



Pethik Laut Tradition as a Ritual of Repelling Bala (Study of Sociology Disaster)

Abstract

Indonesia is an archipelagic country that is famous for its ethnic, racial, religious and cultural diversity. This diversity is widespread in every area from Sabang to Merauke. The diversity of ethnicity, race, religion, and culture is in line with the many traditions that exist in every region in Indonesia. Each region has traditions and rituals that have their own meaning and purpose. One of them is the sea picking tradition carried out by the Muncar community, Banyuwangi Regency. This tradition has its own meaning and purpose for the people around Muncar. This study uses a qualitative research method with a case study approach. This study aims to analyze the Petik Laut tradition with the perspective of the sociology of disaster. The results of this study indicate that the Picking Laut tradition carried out by the Muncar community is a ritual to ask for safety for fishermen to avoid disasters while looking for fish in the sea.

Keywords: Tradition; Petik Laut; Rituals; Rejection Bala.

A. Introduction

Indonesia has ±17.504 islands spread from Sabang to Merauke. These islands consist of islands large and small. The number of islands is owned by Indonesia is one of the supporting factors of diversity that exist in Indonesia. Diversity consists of ethnicity, race, religion, culture, and so forth. This diversity is in line with the traditions, rituals, and ceremonies that are owned by each region that also be the characteristics or identity for the area. In addition to being the characteristics or identity for each area, traditions, rituals, and ceremonies also have the meaning and purpose of its own for the area.

One of the areas that have distinctive features through the tradition and the ritual is Banyuwangi. Banyuwangi is one of the districts in the Island of Java, which is located

in the East of and adjacent to the Island of Bali. Banyuwangi is one area that is often associated with things that smell magical against the traditions, rituals, and ceremonies performed in the area (Annisa, Khoiria, & Juwinda, 2018). Each of the traditions and rituals that do have meaning and purpose of its own for people in Banyuwangi who carry it out. A lot of all the traditions and rituals that exist in Banyuwangi, such as *Tari Seblang*, *Geridhogan*, *Pethik Laut*, and so forth.

Epistemologically, tradition comes from Latin which means a habit in the form of culture or customs (Rofiq, 2019). Sociologist, Soerjono Soekanto stated that tradition is a form of activity carried out by a group of people or society from generation to generation (Rofiq, 2019). There are two kinds of tradition in Indonesia that is still implemented by the community, that is the tradition of religious ritual and ritual traditions of the culture.¹ One of the traditions that is still carried out today is the *Tradisi Pethik Laut*. This tradition is one of the traditions of the Muncar community, Banyuwangi Regency whose existence is still preserved today. This tradition is carried out by the Muncar fishing community who live in the area around the coastal area (Rofiq, 2019). This tradition has its own meaning and purpose for the Muncar community, such as, a form of gratitude for the abundance of blessings they have, as well as the hope of being given safety when looking for the fishes in the ocean (repelling reinforcements) (Anoegrajekti, Macaryus, Saputra, & Maharani, 2019).

Related to this, researcher was interested in conducting research with the title "Tradition of *Pethik Laut* as a Ritual of Repelling Bala". This research will be analyzed with the perspective of the sociology of disaster. In a sociological perspective, when a disaster occurs, sociologists will question "how does a society respond when a disaster occurs?" (Pramono, 2016). In addition, the perspective of the sociology of disaster also looks at how the community in terms of preparedness, both after and before a disaster occurs. (Pramono, 2016). This is the one that will be further reviewed by the researcher in this occasion.

B. Discussion

¹ Eva Dewi Heidyati, Thesis: "*TRADISI PETEKAN NGADAS DALAM PERSPEKTIF GENDER, HAM, HUKUM POSITIF DAN HUKUM ISLAM (STUDI DI DESA NGADAS KECAMATAN PONCOKUSUMO KABUPATEN MALANG)*" (Tulungagung: Repository IAIN Tulungagung, 2019), hal 14-15.

