

Values of Kebhinekaan in Local Wisdom in The Digital Era: A Study of The Sesaji Ritual in Telaga Sarangan, Magetan, East Java

Komunitas: International Journal of Indonesian Society and Culture
15(2) (2023): 203-218
DOI:10.15294/komunitas.v15i2.45987
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p-ISSN 2086 - 5465 | e-ISSN 2460-7320
<https://journal.unnes.ac.id/nju/index.php/komunitas>

UNNES JOURNALS

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Received: July 17, 2022; Accepted: August 8, 2023; Published: September 30, 2023

Abstract

An act of "Kebhinekaan" is the main basis foundation in the life of Indonesian society. Diversity is a gift that cannot be negated so need to be respected as well as acknowledged. This study analyzes ritual offerings phenomenon practiced by the local community around Telaga Sarangan, Magetan, and East Java in preserving "Kebhinekaan" in the digital era. Used qualitative approach as well as Clifford Gertz's theory on religion and symbol, the article shows that the ritual offerings consisted of two sessions. The main ritual is a cultural carnival (carving and throwing a tumpeng). The second is a pre-ritual (Kambing Kendit slaughter, pilgrimage to the tombs (Kyai and Nyai Pasir), and thanksgiving. Moreover, the ritual aims to thank of God's blessings and maintain safety and harmony. The article argues that rituals can be a medium in strengthening the values of "Kebhinekaan" and creativity through the carnival events. The events provide various values including religious and cultural meanings, strengthen kinship, humility, safety, and symbolic values (local wisdom). As a result, an act of "Kebhinekaan" and local wisdom strengthens national identity and integrity through society's innovation and creativity of local community members.

Keywords

values of kebhinekaan; local wisdom; digital era; sesaji

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INTRODUCTION

The digital age provides a lot of information related to the diversity of people's lives, both cultural, ethnic, ethnic group, and religious. Diversity on the one hand can be a gift to strengthen harmony between communities, but on the other hand it can also be a backfire that is destructive. Understanding of *kebhinekaan* is important to be instilled, starting from the smallest environment (family) to the wider community, so that in a wider spectrum can maintain the security and sovereignty of the state. Understanding diversity is important to be instilled, starting from the smallest environment (family) to the wider community, so that in a wider spectrum can maintain the security and sovereignty of the state (Hafiluddin, 2022). Attitudes to appreciate and respect differences need to be taught starting from the family environment. While in community life, this effort can be done through activities celebrating various religious holidays, traditions that still hold on to local wisdom.

Diversity in Indonesia can be viewed from two aspects, namely, social differentiation and social stratification. Aspects of differentiation (horizontal aspects) namely the existence of differences in ethnicity, culture, language, religion, race, and between groups; while social stratification (vertical aspects) refers to the difference between the upper and lower layers due to factors of education, employment, income, and ownership. The differences that exist in society in practice bring a wide influence including on social, cultural, religious, political, and economic aspects. Such differences will be able to have a positive impact, harmony and peace, if each individual is able to appreciate and respect any entity in society. In addition, the importance of understanding and meaning of the differences ("kebhinekaan") that not only prioritize primordial bonds but recognize and respect existing diversity is also another factor that cannot be denied (Wulandari 2023). Basically, diversity is a social capital in fostering an attitude of tolerance. The frame of diversity must be built through constructive and continuous

understanding. In the state perspective, for example, educating the public about the diversity that leads to the lives of people, harmony, and peace must be done jointly between the community and the government (formal and informal). Formally, this can be done through materials or curriculum in the world of education, while informally, many ways or models of activities can be done by adjusting the context of locality according to their respective regions.

