

THE ROLE OF MERGO BUAY SUBING CAREER IN PRESERVING LAMPUNG PEPADUN CUSTOMS AS AN EFFORT TO FACE THE CHALLENGES OF GLOBAL CULTURE

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Abstract

The traditional institution of Keperwatinan Mergo Buay Subing is a forum for the people of Kampung Terbanggi Besar to discuss and resolve issues, maintain the existence of culture and preserve local cultural values, plan goals to be achieved by the culture of the indigenous people of Kampung Terbanggi Besar in the future. Keperwatinan Mergo Buay Subing has been established since the 1600s, but over time, the role of Keperwatinan Mergo Buay Subing has experienced ups and downs, especially in this era of globalization. The purpose of this study is to determine the role of Keperwatinan Mergo Buay Subing in preserving the Lampung Pepadun tradition as an effort to face the challenges of global culture. This study uses qualitative research methods and data collection techniques, namely interviews, observation and documentation, as well as data analysis, namely time extension and data triangulation can provide accurate information. The subjects in this study were Traditional Figures and Community Figures in Kampung Terbanggi Besar. The results of the Mergo Buay Subing Terbanggi Balak Community Care study still play a role in preserving the Lampung Pepadun tradition, especially in Terbanggi Besar Village, but in its implementation, the Community Care only provides examples to the community in terms of behavior, language, and how to dress in everyday life as role models that are expected to be emulated by the indigenous community. The Community Care applies the values of the core pesenggiri in the efforts to preserve Lampung customs, which in this pesenggiri piil includes bejuluk beadek, nemui nyimah, ngejuk ngakuk nengah nyappur, and sakai sambayan. The obstacles faced in this preservation effort are cost factors, public awareness, and participation of the village government and the younger generation.

Keywords: *Mergo Buay Subing Concern, Preservation of Customs, Global Culture*

I. Introduction

Culture is a reflection of a nation's identity that includes a system of values, norms, and social heritage passed down from generation to generation by ancestors. In the context of a multicultural Indonesian society, local culture is an important pillar in maintaining diversity and strengthening national character. One concrete form of preserving local culture can be found in the Lampung indigenous community, especially in Kampung Terbanggi Besar which still adheres to the Lampung Pepadun traditional values. This culture is not only preserved through physical symbols such as traditional houses and traditional clothing, but also through traditional institutions that carry out social and cultural functions in society (Yuliani, 2022).

Customary institutions play a central role in regulating the course of life of indigenous communities, both in terms of preserving traditions and resolving social conflicts. The existence of institutions such as the Mergo Buay Subing Keperwatinan is an important pillar in maintaining cultural values that are starting to be eroded by the currents of modernization and globalization. Through various traditional ceremonies, this institution not only maintains the cultural heritage of its ancestors, but also becomes an educational medium for the younger generation to understand noble local values (Apriyanto, 2020).

Social reality shows that there are major challenges in maintaining local culture, especially in the modern era today. Rapid social transformation, the dominance of popular culture, and pragmatic mindsets often cause the younger generation to lose their attachment to inherited traditional values. This is exacerbated by the lack of documentation and minimal

academic studies on the role of traditional institutions in preserving culture at the local level (Basrowi & Suwandi, 2008). In this context, qualitative descriptive research is important to reveal the strategic role of traditional institutions in maintaining the existence of local culture.

The social functions of customary institutions such as Keperwatinan Mergo Buay Subing include legal, moral, and cultural aspects that interact directly with the daily lives of the community. For example, in resolving internal community conflicts, this institution is able to offer solutions based on customary law which is considered fairer and socially binding. In addition, the existence of customary institutions is also able to maintain social order by instilling ethical values and norms that originate from ancestral teachings (Risman, 2015). This shows that customary institutions have integrative and educational functions that are still relevant today.

One of the biggest challenges faced by traditional institutions is the process of passing on values to the younger generation. Lack of interest and low understanding of traditional values often become obstacles in the regeneration of traditional leadership. The younger generation is more exposed to global culture through digital media, so they often experience cultural disorientation. Therefore, traditional institutions need to adopt a more inclusive and educational approach in conveying cultural values, for example through art activities, traditional performances, and local cultural training programs (Dewi, 2014).