The research method used in this study is a qualitative research method. Qualitative research methods seek to explore a phenomenon by describing it in detail with an explanation that is in accordance with what happened (Nugrahani, 2014). The advantage of this research method is that it can obtain data that cannot be done statistically or quantitatively (Nugrahani, 2014). Qualitative research methods have 6 types of research, including case studies, historical research, grounded theory research, phenomenology, ethnography, and ethnomethodology (Nugrahani, 2014). The type of qualitative research method used in this research is a literature study with a descriptive approach. Study literature is one of the types of qualitative research methods that relies on journals, books, research reports, and others as a source of data and references in research.² Types of research methods tend to notice the description of a phenomenon in order to understand the meaning of the phenomenon to be studied in depth (Nugrahani, 2014).

In the process of collecting data, there are several techniques that researchers can use to obtain valid data. The technique of data collection is one of the parts or the important stages in the research process because at this stage the researcher will collect the data required by the research (Sidiq & Choiri, 2019). Data collection techniques can be performed with several techniques, such as interviews, observation, and documentation (Sidiq & Choiri, 2019). Since this research was conducted through case studies, the data collection technique used in this study was documentation. Documentation data collection techniques are as important as other data collection techniques (Sidiq & Choiri, 2019). In this technique, data is obtained through documents, such as writing about a phenomenon that has occurred, newspapers (newspapers), books, magazines, notes, etc (Sidiq & Choiri, 2019). In addition, data in documentation techniques can also be in the form of audio and recordings (Harahap, 2020). Based on this statement, the authors use data from books, research journals, mass media, and so on for research data.

Then, the next step after the research data collected is data analysis. At this step, the collected data will be analyzed in order to get data that is actually relevant to the research and data that is not relevant will be removed (Nugrahani, 2014). The technique of

² Kurnia. Thesis: "*Studi Literatur: Media Pembelajaran Yang Digunakan Pada Model Pembelajaran Inquiry Learning*" (Makassar: Lembaga Perpustakaan dan Penerbitan Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar, 2021) hal. 14.

data analysis that used in this research is the technique of analysis of Miles and Huberman. There are three steps that must be solve in this technique, among others, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion (Sidiq & Choiri, 2019). The first step of technique of data analysis of Milles and Hubberman is data reduction. Data reduction is grouping of the data derived from the raw data obtained through journals, books, and online news, then grouped into data in accordance with the concept of research. Selanjutnya, data yang sesuai akan disajikan (*display data*). Then, the corresponding data will be presented (*display data*). The last step is making the conclusions. At this step, when additional data occurs in the data display process, the research conclusions will have the potential to change.

1. The Tradition Of *Pethik Laut Muncar*

The tradition of *Pethik Laut* is one of tradition that still preserved until right now by some community in some locatios. This tradition is usually done by people who live on the coast and fishermen. There are several locations that still do this tradition, such as Banyuwangi, Bali, Madura, Jember, and others (Setiawan, 2016). In Banyuwangi, especially Subdistrict Muncar, the people who live in coastal areas and fishermen carry out these activities every 15th of the month of Suro (Javanese calendar) or the month of Muharram (Ainiyah, 2017). This tradition already existed since 1905. This tradition is carried out when the morning or during the day when the tides (full moon), this is due to facilitate the sinking of the *gitek* as the peak of the event in this tradition (Ainiyah, 2017).

This Ritual is performed for three days in a row. Before going to the port, the head of the districk was required to attach the fishing line of gold on the tongue of a cow or a goat. On the first day, the fishermen will do *tahlilan* in the mosque, then continued with the reading of the Qur'an as a whole (*khatmil qur'an*) on the second day. And on the last day, the peak of the event there will be the appearance of a typical dance of Banyuwangi, that Gandrung Dance, then the *sajen* will be floated out to the middle of the sea. The banning of *sajen* in the middle of the sea can't be done by just anyone, only people who have the descendants of Madura and have a large ship (the owner) that can be banning the *sajen*.³

³Eko Setiawan, "Eksistensi Budaya Bahari Tradisi Petik Laut Di Muncar Banyuwangi", *UNIVERSUM*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Juli, 2016).