Today many cultures in Indonesia are influenced by the flow of technology and information. For example, the lifestyle of the younger generation is dominated by attitudes of materialism that are very different from the cultural background of the Eastern nation, including Indonesia (Agung, 2008). (Efendi, 2008) revealed in his research, that the development of technology and information in the digital age has entered all lines of people's lives will change the system of relationships, families, or in humans themselves. Symbols of foreign culture also trigger a shift in local culture, so that the next generation must be prepared to be able to survive and filter the development of information technology by providing provisions about the values of local wisdom. This is important in maintaining his identity and being able to provide a filter against outside cultures that are less appropriate, even contrary to local cultural values. (Meliono, 2011) emphasized that Indonesia's young generation must be prepared with knowledge and understanding of Indonesian, local culture, local values, and multiculturalism to maintain and develop its identity in the international arena. In today's digital era, the love of local wisdom is increasingly eroded by foreign customs and cultures, where they are more familiar and proud of Western fashion or cultural works that make the millennial generation do not recognize local culture (Jahir, 2023). Therefore, the culture of local wisdom is very important to be introduced in order to care for and respect differences through efforts to foster the love of existing local culture

To position this research, researchers feel it is important to conduct a literature re-

view as a reference material to see the differences and enrich the findings in this study. Previous studies that examine the shifting cultural values of larung sesaji are still rare. There are also no existing studies in the context of larung sesaji that carry issues focused on the digitalization era. Here are some previous studies related to larung sesajen and its changes. Among others:

Research by Ines Syilvi Firda Rahamawati entitled: "Perubahan Tradisi Larung Sesaji di Pantai Pancer Plawangan Desa Puger Kulon, Kecamatan Puger, Kabupaten Jember". This research reveals the origin of the ceremony and the process of larung sesaji and the role of the community in preserving the ritual ceremony as local wisdom. In addition, there are changes in the ceremonial procession in the modern era where the mobility of social media users is very high. There are changes in the ceremony in this activity that are more modern and more lively so that the loss of sacredness turns into entertainment. And there is an impact on economic development felt by the community and larung sesaji is known to the wider community (Rahmawati, 2020).

Research by Fenniar entitled "Perubahan Budaya Larung Sesaji dan Petik Laut Dalam Perspektif Kearifan Lokal Pantai Tambakrejo Wonotirto, Kab. Blitar Jawa Timur". The results of the study discuss the tradition of larung and petik laut. These two rituals are still maintained and sacred, there is no change in the development of the times. However, there are some coastal communities who consider the celebration of the ritual ceremony as mere entertainment. Although there are two different ritual celebrations and symbols, it does not affect the meaning of the larung sesaji celebration. Both have the same meaning, namely asking for gratitude for the abundant results in agriculture and in the results at sea (Fenniar, 2015). Research conducted by Nova Tri Satria with the title "Kebertahanan Larung Sesaji di Telaga Sarangan, Kec. Plaosan. Kab. Magetan". With the results and focus of research, it has a positive impact on society. The community is still involved in the ritual ceremony and even with the implementation of the cere-

mony, it increases the community's confidence to further maintain and preserve the culture that is considered or meaningful as a gift from God to mankind. (Satria, 2019).

Research by Nurma Latifah, et al entitled: "Pergeseran Pada Tradisi Pesta Syukur Laut Di Pantai Pamayangsari Cipatujah Tasikmalaya". This research discusses the shift in the value of the sea thanksgiving party, namely some rituals are considered not in accordance with Islamic teachings. So there are some processions in the ceremony deliberately eliminated and not implemented. The factor is the entry of Islamic values in society, so that people's belief in the myth of Nyi Roro Kidul decreases. So the shift from sacred to mere entertainment (Lathifah, 2021). Research by Tomi Latu Farisa with the title: "Ritual Petik Laut Dalam Arus Perubahan Sosial di Desa Kedungrejo, Muncar, Banyuwangi, Jawa Timur". This research discusses the changes in rituals in the present experiencing a transformation into a public party or performance event. So that the existence of the people's party has an impact on people who have economic interests and daily conflicts of the local fishing community. (Farisa, 2010).

Research by Wiji Dina Anggraini with the title: "Pola Perubahan Larung Sesaji di Pantai Kenjeran. Kec. Bulak, Surabaya, Jawa Timur". This research focuses on the existence and shifting patterns of Larung culture due to the presence of Islam so that a little erosion of the customs of the ancestors and leaning towards the teachings of Islam, especially in the procession of the ritual culture (Anggraini, 2019). Research by Feylescha in his research entitled: "Perubahan Budaya Larung Sesaji dalam Perspektif Kearifan Lokal di Pantai Ngliyep Desa Kedungsalam Malang, Jawa Timur". The focus of this research study is the shift in the meaning of Larung from local wisdom to a medium of economic resources for community members. In other words, the meaning of Larung is not only a form of gratitude for the existing sea products, but also has a function in the economic field of increasing sales from tourists who vacation and witness the Larung culture at Ngliyep Beach (Feylescha,

2019). Departing from the previous studies that the author described above, the research that the researcher will do is different from the existing ones. The research to be conducted by researchers focuses on examining the tradition of ritual offerings in the digital era as a medium for maintaining diversity in Telaga Sarangan-Magetan.

