Jurnal Publikasi Berkala Pendidikan Ilmu Sosial: Volume 4, Nomor 2, September 2024 ISSN (p): 2797-1945 & ISSN (e): 2777-0931

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVING THE EXISTENCE OF THE REJANG TRIBE KEJEI DANCE THROUGH THE ARTS COMMUNITY IN SELUPU REJANG, BENGKULU

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Abstract

This study analyzes (1) community participation in preserving the existence of the Kejei dance culture of the Rejang tribe through the arts community in Selupu Rejang District, Rejang Lebong Regency, Bengkulu Province. (2) factors that support and hinder community participation in preserving the Kejei dance culture of the Rejang tribe through the arts community in Selupu Rejang, Rejang Lebong, Bengkulu. This qualitative research involves collecting data using research observations, interview methods, and documentation. The interview technique was carried out in an unstructured manner using interview guidelines. Research data analysis is descriptive. The results of data processing in this study show that (1) efforts to preserve the Kejei dance of the Rejang tribe through the art community in Selupu Rejang district use three methods, namely: First, protection efforts are an effort to maintain the existence of the Kejei dance so that it does not become extinct by conducting dance training Kejei every week regularly. Second, development efforts are carried out through the quantity aspect of the dance, namely the development of the number of actors (dancers), the number of users, and the number of regions that receive the Kejei dance. Third, efforts to utilize the Kejei dance to introduce the Kejei dance to the broader community that the Kejei dance must be maintained. (2) factors supporting community participation in preserving the existence of the Kejei dance through the sanggar Tiang Bumei Selupu, namely social media that functions as a means of promotion, support from the government of Suban Ayam village and the government of Selupu Rejang district, a well-run studio management system, a strategic studio location, the enthusiasm of members of the sanggar Tiang Bumei Selupu and the support of all levels of society in Selupu Rejang district. The inhibiting factors for community participation in preserving the existence of the Kejei dance through the sanggar Tiang Bumei Selupu are limited infrastructure, funding problems, and the busyness of each member of the sanggar Tiang Bumei Selupu.
Keywords: *Preservation, Existence, Kejei Dance of the Rejang Tribe, Art Community*

Abstract

Penelitian ini menganalisis (1) partisipasi masyarakat dalam melestarikan eksistensi budaya tari Kejei suku Rejang melalui komunitas kesenian di Kecamatan Selupu Rejang, Kabupaten Rejang Lebong, Provinsi Bengkulu. (2) faktor-faktor yang mendukung dan menghambat partisipasi masyarakat dalam melestarikan budaya tari Kejei suku Rejang melalui komunitas kesenian di Kecamatan Selupu Rejang Kabupaten Rejang Lebong Provinsi Bengkulu. Penelitian kualitatif ini dilakukan dengan cara mengumpulkan data dengan menggunakan metode observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Teknik wawancara dilakukan secara tidak terstruktur dengan menggunakan pedoman wawancara. Analisis data penelitian bersifat deskriptif. Hasil pengolahan data dalam penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa (1) upaya pelestarian tari Kejei suku Rejang melalui komunitas seni di kecamatan Selupu Rejang menggunakan tiga cara, yaitu: Pertama, upaya perlindungan merupakan upaya untuk mempertahankan keberadaan tari Kejei agar tidak punah dengan cara melakukan pelatihan tari Kejei setiap minggu secara rutin. Kedua, upaya pengembangan dilakukan melalui aspek kuantitas tarian yaitu pengembangan jumlah pelaku (penari), jumlah pengguna, dan jumlah daerah yang menerima tari Kejei. Ketiga, upaya pemanfaatan tari Kejei untuk memperkenalkan tari Kejei kepada masyarakat luas bahwa tari Kejei harus dipertahankan. (2) faktor pendukung partisipasi masyarakat dalam melestarikan eksistensi tari Kejei melalui sanggar Tiang

Bumei Selupu, yaitu media sosial yang berfungsi sebagai sarana promosi, dukungan dari pemerintah desa Suban Ayam dan pemerintah kecamatan Selupu Rejang, sistem manajemen sanggar yang dikelola dengan baik, lokasi sanggar yang strategis, semangat anggota sanggar Tiang Bumei Selupu dan dukungan seluruh lapisan masyarakat di kecamatan Selupu Rejang. Faktor penghambat partisipasi masyarakat dalam melestarikan keberadaan tari Kejei melalui sanggar Tiang Bumei Selupu adalah keterbatasan sarana prasarana, masalah pendanaan, dan kesibukan masing-masing anggota sanggar Tiang Bumei Selupu.
Kata Kunci: *Pelestarian, Eksistensi, Tari Kejei Suku Rejang, Komunitas Seni*

Introduction

Indonesia is home to many different tribes and cultures. In addition to the Malay tribe, the Rejang tribe is the oldest tribe in Sumatra. The Rejang clan comes from one of the territories on the island of Sumatra, particularly the Bengkulu Region. The Rejang tribe controls the majority of Bengkulu Province's territory, which is divided into North Bengkulu Regency, Central Bengkulu Regency, and Rejang Lebong Regency, which has since been divided into Lebong Regency, Kepahiang Regency, and Rejang Lebong Regency, respectively.

