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SAPTA DARMA INCLUSIVITY IN MAINTAINING THE EXISTENCE OF LOCAL BELIEF IN JEMUR WONOSARI, SURABAYA

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Absract

Sapta Darma, as one of the belief systems (aliran kepercayaan) developing in Jemur Wonosari, Surabaya, exists as a minority group amid the dominance of officially recognized religions, thereby facing challenges in maintaining its existence while building harmonious relations with its surrounding environment. Based on this issue, the study formulates three research questions: (1) What forms of inclusivity are implemented by the Sapta Darma community in Jemur Wonosari, Surabaya; (2) How does inclusivity serve as a strategy to maintain the existence of Sapta Darma as a local belief system; (3) What factors support and hinder the implementation of inclusivity in maintaining the existence of Sapta Darma as a local belief system. The study employs a descriptive-analytical qualitative method grounded in Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann's social construction theory, involving observation of six informants. The results show that inclusivity is manifested through theological, social, and cultural dimensions, and functions as a strategy through active participation in community activities, open communication without coercion, and sensitivity in designing activities to build social acceptance at the micro, meso, and macro levels. Legal protection, an open (non-exclusive) system of teachings, and good relations with community leaders serve as supporting factors, while inconsistencies in policy implementation and negative stigma remain inhibiting factors. These findings indicate that inclusivity functions as a strategy for preserving Sapta Darma's existence while also fostering good social relations.

Keywords: *Sapta Darma, Inclusivity, Local Beliefs*

Abstrak

Sapta Darma sebagai salah satu aliran kepercayaan yang berkembang di Jemur Wonosari Surabaya, hidup sebagai kelompok minoritas di tengah dominasi agama resmi sehingga menghadapi tantangan dalam mempertahankan eksistensi sekaligus membangun hubungan harmonis dengan lingkungan seklitar. Berdasarkan permasalahan tersebut, penelitian ini merumuskan tiga pertanyaan: (1) Bagaimana bentuk-bentuk inklusivitas yang diterapkan oleh komunitas Sapta Darma di Jemur Wonosari, Surabaya; (2) Bagaimana inklusivitas menjadi strategi dalam menjaga eksistensi Sapta Darma sebagai kepercayaan lokal; (3) Apa saja faktor yang mendukung dan menghambat penerapan inklusivitas dalam menjaga eksistensi Sapta Darma sebagai kepercayaan lokal. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif-analisis berlandaskan teori konstruksi sosial Peter L. Berger dan Thomas Luckmann, dengan observasi terhadap enam informan. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa inklusivitas diwujudkan melalui dimensi teologis, sosial, dan budaya, serta bekerja sebagai strategi menjadi aktif dalam kegiatan masyarakat, komunikasi terbuka tanpa memaksa, dan peka dalam menyusun kegiatan untuk membangun penerimaan sosial pada level mikro, meso, dan makro. Payung hukum,

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ajaran yang terbuka, serta relasi baik dengan tokoh masyarakat menjadi faktor pendukung, sementara ketimpangan implementasi kebijakan dan stigma negatif masih menjadi penghambat. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa inklusivitas berfungsi sebagai strategi untuk menjaga eksistensi Sapta Darma sekaligus membangun hubungan sosial yang baik.

Kata Kunci: *Sapta Darma, Inklusivitas, Kepercayaan Lokal*

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A. Introduction

The presence of adherents of indigenous beliefs in Indonesia is part of the reality of diversity that cannot be separated from the long history of the peoples of the archipelago. In practice, however, their position has often remained marginal, particularly in a state context that administratively requires a religious identity, such as the inclusion of religion on the National Identity Card (KTP). This condition creates various challenges, ranging from difficulties in accessing public services to social stigma that persists in parts of society (Mustolehudin et al., 2024). Under these circumstances, the existence of indigenous belief communities is an important issue to examine, particularly in modern society.

One concept for understanding how minority groups survive amid diversity is inclusivity. Inclusivity may be understood as openness toward differences in ethnicity, culture, religion, paradigms, belief systems, economics, and politics (Purnomo & Solikhah, 2021). In contemporary studies, inclusivity is often associated with Diana L. Eck's concept of "active pluralism," which emphasizes active engagement in interreligious relations rather than passive tolerance that merely accepts difference without interaction (Aleksander et al., 2025). This concept is relevant for examining how local belief communities build relationships with the surrounding majority society.