On the other hand, local governments also have a great responsibility in supporting the preservation of local culture through regulations, policies, and fostering of indigenous communities. This support can be in the form of budget provision, facilitation of cultural activities, and integration of local cultural values in the education curriculum. However, cultural preservation is not enough only through a structural approach, but must also touch on the cultural and spiritual aspects of society, where customary institutions have a very strategic position (Kurniawan, 2016). It should be realized that cultural preservation efforts cannot be done instantly, but rather through a continuous process and involving all elements of society. The involvement of traditional leaders, youth, religious leaders, and government institutions needs to be orchestrated in a collaborative system that respects local values without closing itself off to change. This participatory approach is important so that people do not feel that culture is just a dead heritage, but something that lives, develops, and continues to function in everyday life (Widyawati, 2018).

Based on this background, this study will focus on the role of the Mergo Buay Subing Nursing Institution in preserving the Lampung Pepadun traditional culture in Terbanggi Besar Village. This study is important to reveal how the traditional institution maintains the continuity of local culture, as well as what strategies are used in facing the challenges of globalization and modernization. Thus, this study is expected to provide scientific contributions to the development of cultural studies and strengthening local identity in Indonesia.

II. Research Methods

The research method used in this study is descriptive qualitative, which aims to describe and understand in depth the social and cultural phenomena related to the role of Keperwatinan Mergo Buay Subing in preserving the Lampung Pepadun tradition. This approach was chosen because it is able to reveal meanings, values, and social dynamics that cannot be measured quantitatively. The research was conducted directly in the field (field research) in order to obtain authentic and contextual data. The main focus of this study is to analyze how traditional institutions carry out their functions in maintaining cultural sustainability amidst the flow of globalization and modernization.

The data collection techniques used included in-depth interviews with traditional figures, penyimbang, members of Keperwatinan, and the Lampung Pepadun traditional community in Terbanggi Besar Village, Central Lampung Regency. The interviews aimed to explore information about the practices, challenges, and strategies for cultural preservation carried out by traditional institutions. In addition, participatory observations were conducted on traditional activities such as begawi and merwatin, as well as documentation in the form of archives, photographs, and records of relevant traditional activities. Data triangulation was conducted to increase the validity and reliability of the findings, by combining the results of interviews,

observations, and documents as a basis for comprehensive and in-depth interpretation.

III. Result and Discussion

1. Guidelines for Preserving Lampung Pepadun Customary Activities by the Mergo Buay Subing Terbanggi Balak Community

The Cepalo custom is the customary law of the Lampung people which regulates the behavior of citizens through prohibitions which aim to form morals and social norms which uphold the self-respect and honor of individuals and relatives in the concept of *The Pesenggiri Pile* (Husin, 2022). This customary law is known as *The Head is Broken* consisting of twelve prohibitions, such as the prohibition of looking at other people's wives suspiciously, talking dirty, and committing indecency. Each violation is regulated by strict sanctions, ranging from light fines to severe penalties such as the death penalty for serious violations. These provisions are symbolized in colorful, sewn-together cloth, showing a visualization of the rules that live in society (Husin, 2022). This custom functions to form individuals who have noble morals and strong personalities so that they can become respected traditional leaders.

Over time, the number of prohibitions in the Cepalo Custom has grown to 24, 40 to 80 types of violations with various levels of sanctions, reflecting the community's efforts to expand the scope of regulated norms (Husin, 2022). However, severe sanctions such as the death penalty have begun to be criticized because they are considered inconsistent with modern humanitarian principles. For this reason, the Mergo Buay Subing Terbanggi Balak Concern reformulated the form of sanctions so that they are in line with applicable positive law and religious law (Husin, 2022). Thus, violations of state and religious law are also considered to violate Cepalo customary law. This change shows the existence of a cultural adaptation that maintains moral values, but is also able to follow the development of more humanistic global laws and norms.

Another form of the customary system of the Lampung community is Adat Kebumiyan, namely the process of giving a title (*adek*) to someone by the adat leader as a recognition of their social status (Husin, 2022). This title is not only given to men, but also to women, although with different titles. The process must go through customary deliberation in *sesedor* the traditional hall called *merwatin*, where the balancers check the record of customary violations (*cepalo*) of the candidate for the title. If there is a violation, then the individual is required to atone for his/her mistake by providing *the saidor* compensation money, the amount of which is determined together and distributed to the balancers (Husin, 2022). This confirms that social status in Lampung society is not only determined by lineage, but also by moral integrity.

