

Maintaining Plurality Through the Preservation of the Siulak Kerinci Tradition

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Abstract: This study aims to describe and identify inter-ethnic relations and form existing traditions as a means of inter-ethnic bonding that is able to unite within the frame of brotherhood. The background of this research is the diversity of the Siulak Kerinci community which consists of various ethnicities with a diversity of traditions and their uniqueness. This research is a qualitative research with an ethnographic approach. In the process of data, researchers used the method of observation, interviews and literature study, then the data were analyzed by means of descriptive qualitative. Based on the research, it was found that Siulak Kerinci was inhabited by various ethnic groups, both natives and immigrants. Each ethnic group has its own diversity and uniqueness, including the *kenduri sko* tradition, the *tale* tradition and the *asyeik* dance tradition. These traditions become a unifying tool that is able to unite the various ethnic groups that exist only because ethnicity is only carried out by the participating ethnic groups. There is no longer a dividing line because of the awareness that the existing traditions are national cultural treasures that need to be preserved and maintained. The principle of mutual respect is the main asset in the framework of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan dan mengidentifikasi relasi antar etnis serta bentuk tradisi yang ada sebagai sarana perekat antar etnis yang mampu menyatukan dalam bingkai persaudaraan. Penelitian dilatarbelakangi oleh keberagaman masyarakat siulak kerinci yang terdiri atas berbagai etnis dengan keanekaragaman tradisi dan keunikannya masing-masing. Penelitian ini adalah jenis penelitian kualitatif dengan menggunakan pendekatan etnografi. Dalam proses pengumpulan data, peneliti menggunakan metode observasi, wawancara dan studi pustaka, selanjutnya data dianalisis dengan cara deskriptif kualitatif. Berdasarkan penelitian, ditemukan bahwa siulak kerinci dihuni oleh berbagai suku bangsa atau etnis, baik pribumi maupun pendatang. Setiap etnis memiliki adat dan tradisi dengan keanekaragaman dan keunikannya, di antaranya *tradisi kenduri sko*, *tradisi lisan tale*, dan *tradisi tari asyeik*. Tradisi-tradisi yang dilakukan secara turun temurun menjadi alat pemersatu yang mampu menyatukan berbagai etnis di Siulak, karena tradisi tidak hanya dilaksanakan oleh etnis yang bersangkutan melainkan etnis lain juga turut andil dan berpartisipasi. Tidak ada lagi sekat pembeda karena lahirnya kesadaran bahwa tradisi yang ada merupakan sebuah keniscayaan dan khasanah budaya bangsa yang perlu dilestarikan dan dijaga kesinambungannya. Prinsip saling memahami dan menghargai menjadi modal utama dalam bingkai Bhinneka Tunggal Ika.



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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a plural nation, consisting of various ethnicities, cultures, languages, traditions and religions. This pluralism has emerged long before Indonesia's independence was proclaimed.

According to Sudiadi (2009), quoted by Pitoyo and Triwahyudi in the *Population Journal* Volume 25 Number 1 of 2017 that Indonesia is a country with a very diverse ethnic composition. In Indonesia alone there are around 633 tribes based on the existing ethnic and sub-tribe groupings. The international community acknowledges that vertically and horizontally, Indonesian society is the most pluralistic society in the world, apart from India and the United States.

In line with Kusumohamidjojo as quoted by Lestari (2015:28) that Indonesian society is a society that has various cultures. Indonesia consists of various ethnic, cultural, religious and other groups that are plural (plural) as well as heterogeneous (various).

As a plural nation, Indonesia is rich in culture which covers from Sabang to Merauke. This cultural wealth is the hallmark and identity of each ethnic group which is different from one another. The various ethnic groups have customs and traditions with their own diversity and uniqueness that need to be preserved and sustainable.

The variety of traditions and cultures that exist has made Indonesian people accustomed to living in differences and side by side with one another. They take care of each other between individuals with other individuals or groups with one another. Mutual respect between ethnic groups is the main key to creating harmony and maintaining harmonization. Culture and tradition can strengthen unity and become a possible solution for heterogeneous societies. The fact is that many traditions have begun to be ignored and forgotten due to the rapid flow of globalization and the influx of foreign cultures which have contaminated morals and ethics which ultimately lead to cultural degradation.

