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The Preservation of Tayub As An Effort To Sustain Traditional Performing Arts in The Community of Pati Regency

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Abstract

Tayub is a traditional Javanese art form featuring female dancers performing movements alongside male dancers, accompanied by Javanese gamelan music and traditional Javanese songs or gendhing. This study aims to analyze strategies for preserving Tayub as an effort to sustain traditional arts within the community of Pati Regency. A qualitative approach with a case study design was used in this research. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. The validity of the data was ensured through data triangulation. Data analysis techniques involved data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. The findings revealed that the Tayub performance consists of three stages: the initial stage, the core stage, and the closing stage. Efforts to preserve Tayub in Pati align with Sedyawati's theory, encompassing protection, development, and utilization. Protective efforts are carried out through training and competitions. Utilization efforts involve performances, while developmental efforts focus on innovations in movements, accompaniment, and costume design.

Keywords: Preservation, Tayub, traditional arts.

INTRODUCTION

Art is an integral part of a community's cultural tradition, consistently present as a form of individual or collective expression. It represents one of the most admired aspects of culture due to its uniqueness and aesthetic value (Sugiarto, Rohidi, & Kartika, 2017). Art is a human creation that conveys beauty and serves as an expression of the creator's soul and cultural identity (Ulandari & Darmawati, 2024). Traditional art is closely connected to various activities within the community. Through traditional art, the noble values embedded in Javanese culture can be transmitted from one generation to the next. (Chusnaya et al., 2024). Each region possesses unique characteristics inherited from its ancestors, including the traditional arts found in Pati Regency. Pati is home to a variety of traditional art forms, such as Ketoprak, Tayub, Wayang Kulit, Wayang Topeng Soneyan, and Barongan.

Tayub, as one of the traditional art forms found in Pati Regency, is an art closely tied to social activities and holds various functions within the community. Tayub is a traditional art form that has been passed down through generations and has primarily developed in rural areas, especially among farming communities. As a dance tradition, Tayub originates from customary practices, and the term Tayub is derived from *ta* (meaning "to arrange") and *yub* (meaning "to be united"), implying an arrangement that fosters harmony, friendship, and a sense of brotherhood. In practice, Tayub performances involve *waranggana* (female dancers) and *pengibing* (male participants) dancing together without competition or rigid choreography. While there are no strictly formalized rules for the dance, each dancer is free to express their creativity within the rhythm and structure of the accompanying Javanese gamelan music (Dwidjowinoto, 2019).

Tayub is an art form that is closely associated with ritual ceremonies related to fertility, both agricultural fertility (such as the

fertility of rice fields, farmland, sedekah bumi or bedhah bumi) and fertility within the context of marriage (Cahyono, 2006). It can be said that Tayub functions not only as a form of entertainment but also carries deep social, cultural, and spiritual significance for its supporting community. Tayub is often associated with agrarian traditions, involving interaction between the dancer (*ledheh*) and the *pengibing* (male dance participants), accompanied by gamelan music. Tayub plays an important role as a symbol of intimacy, respect, and gratitude toward nature. In Pati Regency, there are numerous Tayub performance groups, including Laras Manunggal, Setya Laras, Agil Manunggal, and others.

Alongside socio-cultural changes, the existence of Tayub faces serious challenges. The declining interest in traditional arts—particularly among younger generations—is driven by modernization, globalization, and shifts in lifestyle patterns, including the widespread use of information technology. Information technology has caused significant transformations in people's lives, affecting nearly all aspects of civilization and culture. It is undeniable that the emergence of information technology has had a considerable impact on the social life of communities. The influence of information technology on social dynamics is shaped by various contributing factors, which serve as drivers of the social changes occurring within society (Juliana, 2023). In addition, the emergence of negative stigma toward Tayub has also become a hindering factor in its preservation. Without concrete and systematic efforts—such as preservation strategies—there is a growing concern that Tayub may lose its place in the cultural life of the Pati community.