Earthly practices are closely related to the Begawi traditional procession, which consists of three main forms, namely *Ngegukhuk Cakak*, *Turun Mandi*, and *Cakak Pepadun*. *Ngegukhuk Cakak* done after the marriage contract to get a small title such as *Rajo* or *Ratu*. While *Turun Mandi* is a self-cleansing ceremony that involves a procession of the bride and groom before the *penyimbang* as a symbol of purity and moral readiness to carry the title of prince or *pengiran* (Husin, 2022). *Cakak Pepadun* is the highest procession to obtain the title of *suttan*, carried out for seven days and seven nights with various rituals such as *asmepadai behavior* and *tall*. This ceremony strengthens the traditional identity and becomes a symbol of status confirmation in the social structure of the Lampung Pepadun community.

The Ngejuk Ngakuk custom is a marriage ceremony of the Lampung Pepadun community which emphasizes the principle *honest marriage* with a patrilineal lineage system. The characteristic of this custom is the giving of *seggeggh*, an amount of money given by the man to the woman to prepare *sesessin* the form of household equipment (Husin, 2022). In practice, a marriage is not considered valid if it is only carried out religiously without involving the customary balancer and relatives. Therefore, customary ratification is crucial, reflecting that social structures and customary values remain pillars in the formation of a household. These customary values also regulate age requirements, parental permission, and forms of divorce that can affect relationships between relatives (Husin, 2022).

Modernization and the influence of foreign cultures have caused traditional values to begin to fade in the lives of the Lampung people. Culture as a dynamic system always changes

over time without having to be triggered by external influences alone (Husin, 2022). Therefore, the Lampung people need to make efforts to strengthen culture through exploration, study, development, and development of noble traditional values so that they can survive in the changing times. This preservation strategy is important so that the younger generation does not lose their cultural identity amidst the challenges of globalization. By maintaining values such as Piil Pesenggiri and traditional structures such as penimbang, the Lampung people can remain a strong and cultured community.

2. How Mergo Buay Subing Care Carries Out Its Role

The Mergo Buay Subing Concern in Terbanggi Besar Village plays a strategic role in preserving local culture by reviving arts and cultural activities rooted in the Lampung Pepadun tradition. This preservation effort is carried out through cultural training such as netik tabuh talo balak and pencak silat, which are consistently introduced to the younger generation. The Concern is directly involved in traditional and social activities, establishes communication with indigenous communities, and provides a space for cultural education to create a sense of belonging to ancestral heritage. This is an important step in facing the challenges of globalization and the penetration of foreign cultures which have weakened local cultural identities, especially in terms of language and way of life (Husin, 2022).

The identity crisis that occurs among the younger generation of Kampung Terbanggi Besar is a serious concern, considering that more and more young people are no longer fluent in Lampung. Language as a cultural identity plays an important role in maintaining the existence of an ethnic group. Through the active role of traditional leaders and community leaders, various strategies are carried out such as oral narration of traditional values, arts training, and simple writing about Lampung Pepadun customs. This activity functions as a medium for cultural transmission so that these values not only survive, but also develop dynamically in the social life of the younger generation (Husin, 2022).

The Mergo Buay Subing care also has a crucial role in reviving and implementing customary law known as Cepalo Wo Belas, which is a set of customary prohibitions that function to regulate the social life of the community. Initially, this customary law consisted of 12 prohibitions, but in its development it became 80 articles that regulate behavioral norms and provide sanctions for violators. The uniqueness of this customary law is its unwritten nature and is passed down orally through a customary deliberation forum called merwatin, which involves customary leaders, religious leaders, and village heads. The function of this customary law is important because it reflects values such as piil pesenggiri which emphasizes the dignity and honor of individuals and communities (Husin, 2022).