Not all indigenous belief systems emerged through the same historical pattern. Whereas many local beliefs existed long before major religions entered Indonesia, Sapta Darma emerged in 1952 (Ardianto Mukhlis M. & Saliki, 2024), when formal religions had already become socially and institutionally established. The name Sapta Darma derives from sapta (seven) and darma (sacred obligations), literally referring to seven sacred obligations that guide the lives of its adherents, as formulated in Wewarah Pitu (Hildatya et al., 2025). Its emergence amid already dominant religious traditions placed Sapta Darma in a distinctive position, requiring it to construct its own identity and social legitimacy. In Jemur Wonosari, Surabaya, Sapta Darma continues to survive and demonstrate continuity within a diverse modern society.

The authors' interest in this study arises from a fundamental question: how can a community of indigenous-belief adherents such as Sapta Darma maintain its existence under conditions that are not always supportive? Amid state administrative demands, social pressure, and modernization, the continuity of Sapta Darma does not occur automatically. Efforts are therefore required to enable the community to remain active

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and recognized, one of which is the practice of inclusivity in its interactions with the surrounding society.

Previous researchers have examined indigenous belief communities and Sapta Darma. Wiwik Setiyani (2020) highlighted the dilemma between religion and spirituality among Sapta Darma adherents, particularly in seeking spiritual meaning beyond formal religious identity (Khasbullah, 2020). Ahmad Zaenal Abidin (2026) examined the dynamics of tolerance and the social adaptation strategies of Sapta Darma as a minority community (Abidin, 2026). Muwaffiq Jufri (2020), meanwhile, focused more strongly on structural issues, particularly legal recognition and the civil rights of indigenous-belief adherents (Jufri, 2020).

Unlike earlier studies that generally discuss the dynamics of indigenous belief communities in confronting social and structural challenges, this study focuses on inclusivity as a strategy for maintaining the existence of a local belief system. It not only identifies concrete forms of inclusivity practiced by the Sapta Darma community in Jemur Wonosari, but also analyzes how these practices function strategically in building open and adaptive social relations, thereby enabling the community to survive within a plural modern society.

Based on this background, the study formulates the following research questions: (1) What forms of inclusivity are practiced by the Sapta Darma community in Jemur Wonosari, Surabaya? (2) How does inclusivity function as a strategy for maintaining the existence of Sapta Darma as a local belief system? and (3) What factors support and inhibit the implementation of inclusivity in maintaining Sapta Darma's existence as a local belief system? This study aims to identify the forms of inclusivity practiced by Sapta Darma, analyze inclusivity as a strategy for maintaining the existence of a local belief system, and explain the factors that support or inhibit its implementation.

The urgency of this study lies in the need to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how inclusivity is practiced by Sapta Darma adherents as a strategy for maintaining their existence within Indonesia's plural society. The study is also expected to enrich the study of religions by presenting a more inclusive perspective on the diversity of belief systems, thereby contributing not only academically but also socially to a more open understanding of indigenous-belief adherents in Indonesia.

B. Method

This study employed a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach to examine practices of inclusivity within the Sapta Darma community. The research was conducted in Jemur Wonosari, Surabaya, an urban area in which a community of indigenous-belief adherents has developed. The research participants consisted of six Sapta Darma members selected through purposive sampling: one sanggar administrator, one senior sanggar figure, and four active members. The purposive criteria included: (a) involvement in the community's ritual and social activities; (b) an in-depth understanding

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of Sapta Darma teachings and activities; and (c) direct experience of social interaction with people outside the community (Machali, 2021).

Data were collected from February to May 2026 using two techniques. First, semi-structured in-depth interviews lasting 40–90 minutes per informant were conducted to obtain information about experiences, perspectives, and practices of inclusivity in everyday life. Second, observations were conducted during various social and religious activities of the Sapta Darma community, including the regular prostration ritual held every Friday and youth sanggaran activities.

