



## Exploration of Traditional and Modern Values of Bidara (*Ziziphus mauritiana*) Leaf in the Community of Tancung Village, Tanah Sitolo Sub-District, Wajo District

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the utilization and meaning of bidara leaves (*Ziziphus mauritiana*) in the lives of people from various generational and professional backgrounds. Data were obtained through interviews with six resource persons, namely traditional healers, housewives, fathers, grandmothers, millennial aunts, and local residents. The results of the interviews showed that bidara leaves have strong traditional values, such as being used in the ritual of bathing corpses, treating wounds, and treating supernatural disorders. On the other hand, modern uses are starting to develop, such as being used in beauty products, skincare, and as a symbol of spiritual healing on social media. The findings show that bidara leaves have not only survived as part of tradition, but have also been successfully adapted into modern lifestyles, reflecting the continuity and transformation of values in society.

Keywords: Bidara leaves, Traditional values, Modern values, Traditional medicine, Spiritual healing.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known as a country with abundant biological wealth, including the existence of medicinal plants that are traditionally used by the community (Sakka & Muin, 2023). One of the plants that has traditional importance and has begun to be explored in the modern scientific realm is the **bidara leaf** (*Ziziphus mauritiana*). This leaf has long been recognized in various traditions, especially in religious practices, spiritual healing, and herbal medicine (Siregar, 2020).

According to Wahyudi (2022), Bidara plant is a kind of small tree that is always green and known as a fruit producer that grows in North Africa, tropical regions, and West Asia. This plant can also be found growing in Israel in valleys up to 500 meters above sea level. In Indonesia itself, bidara plants grow mainly in the Sumbawa area, West Nusa Southeast. Initially, this plant was only known as a food ingredient, but over time it was known to have various traditional health benefits. The leaves and other parts of the bidara plant are traditionally used to treat various types of diseases, such as skin disorders, digestive disorders, liver complaints, jaundice, and play a role in wound healing. In addition, this plant is also known to have anticancer, anti-inflammatory properties, and can function as a tonic (Health et al., n.d.).

In traditional contexts, bidara leaves are often used for ritual bathing of the dead, warding off the disturbance of spirits, and naturally relieving wounds and itching. Bintoro (2017) Their use is often closely related to belief values and cultural heritage passed down across

generations. However, over time, the utilization of bidara leaves has shifted in meaning and form. Among the younger generation, especially those active on social media, bidara leaves are now popular in the form of more modern and practical beauty products, skincare, and spiritual self-care (Sakka & Muin, 2023).

This phenomenon is interesting to explore further, as it shows how a local natural ingredient is not only preserved through traditional values, but also adapted and accepted in modern society. Therefore, this paper has been prepared to explore the traditional and modern values of bidara leaves based on interviews with informants from various social backgrounds and ages. This study is expected to provide a complete picture of the transformation of the meaning and use of bidara leaves in Indonesian society today.

## II. METHODS

This research used a **descriptive qualitative** approach with data collection methods in the form of interviews. The purpose of this method is to obtain an in-depth description of the perceptions, experiences and practices of the community in utilizing bidara leaves, both in traditional and modern contexts. The following are several stages in data collection and data analysis, including the following:

a) Interview

This research used a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection methods in the form of interviews. The interview technique was semi-structured with open-ended questions to allow the interviewees to express their understanding freely and broadly.

b) Selection of Informants

Six interviewees were purposively selected based on their diverse social backgrounds, ages and perspectives on bidara leaves. The six interviewees included a traditional healer, a housewife, a father, a grandmother, a millennial-generation aunt, and a local resident from the Tancung area. They were chosen to represent cross-generational perspectives and different social functions within the community.

c) Data Collection

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d) Data Analysis

The data obtained was then thematically analyzed to identify traditional and modern values in the use of bidara leaves. The analysis was conducted by highlighting keywords, usage patterns, and the social and cultural context of each interviewee.

