

Preserving the Breath of Javanese Culture in the Era of Globalization: *Macapat* Singing Training for the Ngesti Laras Art Group, Tulungagung

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Abstract. The preservation of local culture is a crucial aspect in safeguarding national identity amidst the currents of globalization. One form of Javanese culture that holds high historical and philosophical value is *macapat*, a traditional form of singing that conveys moral, ethical, and spiritual teachings. This community service project aims to develop the skills of the younger generation and foster their love for Javanese art and culture through *macapat* singing training, while also establishing a well-structured and sustainable organization for the Ngesti Laras Art Group in Tulungagung. The method used is a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques including observation, interviews, and documentation. The results show that the *macapat* training not only enhanced the musical skills of the participants but also raised their awareness of the importance of preserving cultural heritage. Participants experienced significant improvement in understanding and performing *macapat* songs, supported by the training module provided. Additionally, the formation of an organizational structure consisting of a chairperson, secretary, treasurer, and work divisions provided clear direction and defined roles in managing the group's activities. The recommendation from this initiative is for similar training programs to be conducted continuously, involving more youth and support from educational institutions or local governments, so that local cultural preservation can be carried out more systematically and sustainably. This training serves as a means of regenerating traditional art practitioners and strengthening the cultural identity of the local community. In conclusion, *macapat* training is an effective strategy for preserving Javanese culture, particularly within local art communities.

Keywords: Javanese culture; *macapat* training; art group.

1. Introduction

Indonesian society is undergoing significant cultural changes in the modern era. Today, many people prefer spending time on gadgets or engaging in unproductive activities. Public interest in cultural heritage is steadily declining, and in some cases, almost entirely absent. This situation is concerning, especially considering that our ancestors hoped their knowledge and intellectual legacies would be preserved by future generations.

Indonesia is, in fact, rich in culture and traditions. Among the most culturally diverse ethnic groups is the Javanese. One of the most well-known elements of Javanese cultural tradition is *tembang* or traditional singing, particularly *macapat*. *Macapat* is a form of Javanese poetry written in modern Javanese language, structured through metrical rules known as *guru gatra* (number of lines), *guru wilangan* (number of syllables), and *guru lagu* (final vowel sounds). These metrical elements are determined by the type of pattern or metrum applied (Karsono H, 2001). From a *fiqh* (Islamic legal) perspective, *macapat* does not contradict Islamic teachings. Thus, it can serve as a medium to instill moderate religious and social values in learners. From a cultural arts perspective, *macapat* contributes positively to Islamic moderation through cultural expression (Hidayat, 2022).

Macapat is a literary creation with a long-standing history in Javanese culture and holds a unique position within it. Its primary function is to convey messages and values through various literary compositions, as evident from the abundance of literary works composed in *macapat* form. This enduring function demonstrates its relevance and the necessity of its preservation. Given its importance, community empowerment is needed to support the revitalization of *macapat* traditions.

In essence, *macapat* contains numerous moral messages that can serve as reflections or even life guidelines. Some of these messages are embedded in gendhings such as *Mijil*, *Sinom*, *Asmaranda*, *Kinanti*, *Gambuh*, *Dhandhanggula*, *Maskumambang*, *Durma*, *Pangkur*, *Megatruh*, and *Pucung* (Soetami, 2010). *Macapat*, as a literary and musical form, has gradually lost its role in modern times, making it necessary to incorporate web-based interactive media into *macapat* education to introduce local wisdom values (Nabilunnuha et al., 2023). Thus, the presence of *macapat* must be preserved through both formal and informal education. Compounding this issue is the increasing disconnect between *macapat* and the mindset of today's global generation, despite their potential to develop and express appreciation for it.

Since its emergence in the 14th century, *macapat* has continued to thrive, both in oral and written forms. It is still used in daily life by many Javanese people as a source of entertainment, aesthetics, education, traditional performances, written correspondence, work chants, incantations, traditional wedding ceremonies, *Pangestu* rituals, and as a philosophical narrative of the human life cycle—from birth to death and the soul's return to the divine realm. These societal functions highlight *macapat* as a vital literary form in human life, serving as entertainment, guidance, and a moral framework in social, national, and spiritual contexts. As a form of entertainment, *macapat* should be enjoyable to watch, hear, and experience. This underlines the need to preserve *macapat* in Java as a meaningful cultural element.