The Rejang people have been well-known for centuries in the Rejang Lebong Regency. On May 29, 1880, Rejang Lebong Regency, whose capital is Curup, was established. With a total area of 151.576 ha (1.516 KM2), Rejang Lebong Regency is a remarkable region from a geographical perspective. Displays at 102°57' E and 2°22' 7' to 2°31' S. There are 15 districts in this area.

There are four Mergo (Marga) in the Rejang tribe: Mergo Bermani or Bermano, Mergo Beginggo, Mergo Sepanjang Jiwo, and Mergo Bembo. These Mergos are also known as Rejang Pat Petulai or Rejang Empat Tulai. The Rejang tribe, like other tribes in Indonesia, has almost all of its cultural elements—history, scripted language, knowledge systems, social organization systems, systems for living tools, religious systems, and arts—encased in traditional processions to celebrate their cultural practices. Researchers are particularly interested in the Kejei dance, one of the Rejang tribe's many cultural elements. The Kejei Dance is a well-known Rejang tribe tradition. On October 4, 2017, the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia designated the Kejei Dance as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Indonesia.

The tale of Masdene and Mateman, a short story from the History of Bun Gelige Kace, is where the Kejei dance is derived from tales of traditional elders passed down through generations. When Seri dato married Cerlik Cerlang Mato, they performed this dance for the first time in Kersip Hamlet. According to historical records, the Kejei soldiers may have been

present at the wedding of Monk Bermano and Putri Senggang in the 9th century. On March 12, 1957, the Kejei dance was also performed at the Merdeka Palace by Dr. Ir, the first president of Indonesia. Soekarno, H.

Simple steps make the Kejei dance unique, but each movement has its meaning. The worship movement (Sembeak Semanie) is the first dance movement. This movement shows respect for the traditional leader, the ancestral spirits, the great guests, the dancing partners' families, and the people who watched the Kejei event. The second step is the wavy waist, which represents decision-making expertise. The third motion, fingerpicking, is a way to accept new friends or family. Mate'ak Payung, the fourth step, requires complete submission to the One and Only God. In the fifth movement, worship the Sudo to express gratitude for the Kejei dance's ease. The rowing motion is the final dance move. It is a way to say goodbye to the ancestors, great guests, audience, and fellow dancers. Talking to Mr. Ir. October 2022, H. Ahmad Faizir).

The Kejei dance is joined by a conventional instrument made of bamboo and named after the Rejang kelintang, which comprises the fifth, seven, and twelve kelintang, likewise furnished with dep or redap, little gongs, enormous gongs, and krilu (Rejang woodwind). Female dancers initially wore loose brackets, a shawl covering their chest and back to the toe, songket cloth, and a headdress made of a tapung or banyan stuck on a banana stem and head circumference during the presentation of the Kejei dance. The male dancer wears a bupak, or songket sarong, keris, and Cuk Uleu, a cross-shaped songket scarf.

The Rejang people consider the Kejei dance to be a sacred dance that has its own meaning for the Rejang people and is their pride and hallmark. For Rejang youth, the Kejei dance is also a way to find a mate. People's essential life events always include the art of Kejei dance in the procession of customary indecisive events, such as welcoming monks, marriage ceremonies, and clan customs. This aligns with the name Kejei, which comes from the Rejang language and means a big celebration. Kejei dance has become a tradition in people's lives.

Dutzendes of young people from the Rejang tribe, known as anak sangei, dance the Kejei dance in odd numbers, such as three pairs, five pairs, seven pairs, or nine pairs, at significant Rejang tribe events. The Rejang people believe that the Rejang people's ancestors will serve as the object of this dance. The dancers are positioned to form a circle facing clockwise in a closed Balie Panyang with only one entrance in the middle and a Penei, or dish, placed above the Sukung line.