In its implementation, Lampung customary law does not aim to replace state law, but rather to complement efforts to resolve conflicts based on local culture. The Mergo Buay Subing Concern uses a consensus approach in imposing sanctions on violators, ranging from material fines to social obligations to rebuild kinship relations. Customary problem-solving procedures reflect family values and social healing rather than a repressive approach. A real example is the handling of conflicts such as fights that end in death, which can be resolved through deliberation between the two parties, assisted by customary representatives or lalang, with the result being a fine in a certain nominal amount and social reconciliation (Husin, 2022).

The presence of Keperwatinan as a customary institution also allows the process of resolving social and criminal problems to be resolved through a local approach. Although state law remains the final path in resolving the law, customary law in Terbanggi Besar Village has proven its effectiveness in maintaining social cohesion and reducing conflict. Problems such as infidelity, promiscuity, to land and lineage conflicts are generally resolved through customary law if the first report is addressed to Keperwatinan. This is a manifestation of cultural autonomy within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia which respects the diversity of laws that exist in society (Husin, 2022).

Through interviews conducted, it was found that the Cepalo customary law, which had previously experienced a vacuum, is now functioning again as the vanguard in maintaining the

values of the Lampung indigenous community. The initiative to write a customary book by one of the Perwatin in 1996 became an important milestone in the documentation and revitalization of customary law which was previously only passed down orally. This step is also a long-term strategy in ensuring the sustainability of Lampung customary law in facing the challenges of modernization. The Mergo Buay Subing Keperwatinan actively shows that the preservation of culture and local wisdom is not only symbolic, but also operational in the social governance of indigenous communities (Husin, 2022).

3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of the Mergo Buay Subing Terbanggi Balak Nursing Activity Program

Supporting Factors

In carrying out its role as a traditional institution that maintains the existence of Lampung Pepadun culture in Terbanggi Besar Village, the Mergo Buay Subing Terbanggi Balak Care Unit relies on two main pillars, namely enthusiasm and cooperation between administrators and active community involvement. Limited funds are not a barrier to carrying out various customary and cultural preservation programs because collective enthusiasm is the main force that drives the sustainability of this institution. The administrators and traditional leaders remain committed to preserving ancestral heritage through mutual cooperation, self-reliance, and joint work in every customary activity such as arts training and language preservation. The cooperation that is built is not only in physical and material forms, but also in the form of moral solidarity to maintain local identity amidst the increasing dominance of immigrant communities. The care unit is a symbol of cultural resilience that stands on the cultural values of indigenous peoples, which also shows that the existence of customs is not solely determined by financial support, but by the socio-cultural strength of the community itself (Husin, 2022).

Inhibiting Factors

In carrying out its role as an institution preserving Lampung Pepadun's traditional culture, Keperwatinan Mergo Buay Subing is faced with a number of significant obstacles. First, funding issues are the main inhibiting factor. Every traditional and cultural activity that involves many people certainly requires a large budget, especially for consumption and other logistics needs. The minimal allocation of funds and the lack of support from external parties, especially the government, often make it difficult to implement various traditional preservation programs in the Terbanggi Balak area. Second, the limited number of traditional figures who truly understand the history, cultural values, and beliefs of the Lampung Pepadun Terbanggi Besar traditional community is also a serious problem. Many traditional figures have died or experienced memory loss due to old age. This has given rise to various conflicting versions of historical stories and caused confusion among the traditional community itself. This situation even has the potential to trigger internal conflict due to unilateral claims regarding the truth of history and customary rules, so that the role of Keperwatinan as a mediator becomes very important.

Furthermore, the third factor is the low participation of the younger generation in preserving culture. The existence of the younger generation, or what is known *asmule megana'in* Lampung language, has a strategic position in every traditional activity. However, their awareness of the importance of maintaining and developing regional culture is currently considered minimal. To overcome this challenge, the Mergo Buay Subing Concern began to collaborate with the local Karang Taruna Kampung to re-instill a sense of ownership of culture through an educational approach, such as providing advice and training in traditional arts. These activities include training *with dio*, *tabuh talo balak*, *martial arts*, to the introduction of Lampung classical guitar. This effort is a form of cultural regeneration so that the noble values of Lampung Pepadun customs do not die out and can continue to be passed down sustainably to future generations.