The data were analyzed in stages through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The study applied Peter L. Berger's social construction theory, which emphasizes that social reality is formed through the processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization (Asmanidar, 2021). In this study, the framework was used to identify patterns of social interaction and forms of inclusivity that developed in community life, thereby providing a theoretical understanding of how indigenous-belief adherents construct and maintain their existence within modern society.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Forms of Inclusivity

In the context of local belief systems, inclusivity is understood as openness toward diversity and the ability to coexist without imposing one's will on others. An inclusive religious orientation does not mean doubting one's own convictions; rather, it means recognizing and respecting the existence of adherents of other religions and their equal right to coexist in society (Santoso, 2024). Within Peter L. Berger's social construction framework, inclusivity results from externalization, through which Sapta Darma adherents embody their values in actions, attitudes, and social interactions in everyday life (Ardianto Mukhlis M. & Saliki, 2024). The findings indicate three forms of inclusivity in Sapta Darma: theological, social, and cultural. These forms are not confined to doctrine but are realized in daily life through relations between humans and God, social interaction with the community, and the preservation of local culture.

a. Theological Inclusivity

Theological inclusivity is an approach that recognizes that God or spiritual values may operate through diverse paths, allowing for multiple ways toward salvation (Sudijanto et al., 2024). Interviews show that Sapta Darma adherents believe each person has an individual path for drawing closer to God Almighty. Sapta Darma does not dispute other beliefs; instead, it emphasizes how people may live well (Saputra & Mustika, 2023). This perspective makes Sapta Darma open to Indonesia's religious diversity.

This perspective is also reflected in their refusal to impose their teachings on others. One informant stated:

> "For me, Sapta Darma teaches people how to become truly human. Muslims should follow Islamic teachings, Christians should follow Christian teachings, and

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the same applies to others. A person's relationship with God is their own affair." (Interview with Mr. B, sanggar member, 2026)

This statement shows that Sapta Darma's central teaching does not lie in asserting a religious identity, but rather in cultivating human values among its adherents. Within Sapta Darma, a person is not judged by their religion, but by how they behave, speak, and treat others. Human values therefore provide the main foundation for building relationships with people from different religious backgrounds (Islami et al., 2023).

Based on observations conducted during several sesujudan activities held every Friday evening, the researchers found that Sapta Darma adherents were open to outsiders, including researchers from different religious backgrounds. From the beginning, the researchers were warmly welcomed by both community leaders and sanggar members without discriminatory treatment. During the activities, the researchers were not only permitted to observe the worship process, but were also given explanations of each stage. Several members voluntarily shared their experiences as Sapta Darma adherents and explained the values they believed in. The openness of the leaders and members enabled the observations and interviews to proceed smoothly, openly, and with mutual respect.

These findings demonstrate that the openness of Sapta Darma adherents is evident not only in informants' statements but also in daily practice. Their openness appears in their willingness to receive researchers, permit them to attend and observe worship, and explain their teachings and experiences. Such attitudes reflect respect for others regardless of religious or belief background and a willingness to establish communication and positive relations beyond the community.

These findings are also consistent with the practice of Wewarah Pitu values in everyday actions, such as guarding one's speech, refraining from blaming others, cultivating good character, helping anyone in need, and recognizing that worldly life is impermanent (Sudarma et al., 2021). This indicates that Wewarah Pitu is not merely normative doctrine, but a foundation that shapes perspectives and conduct in the social behavior of adherents (Rozy et al., 2020). Respect for difference, non-coercion in matters of belief, and the upholding of human values thus provide concrete evidence of theological inclusivity in daily life.

b. Social Inclusivity

In addition to its theological dimension, Sapta Darma's inclusivity is reflected in social relations with the surrounding community. Social inclusivity refers to conditions in which every individual is regarded as valuable, respected, and granted equal access to resources, services, and opportunities without discrimination (Wahyuni et al., 2025). Every person therefore has the same right to fair treatment regardless of background (Darma & Rusyidi, 2015). In Jemur Wonosari, Surabaya, social inclusivity is manifested through generally harmonious relations with the surrounding community.

Interviews indicate that adherents remain involved in social activities such as community service, neighborhood patrols, assisting neighbors who hold family events,

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and attending other neighborhood activities. Rather than isolating themselves, they seek to maintain social relations in a community characterized by diverse beliefs. Their involvement demonstrates that differences in belief are not regarded as barriers to social participation. Instead, communal life is understood as a space for developing relationships based on togetherness, mutual assistance, and mutual respect (Defiana et al., 2024).