The *sajen* were put in *gitek* or miniature small boat (Annisa, Khoiria, & Juwinda, 2018). The *sajen* are put into the *gitek*, there are the head of a four-legged animal, along with the flesh and bones that is already cooked, live chickens and chicken that has been cooked, clothes, cananga oil, pulp and cone colors, chicken eggs, small lamps, *ketupat*, cosmetics, fruits, vegetables, golden rod, *pala pendem*, and jasmine flowers are used to decorate the ship. The *sajen* will be presented to the spirits and ancestors, such as the Prophet Khidr, Nyi Roro Kidul, Queen and Rejo.⁴

Before the *gitek* sunk or floated out, the Gandrung dancers are obsessed with dancing around the *gitek* with the citizens who have to wear traditional clothes Madura three times. Then, *gitek* will be paraded to the sea followed by a carnival by the women and men that wear traditional clothes of Bugis, Jawa, Madura, and Mandar. In the event, elder or shaman of *Pethik Laut* will be sprinkling of yellow rice on the way who has been passed to the port. When up in the middle of the sea, the *gitek* be drowned by the head of the district after the orders from the elders. Then quickly, the fishermen who go to sea will be scrambling to pick up the *sajen* because it is believed to give blessings for the fishermen who managed to take the *sajen*. When banning the *sajen* implemented, *gitek* will be recited by prayer up in the tomb. The Ritual of *Pethik Laut* ends after the Gandrung dancer's dancing around in the tomb of Sayyid Yusuf and his wife, as well as entertain the public and the government that has been present.⁵

2. The Tradition Of *Pethik Laut* Muncar On Pandemic

The pandemic of Covid-19 expected to go to Indonesia in early March 2020 (detikcom, 2020). It was also confirmed directly by the president of Indonesia, Joko Widodo (detikcom, 2020). The pandemic that occurred in Indonesia has affected many sectors, this is in line with the policy of government restrictions on social fairly tight in order to suppress the spread of the virus Covid-19 in Indonesia. It's almost 2 years of the pandemic is still stuck in Indonesia, although the case has been decreasing. During the pandemic, some of the activities that could potentially cause the crowd to temporarily

⁴ Annisa, Iim Khoiria, Juwinda, "Makna (*Pangrokot*) dalam Tradisi Petik Laut Muncar di Dusun Kalimati Banyuwangi", *Asas: Jurnal Sastra*, Vol.7, No.2 (2018).

⁵ Nur Ainiyah, "Ritual Petik Laut Dan Keragaman (Keragaman Dan Komunikasi Ritual Di Kalangan Nelayan Multietnis Di Kedungrejo Muncar Banyuwangi)", *Empirisma*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Januari, 2017), page. 72.

dismissed or removed first, such as the Salat Eid. However, there are also activities that are carried out during the pandemic because the activity has an important meaning for the people who carry it out, one of the activities that are carried out during the pandemic is the Tradition of *Pethik Laut*.

The tradition of *Pethik Laut* constantly held on the 15th of Sura (Javanese calendar) or 15 Muharram (Islamic calendar), even in a pandemic situation. During the period of PPKM (Imposition of Restrictions on the Activities of the Community) 3, the event is still held in Muncar, Kabupaten Banyuwangi, although there is a difference-a significant difference from the years before the pandemic. These differences can be seen from the number of boats, number of gitek that have bane, the participants of the ritual, and no tourists. In addition, events such as the wayang kulit show, night market, fish market, competition ornamental vessel, and grilled fish contest also dismissed or removed for a while. While the pandemic, only the activity or ritual of the principal course implemented.⁶

One of public figures, Ridiyanto said that:

“No one can stop or prohibit, leathery creature or creatures fine, because it's a tradition for our community. So, keep organized, but so as not to cause the crowd, only be ritual (Suudi, 2021).”

