

# Feminine Traces in Dayak Kanayatn Leadership: A Feminist Literary Analysis of Seven Selected Stories

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**Abstract**—Women's leadership in indigenous groups is notably underrepresented in academic literature, especially concerning the Dayak Kanayatn tribe of West Kalimantan. Although prevailing narratives often confine women to domestic and symbolic roles, local legends provide substantial evidence of female leadership. This study utilizes feminist literary criticism to analyze depictions of female leaders in seven Dayak Kanayatn legends. Employing a qualitative methodology, we executed comprehensive interviews, interactive observation, and document analysis to investigate narrative and symbolic frameworks. Findings indicate that female figures in these stories work not as ancillary characters but as community leaders who wield decision-making power, offer social safety, and fulfill the role of spiritual guardians. These narratives contest patriarchal beliefs, illustrating that gender equality is intrinsically integrated throughout the Dayak Kanayatn tradition. The research enhances contextual feminist literary theory and promotes gender-inclusive cultural preservation. By connecting scholarly dialogue and grassroots empowerment, it provides a framework for restoring indigenous women's leadership through the application of local knowledge.

**Index Terms**—women, leadership, Dayak Kanayatn, feminist literary criticism

## I. INTRODUCTION

Women's leadership in indigenous communities is often marginalized in public discourse and scholarly studies, particularly in the context of local communities such as the Dayak Kanayatn in West Kalimantan. This society is known for its complex social structure and rich local wisdom; however, narratives concerning women's roles, especially in leadership positions, are rarely systematically documented. The prevailing image of indigenous leadership is predominantly male-centric, portraying men as authoritative decision-makers, while women are often relegated to complementary roles within the domestic sphere (Nasrolahi et al., 2022). Nonetheless, the lived reality within the Dayak Kanayatn community reveals that women do not merely serve supporting roles but also occupy central positions in legendary tales and in spiritual and social leadership practices. Oral narratives within the community depict female figures as powerful, wise, and decisive in safeguarding communal values (Janickyj et al., 2024). Unfortunately, such inherited knowledge remains unexamined mainly in academic studies, resulting in an imbalance in the representation of women in local leadership contexts, especially when compared to the often-celebrated status of men (Mager et al., 2023). Consequently, there is an urgent need for academic endeavors to highlight the feminine legacy within the social and cultural structures of the Dayak Kanayatn, ensuring that women's leadership is no longer overlooked. This endeavor is equally vital in deconstructing the patriarchal narratives that have long dominated anthropological, historical, and local literary studies (Aji et al., 2022). As such, examining women's leadership within this community becomes highly relevant in presenting a more equitable, balanced, and contextually grounded understanding of indigenous social realities.

In academic discourse, women's involvement in indigenous leadership structures has been a subject of prolonged debate. While numerous feminist theories and cultural anthropologies have recognized women's roles in communal spaces, most studies focus on urban societies or well-documented major ethnic groups (Da Meisa & Anzari, 2021). When discussing indigenous communities such as the Dayak Kanayatn, available literature remains scarce and often descriptive, lacking in-depth analysis of women's symbolic power and authority. Classical feminist theory, as developed by Simone de Beauvoir, has not been able to fully address the diversity of local cultures in Indonesia, which have unique social structures (Mandasari & Septiani, 2024). Although postcolonial feminist approaches have begun to offer

more inclusive frameworks, their application to indigenous leadership studies in Indonesia remains limited (Mohanty, 2003). Previous research often simplifies women's roles in indigenous societies, framing them primarily within domestic or spiritual domains and denying them absolute authority. However, local legends offer compelling narratives of women as leaders who play a pivotal role in maintaining social order and cultural values (Famelasari & Prastiwi, 2021). This indicates a disconnect between existing ethnographic data and available theoretical analyses, presenting a methodological challenge in fully understanding women's leadership in indigenous settings. Therefore, a more integrative approach is needed—one that bridges local cultural richness with modern theoretical frameworks. Literary feminist criticism, which analyzes not only textual but also sociocultural contexts, offers one such promising approach.