Positive social relations are also evident in cooperation between the surrounding community and Sapta Darma adherents. Local residents assisted during the construction of the sanggar and in other activities. Sapta Darma members likewise contributed to the community by making the sanggar hall available for neighborhood deliberations. One informant stated:

> "Sometimes I offer the Sapta Darma hall for neighborhood meetings because there is no neighborhood office here. I do not mind; in fact, I am pleased. After all, we live side by side." (Interview with Mr. N, Head of the Jemur Wonosari Sapta Darma Sanggar, Surabaya, 2026)

This statement shows that relations between Sapta Darma and the community are built not only through everyday interaction but also through mutually beneficial cooperation. The willingness to provide sanggar facilities for community purposes reflects mutual trust and concern for shared needs. Conversely, residents' involvement in Sapta Darma activities also demonstrates reciprocal relations. These conditions confirm that the social inclusivity practiced by Sapta Darma adherents contributes to harmonious and mutually supportive relations with the surrounding community.

Beyond their immediate neighborhood, Sapta Darma adherents also participate actively in interfaith activities. Several members have taken part in events organized by the Supreme Council of Indonesian Beliefs (Majelis Luhur Kepercayaan Indonesia), including a commemoration of the Bali bombing tragedy (M. Hamim Arifin, 2026), as well as other interfaith activities. Participation in such events embodies openness toward diversity and efforts to build solidarity in a plural society. It confirms that Sapta Darma adherents do not restrict social relations to their own group, but actively build relations with others through dialogue and interfaith cooperation. Social inclusivity is therefore expressed both in positive neighborhood relations and in active participation in interfaith activities, dialogue, and cooperation.

c. Cultural Inclusivity

In addition to theological and social dimensions, Sapta Darma's inclusivity is reflected in efforts to preserve local culture. For Sapta Darma adherents, cultural preservation does not merely mean maintaining ancestral traditions, but also expresses openness and a willingness to embrace diversity. At the Sapta Darma sanggar in Jemur Wonosari, cultural inclusivity is manifested through the continuation of long-standing Javanese traditions. The eve of the first day of Suro, Friday Wage vigils, wayang performances, and other traditions remain part of community life. Informants stated that these traditions do not conflict with Sapta Darma teachings, but may instead be

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understood as part of the adherents' cultural and spiritual identity. These cultural practices have therefore continued to the present.

One form of local cultural preservation is the commemoration of the Eve of the First of Suro. According to the head of the Jemur Wonosari Sapta Darma Sanggar, the event includes various activities involving the surrounding community. It commonly features a wayang performance or a gathering at the sanggar followed by a communal meal. The neighborhood head and local residents are invited to attend and participate. An informant explained:

> "Usually, for the Suro celebration, we hold a wayang performance. Otherwise, we gather at the sanggar what you might call a slametan and invite the neighborhood head and local residents to share a meal." (Interview with Ms. D, member of Puanhayati (Indonesian Women Adherents of Belief in God Almighty), 2026)

This statement shows that cultural preservation within Sapta Darma is carried out not only by maintaining inherited traditions, but also by involving people outside the community. Cultural activities have a broader function than the mere continuation of tradition. For Sapta Darma adherents, wayang performances, slametan, and communal meals provide spaces in which adherents and local residents meet and interact, thereby strengthening their relationships (Suyitno & Umam, 2020). The participation of the neighborhood head and residents indicates that cultural traditions are not viewed as exclusive community events, but as means of strengthening togetherness, social bonds, and mutual respect amid diversity.

Preserving cultural heritage is one way in which Sapta Darma adherents maintain their existence. This effort involves young people in sanggar activities and uses social media to introduce Sapta Darma teachings and activities to a wider public. The presence of children and adolescents in cultural activities demonstrates a process of regeneration through which traditions and doctrinal values are maintained (Nazila et al., 2023).