Penei represents kutei, one of the obligatory requirements for the Kejei dance, which is performed to express gratitude to God Almighty for the well-being and prosperity of the Rejang people. Sukung denotes the line that separates dancers. The Mate'ak Paddle movement must be performed by both male and female dancers when they cross the Sukung line. Sukung is made of 2 bamboo sticks (boloak mbuk guata) hung over the Penei. Penei includes a wide range of items, including agricultural products, plantation goods, traditional materials, traditional objects, and kitchen ingredients for the Rejang tribe community.

Aside from the penei table and the breadfruit, a few circumstances should be satisfied by the host of the occasion, which are very restricting and require a large chunk of change, typically for respectable families, by butchering up to 7 bison. It is sufficient for a typical family to slaughter a goat. The quantity of butchered creatures is acclimated to the period the Kejei dance is played out; the reason for butchering bison is as a dish to engage visitors who come, and the period for the Kejei dance relies upon the capacity of the host. In addition, the host is responsible for the dancers' housing and living expenses.

The circumstances that the artists of the Kejei dance should meet are that the artists should be in a condition of immaculateness yet unadulterated. Being pure implies that the female dancer does not have menstrual periods, whereas being pure requires that both the male dancer and the female dancer remain virgins. Additionally, both male and female dancers must be from distinct clans. Because the Rejang people consider a single clan to be a single descendant, this aims to prevent one descendant from marrying another. In order to avoid stumbling blocks in the Kejei dance's execution, these conditions must be satisfied.

While the Kejei dance that is displayed at the peak of community marriages is typically of a preservation nature, the current implementation of the Kejei dance, which follows binding requirements, is typically carried out at the peak of customary marriages or the peak of marriages carried out by officials such as regents or community leaders. This makes the implementation more accessible and shorter despite meeting the requirements.

This is because binding requirements have changed some of the requirements for the Kejei dance, and the high costs of performing the Kejei dance have affected the dance's existence. To preserve the Kejei dance in people's lives, requirements are modified gradually over time, making it impossible to pinpoint when these modifications occurred. For instance, long stalks of ivory sugarcane, which are required to execute the Kejei dance and are now placed on the penei's table, are tough to come by. As a result, they have been replaced with easy-to-find red sugarcane.

As part of a conservation effort, the Kejei dance is currently performed so that it can only be performed once, at the beginning of the wedding ceremony's peak, and the host does not have to be a member of the Indigenous Rejang tribe. Anyone can participate in the Kejei dance, even if they are not from the original Rejang community. As long as these young people can dance the Kejei dance, the dancers do not need to be from a different clan. This is because the Rejang tribe's clan no longer exists, making locating dancers from different clans difficult. However, there is still a persistent and spreading myth that this dance, which young people perform, is only meant for female dancers who are still virgins and that men also need to be virgins. There have additionally been changes to the artists' clothing, melodic backup, and the setting for the Kejei dance.

The garments worn by female artists right now are baju kuning (Kurung Nyawe), songket fabric, songket wrap, tapung or banyan (Tapung and Head Outline), Bandoak pieces of jewelry, Andoak, Ringgit, Gelamor, Dering Wristbands (conventional wristbands of the Rejang public), Cempako, Birds, kote, Forthcoming (Belt), Ke'is (Keris). Beskap shirts, Bupak fabrics, songket scarves, Check Uleu, Jas Chains, and Ke'is (keris) are worn by the male dancers. The Kejei dance can now be performed on a stage of varying sizes and decorations, and the musical instruments accompanying it are now brass.

Selupu Rejang District has a name that is synonymous with the Rejang tribe, indicating that the majority of the people living in the sub-district are members of the Rejang tribe. However, over time, the Selupu Rejang District has become dominated by Javanese and Minang immigrant communities. Additionally, due to the rapid pace of change and the influx of new cultures, people in Selupu Rejang District, particularly the younger generation, have shown less and less interest in learning and preserving traditional arts in recent years. A portion of these things have empowered individuals in Selupu Rejang Locale to lay out the "Sanggar Tiang Bumei Selupu" as a gathering for exercises to safeguard the presence of customary moves, particularly the Kejei dance of the Rejang clan.

The researcher is interested in conducting research on Community Participation in Preserving the Existence of the Kejei Dance of the Rejang Tribe through the Arts Community in Selupu Rejang District, Rejang Lebong Regency, Bengkulu Province, based on the background of the problems described above.