The community of Tanggung Village, Campurdarat Subdistrict, Tulungagung Regency, East Java, has considerable potential to enhance their understanding and appreciation of *macapat*, a legacy rich in noble teachings that can be applied in everyday life. This is evidenced by the existence of a *macapat* art group called “Sasana Budaya

Ngesti Laras,” established in the 1970s by the late Ki Sudjinal, Head of the Office of the Ministry of Education and Culture in Campurdarat, Tulungagung (Handaka, 2025).

The group was founded out of a desire by local cultural figures to create a cultural space that would preserve Javanese traditions and serve as a cultural hallmark for Tanggung Village – distinct from neighboring villages. Most residents of Tanggung still incorporate Javanese culture, particularly *macapat*, into their social and communal events. However, with changing times, the group has experienced a decline, evident in the decreasing number of members and reduced frequency of practice sessions (Handaka, 2025). A similar issue is occurring in Semarang, where Panembrono – a traditional Javanese choral song performed without musical instruments – is nearing extinction due to a lack of interest from younger generations (Nurhayati et al., 2024).

Therefore, we felt it necessary to carry out a program of coaching and empowering the *macapat* singing skills of the Tanggung Village community, particularly the members of the Sasana Budaya Ngesti Laras group, to ensure the group’s continued existence and make it a distinctive cultural feature of the village.

Various efforts to preserve Javanese culture – especially *macapat* – have been undertaken by individuals, communities, and government institutions. For example, Edmawati implemented a program aimed at increasing Gen Z’s resilience through group counseling based on local wisdom in *Macapat Sinom* (Edmawati, 2021). Other efforts have included empowering teachers to help students better understand Javanese culture and enhance their *macapat* singing skills (Nugrahanta et al., 2023), and interpreting verses of *macapat*, particularly *Mijil*, as a tool for character education (Anto & Anita, 2019). Absul Bashith and colleagues also conducted community empowerment in Tunggulwulung through *macapat* training, which they hoped would contribute to developing the village as a nationally and internationally recognized cultural center known as the “Cultural Village of Tunggulwulung in Unity in Diversity” (Bashith et al., 2021).

However, many of these initiatives remain ceremonial or formalistic, lacking a sustainable development approach at the local community level. This proposed community service introduces a more participatory, sustainable, and contextual model by strengthening the capacity of local art groups such as Ngesti Laras, who are the frontline agents of cultural preservation. The training provided not only focuses on *macapat* performance techniques but also covers its philosophical meanings, structural components, and regeneration strategies through hands-on practice, digitalization, and documentation. The final goal is to establish a well-organized structure that supports the development of local Javanese art communities and affirms cultural identity.

The implementation of this program is aligned with the aspirations of the Tanggung Village community, particularly members of the Sasana Budaya Ngesti Laras, to be recognized beyond their village. It is hoped that this mentoring and training will ensure the continuity of the group, especially through the involvement of local youth. By increasing their knowledge of Javanese culture, particularly *macapat*, and honing their

singing skills, this program aims to preserve cultural heritage and strengthen the group as a unique and enduring cultural symbol of the Tanggung Village community.

2. Methodolgy

This community service activity was conducted through the delivery of material in the form of training and technical guidance on singing *macapat* in Tanggung Village, Campurdarat Sub-district, Tulungagung Regency. The activity was focused on the Ngesti Laras arts group and took place at the home of Mr. Handaka, who is also the head of the group. The location was chosen due to its spacious area and the availability of a gamelan set to accompany the training sessions. The group currently consists of around 20 members, but the number has declined over the years due to the younger generation's waning interest in *macapat*. Most of the current members are over 50 years old. Therefore, this community service project mainly focuses on the local community in Tanggung Village to encourage broader participation.

The implementation of the community service program was divided into four main phases: 1) Preparation Phase, which began with a preliminary study through direct observation at the site; 2) Implementation Phase, during which training was delivered directly to the target participants; 3) Evaluation Phase, where the participants' understanding and outcomes were assessed.

The next stage of the activity involved delivering practical *macapat* training. The method used was adapted to meet the specific needs and goals of this empowerment initiative. The training and technical guidance for *macapat* performance as an effort to preserve Javanese culture in Tanggung Village, Campurdarat, Tulungagung, utilized the drill method (also known as the training method). This method was considered appropriate for mentoring and practical instruction in *macapat* performance.