In this context, through local wisdom that is considered able to overcome the unpreparedness of the community in the face of the digital era and it is hoped that there are efforts to explore and develop local wisdom of the community to not be easily eroded by the flow of globalization. Researchers chose the tradition of ritual offerings at Sarangan Magetan Lake which is one of the cultures that contain local wisdom such as sacred elements, meaning and the process of its implementation related to belief in the power of nature. Through the practice of ritual offerings in Sarangan village, Magetan East Java, this study seeks to reveal how the practice of *ritual Sesaji* in Sarangan Village, as well as the values contained in the ritual that can strengthen the value of *kebhinekaan* in society. His writings on *kebhinekaan* have focused on themes of culture, economy, and national identity. In terms of culture, themes about *kebhinekaan* related to ritual practices rarely receive attention.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach by means of field observations to explore data in the field (James, 1999). Meanwhile, to further deepen the data and information related to the ritual offering activities studied, the study used an in-depth interview method (Coenjtaraningrat 1994) with several local communities in Sarangan village, Magetan, especially community leaders who were involved and considered to understand the meaning of the ritual practice. In addition to these two ways, data mining also pays attention to important documents which are considered important and enriching information related to the practice of ritual *Sesaji*. This study uses the theory of Clifford Geertz who sees religion as a cultural

system, a symbol or symbol system that can create a very strong feeling and motivation, so that the ritualists have a strong drive and are difficult to define and easily spread and are not easily lost from their identity or personal. By forming a conception of a general order of existence and attaching this conception to factual emanations and ultimately feeling and motivation it will be seen as a unique reality (Geertz, 1992).

If further elaborated, Geertz in detail defines religion into several parts. First, "symbol or symbol system", is a form of feeling, idea, or gesture that has a deep meaning called conception. Conception is an idea that is formulated and abstracted, then represented in concrete form. The concrete form of the symbol can have the same or different meaning in each region. In other words, these meaningful symbols come from the ethos and world view of a particular community. Symbols or symbol systems have a buffering power over social values formulated by certain societies because through symbols humans can express their feelings. The symbol can be an object, image, language, gesture, or discourse, so the meaning contained in the symbol depends on the way a person presents it.

Second, "symbols create strong, pervasive, and long-lasting feelings/moods and motivations in humans." Religion is a symbol that creates one's feelings and motivates. Therefore, man is strongly encouraged to do what is good for his life in accordance with a set of values that are believed by the human being. Geertz gives an example of the Buddhist Priestess not eating the steak dish served. Buddhism teaches reincarnation and moksha. Someone during his life has never done bad things and killed, so they will achieve moksha, that is, unite with God. On the other hand, if a person often kills animals and other things during their lifetime, then they will be reborn in a lower level, such as animals. This is because the "sense" experienced as a pastor to fight for the values of existing teachings, in order to become an obedient people because of the motivation to want to fight for the achievement of rebirth and unity with God. Geertz also added

about feelings that are difficult to explain, define, and control. This feeling comes to a person because of the role of religion that constructs it and is difficult to control. The difficulty in controlling it is because religion is inherently strong and difficult to express, because it comes by itself as long as they hold fast to the values taught by religion.

Third, the symbol gives rise to a feeling of a kind of aura of factuality. Factual aura is a feeling that humans experience consciously, but one is difficult to describe about the feelings felt. This is because the factual aura is related to human psychology. That factual aura is experienced and felt, but it comes from outside forces that ultimately merge with their feelings. Feelings and union with these forces eventually meet at a rite or ritual. In a ritual, everything that was originally profane can become sacral. Beliefs and thought patterns are formulated in symbols in religious ceremonies with a unique mood. In other words, in a ritual there is a series of activities and sacred symbols meld and support each other and create a unique feeling that is inherent, and difficult to define. Rites hold not only religious metaphysical meanings, but also political meanings and values (Geertz, 1992).