As stated by Nisar (2005: 192) that the socio-cultural existence of a nation that lives in the midst of society is a unit that has parts

that are intertwined with each other and are bound by internal ties which reflect the moral, taste, and the historical value of a nation. These bonds then accumulate and give a distinctive character to human culture, as well as reflecting a special character for the way of life, individual behavior and society.

Of course, social interactions that are made up of various ethnicities, traditions, cultures and religions are harmoniously intertwined, on the contrary what happens often leads to disintegration. This is where it is necessary to build awareness of unity and oneness in Indonesia. The differences that exist must be interpreted as a gift and are more directed to build togetherness, not on the contrary to trigger hostility and division. Past history, such as the occurrence of inter-tribal conflicts in Sampit, Ambon or in the Lampung province, should no longer occur. Therefore, the plurality of local wisdom values and a pluralistic culture needs to be understood, appreciated and responded to wisely so that conflicts/deviations/cheating between fellow citizens do not recur.

Based on this phenomenon, the diversity that should be the identity of the Indonesian nation in terms of ethnicity, religion, tradition and culture in the structure of society must be maintained by prioritizing a sense of brotherhood. Without highlighting the differences that exist because of the position of humans as social beings. Pancasila as an ideology is the main capital for unifying the various differences that exist in Indonesia, but without neglecting the appreciation of the values of national history and strengthening the unity and integrity of the nation, it is also necessary to explore, understand, adopt and apply the values of the existing regional cultures in a down-to-earth way.

As a multicultural society, people with various ethnic, traditional and cultural differences live within it, but respect in a tradition (culture) for each ethnic group will give confidence to other ethnic groups, so that good interactions are established and even inter-ethnic relations become harmonious. It cannot be denied that the lack of awareness of one ethnicity towards other ethnic cultures is often the trigger for the emergence of seeds of disharmony. Another

factor is that ethnic immigrants are unable to assimilate and acculturate in the area they occupy.

Siulak, Kerinci Regency is one of the many regions in Indonesia which is inhabited by various ethnic groups or ethnicities, namely the natives known as Malays and immigrants consisting of Minang, Javanese and Batak ethnicities. Each ethnic group has a different way of life, habits, customs, traditions and culture, but history has proven that inter-ethnic conflict in Siulak Kerinci is very rare.

To see inter-ethnic relations and existing forms of tradition as a means of inter-ethnic bonding that is able to unite in brotherhood on the basis of a shared destiny, a scientific study is needed. The problem raised in this study is how the existing inter-ethnic relations and what forms of tradition are used as a means of inter-ethnic bonding that is able to unite in a frame of brotherhood on the basis of a shared fate. Through this research, on the one hand, it is hoped that various traditions will be developed to maintain harmonious life in Siulak, Kerinci Regency. On the other hand, local wisdom can also be learned which they gave birth to in the life of society and the state. This can be a reference and reference for the community as an individual regarding the awareness of the importance of maintaining diversity, as well as assisting the government in establishing policies regarding national integration by setting an example of a harmonious life in an area, namely Siulak, Kerinci Regency.

METHODS

This research is a qualitative research with an ethnographic approach, because the activities in this study examine the life of a group or society scientifically with the aim of studying, describing, analyzing and interpreting the cultural patterns of a group regarding behavior, beliefs, language and shared views (Creswell, 2012). This research was conducted in Siulak District, Kerinci Regency, Jambi Province. The data collection process was carried out through observation, interviews and literature study.

Observations are carried out by observing directly in the field regarding all phenomena related to the research theme. Interview is a process of obtaining information by way of question and answer which is directly obtained from the informant. The selection of informants was carried out purposively, namely selecting informants according to the research objectives, so that the informants selected in this study were community leaders and traditional leaders who understood the customs and traditions studied. Furthermore, literature study as a complement to observations and interviews. Literature study was carried out before and after going to the field. Researchers also refer to previous studies related to the object under study. The purpose of this literature study is to strengthen data related to the multi-ethnic traditions of the Siulak community, Kerinci Regency. In testing the validity of the researcher using data triangulation from Miles & Huberman. The analysis was carried out in 3 stages, including 1) data reduction; 3) presentation of data and 4) Drawing conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The diversity demands of a multicultural society cannot be ignored. Respect for culture and traditions fosters self-confidence, loyalty and the courage to interact with other existing cultures and makes it easier to integrate into the larger system of society. The diversity of cultures and traditions is very helpful in solving problems in rebuilding the awareness of the people involved in the cultural practices themselves.