In addition, the Healthy Aftarjo, deputy chairman of the executive ritual of *Pethik Laut* said that:

“For this time, gitek will be made smaller because of the varying circumstances that still the pandemic, so it's still simple. If *Pethik Laut* held in the massive, the size of the gitek can reach five meters, but it will invite people outside Muncar (Konik, 2021).”

The head of the Village Kedungrejo, Muncar, Ahmad Zaihu, said that:

“The show is not as big as the *Pethik Laut* was held before the pandemic Covid-19. The important essence of these activities remains to be implemented (Sodiqin, 2021).”

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, *Pethik Laut* was held by coastal communities and fishermen in Muncar District, Banyuwangi for three consecutive days with a series

⁶ Ahmad Suudi, “Petik Laut Muncar Digelar Saat PPKM, 2 Kapal Larung Sesaji”, *jatimnet.com*, Agustus 24, 2021, <https://jatimnet.com/petik-laut-muncar-digelar-saat-ppkm-2-kapal-larung-sesaji>.

of dense events, even this tradition could attract domestic and foreign attention to participate in seeing this tradition (Setiawan, 2016). But unfortunately, when the Covid-19 pandemic hit Indonesia, the Pethik Laut tradition was temporarily carried out in a simple manner by maintaining existing existence and efficiency.

3. Meaning Of The Tradition Of *Pethik Laut* Muncar

Ideologically, the tradition of *Pethik Laut* which is implemented by people Muncar aims to get the safety and abundance of sustenance from God Almighty. Although there is no statement is implied, but there is a meaning of its own implied are those of the javanese and muslim faction. For the mysticism, ritual *Pethik Laut* will bring an abundance of sustenance in the form of abundant fish for the fishermen, so that can improve the economy of fishing communities and society of Muncar. For the muslims themselves, the ritual of *Pethik Laut* has a meaning as a form of gratitude fishermen and community Muncar top of the sustenance provided by God.⁷

The Ritual of *Pethik Laut* is also believed to be a ritual prayer (*parongkat*) for the fishing community and the community of Muncar to avoid from disaster or *bala* (Anoegrajekti, Macaryus, Saputra, & Maharani, 2019). In addition, if the ritual is not implemented constantly, there will be things that are not desirable, as once in a while tradition is not implemented, as a result, the fishermen did not get any fish at all and the sea water has entered the area of the people's house when the tide is high, whereas previously did not happen such a thing. It is believed by the fishing community and the community Muncar that moment that the spirit of the ancestors was angry because people Muncar and fishermen do not carry out the ritual of *Pethik Laut*.⁸

4. The Perspective Of The Sociology Of Disaster

Based on Law Number 24 Year 2007 on Disaster management, disaster is defined as an event or series of events that threaten and disrupt lives and livelihoods caused by

⁷Nur Ainiyah, "Ritual Petik Laut Dan Keragaman (Keragaman Dan Komunikasi Ritual Di Kalangan Nelayan Multietnis Di Kedungrejo Muncar Banyuwangi)", *Empirisma*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Januari, 2017), page. 73.

⁸Eko Setiawan, "Eksistensi Budaya Bahari Tradisi Petik Laut Di Muncar Banyuwangi", *UNIVERSUM*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Juli, 2016), 231.

both natural factors and/or factors nonalam, and human factors, resulting in the onset of human casualties, environmental damage, loss of property, and the psychological impact.⁹

One of the sociologists of disaster, Dynes, states that there are four meanings of the disaster, that is a disaster as a thing produced by an outside part, the disaster as a study that tend to be negative, the disaster as a social disruption, and disaster as an event that can cause physical damage. Then, the sociologist of contemporary states implicitly about the disaster, namely disaster is one of the social events, the disaster is the result of a social construction shaped by the community, the focus of the study of disaster need to be transferred to the development of effective response of social organization, the study of disaster response agencies outside need to be avoided, and the main focus in this study is the emergence of social disorder as the impact of a disaster.¹⁰