Fourth, those moods and motivations appear in action to be typically realistic. The existence of religion and rituals carried out by adherents in a society creates a calm, strong mood, and encourages humans to carry out activities (rituals). It is difficult to control, which in the end is applied in a visible course of action. The importance of religion and religious rites gives color to human feelings and moods as they behave distinctively and clearly. From the meaning of religion as a cultural system that contains a variety of symbols in various forms can create a human mood, can calm and become a solution or community support when chaos comes as a problem that cannot be solved or avoided.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Setting Sarangan Village

Sarangan Lake or also called Telaga

Pasir becomes one of the mountainous natural tourist destinations in Magetan, East Java. Sarangan Lake is a natural lake located at an altitude of 1,200 meters above sea level. Sarangan Lake is also located on the slopes of Mount Lawu, precisely in Sarangan Village, Plaosan District, Magetan Regency. Sarangan Lake is a natural lake located at an altitude of 1,200 meters above sea level. Sarangan Village consists of 4 hamlets, namely Sarangan Hamlet, Mandoran Hamlet, Singolangu Hamlet, Ngluweng Hamlet. Of the 4 hamlets, there are 4 RW and 28 RT. Sarangan Lake is the most popular tourist spot for tourists from the archipelago and abroad. The lake which is located quite far from the Magetan city has historical significance for the people in Sarangan Village. Sarangan Lake is a tourist area that is protected by the Regional Government, namely the Magetan Regency Tourism Office (Trihono, 2022). People who live in the area/ around Sarangan Lake, so intimate with the situation and conditions of the lake that the weather is very cool makes pollution-free air that affects the earth's produce (fruits, vegetables, plantations, agriculture, etc.) thrive on the slopes of Mount Lawu, and its surroundings.

The Phenomenon of Ritual *Sesaji* at Sarangan Lake

Ritual is a local wisdom that accommodates all types of knowledge, beliefs, understandings, insights, and customs or ethics that guide human behavior in life in the community. Society has close social, cultural, and religious ties to its local environment. Local wisdom is a mirror of people's long-standing knowledge systems and living habits. This continuity can be seen from the cultural values that apply to the community. Ritual Phenomenon of *Sesaji* at Sarangan Lake (Widianto, 2021). Local wisdom is a view of life, science and various life strategies in the form of activities carried out by local communities in answering various problems in meeting their needs. In foreign languages it is often also conceptualized as local policy "*local wisdom*" or local knowledge "*local knowledge*" or local intelligence

“local genius” (Fajariani, 2014). Like the tradition of local wisdom owned by Sarangan Village Magetan, namely *Ritual Sesaji* as the cultural identity of the community under the foot of Mount Lawu Magetan Regency. Sarangan people still maintain the customs, behaviors and beliefs of the ancestors. The tradition/ritual of *Sesaji* is a tradition of descending down the community around Sarangan Lake held once a year in the month of Ruwah (Java), Friday pound with the main procession around Sarangan Lake. There are several stages in the implementation of *ritual Sesaji* at Sarangan Lake, among them, a procession to slaughter lambs, a pilgrimage to the ancestral tomb, a night of tasyakuran, and local cultural rituals (*Ritual Sesaji*).

First, the procession of slaughtering “*kambing* (goat) *kendit*.” The slaughter was held on Thursday, the day before the core event, at around 09.00 WIB (The *kendit* goat is a goat that has a white circle on its body and the circle cannot be broken or must be connected. The *kendit* goat used is a pueled goat (withdraw the first teeth). Preparation of this procession was carried out at Sarangan village office by the committee. Goats are tied and stretchered with a stretcher that has been decorated with yellow coconut. Then the goats were paraded with an army of eight horses to Sarangan Lake to be bathed. At the ritual event (slaughter of *kambing kendit*), people use Javanese traditional clothing in the style of the Solo Palace. The reason for the selection of Javanese traditional clothing in the style of the Solo Palace is because the village elders have a close relationship with the Solo Palace (Sutowo, 2022). It can be seen when the procession of “*kambing kendit*” from the village office to Sarangan Lake people use black patterned traditional clothes.