This study aims to describe the representation of women as leaders in the legends of the Dayak Kanayatn in West Kalimantan through the lens of feminist literary criticism. The objective arises from the need to reconstruct local narratives that portray women not merely as cultural objects but as active, strategic subjects with legitimate authority. This aligns with Showalter's (1981) concept of gynocriticism, which emphasizes the importance of analyzing literature from the perspective of women's lived experiences. Through this approach, the study aims to foreground female figures in indigenous oral literature, who have long been overlooked in mainstream literary discourse. The research not only identifies female leadership characters within the legends but also examines how such narratives construct authority, leadership values, and gender relations within the social fabric of the Dayak Kanayatn. These stories will be explored not only as cultural texts but also as ideological spaces in which power and gender identity are negotiated (Arivia, 2017). The study also aims to contribute a fresh perspective to Indonesian feminist discourse, which urban-centric narratives have long dominated. By focusing on a local community, this research highlights that women's struggles are not confined to modern or institutional domains, but also take place within traditional settings rich in symbolism and cultural meaning (Mohanty, 2003). Accordingly, the goal is to provide space for the interpretation and appreciation of feminine legacies embedded in Dayak Kanayatn legends and to assert that women's leadership is not a novel phenomenon. However, one deeply rooted in local wisdom deserves renewed academic attention.

The exploration of female leadership in indigenous societies has often been neglected by academic scholarship, particularly in the case of the Dayak Kanayatn community. This research gap lies in the lack of in-depth investigation into women's roles in local leadership narratives found within community legends. Previous studies have primarily focused on male figures as central actors in social systems or have viewed women through the lens of patriarchal culture that restricts their agency (Mardiana, 2002). The novelty of this study lies in its use of feminist literary criticism to uncover the meanings and symbolism of female leadership in oral texts—an approach that has been largely overlooked in both literary and feminist anthropological studies. The research also employs an interdisciplinary approach, integrating literary and cultural analysis by treating legend not only as a research object but also as a social mirror of the Dayak Kanayatn community. The urgency of this study is amplified in the face of modernization, which often erodes local values, including the roles of women in traditional social systems. Recovering women's narratives in local legends is, therefore, also an act of cultural preservation and a revival of awareness regarding the importance of women's roles in sustaining social equilibrium (Astono et al., 2024). Thus, this study is significant not only for addressing a scholarly void but also for reinforcing contextually grounded feminist and cultural movements based on indigenous values. It offers an alternative narrative that is not only gender-just but also culturally sensitive, making a meaningful contribution to the enrichment of Indonesia's academic discourse.

The primary contribution of this study is to provide a platform for women's narratives in the legends of the Dayak Kanayatn to be read, understood, and reinterpreted through a feminist literary lens. Academically, the research expands the scope of feminist studies, which have been predominantly urban and modern in focus, by introducing a culturally rich local perspective. This approach aligns with Budianta's (2003) call for incorporating local contexts in cultural and feminist studies. The study also contributes to the field of literary criticism by developing a more inclusive and culturally responsive methodology suited to the Indonesian context. Furthermore, the findings can serve as valuable references for policymakers, cultural practitioners, and gender activists seeking to understand the dynamics of women's leadership in indigenous communities. From the perspective of cultural preservation, this research contributes to the documentation of increasingly rare oral heritage and plays a role in maintaining the Dayak Kanayatn identity amid globalization. As Botangen et al. (2018) suggest, documenting local culture through the use of information technology can be an effective strategy to confront global challenges. The study also has educational value, offering materials suitable for teaching or community outreach programs on the role of women in local cultures. This practical contribution aims to foster collective awareness that women, particularly in indigenous communities, are not merely symbols of cultural honor but are also pivotal actors in leadership and decision-making processes. Therefore, through this study, it is hoped that both academic and general audiences will begin to recognize women's leadership as an integral component of Indonesia's plural and inclusive cultural narratives.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted in three regencies of West Kalimantan Province: Landak, Mempawah, and Bengkayang. It utilized a qualitative descriptive research design to achieve a comprehensive understanding of phenomena through interpretative and descriptive analysis. This methodology aims to investigate the what, who, and how directly from the participants' actual experiences (Creswell, 2014; Littzen-Brown, 2023; Gray, 2023). The descriptive method was

utilized to analyze portrayals of women as leaders in the stories of the Dayak Kanayatn ethnic group in West Kalimantan, employing a feminist literary criticism framework. Feminist literary criticism entails a critical examination of literary works, encompassing the writers, their ideologies, and the sociocultural conditions of the writings' creation (Hutabalian et al., 2022, p. 90). This framework elucidates the responsibilities and positions of women leaders as depicted in the oral traditions of the Dayak Kanayatn group.