The training activities were supported by various tools, materials, and technologies to enhance effectiveness. Equipment used included a sound system, traditional musical instruments (such as *gamelan* and *kendang*), a laptop, camera, and projector for both theoretical and practical sessions. Training materials included 45 printed *macapat* modules, *macapat* lyric sheets, and writing tools. Supporting technologies included document processing applications.

To evaluate the success of the training, direct interviews were conducted after the sessions. Participants were asked a series of questions related to the content of the *macapat* training, including general knowledge of the songs taught and their ability to perform the pieces according to the instructions. This evaluation aimed to assess the level of material comprehension, skill acquisition, and participant enthusiasm for cultural preservation through *macapat*.

The training program was conducted over a six-month period, following a structured service-based framework consisting of: 1) Initial field orientation, 2) Situation analysis of the group and community, 3) Community outreach and focus group

discussions (FGDs) on Javanese cultural preservation through *macapat*, 4) Module development, 5) Training implementation, and 6) Evaluation.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on observations and interview results, it can be concluded that efforts to preserve Javanese culture, particularly in the art of nembang *macapat*, already exist in Tanggung Village. However, these efforts have received minimal attention from both the village government and the community, leading to the limited recognition of the *macapat* arts group by the broader village population. The group continues to make efforts to recruit new members, especially from among the youth of Tanggung Village, each year. Unfortunately, these efforts often face challenges due to the lack of interest from the younger generation in becoming members of the group. It is hoped that through this community service program, the people of Tanggung—particularly the youth—will develop greater enthusiasm for preserving Javanese culture, especially in nembang *macapat*. Ideally, future generations, especially young people, will take part in the cultural preservation of *macapat*, allowing the group to continue and become a cultural hallmark of Tanggung Village, Campurdarat, Tulungagung (Handaka, 2025).

The *macapat* training was held at the cultural center of the Ngesti Laras *macapat* group in Tanggung Village, specifically at the home of Mr. Handaka, who is also the head of the group. This location was chosen because the cultural center is equipped with the necessary facilities for *macapat* training activities, including a spacious area and a complete set of gamelan instruments. Furthermore, since the study focuses on the Tanggung Village community, conducting the training in the village itself facilitates community involvement and participation.

The implementation of this community service program comprised four stages:

3.1 Preparation Stage

This stage began with a preliminary study involving an initial observation at the mentoring site and an interview with Mr. Handaka, the head of the Ngesti Laras *macapat* group. The interview revealed that the group has been active since 2012 and had previously organized various events and training sessions in Tanggung Village. However, the group is currently inactive and at risk of disbanding due to the declining enthusiasm of both its members and the local community. This is evident from the absence of new members willing to carry forward the group's mission of preserving Javanese culture—particularly *macapat*—in the modern era.

Therefore, the researcher aims to organize a training program to be led directly by Mr. Handaka, with the hope of attracting new members from among the youth and revitalizing the spirit of existing members. During this stage, the researcher also secured permission from the village head of Tanggung, Mr. Didik Girnotoyekti, and proceeded with planning the event, including identifying speakers and trainers to be involved. The program is structured into three main sessions: outreach/socialization, training, and a seminar presenting the results.

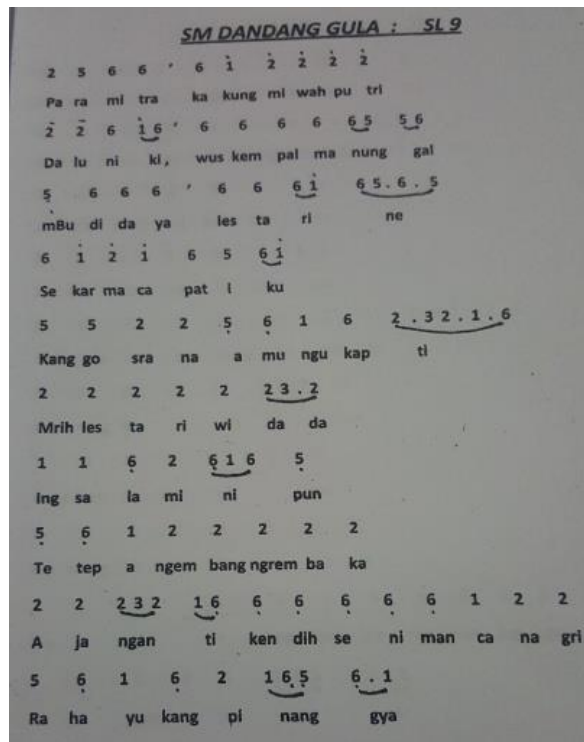


Figure 1. Interview with Mr. Handaka

3.2 Socialization Stage

The purpose of this socialization activity was to inform the entire community of the upcoming *macapat* training program as part of efforts to preserve Javanese culture in the Tanggung Village area, Campurdarat, Tulungagung. For this activity, the researcher invited all 40 neighborhood association (RT) heads from Tanggung Village. The rationale behind inviting RT heads was to ensure that the information delivered would effectively reach all levels of society without exception, thereby enabling full community participation in the training program.

