

Analysis of the *Nyeleng* Process of Making *Minyak Seribu Hajat* as a Traditional Ritual of Local Wisdom of The Sasak Tribe of Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara

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ABSTRACT

The tradition of making seribu hajat oil is a form of local wisdom of the Sasak tribe of Lombok, combining the processing of natural ingredients with spiritual rituals and sacred recitations. This tradition not only serves as a process of traditional oil production, but also as a medium for transmitting religious, social, and ecological values that have been passed down from generation to generation. However, amid the tide of modernization, academic understanding and documentation of the nyeleng process tends to be limited, potentially eroding the sustainability of this tradition. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the stages of the nyeleng process of making seribu hajat oil and to reveal its symbolic meaning and cultural function in the lives of the Sasak people. This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive-ethnographic approach. Data was obtained through participatory observation of the nyeleng ritual, in-depth interviews with traditional leaders and ritual practitioners, and documentary studies of oral traditions and lontar manuscripts related to the production of minyak seribu hajat. Data analysis techniques were carried out through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing using an interpretive approach. The results of the study show that the nyeleng process of making seribu hajat oil consists of several main stages, namely the preparation of ritual materials and tools, the determination of the sacred time, the recitation of prayers and traditional sayings, the ritual heating of the oil, and the closing and storage stages. Each stage has symbolic meaning that represents the values of purity, patience, effort, and harmony in the relationship between humans, God, and nature. In addition, seribu hajat oil serves as a symbol of spiritual protection, a medium for strengthening cultural identity, and a means of preserving the local wisdom of the Sasak people of Lombok.

Keywords: *Nyeleng, Thousand-Purpose Oil, Sasak Tribe, Traditional Rituals, Local Wisdom*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known as a nation with a rich and diverse local culture, steeped in traditional wisdom. Koentjaraningrat (2009) states that culture is the entire system of ideas, actions, and human creations in society that are acquired through learning. In this context, ritual traditions that have developed in indigenous communities not only serve as ancestral heritage, but also as a system of knowledge that regulates human relations with God, nature, and fellow human beings.

One form of traditional culture that still survives in society is the ritual of processing natural materials accompanied by spiritual practices. According to Geertz (1973), rituals are symbolic systems that serve to build a strong, comprehensive, and lasting mood and motivation within humans. Rituals are not merely understood as religious activities, but as a medium for affirming the values and meaning of life of a community. This is clearly seen in the tradition of nyeleng, the production of minyak seribu hajat (thousand wishes oil) among the Sasak tribe of Lombok. Minyak seribu hajat is a cultural product born from a combination of local knowledge, religious beliefs, and ritual practices. The process of making it through nyeleng is not carried out purely technically, but is accompanied by prayers, sacred recitations, and strict customary rules. Endraswara (2018) emphasizes that in Javanese culture and the archipelago in general, the process of making ritual objects always contains symbolic and spiritual dimensions that are believed to influence the power and function of these objects. Thus, seribu hajat oil cannot be understood merely as traditional oil, but as a cultural artifact with deep symbolic meaning.

From an anthropological perspective, the practice of nyeleng reflects the syncretic belief system of the Sasak people, which combines Islamic teachings with local traditions. Koentjaraningrat (1990) explains that religion in traditional societies often undergoes a process of localization, whereby formal teachings are blended with local customs. This can be seen in the use of Islamic prayers recited together with Sasak traditional mantras during the nyeleng process, which shows the harmonization between religion and culture. Furthermore, the use of natural ingredients such as coconut oil, spices, and local plants in

the making of minyak seribu hajat reflects the ecological relationship between the Sasak people and their environment. Keraf (2010) states that local wisdom is a form of environmental ethics that arises from humans' long experience of interacting with nature. Thus, nyeleng minyak seribu hajat can also be understood as a cultural practice that contains eco-cultural values, namely respect for nature as a source of life.

However, amid the tide of modernization and social change, the tradition of nyeleng minyak seribu hajat faces the challenge of a decline in the transfer of traditional knowledge to younger generations. According to Sibarani (2012), local wisdom will become extinct if it is not documented and integrated into academic discourse and education. Therefore, scientific studies of the process of making seribu hajat oil are important as an effort to preserve culture and strengthen the identity of the Sasak Lombok community. Based on this description, analysis of the process of making seribu hajat oil is not only relevant in cultural anthropology studies, but also in studies of local wisdom, community religiosity, and cultural ecology. This research is expected to contribute theoretically and practically to efforts to preserve the intangible cultural heritage of the archipelago.