The procession escorts gathered at the main point of Sarangan Lake and placed the goats in front of it. One of the escorts took water at the Sarangan well, meaning holy water to bathe the goats, starting with praying first which was led by traditional leaders, then continued by preparing flower water to bathe the goats. Goats are bathed starting a procession of watering by traditio-

nal leaders and continued by *Pak Lurah* who is witnessed by the community. After being bathed by some traditional leaders and *Lurah*, goats were paraded to *Punden* (*Punden* is a location in Sarangan Lake which is believed to be a rite of passage by the community. There is a very large tree that is believed to have an ancestor who guarded it. There is no cemetery in the cemetery. Except for the rocks and the trees. According to the story, Kyai Basir and Nyai Basir disappeared there. The *punden* area is treated so well by the village government, so that this area becomes a separate area that is often used as a ritual place at certain events). The procession of “*kambing kendit*” to *Punden* was accompanied by a team (traditional leaders, committees, sub-districts, communities and tourist visitors). The horse troops only deliver the procession to the limp goat baths only. Goats are further paraded to *Punden* to be slaughtered (*Kambing Kendit*). When the goats arrived in *Punden*, the traditional leaders prepared all the necessities in the ritual slaughter. There are two traditional figures who lead the ritual.

The two traditional figures began to sit under a large tree and began to light the incense used during the procession. The slaughter of “*kambing kendit*” begins with praying using language (*kromo inggil*). At a glance, researchers understand that prayers are directed to Almighty God and the ancestors of Sarangan Lake. Prayers are offered to ask for protection and gratitude for the pleasure that God gives to the Sarangan community. After finishing praying proceed with the process of slaughtering the *kambing kendit*, where one of the committees digs a hole for the place/container of blood of the slaughtered *kambing kendit*. After finishing the hole is sprinkled with flowers and covered back with soil. As for the goats that have been slaughtered in pieces to take part of the feet and head to be buried in a predetermined place. While the rest will be cooked to serve as a treat to invited guests on the night of the festival in the evening. This is like the explanation of Mr. Suratno and Sutowo, that:

“The procession of the Kendit goat is the slaughter of the Kendit goat. The day before the rite of passage. The slaughter of jugular goats is one of the requirements of the clean procession of the village. There are 4 kasuns, namely Sarangan, Mandoran, Ngluweng, and Singolangu, which carry out village cleanup. Kendit goat is a goat that must have a white circle that is coiled without breaking in the stomach like a belt/belt. The choice of goat has conditions, in addition to having a circle on the body, also the goat must be over 2 years old, or have extracted the teeth and the type of goat.” (Suratno, 2022)

“The goats that had been slaughtered were then buried separately. Starting from the head, front right foot, front left foot, rear right foot, rear left foot buried according to the four directions of the wind at each corner of the village. It means as a fence for Sarangan village to avoid danger. Then there are five chicken eggs that are planted in the four corners of the village as well. The last egg was planted in the middle of the village. It is intended as a forerunner or origin.” (Sutowo, 2022)

The slaughter of *kambing kendit* was attended by elders and Sarangan community leaders. Sarangan people use the *Sesaji* of *kambing kendit* which are believed to have their own strength and are also believed to be a form of gratitude and embodiment of hope in protection to the Almighty. *Kambing kendit* in the tradition of ritual *Sesaji* has the meaning of minus logs (refusing to avoid danger). In 2007 it was replaced without the use of goats. Then what happened was one of the residents drowned in Sarangan Lake. At night, no search was found. But in the morning we saw a dead body floating in the lake (Sarwo, 2022).

Second, the pilgrimage to the ancestral tomb. In this procession, there are two meals visited, namely the tomb of *Kyai* and *Nyai Pasir* which is an advanced stage in the series of *ritual Sesaji* performed on Thursdays around 4 pm. This ancestral tomb pilgrimage activity is not all residents can participate in carrying out it, but only represented by traditional leaders and representatives from the village. And the location of

the tomb is in an island located west of Sarangan Lake. On the wall of the tombstone was written *Nyai Ramping* 1826 and *Sheikh Mufdhur (Kyai Djogo Lelono)* 1826. After the procession of slaughtering jugular goats and burial of goat legs, it will be continued with a pilgrimage procession to the tombs of *Kyai* and *Nyai Pasir* to a place called *Pulau/Pulo* to perform prayers (Suparno, 2022).