The socialization event was held at the researcher's residence. Out of the 40 invitees, 36 attended the event. During this stage, the *macapat* tradition was introduced, the training module was explained, and an overview of the Ngesti Laras *macapat* group in Tanggung Village was presented. Additionally, the researcher informed the participants that a *macapat* training program would be held within the next month as a means of preserving Javanese cultural heritage and to recruit new members to join the Ngesti Laras group in Tanggung. This stage also marked the initial introduction to the *tembang macapat* (Javanese poetic songs).



*O my brothers and sisters,
 Tonight we gather, hearts as one,
 Striving to guard our heritage –
 This song of macapat,
 To awaken the soul,
 To bring peace and serenity,
 Now and forever.
 Let it bloom and flourish,
 Never crushed by foreign tides,
 May this gathering be forever blessed.*

Figure 2. Training module used by the researcher



Figure 3. Module socialization session

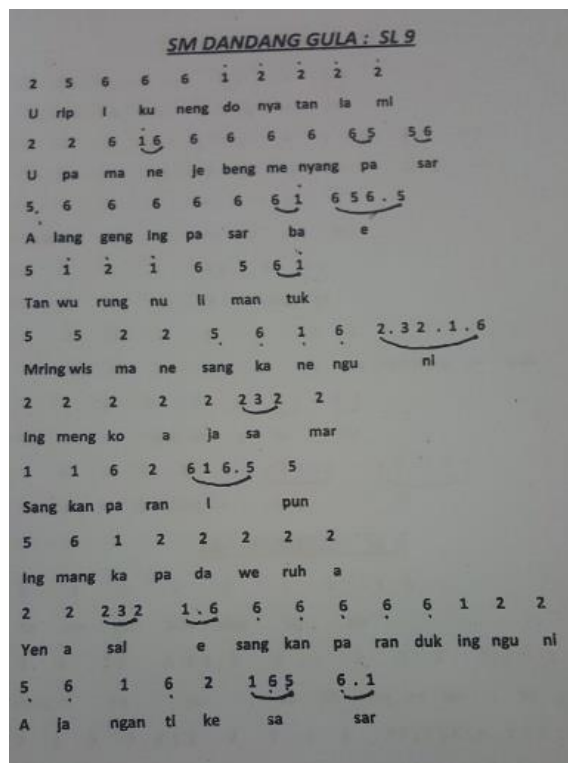
3.3 Training Stage

This stage consisted of four separate training sessions. The first training session was held at the Ngesti Laras Cultural Center in Tanggung Village, Campurdarat District, Tulungagung Regency, specifically at the home of Mr. Supardan, who served as the trainer and the head of the Ngesti Laras association, on September 7, 2019. The session began at 8:00 PM and ended at 11:00 PM. A total of 38 participants attended, out of 44 who had registered. The session began with the distribution of training modules to facilitate the learning process of *nembang macapat*, followed by an explanation from the trainer on the definition of *macapat* and the types of *tembang macapat* that are still used today in various Javanese traditional ceremonies, such as wedding rituals and other customary events.



Figure 4. *Macapat* training on *Dhandhang Gula*

In the first training session, participants were introduced to only one type of *tembang macapat*, namely *Dhandhang Gula*. The trainer explained that this type of song is suitable for all purposes—introductions, content, and closing sections of a story or expressions of admiration for noble values. The character of this *gendhing* is sweet, flexible, and easy to adapt to various situations and contexts. This song was selected as the starting point because it is relatively easy and frequently sung, thus already familiar to many (Handaka, 2025).