Method

Field research, also known as descriptive qualitative field research, is used in this study. The data will be collected at the Tiang Bumei Selupu Studio in the Selupu Rejang

District. The Kejei dance of the Rejang tribe is the subject of this study, so the efforts made by the Tiang Bumei Selupu Art Gallery to preserve the Kejei dance will demonstrate community participation and government support in the Selupu Rejang District. Primary and secondary data are the types and sources utilized in this study. This study used stationery, smartphones, observation guidelines, and interview guidelines as research instruments. This study used research observations, interview techniques, and documentation to collect data. Source triangulation, technical triangulation, and time triangulation were the methods used in this study to validate the data. This study's stages of data analysis were data collection, reduction, presentation, and conclusion (Sugiyono, 2021).

Result and Discussion

The Rejang people are known for their traditional dance, the Kejei Dance. The Rejang people now live in Selupu Rejang District, where Javanese and Minang immigrant communities dominate. As a result, preserving the Kejei dance as time passes is necessary. According to Teesen (2016), participation is when an individual or group participates in an activity.

Community Participation in Preserving the Existence of the Kejei Dance Through the Arts Community in Selupu Rejang District

The people of Selupu Rejang District agreed to participate in conservation efforts to preserve the Kejei dance, which received support from the government of Rejang Lebong Regency. According to Priyono (2015), preservation is the effort to safeguard, care for, and preserve something so it does not become damaged. The following protection, development, and application methods are utilized in efforts to preserve the Kejei dance:

Safeguard protection is an act that guarantees the security of what is protected against potentially harmful dangers or risks. The community's protection efforts through the Tiang Bumei Selupu studio are to preserve the Kejei dance so that the community can continue to enjoy its existence. There are currently two ways to show the Kejei dance: the Kejei dance, which still follows its standard and takes a long time, and the Kejei dance, which is said to be a way to preserve it. High-ranking officials, such as the Regent of Rejang Lebong Regency or community leaders, typically perform the Kejei dance, which adheres to its standard, during customary confusion or the peak of marriages. At the height of public weddings, the Kejei dance is frequently performed for preservation (Kusmawan, 2014).

Development efforts are part of cultural development, which is the placement of art (dance) as an object that is moved, changed, or shifted and modified and developed in certain

aspects. In this scenario,) breaks cultural development, particularly art (dance), into two distinct phases: expansion in quantity and quality. Development efforts have two distinct aspects: development in terms of quantity and development in terms of quality. The Tiang Bumei Selupu studio has attempted development in quantity based on the number of actors (dancers), users, and locations where the Kejei dance of the Rejang tribe is performed (Indrayuda, 2013).

Through invitations and appeals to every community in Selupu Rejang District, the studio seeks to increase the number of actors (dancers) so that they can practice together to develop their potential and contribute to the preservation of traditional arts, including the Rejang tribe's Kejei dance. The studio sends out invitations and requests both directly and indirectly. Direct invitations are given by asking the host to allow the studio representative to share information as an invitation and remind the community as a whole that joining the studio is open to anyone interested and free.

The studio is attempting to increase the number of users not only through social media but also through collaboration with the Wedding Organizer business that is located nearby. Because the Kejei dance is commonly performed at weddings and community circumcision events in Selupu Rejang District, wedding organizer businesses that deal directly with the community that will hold weddings and circumcisions will influence the growth of the number of Kejei dance users.

Quantity-wise, the Tiang Bumei Selupu studio's efforts to grow the number of actors (dancers) and users will indirectly affect the regions where the Rejang tribe's Kejei dance is performed. The Kejei dance, which has begun to be widely performed in several Selupu Rejang District villages or sub-districts, is evidence of this.

The Tiang Bumei Selupu Studio has been requested to perform the Rejang tribe's Kejei dance at the height of community weddings in the Selupu Rejang District and communities outside the district. The Kejei dance has begun to develop among Selupu Rejang District residents due to the efforts of the Tiang Bumei selupu studio. The Kejei dance is performed not only during the peak of the marriage event for the people of Suban Ayam Village but also in several villages, including Kampung Baru Village, Air Meles Village Atas, and the Simpang Nangka Sub-District, as well as in another Sub-District, specifically the East Curup Sub-District, specifically in the Talang Ulu Sub-District, thanks to the Tiang Bumei Selupu studio.

Utilization efforts The term "utilization efforts" refers to the utilization of culture for educational, religious, economic, scientific, and tourism-related purposes. The Tiang Bumei Selupu studio uses the Kejei dance to show the community that the Kejei dance is a traditional art form that needs to be kept alive. Public performances of the Kejei dance, both within and outside the Selupu Rejang District, are one method for utilizing the dance. Outside and inside the building, Sanggar Tiang Bumei Selupu also hosts performances. People who know little about the Rejang tribe's Kejei dance or the Tiang Bumei Selupu studio can use this to create a Kejei dance performance (Karunianingtias & Putra, 2021).