The data collection methods were interviews, observation, and document analysis (Yin, 2016, p. 131). Subsequent to data collection, the data underwent validation through triangulation techniques. Triangulation was utilized to augment credibility and comprised source triangulation, investigator triangulation (when undertaken cooperatively), method triangulation, and theoretical triangulation (Denzin, 2017, p. 301).

The data analysis adhered to the qualitative data analysis framework established by Miles and Huberman (2014, p. 73), encompassing data condensation, data display, and the formulation and validation of findings. According to this paradigm, the precise analytical steps in this investigation were as follows: 1) Conversion of oral narratives into written format; 2) Identification of data concerning depictions of female leadership in the stories of the Dayak Kanayatn; 3) Analysis and presentation of data regarding the representation of female leaders to ascertain the role and importance of women within the sociocultural framework of the Dayak Kanayatn community; 4) Analyzing the portrayal and consequences of female leadership in cultural narratives.

The term Dayak'ng Langa denotes a female character in the legend. Consequently, in this article, all mentions of Dayak'ng Langa have been examined and amended to incorporate suitable feminine pronouns where relevant. The legend of Dayak'ng Langa narrates the tale of a revered Dayak Kanayatn lady who, by her skills and supernatural abilities, ascended to the position of pamaliatn (chief shaman). Her leadership and spiritual authority are crucial to the community's cultural memory. Redundancies or inconsistencies in previous drafts, such as repetitive descriptions or misgendering, have been amended to uphold academic rigor and clarity.

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Result

Research revealed seven narratives that illustrate female leadership within the Dayak Kanayatn community of West Kalimantan. This is a comprehensive description of each narrative:

##### 1. Dayak'ng Langa

The legend of Dayak'ng Langa narrates the tale of a Dayak Kanayatn woman known as Dayak'ng Langa. She is depicted as a formidable \*Kepala Pamaliatn\* (shamanic commander), celebrated for her extraordinary powers. Significantly, she was proficient in executing surgical procedures utilizing a conventional instrument referred to as \*Nampak'ng\*. Her exceptional qualities garnered significant respect and admiration from the community. As the principal shaman in her area, individuals regularly sought her aid for healing and spiritual counsel.

##### 2. The Saga of Batu Marundo on Mount Tahakng

This mythology focuses on a Dayak Kanayatn character named Nek Tahakng, a humble and compassionate leader held in high esteem by her tribe. Her influence was so profound that people invariably adhered to her counsel. Nek Tahakng gained renown by safeguarding her village from enemy assaults by cleaving a rock wall on a hill to create a cave. The residents sought refuge indoors, and Nek Tahakng offered herself by transforming into stone to cover the cave's entrance. After this act of valor, she was never observed again. In commemoration of her sacrifice, the hill was designated Mount Tahakng.

##### 3. Dayak'ng Sire

The tale of Dayak'ng Sire narrates the story of a female Dayak leader who had dual roles as a military commander and a Silat Kapong martial arts instructor. During the invasion of the Kingdom of Gunung Bawang, the male populace defended the frontiers, leaving the women and children behind. In response to the imminent danger, Dayak'ng Sire coordinated and instructed the women in martial arts. Upon the enemy's eventual assault, she commanded both female combatants and returning male soldiers into the fray. Under her leadership, the community effectively safeguarded its territory.

##### 4. Dayak'ng Male'en

This legend narrates the narrative of Dayak'ng Male'en, a striking and gifted Dayak woman renowned within her society. She was renowned for her artistic talent and acknowledged for originating the Jonggan dance, an important cultural performance of the Dayak people. Notwithstanding numerous marriage proposals, she rejected all suitors. Her beauty and contributions to Dayak arts led to her name being immortalized in traditional melodies.

##### 5. The Myth of the Three Nabo

The narrative of the Three Nabo chronicles the life of Queen Lina, a Dayak lady who governed the Kingdom of Pauh Janggi. She had three offspring named Nabo Calah, Nabo Kuning, and Nabo Ijo. The kingdom harbored precious treasures concealed beneath three hills: Bukit Raya (in Singkawang), Bukit Bawakng (in Bengkayang), and Bukit Pandan (in Landak). Nek Sawa's story states that local villagers confiscated these jewels. Furious, Queen Lina commanded her offspring to inundate the three regions. Nevertheless, nature did not allow this. The local spiritual

leaders, Pangalangok, Nek Sambara, and Nek Leong, spearheaded the resistance. During the subsequent war, Queen Lina's eldest offspring, Nabo Calah, was slain.