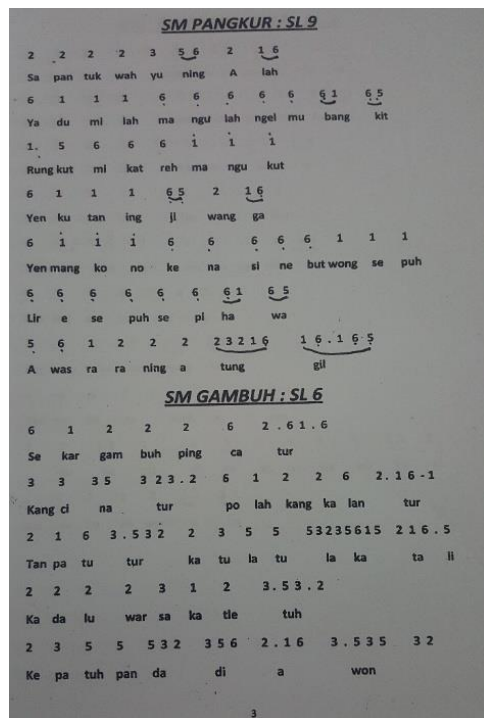
*Life in this world is fleeting,
 Like a visit to the market –
 One doesn't stay there long,
 Just a moment, then returns
 To their own home.
 So let there be no doubt
 About life's true purpose.
 Know this well –
 The journey leads to God.
 Do not lose your way.*

Figure 5. *Tembang Dhandhang Gula*

The moral conveyed through this *tembang* was a reminder that life in this world is temporary and fleeting. Human life is likened to someone shopping at the market—brief and bound to return home (Handaka, 2025). Therefore, humans must remember the true purpose of life, which is to seek the pleasure of Allah and not be led astray. The interpretation of this *tembang* emphasizes ethical behavior and awareness in achieving

social welfare and fulfilling basic needs (Prabawa & Mukti, 2022). The session concluded with a group performance of *Dhandhang Gula*, although many participants were still shy and had difficulty replicating the song properly, which was expected for a first session.

The second training session was held at the same location, the Ngesti Laras Cultural Center, at Mr. Handaka's residence, and was attended by 40 participants – an increase from the first session. The session began with a group recitation of *Dhandhang Gula* for about 15 minutes as a review. Next, participants were instructed to read the training modules covering *tembang Pangkur* and *Gambuh*.



Pangkur

*To receive divine revelation,
One must refine the wisdom of awareness,
Touching both heart and soul,
Planted deep within the spirit.
Such a one is truly wise –
Freed from worldly desire,
And ever mindful of the One Supreme Being.*

Gambuh

*Four verses of Gambuh we sing,
Unraveling lessons in conduct.
Without counsel, one falls to disgrace;
Ignoring advice leads to ruin.*

Figure 6. *Tembang Pangkur* and *Gambuh*

The moral message in *Pangkur* encourages individuals to seek heartfelt wisdom and not forget the teachings of their elders to avoid harmful desires. It also serves as a reminder that all actions are observed by Allah, thus urging caution in one's conduct while seeking knowledge (Handaka, 2025). The interpretation emphasizes the importance of adhering to religious teachings (Prabawa & Mukti, 2022). In *Gambuh*, the moral centers around behaving according to divine and social advice, warning against immoral behavior and bad habits that lead to misguidance (Prabawa & Mukti, 2022).

Participants attentively listened as the trainer demonstrated the melodies of *Pangkur* and *Gambuh*, which differed from *Dhandhang Gula*. Afterward, they practiced singing the songs in unison, and then, unlike the first session, each participant was asked to sing individually, in the order of the attendance list. Each participant was observed and evaluated over a period of three to five minutes.

Through this individual practice, the trainer was able to identify each participant's weaknesses. Some struggled with the language due to limited exposure to Javanese, requiring special attention from the trainer and researcher. Others received

more intensive guidance, including specific feedback and demonstrations on proper technique. The session ended with a collective performance of *Dhandhang Gula*, *Pangkur*, and *Gambuh*. Participants were then assigned to read the module on *tembang Mijil* in preparation for the next session.



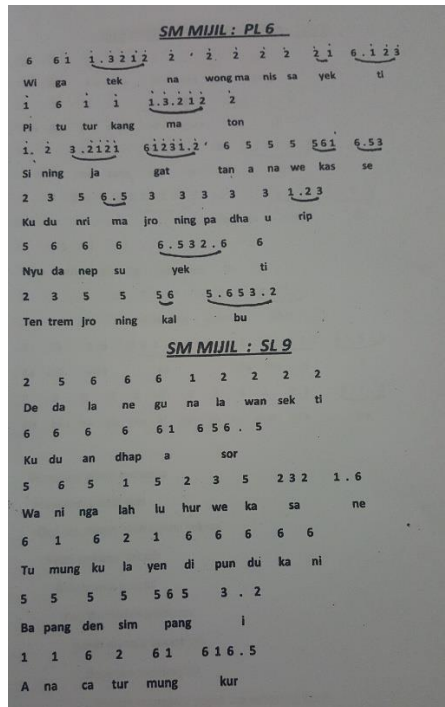
Figure 7. Second training session on *Pangkur* and *Gambuh*