According to Sulasman and Gumilar (2013: 5) that culture has an integrative function that provides a basis and orientation for members of society so that it creates enthusiasm, a sense of security, a sense of belonging, a sense of being a member of that society. Culture also creates a state of peace in social life with customs, mysticism and decency, which creates

respect in the acceptance of different cultures in a society that will feel comfortable and beautiful in its eyes.

In a multicultural society, tradition in a culture is a unifying tool that is often neglected. Even though the existence of culture becomes the support of an identity in a group. Tradition (culture) can be a major factor to stem conflict. According to Ismail (2014: 124) that strengthening cross-cultural relations in our homeland begins with respect between religious communities, ethnic mutual acceptance and mutual respect between cultures which continue to be nurtured and developed in realizing the unity of diversity.

Siulak, Kerinci Regency is one of the areas inhabited by various ethnic groups or ethnic groups, both native and immigrant. The presence of migrants in Siulak, Kerinci Regency, was initially more due to the fact that Siulak, Kerinci Regency, is an area that is geographically close to Sumatra. The arrival of immigrants has increased the number and ratio of the population, changed the composition and order of the population and formed a plural society. The immigrants were Minang, Javanese and Batak ethnic groups who then mixed with the native population known as the Malay tribe. These heterogeneous ethnicities are spread across several villages in the Siulak District such as the villages of Telago Biru, Siulak Gedang, Bandar Sedap, Pasar Siulak Gedang, Dusun Dalam, Koto Beringin, Siulak Panjang, Dusun Baru, Koto Tengah, Pasar Senen, Sungai Pegah, Koto Lebu Tinggi, Lebu River, Lubuk Nagodang. Each ethnicity has job specifications, such as working as a trader, teacher, entrepreneur and farmer.

In their daily lives, the Siulak people of Kerinci Regency, which consist of multiethnic groups, always maintain an attitude of mutual respect and mutual understanding between individuals or groups with one another so as to create a sense of security and comfort in social life.

Conflict is a social phenomenon and even a social process that often appears in the reality of social relations between individuals and between groups. In the reality of people's lives, conflicts still often arise with various nuances ranging from conflicts with religious, economic, political,

cultural and other nuances. But with the tradition, people respect each other. The community highly respects the existing cultural treasures and traditions. Every time a celebration of the traditions of an ethnic group is held, other ethnic groups also contribute and celebrate it. Togetherness wrapped in peace is felt to color their diverse lives.

The existing tradition of the Siulak community in Kerinci Regency is a cultural heritage passed down from generation to generation and contains wisdom values that are still relevant to today's conditions, such as the values of togetherness, mutual cooperation, unity, and religion. The following are traditions that are able to become an inter-ethnic glue that still survive today, including:

The *Kenduri Sko* Tradition

The *kenduri sko* tradition is the largest traditional ceremony in Kerinci Regency, including for the Siulak people, because it involves all the people in Siulak, Kerinci Regency. The *kenduri sko* party illustrates the existence of integration, familiarity, awareness, togetherness and openness among members of the community and between members of the community and their leaders as the philosophy of Nagari Kerinci.

Almost every hamlet and village in Kerinci Regency always holds a *kenduri sko*, and naturally *kenduri sko* is always associated with the coronation of traditional stakeholders, both *Depati*, *Rio* and *Mangku*.

Traditional ceremonies which are carried out on an ongoing basis in every village in Kerinci Regency are a medium of communication between the older and younger generations and are a means of conveying moral messages for the sustainability of a better future life order. The traditional ceremony in the form of *kenduri sko* which is held in every village in the Kerinci realm is a means of fostering traditional values and moral values that are not weathered by rain and are subject to heat.