When the group arrived at the tomb, they sat in front of the tomb preparing the *Sesaji* that had been brought for the ritual procession. Serves in the form of cone rice and food. The ritual is carried out by reciting prayers led by traditional leaders, which are addressed to the spirits of ancestors asking for forgiveness, calm at His side and the people around Sarangan are given *rahayu* in their work and kept away from logs (Sutowo, 2022).

Pilgrimage tradition is one form of activity that has noble values that can be taken essence. In addition to the purpose of praying, it also has a meaning for pilgrims to always remember death which connotes preparing by doing good in life before death picks him up. Pilgrimage to the tombs of certain people who are considered ancestors or figures, also as a form of respect for their struggle in treading and guarding the Sarangan area, especially Sarangan Lake. Where *Kyai* and *Nyai Pasir* are considered Sarangan ancestors who are believed to be the guardians and reinforcers of the existence of the Lake, until now even though it is gone. Therefore, the community still remembers their existence, in every way the implementation of the ritual is always accompanied by a pilgrimage to the tombs of *Kyai Pasir* and *Nyai Pasir*. This is considered respect and devotion to the community will remember the service of their struggle for the existence of Sarangan Lake.

Third, the night of the rite of passage. This procession was held on Thursday night (Friday night *Pon* based on the Javanese calendar day cycle) in the Punden area. The night of reckoning is termed as the night of reckoning by the Sarangan people. This night of fame was attended by guests from various elements of government and so-

ciety with the aim of praying together and expressing gratitude to God, ahead of the “*ritual Sesaji*” culture the next day. And Mr. Suparno said that: Thanksgiving is held on the night (Thursday night Friday), which is *tirakatan* in Punden. The dishes of the slaughtered goats were cooked into stew and satay. In addition, the invitations from government elements, Regents, Lurah, traditional leaders, youth, and the community (Suparno, 2022).

Evening event tasyakuran also collaborate between Javanese culture and Islam. The event began with reading tahlil led by local Muslim leaders, then continued with the appearance of *hadrah* and Javanese *gamelan*. Event collaboration is one of the development of community traditions and beliefs/religions in an effort to care for existing diversity. Seen at the thanksgiving event attended by traditional leaders, religious, local government parties, and young people/*karangtaruna*'s were also present at the evening event. The *karangtaruna*'s youth from four compact hamlets in this annual event, from the start of preparation, the event took place, to cooperation in maintaining security around the village.

Fourth, culture. This procession was held on Friday starting at 07.00 WIB in the morning to carry out the cultural ritual of the *Sesaji* Ritual. Exactly on Friday *Pon* (month of *Ruwah* or month of Java). The place where the ritual was performed was at Punden Sarangan lake, and tumpeng was wedged in the middle of Sarangan lake island. The reason for the use of days, prayers, traditional clothing, event processions, and others in their implementation uses habits that have been carried out by previous ancestors. And the committee now in its implementation only adds innovations in capturing the moment. For example, young people provide wider information through social media (Facebook and Instagram). This has been coordinated with the Regency and Village/Village Tourism Offices. Through this social media is very helpful in enlivening and succeeding the long-awaited activities of the community, even though it has been two years of vacuum due to the pandemic (year

2020-2021) (Suhardi, 2022).