The third training session was also held at Mr. Handaka's residence. However, this time, the researcher asked the trainer to incorporate gamelan instruments. This addition aimed to increase participant interest and enthusiasm by including musical accompaniment. A total of 38 participants attended, with a noticeable increase in youth participation. This positive trend is expected to continue, encouraging the younger generation not only to join the training but also to become active members of the Ngesti Laras association and contribute to preserving Javanese cultural heritage, particularly *tembang macapat*.



Figure 8. Training session using gamelan accompaniment

The figure 8 shows several participants singing *macapat* songs from previous sessions while waiting for others to arrive and begin learning the next song: *Mijil*. Some participants were seen observing the gamelan instruments with curiosity, as this was their first time using such tools in training. The *macapat* song introduced during the third session was *Mijil*, which is more complex than the previous ones. Consequently, the session ended later than usual – at 12:30 AM instead of the typical 11:00 PM.



Mijil

Hear me, my graceful daughter,

This counsel shall remain eternal –

The universe has no beginning nor end.

Accept it all with an open heart,

And tame desire to find peace within.

Figure 9. *Tembang Mijil*

The moral message conveyed in *tembang Mijil* is an appeal to control one's desires in order to attain inner peace. It is acknowledged that when one is overwhelmed by excessive desires and uncontrolled ambition, it leads to the path of evil and away from tranquility (Handaka, 2025). Human beings are encouraged to be grateful for the gift of life and for being born into this world (Prabawa & Mukti, 2022). Therefore, the community is called upon to maintain peace of mind and heart. The training method in the third session remained consistent with the previous ones, where the trainer first demonstrated the *tembang Mijil* and the participants repeated it together in unison. However, this session was more engaging, as it featured live accompaniment using gamelan instruments available at the training venue. Members of the Ngesti Laras *macapat* association participated by playing the gamelan, while the rest of the participants practiced the *tembang* together.

The third training session concluded with a test to evaluate participants' practical mastery of *macapat* singing. The trainer assessed each participant individually to accurately determine their progress and capabilities in performing *macapat*.

The fourth training session. In the final session, participants had shown marked improvement in their ability to perform *macapat*. The number of attendees increased to 40 people. The session began with participants being asked to directly perform the *macapat* songs they had previously learned. This immediate performance task was assigned by the trainer as the participants were now considered capable of singing *macapat* independently. The final *tembang* introduced was *Pucung*. This selection was made because *tembang Pucung* carries a profound message about mortality—it describes the physical body after death and serves as a closing song in the sequence of *macapat gendhings*.

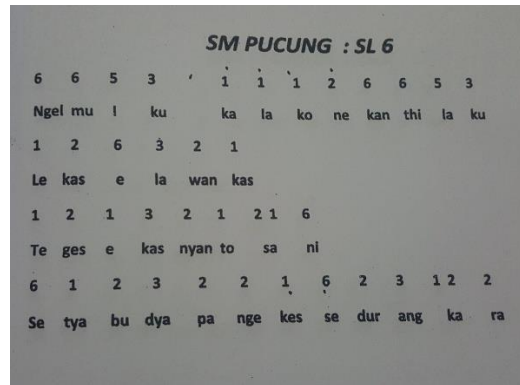


Figure 10. *Tembang Pucung*

The *tembang* conveys the idea that useful knowledge continues to benefit others even after the one who possessed it has passed away – provided that the knowledge was shared and practiced. This aligns with Islamic teachings, which state that one of the deeds whose rewards continue even after death is beneficial knowledge (Handaka, 2025). This is consistent with the thoughts of Kundharu and Dewi, who assert that Islamic religious values and philosophical wisdom embedded in the *macapat Pucung* form an inseparable part of Javanese community life in terms of both spirituality and national identity (Saddhono & Pramestuti, 2018). Therefore, participants are expected not only to understand *macapat*, but also to pass this knowledge on to others, so it becomes a lasting source of merit.