These findings show that local culture is not regarded as contrary to Sapta Darma teachings, but as part of the adherents' cultural and spiritual identity. Preserving tradition is therefore understood as respect for cultural heritage that has long developed in society. Community involvement in cultural activities demonstrates that tradition is not merely a space for ritual performance, but also a medium that brings Sapta Darma adherents into closer contact with local residents. Cultural preservation thus maintains tradition while fostering harmonious social relations (Ardianto Mukhlis M. & Saliki, 2024). In social construction theory, these cultural practices represent externalization, through which adherents embody their values in everyday actions and social interaction (Mustolehudin et al., 2024). Together with theological and social inclusivity, these findings show that inclusivity is not merely understood as doctrine but is concretely practiced as part of the effort to maintain Sapta Darma's existence as a local belief system.

2. Inclusivity as a Strategy for Maintaining the Existence of Sapta Darma

a. Reasons for Implementing Inclusivity

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Sapta Darma's inclusive orientation originated in the concerns experienced by adherents as a minority group amid the dominance of officially recognized religions. These concerns included repeated discrimination, difficulties in managing state administration, including marriage registration, and local suspicion toward the sanggar. Such experiences encouraged adherents to consider how they should position themselves within society. They therefore sought to become more open so that their presence could be understood and accepted.

Observations and interviews indicate that this openness initially arose from practicing Sapta Darma teachings as intended, particularly selfless assistance and harmonious coexistence as taught in Wewarah Pitu. Over time, inclusivity produced changes in public perceptions, as residents gradually came to understand that the presence of Sapta Darma posed no danger. One informant explained:

> "We live among residents, most of whom follow officially recognized religions. If we closed ourselves off, they would probably think of us as something mystical. We do not dwell on people's negative views, but because we live side by side, we must embrace one another. Sanggar members often join neighborhood activities, so people know us." (Interview with Mr. N, 2026)

Maintaining positive relations reflects adherents' awareness of the "definition of reality" circulating in their social environment. For Berger, human beings live in both objective and subjective realities; the direction and meaning of life may be socially shaped through reciprocal relations with one's environment until habitualization occurs (Mawikere & Hura, 2022). Sapta Darma likewise recognizes that the "objective reality" of its surroundings is still shaped by dominant official-religion perspectives. Adherents therefore seek to influence that reality through externalization, namely by embodying Wewarah Pitu values concretely in everyday life.

This condition is consistent with the broader experience of indigenous-belief adherents in Indonesia, who continue to face discrimination, restrictions on fundamental rights, and unequal treatment compared with followers of officially recognized religions (Ningsih, 2026). Other studies show that the "mystical" and "occult" image attached to indigenous beliefs is often produced not by their teachings but by media representation (Hasan et al., 2023). Inclusivity may therefore be interpreted as an effort by Sapta Darma adherents to regain control over definitions of their identity from biased framing. It is not only a means of avoiding conflict, but also a strategy for correcting an already unequal objective reality.

In this situation, inclusivity helps reduce tension and enables society to understand Sapta Darma as a local belief through direct interaction and experience. Its implementation reflects adherents' awareness of the "definition of reality" circulating in their environment. They recognize that social reality is influenced by the perspectives of the dominant community, which may be biased. Sapta Darma therefore externalizes Wewarah Pitu values through harmony and openness toward wider society, thereby promoting a more positive understanding of local belief.

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Regulation also influences the implementation of inclusivity. Only in recent decades have indigenous-belief adherents received clearer legal recognition and civil-political rights (Pransefi, 2021). At the grassroots level, however, access to rights often still depends on the perceptions of local officials. Other indigenous-belief communities in East Java display a similar pattern: legal recognition does not automatically guarantee rights in public services, so adherents require informal strategies such as strengthening personal relations with local neighborhood authorities to prevent administrative rights from being obstructed by prejudice (Ginting et al., 2024). This similarity confirms that Sapta Darma inclusivity in Jemur Wonosari is not an isolated case, but part of a broader pattern among indigenous-belief communities, strengthening the argument that inclusivity is a structural response to regulatory gaps.

b. Inclusivity as a Strategy for Achieving Social Acceptance

The various forms of inclusivity function as strategies for obtaining social acceptance. Observations revealed three consistently recurring strategies. When examined sequentially, they show a movement from externalization to objectivation and internalization in accordance with Berger's social construction process. The theoretical analysis below accompanies each strategy