With this approach, it is expected that the research results can reflect the social dynamics in the utilization of local herbal plants such as bidara leaves that remain relevant in the midst of the times.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of interviews conducted with six interviewees show that **bidara leaves** have various functions and meanings in people's lives. Differences in age, profession, and perspective result in a spectrum of utilization that reflects a blend of **traditional** and **modern** values. The following is a summary of the findings from each interviewee:

### 1. Traditional healers

Mr. Mappe is one of the 70-year-old traditional healers who uses bidara leaves as a traditional medicine. According to Mr. Mappe, bidara leaves are considered to have spiritual power to overcome supernatural disorders, especially used in bathing rituals for people who are possessed. In addition, these leaves are also used physically to heal wounds or ulcers, by squeezing and attaching them to the affected area. His explanation can be supported by various previous studies, one of which is a study which explains the benefits of bidara leaves as a ruqyah medicine in Islam (Al-Kauniyah: Journal of Quranic Science and Tafsir, n.d.). This traditional belief is also supported by Siregar (2020), who states that bidara leaves have long been used in spiritual cleansing rituals in various Indonesian communities.

**2. Housewife (Mrs. Rini)**

Mrs. Rini is one of the 45 years old who uses bidara leaves as a natural ingredient for hair and beauty care. The boiled water is used for shampooing, which is believed to make hair healthier, cooler, and less prone to falling out. She also believes that the leaves can eliminate jinn interference. His explanation can be supported by various previous studies, one of which is research Jumardi et al. (2025) which describes the use of bidara leaves for skin care and beauty. This aligns with findings from Aisyah & Harahap (2020), who demonstrated that bidara leaf extracts contain antibacterial compounds beneficial for scalp and skin health.

**3. Stay-at-home dad**

Mr. Baharuddin is one of the household fathers who is 52 years old, he said that the practical benefits of bidara leaves as a natural external remedy for insect bites and made into herbal tea to help sleep and stabilize blood pressure. He tends to see the benefits in terms of physical health and does not really believe in the mystical aspect. His explanation can be supported by various previous studies, one of which is a study of ... These benefits are consistent with studies showing bidara leaf extract has antioxidant and sedative potential, useful for sleep and cardiovascular regulation (Mardhiyani & Rehulina, 2023).

**4. Grandma**

Mrs. Hj. Condong is one of the residents of Tancung who is 68 years old. She explained the use of bidara leaves in the tradition of bathing a corpse to cleanse it from the disturbance of spirits. In addition, bidara leaves are also used in traditional herbal medicine to maintain endurance, showing a utilization that is very thick with ancestral values. A similar perspective is reported by Wahyudi et al. (2022), who note that bidara leaves have long been integrated into ritual purification practices in Indonesia.

**5. Millennial Aunty**

Herdianti is one of the Tancung residents who is 27 years old. She found information about the benefits of bidara leaves through social media such as TikTok and Instagram. She uses it in the form of modern products such as facial soap. According to her, this leaf is effective for acne and gives a calming effect. Its use reflects the trend of spiritual care and the need for healing among young people. Mrs. Herdianti's explanation is very accurate because it can be supported in several studies. One of them is research Suzanni & Isma (2024) which explains the formulation of bidara leaves as a face mask that is useful as anti-aging and brightens the skin. Her experience aligns with recent cosmetic science studies showing that bidara leaf extract is effective as an antioxidant and anti-acne agent (Yulianingsih & Arwie, 2019).

**6. Local residents (Tancung Village)**

According to some of the local residents of Tancung Village who we interviewed, the people in their area believe that bidara leaves can drive away jinn if planted around the house. In addition, they process these leaves into **bidara oil** in the traditional way, which is used to treat wounds and itching. The boiled water is also believed to cure cholesterol and improve digestion. Such practices are supported by findings from Sakka & Muin (2023), who reported that bidara leaf extract demonstrates anti-inflammatory and wound-healing activity.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Exploration of various sources shows that thistle leaves have a wide range of meanings and benefits in people's lives, both traditionally and modernly. In the traditional context, bidara leaves are used for spiritual purposes such as warding off supernatural disturbances, bathing corpses, as well as treating wounds and maintaining natural health. This utilization is mostly found among the elderly and people who still maintain ancestral practices. On the other hand, the use of thistle leaves has also adapted to modern life, especially among the younger generation. Thimble leaf-based products such as facial soaps, room sprays, and herbal teas have become part of the healthy lifestyle and spiritual care trend. Social media also plays a role in introducing the benefits of thistle leaves to the younger generation. Thus, the bidara leaf not only has high historical and cultural value, but is also able to adapt to the times. This diversity of uses shows that traditional values do not have to be abandoned, but can be developed and modernized according to the needs of today's society.

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