The procession of *ritual Sesaji* is the same as the implementation of jugit goats being paraded from the front of the Sarangan village office to the Lake. There are several procedures that must be obeyed related to the order of the procession/*kirab* culture. *Arakan ritual Sesaji* with large cone rice as high as almost 2 meters are guided/carried by four village youths. In addition, it is also enlivened by the accompaniment of the guides of fruits, vegetables of the best harvest of the village community paraded to Punden. The procession (*nasi tumpeng*, fruit, and vegetables) was guided/carried and accompanied by 13 (thirteen) horsemen to reach Punden. After arriving in Punden, the ritual tradition was started/opened by the village elders, continued by the discourse from Mr. Lurah, and the closing (prayer). Then (*nasi tumpeng*, fruit, and vegetables) have been welcomed dozens of boats boots are ready to accompany larung tumpeng, meaning the *ritual Sesaji* are ready to be fought in the lake. Customary leaders and committees one by one boarded the boat and cooperated to lift cones to the boat. There are two types of cones: rice cone and vegetable cone. The two cones are brought to the middle of the lake with the process of circling the lake first. All the accompanying boats follow the round. There is a point that is intended to loosen or sink the two cones, namely in the middle near the island. In addition to the large tumpeng which is the main object in this *larung ritual*, residents also bring the *tumpengan* (Tumpengan is a small cone with a complete formation of rice and side dishes). All residents, both native/Sarangan residents and immigrant/migrant residents follow the procession and gather in Punden with their respective *Sesaji*. The *Sesaji* carried by the residents were also thrown into Sarangan Lake, carried out after a procession of large *Sesaji*/cones was completed in larung in the middle of the lake. If the large cone drums are all waved, the *Sesaji* carried by the residents are not all waved, but the residents only wedge part of the handling of the head, legs and wings of the chicken and the cone shoots are taken and placed in

an oil paper wrapper, then thrown into the lake simultaneously (The dishes are whole cooked chicken that has not been cut into pieces). Then the rest of the *Sesaji* brought by the citizens can be eaten together. This is as stated by Sari that:

“The rite of offering is the custom of the ancestors of Sarangan’s descendants, which is held once a year, with a large cone held in the middle of the lake. The culture of offering rituals needs to be preserved, because find its sustenance every day here, so every year I also participate in this event. A dish brought by the community from his house with ambengan (rice and side dishes), cooked chicken, rempeyek, tempeh, fruits. The *Sesaji* brought by the community after the prayer were all then the chicken was taken a few pieces/parts with the top cone/rice, then thrown there (pointing to the lake). And the rest can be taken home, eating here can also be or anyone/everyone can also enjoy. “ (Sari, 2022)

The involvement of citizens in *ritual Sesaji* is a form of caring for local wisdom and caring for existing diversity. Where residents believe that this ritual needs to be carried out because according to residents’ beliefs this ritual has a meaning that leads to mysticism related to the guardian or ancestor of Sarangan Lake. Where this is highly respected by the community. According to residents, this activity needs to be preserved because people can live and seek sustenance in this Sarangan Lake area. The *ritual Sesaji* has a meaning as a form of gratitude to God Almighty for all the blessings that God has given so far. For the existence of Sarangan lake which is a place where many people seek sustenance. Because with the lake as a tourist attraction the economic development of the community improves. Therefore, the Sarangan people strongly maintain this tradition and always carry out every year.

“So as appreciation and gratitude to Allah and the elders, the village community still flocked to the punden to pray to Allah as gratitude. Then the next prayer was addressed to *Kyai* and *Nyai Pasir*. Because of this Sarangan Lake, the community

economy also provides rizki. Then a sense of gratitude for the lake water that always flows which results in Sarangan Lake still has meaning to be used as a place of tourism.” (Sunarto, 2022)

“*Ritual Sesaji*” ritual existence describes the Sarangan people strongly believe in *ritual Sesaji* as a form of gratitude to God, preserving and preserving ancestral heritage through local wisdom. Cultural changes and technological advances in the era of modernization have an effect on increasing community creativity such as adding entertainment in *ritual Sesaji* with dances that can be enjoyed by tourists. The dance was performed when there was a *Reog* performance during the event (*Reog* is a traditional dance in an open-air arena that serves as folk entertainment, contains magical elements, the main dancer is a lion-headed person with peacock feather decoration, plus several masked dancers and lumping horses). “*Reog*” itself according to them is a symbol of power, power or can be interpreted also in Javanese called the term *klangenan* (something that must exist). Interviewees likened it to when people were eating, then the class was the “*Reog*”. Interviewees likened it to when people were eating, then the class was the “*Reog*” (Endang, 2022). Starting with the addition of a series of dances in the *ritual larung Sesaji* because the community sees there is potential that is owned by the younger generation through the children’s favorite which is then responded positively by their parents. And parents register their children with the device or committee related to the ritual event so that it can be displayed during the event. The community is very enthusiastic about the development, as evidenced when the event takes place, parents who want their children to appear at the event finance their children in terms of makeup and clothes worn during the event. This activity, apart from government funding, is also on the awareness of non-governmental organizations as well.