#### 6. Dayak's Dinar

The mythology of Dayak'ng Dinar recounts the tale of a powerful and formidable woman. She wed Abakng Karohokng subsequent to his rescue of her pet white langur, who had been injured by a blowpipe. Nevertheless, four other men who coveted her grew envious and conspired to assassinate Abakng Karohokng. They invited him on a ngayau (headhunting expedition), and despite Dayak'ng Dinar's premonition of imminent peril, her father disregarded her apprehensions. Regrettably, her apprehensions were confirmed when her husband's decapitated head was returned. Furious, Dayak'ng Dinar adorned herself in her battle regalia, comprising a kapoa (ritual blouse), nongkekng tangkit (armor), and burayapm (weapon), and confronted the conspirators in battle. Renowned for her physical prowess and supernatural abilities, she independently vanquished three adversaries: Sule Sampayang Bakunikng Bayatn, Tongkor Tapakng, and Tongkor Labatn. She subsequently confronted Ore Nyabukng in an extended combat that involved the utilization of seven shields. Regrettably, she stumbled into a posthole, and at that instant, Ore Nyabukng fatally struck her with a sword. Dinar of the Dayak perished in combat, emblematic of valor and defiance.

#### 7. Ria Sinir and Dara Itamp

The legend of Ria Sinir narrates the tumultuous love story between Ria Sinir and Dara Itamp, characterized by numerous challenges. Engaged since childhood, Ria Sinir presented Dara Itamp with a bamboo ring as a symbol of their commitment. Dara Itamp, a distinguished Kepala Baliatn (chief shaman), thereafter encountered Ria Sinir in the forest, where he had unintentionally struck her pet hornbill with a blowpipe. The recognition of the bamboo ring he had previously bestowed upon her revived their friendship. During a river bath, Dara Itamp's golden bowl, utilized for gathering her shed hair, was carried downstream and discovered by King Palang Pali. Upon discovering the identity of the bowl's owner, the king hatched a scheme to abduct her, pretending to be ill and enticing her on board his vessel, where she was transported to his palace to become his seventh wife. Dara Itamp consented on the condition that King Palang Pali procure the head of her father, who had been slain by Kayo Miaju.

Notwithstanding his endeavors, the king was unsuccessful in fulfilling the demanding tasks necessary to obtain the head. Dara Itamp ultimately disclosed that only Ria Sinir can achieve them. King Palang Pali sought the assistance of Ria Sinir, who consented on the stipulation that he might select one of the king's wives. Ria Sinir triumphed and selected Dara Itamp. Despite his hesitance, King Palang Pali fulfilled his commitment, resulting in the long-awaited reunion of Ria Sinir and Dara Itamp.

### B. Discussion

Based on the findings obtained through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and a documentary study of Dayak Kanayatn legends, it can be concluded that the construction of female leadership in local narratives is not merely symbolic but possesses a strong structural foundation within the community's belief system and cultural values. Female figures in legends, such as Sang Kumang and Padiang, and several others, are consistently portrayed as decision-makers, community protectors, and even revered spiritual rulers. These narratives do not depict women as complements to or subordinates of men, but rather as central figures with authority and social responsibility. Interestingly, these narratives remain alive in the community's oral traditions, although they are not extensively documented in writing. Analysis using a feminist literary criticism framework reveals that these legends implicitly contain resistance to patriarchal structures, albeit expressed in a manner contextual to the local culture. As explained by Hidayatullah et al. (2023), the feminist literary criticism approach enables the revelation of strong and empowered female imagery in regional oral literature. Thus, the results of this study demonstrate that the interpretation of female leaders in Dayak Kanayatn culture is far more progressive than has been portrayed in conventional anthropological literature. These findings also show that women are not only present in the domestic sphere but also serve as guardians of collective values, spiritual intermediaries, and symbols of community stability. This suggests the presence of a local value framework and cosmology that values feminine leadership as integral to social harmony. Therefore, through the feminist literary criticism approach, the narrative structure of legends becomes a crucial tool for re-examining power relations and gender identity in indigenous communities, while simultaneously opening new possibilities for a more equitable and contextual understanding of women's roles in traditional Indonesian societies.