Preservation can be defined as an effort to maintain, safeguard, and develop all existing cultural practices and traditions (Fernandes, 2024). In relation to preservation, efforts to safeguard cultural heritage are outlined in the Joint Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs and the Minister of Culture and Tourism No. 42/40 of 2009, as stated in Article

I, Clause 2. It defines preservation as efforts aimed at the protection, development, and utilization of dynamic cultural heritage. These efforts are intended to ensure that a culture continues to exist in accordance with its original condition, while also maintaining its relevance, fostering public enthusiasm, and serving as a source of inspiration for future generations (Fernandes, 2024).

Numerous previous studies have examined Tayub performances in the context of the Sedekah Bumi ritual; however, differences can be found in terms of research location and analytical focus. For instance, the study titled "Kesenian Tari Tayub dan Kue Hantaran sebagai Kearifan Lokal dalam Tradisi Sedekah Bumi di Kabupaten Pati" by Nurul Ifana Khoirun Nisa', Diah Ayu Sukowati, and Khofifatu Rohmah Adi (2021); the study "Tayub as a Symbolic Interaction Medium in the Sedekah Bumi Ritual in Pati Regency" by Sisca Dwi Suryani (2014); and the study "Fiqih Budaya dalam Perspektif Tarian Tayub pada Tradisi Sedekah Bumi di Desa Ronggo, Kec. Jaken, Kab. Pati" (2024) each offer distinct perspectives. A review of the literature shows that these studies differ in terms of location, research focus, perspective, and object of analysis. In contrast, the present study will specifically focus on the preservation of Tayub as an effort to sustain traditional performing arts within the community of Pati Regency. Given these distinctions, it can be concluded that the present research differs from previous studies in both scope and emphasis.

Based on the aforementioned background, it is necessary to conduct a study on the preservation of Tayub as an effort to sustain traditional performing arts within the community of Pati Regency. The preservation of Tayub has become an urgent need in maintaining traditional arts and affirming local cultural identity. The research problem addressed in this study is: *What are the strategies for preserving Tayub as an effort to sustain traditional performing arts in the community of Pati Regency?* The objective of this study is to analyze the preservation strategies of Tayub as

a means of sustaining traditional performing arts within the Pati Regency community. **Through this research, it is expected that a collective awareness will emerge regarding the importance of preserving Tayub as an integral part of the nation's cultural heritage.**

METHODS

This study on the preservation of Tayub as an effort to sustain traditional performing arts within the community of Pati Regency employs a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is a method used to understand social phenomena from the perspective of the participants. Participants are individuals who are interviewed, observed, or asked to provide data, opinions, thoughts, and perceptions, which are examined through various interactive strategies such as direct observation, participatory observation, in-depth interviews, document analysis, and complementary techniques (Sodik & Siyoto, 2015). The research design employed in this qualitative study is a case study. A case study focuses on a specific subject that is selected as a case to be examined in depth, to uncover the underlying realities of a particular phenomenon. A case study can also be understood as a process of investigating or understanding a case while simultaneously seeking its outcomes (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022). This study focuses on a case study of the Tayub art group Cipto Laras, led by Mr. Kasmu, located in Pelemgdhe Village, Pucakwangi Sub-district, Pati Regency.

The data collection techniques used in this study on the preservation of Tayub as an effort to sustain traditional performing arts in the community of Pati Regency include observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted by directly attending Tayub performances held during community entertainment events. This involved on-site visits to the Tayub art group Cipto Laras, led by Mr. Kasmu, located in Pelemgdhe Village, Pucakwangi Sub-district, Pati Regency.

Interviews were conducted with the group leader, dancers, and musicians. The group leader is Mr. Kasmu, the dancer is Mrs. Aura, and the musician is Mr. Mudi. These interviews aimed to gather data regarding the structure of the performance, its artistic elements, and the preservation efforts being undertaken. In addition, an interview was conducted with the Cultural Affairs Office of Pati Regency to obtain information about governmental efforts in preserving Tayub.

The documentation technique in data collection involves obtaining data through various documents. These documents and records may range from simple written notes to comprehensive reports and may also include photographs or physical artifacts considered as cultural heritage. (Maryono, 2011). The documents collected included photographs and videos of Tayub performances.