4. Subjects Involved in the Preservation Activities of Lampung Pepadun Terbanggi Balak Customs Family

Family plays an important role in shaping a person's identity and personality. Through

interactions within the family environment, individuals begin to learn to adapt to the cultural and social values of their place of residence. This process becomes an initial opportunity to pass on traditions vertically from the older generation to the younger generation. In terms of preserving culture, the family is the first and foremost institution that has the responsibility to introduce and instill cultural values to their children.

Parents are expected to be the main agents in introducing culture to children, so that they do not forget the cultural roots that have been inherited by their ancestors. One form of culture that is important to preserve is the regional language, because language is the strongest identity of a culture. However, in reality, there are still many families who do not have an adequate understanding of Lampung Pepadun culture. This causes a lack of sense of belonging and awareness to preserve the culture within the family.

Several external factors also hinder the role of families in preserving culture, such as the influence of children's social environment, the diverse educational backgrounds of parents, and the entry of foreign cultures through media such as television and gadgets. However, technological advances can also be an opportunity, because families can easily access information about local culture. Concrete efforts that families can make to preserve Lampung culture include using Lampung language in everyday conversations, listening to conversations in Lampung language, and answering children's questions with local cultural references.

Young generation

The younger generation has a strategic role in preserving culture, but at the same time is also the group most vulnerable to the influence of foreign cultures. In facing the currents of globalization and modernization, the younger generation is required to be able to maintain local cultural identity so that there is no identity crisis. The lack of participation and awareness of the younger generation towards local culture can cause the erosion of these cultural values. Foreign culture that enters without filtering values and norms can have negative impacts, such as promiscuity, drug abuse, and other deviant behavior. Therefore, the younger generation must be directed to love their own culture and only accept foreign cultures that are in accordance with the noble values of the nation. This challenge can be faced through an educational approach and collective awareness of the importance of preserving cultural heritage as part of national identity.

Educational institutions

Educational institutions have a great responsibility in the process of internalization and cultural inheritance to students. Education not only plays a role in intellectual development, but also as a medium to form character and personality rooted in cultural values. Therefore, cultural preservation must be an integral part of the learning process, both in the classroom and through extracurricular activities.

Schools and colleges in Lampung have begun to show an active role in preserving local culture. At certain moments, students are directed to wear traditional Lampung clothing and participate in arts and cultural activities, such as dance training, cultural seminars, and cultural parades. It is hoped that from this process, a generation will be born who are culturally aware and have the spirit to continue preserving the heritage of their ancestors.

Media and Publications

The development of information technology provides new space in the dissemination of information and promotion of culture. Social media, websites, and various digital platforms are now effective tools to introduce and preserve local culture to a wider audience. Through digital media, the dissemination of culture is no longer limited by space and time. To maximize this potential, creativity is needed in packaging local culture so that it remains attractive to the younger generation without eliminating the substance of traditional values. In line with Law Number 14 of 2008 concerning Openness of Public Information, every citizen has the right to access and disseminate information, including cultural information. Therefore, social media becomes a strategic tool to build a positive image of local culture as part of a modern lifestyle.

Several social media accounts such as @adatsikam, @adat_lampung, and @galeri.adatlampung actively upload content about Lampung culture. Even several youth

communities in various villages such as @mm_komeringsputih, @mm_negara_ratu, and @mm_terbanggibesar have also participated in enlivening social media by promoting regional culture. This step is an important strategy in raising the spirit of the younger generation to know, love, and preserve their own culture.

Government

Local governments, both at the provincial and district levels, play a crucial role in supporting cultural preservation through policies, programs, and facilitation of cultural activities. The government is often involved in training, organizing cultural festivals, and providing financial assistance for arts and cultural activities. One form of government support is opening up opportunities for submitting proposals for arts and cultural activities to obtain financial assistance. However, in the field, there are still complaints from some people who feel they have not received adequate support from the government. Some say that assistance is only given at certain moments such as the celebration of Independence Day. This shows that communication between the government and the community needs to be improved so that cultural preservation can run more effectively.

Synergistic collaboration between the government, indigenous communities, families, young generations, educational institutions, and publication media is the key to success in maintaining and developing Lampung Pepadun culture. With ongoing cooperation, this cultural heritage can continue to live and be relevant amidst the changing times.