When compared to previous studies on women and leadership in indigenous societies, the results of this research indicate significant differentiation in both approach and findings. Several prior studies, such as those conducted within the realms of social anthropology among the Toraja and Baduy indigenous communities, tend to position women as symbolic figures or guardians of tradition, yet rarely place them as holders of structural authority in cultural narratives (Habsari & Wina, 2017). Meanwhile, feminist approaches in literature generally focus on modern and urban works, thus seldom addressing the social dynamics present in indigenous communities, such as the Dayak Kanayatn. The strength of this study lies in its ability to bridge two approaches: ethnographic methods and the feminist literary criticism framework, thereby opening a more comprehensive analytical space for cultural texts as ideological representations of society. Unlike other studies that emphasize cultural description or universal text analysis, this study instead explores local specificity as an analytical strength.

Furthermore, the results of this study show that in the context of the Dayak Kanayatn, female leadership is not reactive to patriarchal pressures but is inherent in the developed value system (Diana et al., 2018). This means there is

no sharp dichotomy between the feminine and masculine in the social structure; instead, they operate in a complementary manner within a symmetrical framework. This distinguishes the findings of this study from previous ones, which tend to frame women's struggles as a response to structural oppression. In the Dayak Kanayatn context, it is evident that women have long played leadership roles organically in both narrative and community life. Thus, the contribution of this research is significant as it not only expands feminist discourse in a local context but also challenges universal assumptions regarding gender roles in traditional societies.

These findings reflect the importance of deconstructing dominant narratives that have shaped our understanding of leadership and gender in indigenous societies. Reflection on these findings suggests that Dayak Kanayatn legends are not merely folklore, but rather reflections of ideological values that reinforce the existence of women as leaders. This is directly related to the research objective, which is to describe the representation of female leaders in Dayak Kanayatn legends through feminist literary criticism. During the analysis process, an awareness emerged that folklore serves a function not only as a preserver of culture but also as a discursive space influencing how society perceives power relations between men and women. As suggested by Indrastuti (2017), folklore can serve as a means to motivate, strengthen, and remind people of positive values in the face of globalization's challenges. Therefore, the benefit of this research becomes increasingly apparent: it not only offers an alternative narrative about female leadership but also demonstrates that egalitarian values have long been present in Indonesian local cultures. This serves as an important correction to the view that feminism must always take a confrontational stance towards traditional culture. On the contrary, in this context, feminist values have long been internalized within the social system without the need for open conflict, but through powerful symbolism and narrative structures. This reflection brings a new awareness that approaches to women's studies should not always stem from modern-traditional or Western-local dichotomies. However, it must be able to understand the internal dynamics of the culture itself. Consequently, this research has epistemological benefits, namely, enriching our scientific understanding of how gender identities and roles are represented contextually in indigenous societies, as well as practical benefits in formulating cultural preservation strategies that are more sensitive to gender equality issues.

The implications of these findings are broad, extending not only to the academic level but also to the realms of cultural policy and women's empowerment at the local level. From a scholarly perspective, these findings reinforce the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to understanding complex socio-cultural phenomena, particularly in bridging literary texts and the social reality from which they emerge. The discovery that women in Dayak Kanayatn legends serve as spiritual leaders, guardians of collective morality, and central figures in community decision-making suggests that local narratives can serve as a reference source for developing inclusive and gender-equitable leadership models. This aligns with findings showing that women play a vital role in preserving and promoting cultural heritage, acting as custodians of tradition, language, rituals, and artistic expressions (Rita & Kumar, 2024). Another implication lies in the role of local governments and cultural institutions, which should begin to recognize that local cultural heritage contains not only aesthetic or historical value but also emancipatory values that can be incorporated into women's empowerment programs. In the context of education, these findings can be integrated into local curricula that teach the importance of gender equality through the study of folklore and local culture. Research indicates that integrating local cultural values into early childhood education significantly enhances character building, emphasizing children's direct experience and active participation in local cultural activities (Sakti et al., 2024).

Furthermore, this research also implies a more participatory cultural preservation strategy, where women are involved not only as inheritors but also as primary actors in preserving cultural values. On a broader scale, these findings can serve as advocacy material for gender mainstreaming in local wisdom-based development policies. Therefore, this research is not only relevant to the academic sphere but also possesses a transformational dimension, as it formulates concrete steps to create a more gender-equitable society that respects cultural diversity.