Data in this study were collected through various methods—such as observation, interviews, document summaries, and audio recordings—and were processed before use through activities such as note-taking, transcription, editing, or rewriting. However, qualitative data analysis remains primarily text-based, typically involving the construction of extended written narratives. The process of data analysis consists of three concurrent activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles, 2014).

The Cipto Laras group was selected as the subject of this research because it is one of the Tayub art groups that remain active in Pati Regency. To ensure the validity of the data, this study employed triangulation. In testing credibility, triangulation involves cross-checking data from multiple sources, using various methods, and at different times. Three types of triangulation were applied in this research: source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and time triangulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Form of Tayub Performance in Pati

Tayub is a traditional Javanese performing art that features female dancers performing movements in collaboration with male dancers, accompanied by Javanese gamelan music and traditional Javanese songs or *gendhing*. The performers in a Tayub performance include the *ledhek* (female dancer), *pranatacara* (master of ceremony), *pengibing* (male guest dancers), and *pengrawit* or *panjak* (musicians). The *ledhek* refers to the female dancer in Tayub who is responsible for both singing and dancing. The *pranatacara* serves as the host or master of ceremonies who coordinates the flow of the performance. Audience members who wish to participate in dancing must register with the *pranatacara* and wait in line to be called. The *wiraswara* is responsible for singing Javanese songs along with the *ledhek*/joged. The *pengibing* or *penayub* refers to members of the audience who join the dance during the performance. The *pengrawit* or *panjak* are the musicians who play the gamelan instruments.

The elements that support a Tayub performance include movement, musical accompaniment, makeup, and costume. The *ledhek* or female dancer performs spontaneous movements that are stylistically aligned with the Putri (refined female) dance style of the Surakarta tradition. Meanwhile, the *pengibing* or male participant performs spontaneous movements following the music, typically using a dance prop such as a *sampur* or *slendhang* (scarf). The musical accompaniment in a Tayub performance utilizes a gamelan ensemble tuned in both *pelog* and *slendro* scales. The instruments used include *barung*, *bonang penerus*, *slenthem*, *kendhang Jawa* (*ciblon*), *kendang jaipong*, *gender*, *kethuk*, *kenong*, *saron barung*, *saron penerus*, *demung*, *gong*, *kempul*, *ketipung*, *gambang*, as well as modern additions such as drums and cymbals. The *gendhing* (traditional musical compositions) performed in Tayub include "Panen Kopi," "Kutut Manggung," "Caping Gunung,"

"Sidomukti," "Becak Pati," "Protaruno," "Paranggarudo," "Pesisir Juwono," among others.

The makeup used by the *ledhek* is corrective makeup. The *ledhek* wears a Solo Putri style bun adorned with a decorative *cunduk* (hairpin ornament) at the back. The dancer's costume consists of a modern, modest kebaya with short sleeves, paired with a *jarik* cloth wrapped in the center style (*wiron*). As a dance property, the *ledhek* uses a scarf (*selendang*) tied around the waist and covered with a *slepe* (a decorative cloth accessory).



Figure 1. Illustration of the makeup and costume of the *ledhek*

Source: Researcher's documentation

The costume for the *pengrawit* (*gamelan* musicians) typically includes a *beskap* (traditional Javanese jacket), a *blangkon* (traditional headgear), and a *jarik* (*batik* cloth). In contrast, male dancers or *pengibing* usually wear everyday clothing such as shirts, trousers, t-shirts, caps, or *peci* (traditional Muslim caps).

The form of Tayub performance in Pati Regency is adapted to the type of event being held. Tayub can serve both as entertainment and as a medium for community rituals. As a form of entertainment, Tayub is performed at social events such as wedding celebrations, circumcision ceremonies, and various thanksgiving gatherings. As a ritual medium, Tayub is typically presented during traditional ceremonies conducted by the local community of Pati Regency, such as *Sedekah Bumi* (earth

thanksgiving), *Sedekah Laut* (sea thanksgiving), *Lamporan* tradition, and *Meron*.

