Yatim



Note. The donation box is located on the viewing bridge at Lubuk Larangan Anak Yatim. Authors' field documentation at Tambangan Jae Village, Mandailing Natal, September 2026.

The committee's records and the village head's explanation connect communal harvesting with assistance to residents in need. Fishing tickets, auctions, and voluntary donations provide different sources of income, while the reported allocations identify specific forms of support for orphans and elderly residents. The available financial information pertains to a specific harvest cycle and does not establish whether similar assistance continued during subsequent openings.

Table 2

Reported Sources and Uses of Communal Harvest Proceeds

Component	Reported Practice or Allocation	Evidence Source
Fishing tickets	Revenue collected from participants during the communal opening	Management interviews and field observations
Fish auctions	Revenue generated through the auction of selected catches	Management interviews and field observations
Voluntary donations	Contributions collected through the *infaq* box at the site	Field documentation and management information
Assistance for orphans	School uniforms provided for twelve orphans during the preceding harvest cycle	Management committee's financial ledger
Assistance for elderly widows	Monthly health assistance reported for five elderly widows	Management committee's financial ledger

Note. The beneficiary figures refer to the preceding harvest cycle and do not establish the regularity of assistance over time.

Discussion

The protection and use of *Lubuk Larangan Anak Yatim* involve responsibilities that residents explain through religious teachings, customary rules, and concern for community welfare. Religious leaders understand river protection through Islamic principles such as *amānah* and *khalīfah*, while beliefs about sacred fish give the prohibition further moral significance. Customary rules regulate access to the protected river, and communal harvesting allows residents to use its resources after the prohibition ends. The proceeds also serve a stated charitable purpose, connecting river management with assistance to people in need. These practices give Islamic ecological piety a place in the community's understanding of both river protection and the use of its benefits.

The fishing prohibition relies on collective expectations that residents will respect rules governing a shared resource. MS describes the community itself as the guardian of the river, suggesting that the management committee depends on residents' awareness and willingness to observe the restrictions without continuous supervision. Community participation also features prominently in the management of *Lubuk Larangan* elsewhere in Mandailing Natal (Rangkuti et al., 2024). Research on marine protected areas in Indonesia has found that local involvement in decision-making and equitable governance contribute to more effective conservation arrangements (Fidler et al., 2022). At Tambangan Jae, the combination of customary sanctions and shared expectations provides a basis for regulating fishing. However, the available interviews establish what residents and committee members say about their responsibilities, not the actual extent of compliance. The committee's reliance on communal guardianship offers insight into the social expectations surrounding the prohibition, while the consistency of their implementation remains uncertain.

Religious teachings and sacred-fish beliefs give residents different reasons to respect the same prohibition. ML explains river protection through accountability before God, drawing on *amānah* and *khalifah* principles, while NH's story conveys the misfortune that some residents believe may follow unauthorized fishing. Customary sanctions provide a further basis for regulating conduct. Islamic environmental thought places human stewardship within a broader responsibility for nature and human welfare (Al-Jayyousi, 2016). Religious leaders have also encouraged environmental activities through Islamic teachings (Hasan et al., 2022; Putri et al., 2024). At Tambangan Jae, religious responsibility develops within a customary tradition that already regulates access to the river. The religious leaders' explanations give these restrictions Islamic moral significance, while narratives about sacred fish retain meanings rooted in local belief.

Their coexistence helps explain the different obligations residents recognize, without assuming that all share the same interpretation or that religious commitment necessarily produces ecological improvement.

The charitable purpose of *Lubuk Larangan Anak Yatim* becomes especially significant when the river reopens for communal harvesting. The community's commitment to supporting orphans is already expressed in the tradition's name, while fishing tickets, auctions, and voluntary donations provide opportunities to generate assistance. The reported allocations and JL's explanation indicate that residents connect the protection of the river with support for vulnerable members of the community. Reopening also deserves attention because the benefits of collective resource management may reach different groups in different ways. In Zanzibar, Drury O'Neill et al. (2024) found that opening events strongly influenced people's experiences of well-being, particularly through participation and the distribution of benefits. Research in Wakatobi similarly identified weaknesses in benefit-sharing despite substantial community participation in periodic fisheries closures (Sahari et al., 2026). These studies highlight concerns that extend beyond the immediate harvest. At Tambangan Jae, the available records support the reported use of proceeds for welfare assistance, but they do not establish its consistency over successive harvests or the fairness of allocation decisions. The charitable commitment precedes reopening; harvesting brings decisions about fulfilling that commitment using communal income.