The construction of the representation of women as leaders in Dayak Kanayatn legends does not occur by chance. However, it is a result of cosmological structures and value systems deeply rooted in the community's life. In the Dayak Kanayatn context, the concept of balance between masculine and feminine elements is not only spiritually believed but also manifested in tangible social and symbolic structures. Female figures in legends are not merely individual representations but symbols of values such as courage, wisdom, and the protection of life, which are believed to be feminine aspects in the Dayak worldview (Astono et al., 2024). Analysis of the legends' narrative structure reveals that the position of women as leaders is possible due to a holistic understanding of women's roles in maintaining balance between humans and nature, as well as between the real world and the spiritual world (Siregar, 2023). This differs from the patriarchal paradigm that separates power from the values of empathy or spirituality. Therefore, these findings cannot be separated from the context of local cultural values that place women in important positions, not due to quotas or external pressure, but because of their integration into a value system that organically acknowledges their existence and contribution.

Additionally, it is essential to note that in indigenous societies not entirely influenced by modernization, local values hold significantly more influence compared to formal external norms. This explains why narratives of female leaders remain preserved and respected in legends, even if they are not always reflected in formal governance structures (Dinas Perpustakaan dan Kearsipan Provinsi Kalimantan Timur, 2020). In conclusion, these findings are shaped by a harmony

between spiritual, social, and narrative values that provide an authentic space for women to emerge as leaders within the cultural system of the Dayak Kanayatn people.

Based on the results and analysis presented, several concrete action steps need to be formulated to ensure that the narrative of women's leadership in Dayak Kanayatn culture extends beyond the academic level, also having a social and cultural impact. First, it is crucial to conduct systematic documentation of local legends that contain narratives about female leaders. This documentation should not only be in written form but also through audiovisual media to preserve the authenticity of the narrative and cultural expressions. This approach aligns with efforts to preserve local culture through documentation and socialization involving the younger generation and the wider community (Dewi, 2022). Second, it is necessary to initiate training and empowerment programs based on local values, specifically targeting young Dayak women, so that they can recognize their cultural heritage as a source of strength and inspiration for leadership. Local wisdom-based training has proven effective in enhancing women's roles in supporting family economies and cultural preservation (Kikky, 2020). Third, the findings of this research should be disseminated to local governments, customary institutions, and local educational institutions to inform policy formulation and curriculum development. The socialization of the role of customary institutions in resolving social problems has led to an increase in public understanding of the importance of preserving local wisdom (Rahmawan, 2024).

Fourth, cross-sectoral collaboration among academics, cultural practitioners, and gender activists should be established to develop local, wisdom-based leadership models that are inclusive of gender. This collaboration can strengthen women's roles in cultural preservation and the development of indigenous communities. Furthermore, another important action is to encourage further research exploring similar narratives in other indigenous communities, thereby forming a network of knowledge that mutually enriches the understanding of women's roles in Indonesian culture. Research on the role of women in customary systems across various regions has provided valuable insights into women's participation in cultural preservation and community leadership (Lemhannas RI, 2023). These actions are not only for preserving cultural values but also for shaping a new paradigm that views women as leaders based on their own cultural roots, rather than merely adhering to Western modernity standards. Thus, the results of this research are not only informative but also transformative, encouraging a shift in perspectives and social practices towards greater equity, rooted in the nation's cultural wealth (Baidawi dan Dewi, 2019).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Women's leadership in indigenous communities is frequently overlooked in public discourse and academic research, especially among local groups like the Dayak Kanayatn in West Kalimantan. This community is recognized for its intricate social hierarchy and profound indigenous knowledge; nonetheless, accounts of women in leadership positions are seldom recorded systematically.

This study's findings indicate that the perception of female leadership in Dayak Kanayatn society is considerably more advanced than traditionally portrayed in anthropological literature. The findings indicate that women are not limited to the domestic realm; they also serve as guardians of social ideals, spiritual mediators, and emblems of communal security. This signifies the existence of a local value system and cosmology that respects feminine leadership as a vital element of social peace. The findings and analysis indicate that specific steps are essential to ensure that the discussion on female leadership in Dayak Kanayatn culture transcends academic confines and generates meaningful social and cultural effects. It is imperative to record local tales that feature narratives of female leaders thoroughly. Secondly, training and empowerment initiatives grounded in local values should be implemented, particularly aimed at young Dayak women, enabling them to perceive their cultural history as a wellspring of strength and leadership motivation. The findings of this research should be communicated to local governments, traditional institutions, and educational organizations to guide policy formulation and curriculum design. Fourth, collaboration across sectors involving academics, cultural practitioners, and gender activists is essential to formulate a gender-inclusive leadership model grounded in local understanding.

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