1) Active Participation in Community Activities (Externalization Stage)

Sapta Darma members participate in community service, neighborhood association meetings, family events, assistance to residents, and other social activities. One informant explained:

> "I always attend community service activities or neighborhood meetings. When residents hold tahlil gatherings, I sometimes attend but remain silent. When there is a major event involving the officially recognized religions, we always try to be present. For me, this is not only a duty as a resident, but also a way for people to know us. If we rarely appeared, people would assume we were closed off and would not invite us to communicate." (Interview with A, sanggar member, 2026)

This is a form of externalization, in which the teachings of indigenous belief are embodied in actions that others can observe and assess. When such actions are repeated, they move toward objectivation: consistent participation constructs the image of Sapta Darma members as "ordinary, active residents." This perception then becomes attached to Sapta Darma's identity in the eyes of the community. The pattern is consistent with studies showing that involvement in shared activities effectively builds trust among residents.

Research indicates that participation in shared activities effectively builds trust among residents. Social groups tend to grant trust after observing the enthusiasm and contribution shown by individuals or organizations. When residents see indigenous-belief adherents participating, they are more likely to regard Sapta Darma as part of the community rather than as a separate group.

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2) Open but Non-Coercive Communication

Sanggar administrators explained that when residents ask about their activities, the community describes the core teachings in simple terms, emphasizing Wewarah Pitu values such as honesty, responsibility, patience, and the belief that wrongdoing will eventually be revealed. Adherents explain these teachings without aggressively promoting their rituals. The teachings are presented in a way that does not threaten the religious identity of others.

> "When neighbors or outsiders are curious, we explain only what is necessary. Sometimes they are interested in the prostration ritual, and we tell them that they may learn about it simply to understand it. Some people also come here for treatment, and we serve them by providing the therapies we normally practice, but no one is forced to join our belief. People from different religions may learn about it."

This communication strategy represents the externalization of a new self-definition. Sapta Darma no longer allows its teachings to be defined entirely by rumor or external discourse; it actively contributes to defining those teachings in the public eye. Administrators share their activities through YouTube and other social media accounts. A similar pattern was found among Sapta Darma adherents in Jember who experienced conflict with official religious groups: they communicated through the Interreligious Harmony Forum (FKUB) and adopted openness to reduce discrimination (Hasanah et al., 2021).

3) Organizing Activities with Sensitivity to Local Conditions

Another strategy is to organize activities by considering the conditions and comfort of surrounding residents. When an event at the sanggar may create noise or crowds, administrators coordinate with the neighborhood head and ensure that the timing does not cause disturbance. This reflects an effort to avoid symbolic conflict, in which religious practices might appear excessively different from local habits. Through such arrangements, Sapta Darma seeks to ensure that its religious symbols may be present in public space without generating resistance.

Viewed through Berger's construction framework, these three strategies show a movement from externalization (concrete inclusive actions), to objectivation (the formation of habits and public images), and finally to internalization (residents' acceptance of Sapta Darma as a legitimate part of the neighborhood). Social acceptance does not arise automatically; it is constructed through consistent inclusivity. This study therefore shows that inclusivity is the principal practical instrument through which Sapta Darma moves from a potentially rejected position toward social acceptance.

c. The Role of Inclusivity in Maintaining the Community's Existence

Field data and interviews show that inclusivity directly contributes to the continuity of Sapta Darma in Jemur Wonosari at the micro, meso, and local macro levels, each of which reflects a different stage (Fahruddin et al., 2025). At the micro level, open

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and participatory relationships among residents provide concrete support. When misunderstandings or negative issues arise, residents who know Sapta Darma members personally tend to defend them or at least refrain from hostility. A non-Sapta Darma neighbor stated:

> "I know there is a Sapta Darma sanggar in this alley, but I see that they often join community service and help residents facing difficulties. In my view, they are simply ordinary residents. When someone says negative things about them, I explain that they have never caused problems here."

Such a perspective reflects inclusivity as a "social shield" that protects adherents from stereotypical pressure. In social construction theory, support from residents indicates that the image of Sapta Darma members as "active and good residents" has been objectivated and internalized, becoming part of a shared reality.