The relationship between religious meaning, customary regulation, and social welfare has already received attention in studies of *Lubuk Larangan*. Lubis (2009) documented sacred beliefs, customary restrictions, and communal benefits in Mandailing Natal. Turmuzi et al. (2022) examined environmental management and community activities at Tambangan Jae, while Yuslem et al. (2022) considered the tradition through Islamic principles of welfare. Zulfahmi (2025) further explored the relationship between customary regulation and Islamic law. These contributions establish the importance of religion, *adat*, and welfare in understanding the tradition. The findings here add a more specific explanation of the responsibilities involved in its recurring activities. Residents recognize obligations to refrain from fishing during the closed period, respect communal decisions about reopening, and direct part of the harvesting proceeds toward social assistance. The intended beneficiaries form part of the tradition's stated purpose before harvesting begins, while the management of proceeds gives that purpose practical expression. This relationship extends the discussion of Islamic ecological piety to the responsibilities surrounding the regulated use and communal benefits of a shared river.

The findings have implications for the management of *Lubuk Larangan* and the study of Islamic ecological piety. Community involvement remains important for maintaining fishing restrictions, while the collection and distribution of harvesting proceeds call for clear records and accessible information about welfare assistance. Management committees could build on existing documentation by recording harvest revenues, allocations, and the participation of residents in decisions concerning communal benefits. Ecological monitoring would also help establish whether temporary fishing restrictions contribute to changes in river conditions and fish populations. The present study draws on interviews, field observations, and available documents from one community. Its evidence explains residents' understandings of religious and social responsibility but cannot establish long-term ecological outcomes, actual compliance rates, or the consistency of welfare assistance over successive harvests. Further research involving repeated observations of closure and reopening periods, financial documentation, and ecological measurements could examine these questions more closely.

Conclusion

The *Lubuk Larangan Anak Yatim* tradition in Tambangan Jae gives the protection and use of a shared river religious and social significance. Religious leaders explain the fishing prohibition through Islamic teachings, while customary rules and beliefs about sacred fish provide further reasons for respecting the restrictions. The community periodically reopens the river for communal harvesting, generating proceeds intended to support local welfare. Assistance to orphans is already part of the tradition's stated purpose, and communal harvesting provides an opportunity to fulfill that commitment. The reported allocations also include support for elderly residents.

Islamic ecological piety in Tambangan Jae takes shape through the responsibilities residents recognize during the protection and communal use of the river. The closed period calls for respect for customary restrictions, while reopening involves decisions about harvesting and the use of communal proceeds. Religious teachings give these activities moral significance, although customary sanctions and sacred-fish beliefs retain their own meanings within local tradition. The case adds to earlier studies of *Lubuk Larangan* by explaining the different obligations involved in managing the same resource. Communal harvesting gives the tradition's existing charitable purpose a practical place in the management of river resources.

This study draws on interviews, field observations, and available documents from one community. These materials explain residents' understandings of the tradition and

its reported welfare activities, but they cannot establish actual compliance rates, long-term ecological changes, or the consistency of assistance over successive harvests. Further research could follow several closure and reopening periods, examine financial records, and measure changes in river conditions and fish populations. Such evidence would help establish whether the responsibilities expressed through religious teachings and customary practices are consistently fulfilled in protecting the river and supporting the people who depend on its benefits.

Research Ethics Statement

This study involved 12 participants in Tambangan Jae Village, Mandailing Natal, Indonesia. The researchers obtained written or verbal informed consent before conducting interviews and used participant codes to protect participants' identities. Personal names were omitted from the presentation of interview findings to maintain confidentiality.

Data Availability Statement

The interview transcripts and field notes supporting this study are not publicly available due to participant confidentiality. Access to customary regulations and financial records may also require permission from the relevant community authorities. Requests for non-identifying supporting materials may be directed to the corresponding author and will be considered subject to informed consent, confidentiality requirements, and applicable permissions.

Generative AI Use Declaration

During manuscript revision, ChatGPT (OpenAI) was used to assist with English-language editing and translation of selected interview excerpts. The authors reviewed the AI-assisted revisions and independently verified the final text, including interview quotations and translations, against the original research materials and relevant scholarly sources. The authors take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the manuscript.

Author Contribution Statement

Kusor contributed to conceptualization, formal analysis, writing the original draft, and review and editing. Datuk Imam Marzuki and Elismayanti Rambe contributed to methodology, investigation, data curation, formal analysis, supervision, and review and

editing. All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript and accept responsibility for their respective contributions.

Declaration of Competing Interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

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