The Tiang Bumei Selupu studio's performances fall into two categories: those that happen inside and outside the studio. In the studio, performances are performed for the studio's benefit. A studio evaluation, for instance, is a performance for a test or evaluation given to studio members at the Tiang Bumei Selupu studio to see how their abilities and comprehension of the material provided by studio trainers have improved after attending several Kejei dance practice meetings. Through evaluation, trainers can also learn to identify flaws in the Kejei dance training process to enhance the training methods. To support specific events, performances are created outside of the studio. The Tiang Bumei Selupu Studio performed the Kejei dance in response to requests from both Selupu Rejang District residents and visitors. The Kejei dance is frequently performed as the wedding climax in many (Parmadi & Benardin, 2021).

Supporting Factors and Inhibiting Factors of Community Participation in Preserving the Existence of Kejei Dance Through the Arts Community in Selupu Rejang District

There must be factors that influence something to preserve it, such as supporting or inhibiting factors. Likewise, these factors cannot be separated from the community's efforts to preserve the Kejei Suki Rejang dance.

Several supporting factors have ensured that the Tiang Bumei Selupu studio's efforts to preserve the Kejei dance have been successful. Technology development and social media use to preserve art at the Tiang Bumei Selupu studio were the first supporting factors. The public relations department handles Sanggar's Instagram and Facebook social media accounts well. These accounts assist in disseminating information about the Tiang Bumei Selupu studio to the broader community as well as recruiting new members who, with the assistance of numerous community members, particularly in Selupu Rejang District, will help preserve the Kejei dance of the Rejang tribe. The following supporting component is support from the Suban Ayam Town government through permitting. Then, assistance from the Education and

Culture Office of Rejang Lebong Regency for musical accompaniment instruments like the rejang kelintang, redap, small gongs, large gongs, and bamboo flutes was provided by the Selupu Rejang District government (Firdaus et al., 2024).

Support from the Rejang Lebong Regency Customary Consultative Body (BMA) and the Rejang Lebong Regency Government Studio, specifically the Bumei Pat Petulai studio, which published the Mahligai String book by Mr. Ahmad Faizir Sani. This book contains the proper implementation of the Kejei dance. With this book, the Tiang Bumei Selupu studio parties received guidelines for implementing the Kejei dance in a way that does not violate. The following supporting factor is a studio management system with a well-organized training schedule that ensures activities run smoothly and frequently. The Tiang Bumei Selupu Studio's advantageous location also facilitates easy accessibility for the general public, particularly Selupu Rejang District residents. The Tiang Bumei Selupu studio's and Selupu Rejang District's enthusiastic support for efforts to preserve the Kejei dance of the Rejang tribe is the primary motivator (Firdaus, Sulisno, Sani, Saputra, & Najamudin, 2024).

People contributed to preserving the Rejang tribe's Kejei dance through the Tiang Bumei Selupu studio. However, several obstacles existed, including inadequate infrastructure and facilities. Supporting is yet another aspect that has a significant inhibitory effect. All of the studio's activities depend on contributions made jointly by the studio's members because the Tiang Bumei Selupu studio operates independently and does not receive funding from the Rejang Lebong District Government. The ongoing activities of each Tiang Bumei Selupu studio member are another obstacle. This is because most studio members are students and employees; consequently, it is not unusual for some musicians or dancers to miss rehearsals (Mikaresti & Mansyur, 2022).

Conclusion

The arts community in Selupu Rejang Subdistrict uses three strategies to preserve the Rejang tribe's Kejei dance: First, the protection effort is an effort to keep the Kejei dance alive so that it does not disappear by holding weekly Kejei dance classes regularly. Second, the quantity aspect of the dance—the growth of the number of actors (dancers), users, and regions that receive the Kejei dance—is the vehicle through which development efforts are carried out. Thirdly, efforts to use the Kejei dance to introduce it to the community as a whole require the Kejei dance to be preserved. Support from the government of Selupu Rejang District and Suban Ayam Village, a well-run studio management system, a strategic studio location, the spirit of Tiang Bumei Selupu studio members, and support from all levels

of Selupu Rejang District society are all factors supporting community participation in the preservation of the Kejei dance through the Tiang Bumei Selupu studio. The Tiang Bumei Selupu studio's limited infrastructure, funding issues, and the busy schedules of its members all make it difficult for the community to participate in keeping the Kejei dance alive.

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