Like the traditions in a series of traditional ceremonial celebrations in every Indonesian society, the *kenduri sko* ceremony has an important meaning for the people of Kerinci. The *kenduri sko* ceremony

is the culmination of the cultural celebration of the Kerinci people, in other words it can be interpreted as a traditional event for the Kerinci people which is held with specific goals and objectives.

The *kenduri sko* ceremony is only held in traditional communion villages or village communities whose hamlets have a history of traditional elders *depati ninik mamak* and also store heirlooms.

The hallmark of this traditional ceremony is the appointment or coronation of a local son to become a *depati* or traditional leader, who will then be given an oath which the chosen one must hold firmly. For the Kerinci people in general, this traditional ceremony is very important to carry out and preserve as a form of gratitude for the abundance of grace and gifts that God has given them. Usually, in the series of *kenduri sko* traditions, an event or session is also held for appointing/correcting the traditional stakeholders who will propose and direct the children of their nephews/indigenous people who are in the *luhah* environment and the *kalbu* of each.

The traditional ceremonies carried out by the Siulak people of Kerinci Regency apart from being a cultural heritage from their ancestors also have a function as a means of infrastructure to strengthen ties of friendship. Because with the *kenduri sko*, friendship is established between members of kinship and with indigenous peoples in their respective areas, and can strengthen the spirit of unity and oneness with fellow community groups and other indigenous community groups around them such as the Minang, Javanese and ethnic groups. Batak people in the Siulak area of Kerinci Regency.

Oral Tradition Tale

The oral tradition of *tale* is an oral tradition that exists in Siulak, Kerinci Regency. Based on the terminology, there are several opinions regarding the meaning of *tale* for the Kerinci people. First, *tale* comes from the word '*tahlil*'. Second, it comes from the word *talai* which means rope or tied. Third, *tale* as a song. Fourth, the *tale* is a folk song. Fifth, the *tale* is a poem that is sung. Sixth, *tale* is also interpreted as a song in the Kerinci language. All of these opinions have their own understanding. For example, it can be seen as follows:

Cinak ini ruponyo ahi
Patut nian buladang bawang
Cinak ini ruponyo kam
Patut nian kami tibuang
Tigo luhah tanah sikudung
Rumah gedang tempat berunding
Kato alah sudah kami tilangsun
Kayo buralih ngan uhang lain

Bukan rakit ngato nak pnoh
Buluh tirendam nak pnoh jugo
Bukan punyakit ngato nak munoh
Rindu ngan dendam nak munoh jugo
Tinggi nyo bukik samo di daki
Luhah ngan dalam samo ditempuh
Tunggu lah kayo ranah kurinci
Bialah kami tibuang jauh

Translation:

This is what the day looks like
 Must be an onion farm
 This is what we look like
 We should have been wasted
 Three headlands of Sikudung land
 A large house of negotiation
 Said we have agreed
 You switch with someone else

It's not a raft if it's full
 Soaked bamboo will be full too
 Not a disease that will kill
 Longing and revenge will kill too
 The height of the hill is the same as
 climbed
 The deep head is equally traveled
 Wait for you Kerinci land
 Let us drift away

The first stanza of the *pantun* text tells that because people are poor/have no means, it is only appropriate for someone to be thrown away from their lover. The second stanza tells that even though the agreement of both parties has existed, the lover has moved on to someone else. The third stanza emphasizes that it is not the form of the disease that can kill him, but the longing and revenge for his lover that will make him die.

The fourth stanza tells of someone who will go far away from Kerinci. The essence of the entire *pantun* is about someone who has no means/poor (immigrant who is not from Kerinci) and then cannot mingle with the original Kerinci people, so then he prefers to leave Kerinci. From the meaning of the tale, it can be seen that the sequence from the first stanza to the next stanza will bind and form the unity of the story.

Tale as an artistic tradition has been used since time immemorial until now by experiencing various changes in its presentation and use. *Tale* belongs to the songs and songs of the Kerinci people. According to Jan Harold Brunvand (Danandjaja 2007, 141), folk singing is a genre of folklore which consists of words and songs that are circulated orally among certain groups in traditional forms and have many variants. This is in line with the procession of *tale* consisting of songs and sentences that are familiarly circulated within the Kerinci community. At this time, *tale* can still be found in several arts in Kerinci, but not many people know about the existence of these *tale*, some even think that all vocal music activities are *tale*, even though not all vocal music can be categorized as *tale* and *tale* are present only in a number of arts. tradition. This makes the tradition of *tale* worth tracing its existence within the Kerinci community.