Culture and Ritual Tradition

Culture is the entire system of human life that includes ideas, activities, and works obtained through the learning process. Koentjaraningrat (2009) explains that culture has three main forms, namely ideas (ideas and values), activities (patterned actions), and artifacts (physical works). Ritual traditions, including the practice of nyeleng, exist in all three forms because they involve a belief system, symbolic actions, and cultural products in the form of seribu hajat oil. Rituals in traditional societies have an important function as a means of strengthening collective values and identity. Geertz (1973) views rituals as symbolic systems that shape and reinforce the mindset and behavior of a community. Thus, the nyeleng ritual not only serves a practical function but also acts as a means of internalizing spiritual and social values within the Sasak community of Lombok.

The Concept of Local Wisdom

Local wisdom is knowledge and values that develop within a community as a result of long-term interaction with the social environment and nature. Sibarani (2012) states that local wisdom encompasses ideas, norms, and practices that are wise and noble. In the context of minyak seribu hajat, local wisdom is reflected in the selection of natural ingredients, ritual procedures, and customary rules that govern the nyeleng process. Keraf (2010) emphasizes that local wisdom plays an important role in maintaining the balance between humans and nature. The wise use of natural resources in the production of seribu hajat oil shows that the Sasak people have been applying culture-based environmental ethics long before the concept of modern ecology developed

Rituals, Symbols, and Cultural Meanings

Symbols play a central role in ritual practices. Turner (1967) explains that ritual symbols are the smallest units of ritual structure that contain social and spiritual meanings. In the production of seribu hajat oil, symbols such as fire, oil, prayer, and sacred time serve as representations of purity, protection, and blessing. Endraswara (2018) adds that ritual objects in the culture of the Indonesian archipelago cannot be separated from their symbolic meaning and the collective beliefs of the community. Therefore, seribu hajat oil is not merely viewed as a material product, but as a spiritual medium that is believed to have symbolic power.

The Belief System of the Sasak People of Lombok

The Sasak people of Lombok have a unique belief system, which is the result of acculturation between Islamic teachings and local traditions. Koentjaraningrat (1990) states that the process of religious localization occurs when formal religious teachings are adapted to local cultural values and practices. This can be seen in the nyeleng ritual, which combines Islamic prayers with Sasak traditional mantras and incantations. Research on Sasak culture shows that traditional ritual practices still play an important role in the social and spiritual life of the community, especially in the context of traditional medicine and self-protection

(Lalu Wacana, 2015). Nyeleng minyak seribu hajat is a form of local religiosity that is alive and dynamic.

Oral Tradition and the Transmission of Cultural Heritage

The tradition of nyeleng has passed down orally from generation to generation. Ong (1982) explains that oral traditions are repetitive and symbolic in nature, serving to preserve cultural knowledge in societies that are not yet fully documented in writing. In Sasak society, knowledge about nyeleng and minyak seribu hajat is generally passed down through direct practice and the advice of traditional leaders. Sibarani (2012) emphasizes that documenting oral traditions is very important to prevent the extinction of local wisdom amid modernization. Therefore, academic studies of the nyeleng process of making minyak seribu hajat are a form of intangible cultural preservation.

Relevant Research

Several previous studies have examined traditional rituals and culture-based medicine in Indonesia. Endraswara's (2015) study on traditional healing rituals shows that spiritual practices and the use of natural ingredients are closely related to the community's belief system. Meanwhile, Sudiarta's (2017) study reveals that rituals based on traditional oils and herbs serve as a medium for healing as well as a symbol of spiritual protection. However, specific studies on the process of making seribu hajat oil among the Sasak people of Lombok are still limited. Therefore, this study has a strategic position to complement previous studies by focusing on the stages of the process, symbolic meanings, and the socio-cultural functions of the nyeleng tradition.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Types and Approaches

This study uses qualitative research with a descriptive-ethnographic approach. This approach was chosen because the study focuses on a deep understanding of the processes, meanings, and cultural values contained in the tradition of making seribu hajat oil among the Sasak people of Lombok. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research aims to understand social phenomena based on the perspectives of participants in their natural

context. The ethnographic approach is used to describe the cultural practice of nyeleng as part of the Sasak community's way of life, including behavioral patterns, beliefs, and accompanying ritual symbols.