5. Challenges faced by the Mergo Buay Subing Concern in the Preservation Activities of the Lampung Pepadun Terbanggi Balak Custom

Preservation of local culture in Indonesia, especially local culture Lampung Pepadun which is preserved by *Mergo Buay Subing Concern*, facing complex and multidimensional challenges, especially in the context of the increasingly strong current of globalization. The main challenges faced can be explained as follows:

Impact of Globalization

Globalization has become a dominant phenomenon in the development of human civilization since the early 20th century. The development of technology, communication, and economic liberalization has had a significant influence on all aspects of life, including local culture. Easy access to global information makes a nation's culture no longer limited by geographical boundaries.

For local people, especially the younger generation, foreign cultures that are packaged in a modern and attractive way are often considered more relevant and prestigious compared to local cultures that are considered old-fashioned and not in accordance with contemporary lifestyles. This has led to a weakening of interest in local cultural traditions and practices. In the context of Lampung Pepadun culture, this condition can be seen from the decreasing participation of the younger generation in traditional ceremonies, the use of regional languages, and the understanding of local wisdom values.

Lack of Cultural Knowledge and Appreciation

The low level of knowledge and appreciation of local culture is a serious challenge in the process of preserving culture. Many young people do not have an adequate understanding of the history, philosophical values, and symbolic meanings contained in the Lampung Pepadun culture. This is exacerbated by the lack of integration of local cultural materials in the formal education curriculum and the lack of informal education initiatives that emphasize the importance of preserving regional culture. Without a deep understanding, the next generation will experience a disconnection of cultural identity which will result in the fading existence of local culture in everyday life.

Modernization and Urbanization

Modernization and urbanization are unavoidable processes in national development. However, these two processes often cause shifts in values and changes in social structures that threaten the sustainability of local culture. Increasing population mobility to urban areas and the development of modern lifestyles have reduced the space for traditional cultural expression.

Indigenous communities, such as the Mergo Buay Subing Community, face challenges in maintaining customary practices that are usually carried out in communal and rural contexts. Young people tend to be more interested in modern lifestyles that are individualistic, materialistic, and tend to move away from traditional life practices that are full of cultural meaning.

Lack of Government Support

Government policies that have not optimally supported cultural preservation are also inhibiting factors. Budget constraints, inadequate cultural infrastructure, and the lack of sustainable programs involving cultural communities are obstacles in efforts to preserve Lampung Pepadun culture. Several cultural communities reported that they rarely received financial support or facilities from the government, except for certain ceremonial activities such as the commemoration of Independence Day. Inconsistencies in cultural policies and the lack of effective communication between the government and indigenous communities further exacerbate the situation.

IV. Conclusion

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the Mergo Buay Subing Concern has a significant role in efforts to preserve the Lampung Pepadun customs, especially in Terbanggi Besar Village. The preservation efforts carried out include various aspects of culture, such as dance (for example the Sigeh Penguten Dance and Cangget Dance), accompanying music in the form of Talo Balak percussion, and the implementation of traditional ceremonies such as Gawi Agung and Turun Mandei. In addition, customary law practices such as Cepalo, Ngejuk-Ngakuk customs, and Kebumiyan customs are also maintained. The Concern also encourages traditional leaders to provide an understanding to their respective family members about the importance of these customs as the cultural identity of the Lampung community. However, the lack of direct socialization to the community, especially the younger generation, is a major obstacle in expanding understanding and participation in the preservation of local culture.

Although the Mergo Buay Subing Concern is still active in carrying out its role in conservation, their involvement tends to be symbolic, namely by providing an example as a role model for the community. The customary values that are applied such as piil pesenggiri, which consist of the principles of bejuluk beadek, nemui nyimah, ngejuk-ngakuk, nengah nyappur, and sakai sambayan, are the moral and social foundations in the lives of the Lampung indigenous people. These values not only strengthen cultural identity, but also reflect social ethics that strengthen relationships between families and between community members. To maintain the sustainability of the preservation of Lampung Pepadun culture amidst the challenges of globalization and modernization, it is necessary to strengthen socialization, supervision, and institutional support so that these noble values do not just become symbols, but are also internalized in the lives of indigenous people as a whole.

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