At the meso level, good relations with neighborhood structures and local institutions help the community survive organizationally. Reciprocal relations also provide support when the sanggar holds activities. One informant explained:

> "As long as we obtain permission and do not disturb residents, activities at the sanggar are not a problem. We often join neighborhood activities, and the neighborhood officers also use the sanggar hall for meetings because they do not yet have their own building. I allow it; it is a mutually beneficial relationship so that things remain peaceful and we help one another." (Interview with Mr. A, sanggar member, 2026)

This statement shows that inclusivity through participation and communication contributes to local legitimacy. Such legitimacy is important in a context in which local belief systems are not yet fully equal in practice to officially recognized religions. Although legal recognition exists, inclusivity helps prevent the rights of Sapta Darma adherents from being obstructed by hesitation or rejection among local officials.

At the macro level, Sapta Darma's image as a community that does not provoke conflict and contributes to social life helps its members navigate social change. When the local environment changes through the arrival of new residents, turnover among neighborhood officials, or shifts in local government policy Sapta Darma retains opportunities for acceptance because the community already holds a positive view of its adherents (Nasution, 2025). Literature on indigenous-belief communities likewise notes that group continuity often depends on members' ability to maintain a positive image in the eyes of the broader public and local officials.

This section demonstrates that inclusivity serves multiple functions. Beyond expanding social relations, it helps Sapta Darma obtain protection and support from the community. Without inclusivity, adherents could become marginalized and face difficulties maintaining their existence. Through inclusivity, by contrast, society increasingly accepts Sapta Darma as part of the neighborhood, allowing its presence to be regarded as normal, legitimate, and sustainable.

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3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Inclusivity

A factor is a condition or event that influences the occurrence of something. Factors may be divided into supporting and inhibiting factors (Sutiyono, 2022). Supporting factors are conditions that assist Sapta Darma adherents in practicing inclusive attitudes in everyday life, whereas inhibiting factors are conditions that obstruct such practices.

a. Supporting Factors

Supporting factors enable positive relations between Sapta Darma adherents and the surrounding community, thereby contributing to the continuity and existence of Sapta Darma as a local belief system. In general, these factors include community values and teachings, the role of leaders in guiding members, government regulatory support, and positive relations with society and government.

a) Legal Protection and State Recognition

Constitutional Court Decision No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016 marked an important turning point as an embodiment of Pancasila values and the national commitment to Pancasila as a guiding philosophy. The decision created space for citizens, particularly indigenous-belief adherents, to obtain constitutional rights in population administration (Nugraheni, n.d.). Although implementation remains uneven, the ruling provides a formal basis of legitimacy for Sapta Darma as a belief system recognized by the state.

b) The Open and Non-Exclusive Character of Sapta Darma Teachings

One supporting factor is the open and non-exclusive character of Sapta Darma teachings. Non-exclusivity means that Sapta Darma does not regard itself as the only path to truth and does not require people to abandon their religion or belief if they are interested in learning its prostration ritual or other teachings. Sapta Darma places greater emphasis on character formation, self-control, and spiritual closeness to God Almighty than on increasing the number of followers.

Field findings show that this openness is practiced in everyday life. Sanggar activities may be attended by guests or members of the public who wish to learn about Sapta Darma without being required to join. One administrator also stated that they respect each person's choice of belief, because what matters is that people live better lives, respect one another, and practice human values.

c) Community Communication and Adaptation Strategies

Sapta Darma adherents maintain their existence by building inclusive communication with various parties. In general, they sustain communication with society while distinguishing between private matters of worship and public social affairs (Panji Wicaksono et al., 2023). Their communication approach includes maintaining relations with leaders of other religions and the broader community and actively participating in social activities across neighborhoods and religious groups. The researchers observed administrators attending the 13 May bombing commemoration in Surabaya, where a Sapta Darma representative led a prayer among representatives of officially recognized religions. This demonstrates the benefits of communication and adaptation beyond the

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community, through which Sapta Darma adherents gain trust and recognition as part of the wider society.

b. Inhibiting Factors

1) Unequal Policy Implementation at the Bureaucratic Level

Although Constitutional Court Decision No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016 recognizes the civil rights of indigenous-belief adherents, guarantees of religious and moral education for their children have not yet been realized (Sinabutar et al., 2022). The national education system and school-level policies remain inconsistent with the spirit of constitutional recognition. Sapta Darma adherents in Jemur Wonosari experience this problem directly. One administrator stated that children cannot receive instruction in their own belief at school. During official religious lessons, they are therefore either permitted to attend or asked to leave the classroom.