Sociology of disaster is one of the branches of the disciplines of sociology that study about the disaster, both locally and on a large scale. In addition, the relationship between social solidarity and community vulnerability due to disaster is also one of the studies in the sociology of disaster. A sociologist would ask about “how humans and society to give a response to a disaster”. It is asked, when there is a disaster that occurs in a community because in epistemology, a disaster is an event or phenomenon that is unique. Further, Drabek and Hoetmer (1991), to expand the study of the sociology of disaster on the social dimension, such as the study of post-disaster, preparedness and mitigation of disasters, the cause of the occurrence of the disaster, and community preparedness performance facing the threat of nature.¹¹

To deal with threats from nature, people and society have the knowledge and the own way to compromise with the surrounding nature in order to maintain the continuity of life which is named as local wisdom. Local wisdom is the set of knowledge that have been believed by the local people and handed down from generation to generation in order to keep the relation between nature and the local people.¹²

In pesperktif sociology of disaster, the tradition of the Pethik Laut is one of the forms of local wisdom which is implemented by fishing communities and the people

⁹ Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana (BNBP), “Definisi Bencana”, <https://www.bnbp.go.id/definisi-bencana>.

¹⁰ Syamsul Maarif, “Sosiologi Kebencanaan dan Pengurangan Risiko Bencana Berbasis Komunitas”, *Universitas Jember*, April, 2015, page 3.

¹¹ *Ibid*, hal 16.

¹² *Ibid*, hal 17.

around coastal Muncar, Banyuwangi. Refer to the understanding of local wisdom, the tradition of *Pethik Laut* is a hereditary tradition that has been implemented since 1905 every beginning of the Islamic New Year (Muharram/Sura) by the fishermen and coastal communities. This tradition is one form of compromise community Muncar to the sea (natural) to minimize the occurrence of the disaster or the bad things that could overwrite the fishermen when fishing and coastal communities during high tides (repellant). This compromise is made in the form of banning the *gitek* that contains the offerings with the hope of asking for protection when catching fish in the sea and as a form of gratitude and thank you because it has been given the abundance of fish.

This tradition can be said as the means and knowledge of local communities to cope with disasters that might happen to them because it is believed if they didn't do the tradition or ritual, the spirits of ancestors or goddess guards in the sea will be upset. This is evidenced by the presence of the story in the times of coastal communities and fishermen do not do this ritual that happens is the fish the fishermen catch the numbers are very small and at high tide the sea water enters into the settlement of coastal communities at that time. The incidence of which is the trigger of the community of fishermen and coastal communities to build solidarity among them as a form of vulnerability or disaster preparedness along with as a result. This is evidenced by the story that once the coastal communities and fishermen did not perform this ritual, namely that the fish caught by fishermen were very few and when high tides entered the settlements of coastal communities at that time.

C. Conclusion

In a study of the sociology of disaster, disaster is considered as a phenomenon or event that is unique. To deal with the disaster itself, the community has the means by themselves and knowledge to respond, to understand, and to mitigate them. Their own way and their knowledge that they do is a way of hereditary has been done by their earlier ancestors and handed down from generation to generation and it called local wisdom.

As a country that has a lot of diversity, Indonesia certainly has local wisdom in each of the areas has its own meaning. One of them is the tradition of *Pethik Laut*. This tradition is carried out by sink the *gitek* that contains the *sajen* for the goddess and the ancestral spirits that exist in the sea. This tradition is carried out with the hope that fishermen and people who live around the beach to get protection, both when searching for fish in the sea and when the sea water is tide. Moreover, this tradition is also a form

of gratitude because it has been given the abundance of top of the catch of fish which will be the welfare of the fishermen and the people in Muncar, Banyuwangi.

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