The Asyeik Dance Tradition

The *Asyeik* Dance tradition is a medicinal dance tradition for the Siulak community, Kerinci Regency, which has grown since ancient times, precisely when the ancestors of the Kerinci tribe adhered to Animism and Dynamism.

There are two main components that must be prepared for the treatment process in Empih Hamlet, Siulak, namely dance and offerings. The offerings are in the form of lemong, bananas, brown rice, yellow rice, incense, seven kinds of flowers, long cloth, *tango niti*, and others. The offering is used as a form of offering at the request to be conveyed. Submission of requests and prayers is made by using the medium of dance accompanied by chanting *tale*. As a result, there is interaction and communication between people and God (unseen), which is marked by the existence

of several people who experience "possession". It is the conversation between these two different dimensions that becomes the meeting point for prayer requests submitted by the community to God Almighty. Thus, the function of performing the *Asyeik* Dance in the healing rituals in Siulak is as an intermediary medium between the community and God Almighty and the spirits of the ancestors, which is the main function of the *Asyeik* Dance for the Siulak community, Kerinci Regency.

In its development, until now the *Asyeik* Dance still survives and is still used as a ritual ceremony for treatment. Based on the results of an interview with Mr. Rupiye (70 years), a traditional leader in the village of Telago Biru Siulak, in terms of function, existence and ability to survive the *Asyeik* Siulak Dance, apart from being a medium of treatment to heal people who are seriously ill who cannot be cured by medical personnel, By doing *Asyeik* dance performance in medicine is a suggestion or enthusiasm from the family of the sick patient that they feel their family's illness will be cured. The strength of the function of the dance is also inseparable from the context of each of the small program parts, such as *mintak arah*, *manggin* or *nyeru*, healing, *Asyeik* Dance performances, *masuk bumi*, *magih hulu balang makan* which is a whole that strengthens the function for this treatment.

The enthusiasm and suggestions for healing were not only felt by the sick person's family but also by the *uhang jadui* (people who were possessed) themselves who felt better after the ritual treatment was carried out.

Kinship is also generated and transmitted by the sick family and the dancers, all relatives who are present, *ninik mamak*, and people who participate in the dance during the treatment. In addition, the implementation of the *Asyeik* Dance is also motivated by different purposes, some carry it out to ask for sustenance, ask for children for those who have not had children for years, some release vows and it is also just a way to express gratitude because their village has protected from all forms of harm. Based on these functions, until now the *Asyeik* Dance ritual is still able to survive as

part of the lifeblood of the Siulak Community.

The results of the research conducted show that as a whole the traditions that exist in Siulak Kerinci are capable of being an inter-ethnic glue. Existing traditions and culture are in fact the most dominant unifying elements. In the process of developing unity, migrant communities in Siulak, Kerinci Regency, mingle or interact in every cultural activity that is carried out. Together they participate in every cultural event that is carried out regardless of ethnicity. They have a very high tolerance, this can be seen in every aspect of culture. They work hand in hand and participate.

The occurrence of an integration process was motivated by a feeling of shared destiny, that is, all the people who are in Siulak, Kerinci Regency carry out and apply their traditions, in this case there is growing awareness of each member of the Siulak community, Kerinci Regency, both native and migrant communities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion above, it can be concluded that Siulak, Kerinci Regency, is inhabited by various ethnic groups or ethnic groups, both natives and immigrants. There are several traditions including the *kenduri sko* tradition, the *tale* oral tradition and the fun dance tradition. These traditions have become the most powerful unifying tool that is able to unite the various existing ethnicities because the traditions are not only carried out by native/indigenous ethnicities but ethnic immigrants also participate.

It is no longer a dividing line because of the awareness that existing traditions are a gift and a treasure of the nation's culture that need to be preserved and maintained. The principles of mutual understanding, understanding and respect are the main capital in maintaining community harmony within the framework of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika.

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