Research Location and Time

This research was conducted in Beleka Village, Praya Timur Subdistrict, Central Lombok Regency, specifically among the Sasak community who still practice the tradition of nyeleng, or the making of seribu hajat oil. The location was determined purposively, taking into account the continuity of this traditional practice. The research was conducted over several months to allow for direct observation of the nyeleng process and in-depth data collection. The nyeleng procession is held on Friday night or on the 24th day of the month of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, or the month of Maulid.

Research Subjects and Object

The research subjects include traditional leaders, practitioners of the nyeleng ritual, and the Sasak community who understand and are directly involved in the production and use of minyak seribu hajat. The object of the research is the nyeleng process of producing minyak seribu hajat, which includes the stages of implementation, ritual recitations, and the symbolic meanings contained therein.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was conducted using the following techniques:

Participatory Observation. Researchers were directly involved in observing the implementation of nyeleng to understand the stages of the process, the ritual situation, and the social interactions that occurred. Observations were carried out in a planned and systematic manner by recording activities, equipment, and ritual speech.

In-depth Interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with traditional leaders, ritual practitioners, and key informants who were considered to have in-depth knowledge of the nyeleng tradition. The interviews aimed to explore their understanding, experiences, and meanings of the process of making seribu hajat oil.

Documentation Study. Documentation studies were conducted on written and visual sources, such as palm leaf manuscripts, traditional records, photographs, and audio or video recordings related to the nyeleng tradition. The documentation data was used to reinforce the results of observations and interviews

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively using Miles and Huberman's (2014) interactive model, which consists of three main stages, namely: *Data Reduction*, which is the process of sorting and simplifying data according to the focus of the research. *Data Presentation*, which is the compilation of data in the form of descriptive narratives to facilitate understanding. *Drawing conclusions*, which is interpreting the meaning and patterns that emerge from the data analyzed.

Data Validity

To ensure data validity, this study applied triangulation techniques. Triangulation was conducted by comparing data from observations, interviews, and documentation. In addition, source triangulation was also conducted by involving various informants to obtain valid and credible data.

Research Results Presentation Techniques

The research results are presented in a descriptive-analytical form, describing the stages of the process of making seribu hajat oil along with its symbolic meaning and cultural function. The presentation of the research results is supplemented with direct quotes from informants to reinforce the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Stages of the Process of Making Seribu Hajat Oil

The results of observations and interviews show that the process of making seribu hajat oil among the Sasak tribe of Lombok is carried out through several stages that have been standardized and passed down from generation to generation. These stages include: (1) preparation of ritual materials and tools, (2) determination of the sacred time, (3)

recitation of prayers and traditional sayings, (4) the oil heating process (nyeleng inti), and (5) the closing and storage stages.

During the preparation stage, the main ingredients, namely coconut oil and local spices, are selected carefully. Informants stated that the quality of the ingredients greatly affects the “power” of the oil produced. In addition to the physical ingredients, the spiritual readiness of the ritual performers is also a key requirement, marked by pure intentions and a calm state of mind. The sacred timing stage is determined based on traditional calculations (warige) and religious considerations. The chosen time is believed to influence the success of the nyeleng process. Next, prayers and traditional recitations are performed before and during the oil heating process. The prayers recited are a combination of Islamic prayers and traditional Sasak mantras.

The oil is heated slowly over low heat. During this process, the ritualist maintains concentration and avoids unnecessary conversation. Once the oil is considered physically and spiritually mature, a closing prayer is said, then the oil is filtered and stored in a special container.

Ritual Speech and Sacred Language

The interview results show that ritual speech plays an important role in the nyeleng process. This speech functions as a medium of symbolic communication between humans and God, as well as the spiritual forces believed to be present in the ritual. The language used is symbolic, repetitive, and sacred, so not everyone is allowed to utter it.