After all participants individually performed the *tembangs* they had learned in front of the trainer, the next stage was an interview session conducted by the trainer and researcher. The aim of these interviews was to recruit new members for the Ngesti Laras *macapat* association, thereby ensuring the group's sustainability and its continued role in preserving Javanese cultural heritage, especially *macapat*.

Among the interviewed participants, about 10 expressed a desire to join the Ngesti Laras *macapat* association. These included: Dwi, Danar, Nanang, Jefri, Gatot, Prabu, Agus, Roiten, Ida, and Diana. These individuals are categorized as part of the younger generation, aged between 20 and 40 years. Most of them shared the view that *tembang macapat* is a unique aspect of Javanese culture, rich in philosophical meaning. Through joining the association, they hope not only to help preserve this tradition within their community, but also to gain wider recognition, potentially representing Tanggung Village and even Tulungagung Regency more broadly.

The final session concluded with closing remarks by both the trainer and the researcher. They also shared a summary of the outcomes of the training program, which would form the basis for a follow-up seminar. The seminar aimed to establish a new organizational structure and leadership team for the Ngesti Laras *macapat* association in Tanggung Village, Campurdarat.

3.4 Seminar Phase: Presentation of Training Outcomes

This seminar presented the results of the *macapat* singing training program and the interviews conducted by the researcher during the course of the activity. Several community members, especially among the youth, demonstrated enthusiasm for preserving Javanese culture by joining the Ngesti Laras *macapat* association. Approximately ten individuals expressed their desire to become members, including Dwi, Danar, Nanang, Jefri, Gatot, Prabu, Agus, Roiten, Ida, and Diana.

As a result, a new organizational structure for the Ngesti Laras *macapat* association in Tanggung was established. In addition to electing new leadership, the seminar also scheduled regular training sessions for the group and initiated the development of a training module or guidebook on *macapat*, covering theoretical aspects and types of *tembang macapat*. It was agreed that routine training would take place biweekly at the residence of Mr. Handaka, who serves as the secretary of the community group in Tanggung Village.

Evaluation of the program was carried out both directly and indirectly. Direct evaluation occurred during the training sessions, assessing: (1) the participants' level of commitment, (2) their understanding of *tembang macapat*, (3) their ability to mimic the trainer in singing *macapat*, and (4) their progress after completing the training.

Indirect evaluation involved post-training monitoring, including: (1) how participants applied their *macapat* singing skills, and (2) how they integrated these skills into traditional ceremonies in the Tanggung community.

Following four sessions of training, the average proficiency of Ngesti Laras members showed improvement in performing *tembang macapat*. Based on the researcher's mentoring and observations, participants' skill levels increased by an average of 10 points.

Table 1. Post-test Results on *Macapat* Singing Proficiency

No.	Participant Name	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score
1.	Suratno	60	70
2.	Triwati	80	90
3.	Jarwono	70	80
4.	Juremi	80	90
5.	Saladi	60	70
6.	Sugiharto	60	70
7.	Sudibyo	70	80
8.	Takad	85	95
9.	Jio	65	75
10.	Santoso	60	70
11.	Suwarno	60	70
12.	Suwarto	60	70
13.	Sumani	75	85
14.	Argo	70	80
15.	Subagyo	75	85
16.	Iryanto	50	60
17.	Saito	50	60
18.	Adiono	50	60

19. Sugihono	60	70
20. Sucipto	70	80
21. Teguh	60	70
22. Cipto	55	65
23. Amat Ali	60	70
24. Mardani	70	80
25. Iryanto	50	60
26. Adiono	50	60
27. Mulyono	55	65
28. Subarkah	50	60
29. Bibit	50	60
30. Kevin	50	60
31. Ida	50	60
32. Roiten	50	60
33. Dwi	50	60
34. Danar	50	60
35. Gatot	50	60
36. Nanang	50	60
37. Prabu	40	50
38. Agus	40	50
39. Diana	40	50
40. Jefri	40	50
41. Takun	40	50
42. Jatmiko	40	50
43. Imam	40	50

Assessment results showed that nearly all participants improved their ability to sing *macapat*, with average score increases of 10 points. Some participants who initially scored around 40 improved to 50. This variation was due to the fact that not all trainees were original members of the Ngesti Laras group or had prior exposure to *macapat*. Furthermore, some participants were unable to attend every session; some only attended two or three sessions. Consequently, their scores tended to be lower. Nonetheless, this training program is expected to enhance both the technical and interpretive capabilities in performing *sekar macapat* – a noble cultural heritage that must be preserved.