Formal religious services also remain limited. The Ministry of Religious Affairs does not structurally or regulatorily administer indigenous-belief affairs, restricting access to services such as marriage and religious guidance. One administrator explained that Sapta Darma adherents frequently encounter difficulties when registering marriages and handling other administrative matters.

2) Negative Stigma and Labeling

One of the greatest obstacles still faced by Sapta Darma adherents is negative stigma and labeling from parts of society. This stigma shapes public perceptions and restricts their social interaction. The label of a "deviant sect" has long been documented, including an attack on a place of worship in Yogyakarta that served as a central Sapta Darma organization. During the incident, perpetrators damaged furniture, removed Sapta Darma symbols, and physically injured adherents (Intan Kamila & Fitria, 2025). This event demonstrates that stigma can develop into violence when it is not counterbalanced by understanding and mutual respect.

The supporting and inhibiting factors show that legal recognition and social acceptance alone do not guarantee Sapta Darma's existence. Gaps remain between formal regulations and bureaucratic practice, while stigma has not completely disappeared. These conditions require Sapta Darma adherents not only to rely on state protection but also to respond actively through internal and external efforts. The following measures are used to address these obstacles:

a) Age-Based Sanggaran Facilities for Children, Youth, and Adults

One of the most concrete strategies is the establishment of age-based sanggaran activities as a substitute for religious education unavailable in formal schools. At the Candi Busana sanggar, administrators provide activities for children aged 5–13, youth aged 14–35, and adults. These internal spaces transmit Wewarah Pitu teachings and strengthen members' capacity to face external pressure and discrimination. Observations indicate that regeneration occurs through two channels: direct transfer of knowledge from parents and children's participation in sanggaran activities.

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b) Generation Z's Open-Mindedness as an Opportunity for Social Acceptance

Generation Z tends to be more open to diversity. One study identifies this generation as important for preserving culture and local wisdom. Born between 1997 and 2012, they will carry forward the heritage of earlier generations (Fauzi Swarna et al., 2024). This openness also creates broader opportunities for the social acceptance of Sapta Darma. Youth organizations provide spaces for peer relations and strengthen confidence in spiritual identity. Through such openness, Generation Z is encouraged to participate more actively and deepen its understanding of local belief teachings.

c) Participation in Activities under MLKI and Its Affiliated Organizations

The Supreme Council of Indonesian Beliefs (MLKI) serves as the principal umbrella organization for indigenous-belief adherents in Indonesia, including Sapta Darma, and advocates for civil rights and belief education in schools. One adherent at Candi Busana, Surabaya, serves as chair of Puanhayati, the women's wing of MLKI. Sapta Darma adherents also participate in many other organizations in order to build networks and strengthen their position (Ardianto Mukhlis M. & Saliki, 2024).

D. Conclusion

This study concludes that the existence of Sapta Darma in Jemur Wonosari is maintained through inclusivity consistently practiced in everyday life in theological, social, and cultural forms. Inclusivity functions both as a shared value and as a strategy through active participation in community activities, open communication without coercion, and sensitivity to local conditions. These practices gradually construct trust and social acceptance in a process consistent with externalization, objectivation, and internalization in Peter L. Berger's social construction theory.

Nevertheless, this inclusive strategy has limitations. As long as the gap between legal recognition and bureaucratic implementation particularly in education services and population administration remains unresolved, indigenous-belief adherents will continue to depend on personal relationships and the goodwill of local officials rather than on equitable structural guarantees. This situation shows that the community's inclusivity is, in practice, an adaptive response to regulatory gaps. Future studies should therefore examine relations between indigenous-belief adherents and bureaucratic officials in education and civil registration to identify patterns that create opportunities for discrimination. Further research should also investigate the role of young adherents in greater depth, because Generation Z's openness may provide a bridge toward broader social acceptance while also presenting challenges for the regeneration of values amid modernization.

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