Ritual speech is usually passed down orally from traditional leaders to the next generation. Informants stated that mistakes in reciting prayers or mantras are believed to affect the quality of the oil produced.

The Function and Meaning of Seribu Hajat Oil

Based on the interview results, seribu hajat oil has several main functions, namely as a means of self-protection, traditional medicine, and a complement to certain traditional rituals. In addition to its practical functions, this oil also has symbolic meaning as a manifestation of human effort accompanied by surrender to God.

DISCUSSION

Nyeleng as a Cultural Ritual

Research findings show that the nyeleng ritual for producing seribu hajat oil is a cultural ritual that reflects the symbolic system of the Sasak people. This is in line with Geertz's (1973) view that rituals function as symbolic systems that shape and reinforce meaning in social life. Each stage of the nyeleng ritual not only has a technical function but also contains spiritual and social values.

Symbolism in the Nyeleng Process

The use of a small fire in the oil heating process symbolizes patience and self-control. This symbol is in line with Turner's (1967) opinion that ritual symbols serve as representations of moral and social values. The oil produced at the end of the ritual becomes a symbol of protection and blessing, believed to have a positive impact on its users.

Integration of Religion and Local Culture

The combination of Islamic prayers and Sasak traditional incantations shows the integration between religion and local culture. This finding supports Koentjaraningrat's (1990) opinion about the localization of religion in traditional societies, where formal religious teachings adapt to local traditions without losing their religious essence.

Ecological Values in the Nyeleng Tradition

The use of natural materials sourced from the surrounding environment reflects the ecological awareness of the Sasak people. This is in line with Keraf's (2010) view, which emphasizes that local wisdom is a form of environmental ethics. The tradition of nyeleng teaches the wise and sustainable use of nature.

Cultural Inheritance and the Challenges of Modernization

The results of the study show that the inheritance of the nyeleng tradition still depends on the oral system and direct practice. This condition is in line with Ong's (1982) view of oral tradition. However, modernization and changes in lifestyle have led to a decline in interest in this tradition among the younger generation. Therefore, documentation and academic studies are important as efforts to preserve culture.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of research and discussion, it can be concluded that the process of making seribu hajat oil among the Sasak people of Lombok is a cultural practice rich in spiritual, social, and ecological values. The nyeleng tradition not only functions as a technical activity of traditional oil processing, but also as a sacred ritual that represents the belief system and worldview of the Sasak people. The nyeleng process is carried out through structured stages, starting from the preparation of ritual materials and tools, the determination of sacred times, the recitation of prayers and traditional sayings, the process of slowly heating the oil, to the closing and storage stages. Each stage has a symbolic meaning that reflects the values of purity of intention, patience, effort, and surrender to God. The integration of Islamic prayers and Sasak traditional chants shows the harmony between religious teachings and local culture.

Thousand-purpose oil serves as a means of spiritual protection, traditional medicine, and a complement to certain traditional rituals. Additionally, the use of natural ingredients in its production process reflects the local wisdom and ecological awareness of the Sasak people in utilizing natural resources wisely and sustainably. Thus, the tradition of making Thousand Wishes Oil can be viewed as an intangible cultural heritage that plays a significant role in preserving the identity and continuity of the Sasak people's culture in Lombok.

Recommendations

Based on these conclusions, several suggestions can be made as follows:

For the Community and Traditional Leaders. It is hoped that the community and traditional leaders will continue to preserve and maintain the tradition of making seribu hajat oil while upholding the sacred values and local wisdom contained therein, as well as opening up opportunities for cultural inheritance to the younger generation.

For the Government and Cultural Institutions. Local governments and cultural institutions are advised to support efforts to preserve the nyeleng tradition through documentation, archiving, and the development of community-based cultural preservation programs, without diminishing the sacred value of the tradition.

For the World of Education. The tradition of making seribu hajat oil can be used as a source of learning based on local wisdom, especially in subjects or studies of culture, anthropology, and character education, so that students have an understanding and appreciation of local culture.

For Future Researchers. Further research is recommended to examine the nyeleng tradition from other perspectives, such as linguistic anthropology, ecocriticism, or traditional health studies, as well as to expand the study to include aspects of social change and the dynamics of cultural inheritance in the modern era.

Documentation



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