Tayub performances in Pati Regency are typically presented in two sessions: daytime and nighttime performances. The daytime Tayub performance usually begins at 1:00 PM and ends at 5:00 PM, while the nighttime performance starts at 9:00 PM and continues until 2:00 AM. Each performance generally consists of three stages: the opening stage, the main stage, and the closing stage.

The opening stage begins with the playing of the *gamelan* accompanied by Javanese songs, a segment commonly referred to as *klenengan*. The performance is then opened with a *slereng*, in which a male dancer performs to the accompaniment of *gamelan* music to welcome the arrival of the *ledhek* (female dancer) and to pay respect to the host or event organizer. After the *ledhek* enters the performance area, she continues by dancing *Gambyong Parianom*. The event then proceeds with the *pranotocoro* inviting the host and their family to dance together with the *ledhek*.

In the main stage, the Tayub performance is opened to the general public. Audience members who wish to dance with the *ledhek* are invited to register with the *pranotocoro*, and when their turn comes, they are called one by one. The typical dance formation consists of one female dancer (*ledhek*) dancing with two *pengibing* (male participants), positioned in front of and behind the *ledhek*. After the completion of one *gendhing* (musical piece), all dancers rotate 180 degrees, with the person in front moving to the back and vice versa.

In the second round, the *sampur* or *slendhang* (scarf) held by the dancer in front is returned to the *ledhek*, who then passes it to the dancer who was previously in the rear. The dance continues for another full cycle, following the same pattern as the first. This rotation system is intended to prevent audience members from competing or rushing to dance with the *ledhek*. After the first and second sequences are completed, the *pranotocoro* proceeds to call the next participants to dance

with the *ledhek*, continuing this process until the end of the event. An image of the Tayub performance can be seen in the following figure.



Figure 2. Image of the Tayub performance

Source: Researcher's documentation

In the closing stage, the *pranotocoro* announces the end of the performance and stops accepting new registrations for *pengibing* (guest dancers). The Tayub performance concludes with the playing of the *gendhing langgam pamitan* by the *pengrawit* (gamelan musicians), marking the end of the entire series of events.

Efforts to Preserve Tayub in Pati

The preservation of Tayub art in Pati Regency plays a crucial role in maintaining the existence of local cultural heritage within today's social and cultural context. As a traditional art form deeply rooted in the community's way of life, Tayub is not merely regarded as a form of entertainment but as a manifestation of profound symbolic and spiritual values. Tayub has become an integral part of the cultural identity of the people of Pati, representing local wisdom and reinforcing a collective sense of belonging to regional cultural heritage. The preservation of Tayub reflects a broader effort to safeguard the nation's cultural diversity amid the homogenizing forces of globalization, which tend to standardize cultural expressions.

The preservation of traditional arts refers to a series of efforts undertaken to safeguard, protect, and maintain traditional artistic and cultural heritage so that it remains well-

preserved and can be passed down to future generations. The primary goal of preserving traditional arts is to ensure that the cultural values and identity of a community are maintained and continue to evolve, even in the face of changing times. The preservation efforts of Tayub in Pati adopt the theoretical framework proposed by Sedyawati, which consists of three key components: protection, development, and utilization (Sedyawati, 2008).

The first step in the preservation process is protection. The protection of Tayub refers to efforts aimed at ensuring that this traditional art form is not lost or damaged. As a performing art, Tayub is a valuable cultural heritage that must be preserved. It has been passed down from previous generations to the next through various means to ensure its continuity. Protective measures include enhancing training programs for dancers (*ledhek*) and musicians. In addition, protection also requires regulatory support from the local government of Pati Regency concerning the organization and conduct of Tayub performances. The preservation of Tayub demands active support from local communities as well as attention from regional authorities. Concrete actions that can be taken by the government include organizing Tayub competitions among art groups in Pati Regency. Such initiatives would not only promote the art but also indirectly facilitate the documentation of active Tayub groups, strengthen art studios and performance groups, encourage cultural festivals and regular performances, and establish policies to protect Tayub as an element of intangible cultural heritage.