Macapat is also a form of local wisdom that strengthens the resilience of youth, as it is rich with philosophical teachings about enduring life's challenges with passion, patience, and perseverance, whether in seeking knowledge, creating, or navigating life (Edmawati, 2021). Considering its cultural significance in community rituals such as the Islamic New Year (*Satu Suro*), village cleansing ceremonies, *ruwatan*, and weddings, continued training in *tembang macapat* is essential in Tanggung Village.

As emphasized in the community engagement research by Khoiriyah et al. regarding the existence of *tembang macapat* in cultural, mystical, and religious dimensions, future generations should be encouraged to study this art form as part of honoring ancestral heritage. This offers benefits not only individually but also collectively (Khoiriyah & Syarif, 2019). Therefore, government support – especially from local village authorities – is crucial in sustaining such cultural preservation efforts.

Macapat literary art, as part of Javanese cultural heritage, significantly contributes to the formation of national culture. Regional literary traditions still demonstrate vitality despite the pressures of modernization. Their sustainability depends greatly on the interest, dedication, and motivation of cultural enthusiasts and community support. Without such support, these traditions are at risk of decline, leading to the potential loss of invaluable cultural assets. Additionally, *macapat* serves as a medium for religious moderation, as its performances promote harmony, mutual cooperation, and respect among religious communities (Saifuddin et al., 2023).

The *Tembang Macapat* training held for the Ngesti Laras art group in Tulungagung reveals a sustained interest in preserving local culture, particularly when facilitated through educational and participatory approaches. The outcomes of this initiative can be analyzed across several dimensions:

3.4.1 Improved understanding and skills

Prior to training, most members had limited knowledge of *macapat* structure, meaning, and singing techniques. Training helped overcome common barriers, such as lack of expertise or resources, as noted by Hermawan & Sukoyo (2023). With a solid training concept, participants improved in technical skills and philosophical appreciation.

3.4.2 Revitalization of cultural interest

The training positively impacted cultural awareness among participants, particularly younger generations. Some acknowledged that the experience broadened their understanding of the importance of safeguarding ancestral traditions amid rapid global cultural shifts. As *macapat* increasingly loses prominence in modern times, digital and web-based media collaboration—as recommended by Nabilunnuha et al. (2023)—can effectively enhance learning experiences and preserve local wisdom.

3.4.3 Adaptation of local culture in the global era

Results show that cultural preservation can be harmonized with technological advancements. Participants were encouraged to explore digital innovations, such as modern music collaborations or multimedia platforms like YouTube, to promote *macapat* without compromising its essence. This is aligned with practices by groups like Mantradisi in Yogyakarta, who successfully merge traditional and modern art for broader appeal and sustainability (Juwita & Kusnadi, 2020; B & Supriyadi, 2023).

3.4.4 Community support and program sustainability

The Ngesti Laras group, with its long-standing presence, serves as a strategic cultural anchor. The members' active participation and commitment to this training program signal a strong will to uphold Javanese cultural life. The lyrics in *macapat* are rich in moral messages and often reflect values aligned with religious teachings, making them valuable guidelines for living in harmony within society (Zidanurrohim et al., 2022).

4. Conclusion

The *Macapat* training program for the Ngesti Laras Art Association in Tulungagung successfully enhanced participants' understanding of the structure, philosophy, and vocal techniques of *tembang macapat*. Evaluations indicated a notable improvement in both pre-test and post-test scores, alongside increased vocal skills and interpretative ability during practical sessions. The program's objectives were achieved, as evidenced by the growing number of members capable of singing *macapat* in accordance with traditional standards (*pakem*), the rising interest among youth in traditional arts, the development of a training module for continued learning, and the establishment of a formal organizational structure to ensure the sustainability of the group.

In terms of impact, the program fostered stronger cultural awareness within the local community and instilled a sense of responsibility for preserving Javanese traditional arts. Its long-term benefits include the creation of a learning system that can be passed down to future generations, both directly and through digital media.

For future programs, it is recommended that training not only focus on vocal techniques but also involve collaboration with schools, art studios, and local media to broaden educational outreach. The use of simple digital tools (such as instructional videos and social media platforms) has proven effective in both documenting and disseminating training outcomes to the wider public. Practically, this program demonstrates that a community-based approach, supported by technology, can effectively address the challenges of cultural preservation in the modern era. Therefore, regular training sessions are essential to help participants continuously hone their skills and sustain the initiative over time.

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