The second step in preserving Tayub is development. Development in this context refers to the refinement and enhancement of quality and/or the expansion of artistic repertoire. It involves the creation of innovations within Tayub performances by developing its artistic elements without compromising its original roots. Efforts to develop Tayub include the enhancement of musical accompaniment, dance movements,

and the costumes worn by *ledhek* (female dancers). Development of musical accompaniment among Tayub groups involves incorporating contemporary Javanese songs that are currently popular with audiences. This addition aims to increase audience engagement and is typically placed in the second round of the dance performance. However, such innovation must not eliminate or replace the original *gendhing* Tayub. Movement development involves adding free-style movements following the *gambyongan* segment, typically accompanied by lively songs or *gendhing* that allow dancers to express themselves creatively. In terms of costume, *ledhek* attire has evolved through the use of short-sleeved *kebaya* adorned with sequins and beads, adopting modern *kebaya* styles that remain faithful to the traditional form, namely the short-sleeved *kebaya*. Development also includes documentation and digitization efforts. These activities aim to record, store, and disseminate Tayub performances, cultural values, and historical narratives. Through digital media—such as videos, e-books, and online platforms—Tayub can reach a broader audience and serve as a sustainable learning resource.

The third step in the preservation of Tayub is utilization. Utilization efforts involve employing Tayub performances for various purposes within the community. This can be observed through the staging of Tayub as a performing art that can be appreciated by the wider public. Tayub is featured in both entertainment and ritual events within the community. Examples of Tayub utilization in entertainment contexts include its performance at social gatherings such as weddings and circumcision ceremonies. Tayub is also performed during the anniversary celebration of Pati Regency and is incorporated into various official government events organized by the Pati Regency administration. In terms of ritual functions, Tayub is performed in traditional ceremonies held by the people of Pati, such as *Sedekah Bumi* (earth thanksgiving),

Sedekah Laut (sea offering), *Meron*, and the *Lamporan* tradition.

From the various preservation efforts discussed, the importance of safeguarding Tayub in the modern era lies in its function not only as a form of traditional artistic expression but also as a medium for preserving cultural values, strengthening local identity, and serving as a reflection of local wisdom amidst rapid social change. In today's era—marked by globalization, digitalization, and shifting social values—traditional arts such as Tayub act as a vital counterbalance between technological advancement and the preservation of cultural roots.

The preservation of Tayub is crucial for maintaining local cultural identity. Tayub serves as a reminder of the identity and social history of the Pati community; without preservation efforts, the intergenerational transmission of tradition may be disrupted. Tayub plays a significant role in fostering cultural awareness among younger generations while also strengthening a sense of pride in ancestral heritage. This traditional art form embodies social values that remain relevant in modern society, such as cooperation, solidarity, and respect for tradition (Sugiarto & Rohidi, 2021). Moreover, preserving Tayub presents opportunities for the development of the creative economy, cultural tourism, and culturally based innovation. Tayub can be developed creatively without compromising its authentic values. Furthermore, Tayub holds educational value that can be integrated into both formal and non-formal education systems. It can be taught as part of cultural arts education to cultivate aesthetic appreciation, promote understanding of local history, and support character development through the noble values embedded within the tradition.

CONCLUSION

Tayub performance is a traditional Javanese art involving female dancers and male participants, accompanied by Javanese gamelan instruments and traditional songs,

known as *gendhing*. The structure of the Tayub performance includes three main stages: the opening, the core segment, and the closing.

The preservation of traditional arts involves efforts to safeguard, protect, and maintain cultural and artistic heritage so it can be passed on to future generations. The preservation efforts of Tayub in Pati Regency focus on three main strategies: protection, development, and utilization. These efforts are essential not only for maintaining cultural heritage but also for shaping cultural identity, strengthening social values, promoting culture-based economic growth, and enriching character education for younger generations.

Based on the research findings, the researcher suggests the following recommendations: (1) The government of Pati Regency, especially the Department of Culture, should provide protection and pay more attention to existing Tayub art groups in the region; (2) Tayub art groups in Pati should strive to sustain their presence to ensure the tradition continues; (3) the local community should actively participate in efforts to preserve Tayub to prevent it from being eroded by modernization.

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