Village Tradition as a Media to Care for *Kebhinekaan*

Caring for the *Kebhinekaan* of Sarangan

Village is carried out through village tradition activities. The existence of village traditions can unite all circles of society with the culture left by the ancestors. That way the community can continue to carry out the teachings of ancestral values and participate in the implementation of village traditions. The diversity that exists both from religion, language and culture can be maintained through caring for the local wisdom standards owned by the Village. To achieve maintaining this *kebhinekaan* / diversity, there are several ancestral values that are used as role models by the Sarangan community and there is community involvement in the implementation of traditions, including the following:

First, establish ancestral values. Sarangan people are very guarding and caring for the noble values of the village, one of which makes this ritual tradition an annual routine. In addition, as a form of their gratitude to God Almighty for the abundance of gifts and sustenance that has been given, by expressing it in the form of *ritual Sesaji*. The source of goodness is the implementation of their religion. The annual ritual of the *Sesaji* ritual makes all members of the religious community unite in preserving the existing standards and culture in Sarangan. It is also in accordance with (Thomas F.O 'Dea, 1985) (Sociologist), that religion provides a means of ritual that allows man's relationship with things beyond his reach/provides assurance and salvation for man to maintain his morality. *Kirab* ritual culture *Sesaji* also sends the community around Sarangan Lake to always be friendly, harmonious, and peaceful with the universe as well as fellow communities (Sarangan and immigrants).

This is in line with what Mr. Sunardi as the chief executive of the Presentation Ritual activities stated, that :

“This Ritual Ceremony is an annual routine activity (*Friday Pon Moon Ruwah*/Java ahead of entering the Holy Month of Ramadan). Sarangan Regent's Instruction to the Village Head and Coordination with the Tourism and Culture Office, about 3 months before, was used as an agenda for weekly meetings in the Village. For the

year 2022, I was elected as the chairman of the Activity Implementation Committee. The community is quite enthusiastic about this routine activity, with the ease of forming sub-sub-sector committees to be coordinated and implemented. Evidently the community is always excited by cooperating, *guyup*, get along well in the procession/implementation of rituals. You can see for yourself in the celebration/*ritual Sesaji*, the appearance of processions with traditional clothes (Javanese Palace), accompanied by Reog Ponorogo, kirap tumpeng giants almost 2 meters high and vegetables harvested/earth, and each citizen presents *ambengan* (rice complete with side dishes). This procession would not have taken place without the sincere cooperation of the people. During the ritual presentation ceremony at Sarangan Lake from the beginning until now there has never been a meaningful obstacle, in other words always smooth and successful/a lot of support from the Regional Government and its people. “ (Sunardi, 2022)

In addition, the community believes that the *ritual Sesaji* are able to maintain the harmony of local residents, and the series of rituals carried out are understood as expressions of gratitude to God Almighty. This is in line with what was expressed by Mr. Aan and Mrs. Martini (husband and wife as a souvenir trader) around the Sarangan Lake tourist area, that :

“At the time of *kirab* culture/procession *ritual Sesaji* become our habit accompanied by all the people bring *ambengan* (rice and side dishes: vegetable lodeh village chicken tofu tempe, rempeyek, bananas, etc.). Cooked chicken should not be another chicken, because the *Sesaji* (*ambengan*) will be given and distributed in Sarangan Lake with the aim of providing the best food to other creatures in the Lake. This is in line with its purpose (giving food to other creatures that are also the creations of God Almighty), in the hope that the people around Sarangan Lake are always given safety, smooth in trading and seeking sustenance, so we must give the best food to be offered to the creatures of the inhabitants of the Lake. “ (Aan and Martini, 2022)

When harmonized with the environment, the symbiosis of mutualism that applies if humans care about nature, then there is reciprocity or automatic nature also helps maintain the ecosystem for human interests/needs as well. And vice versa, if humans do damage/have no concern in maintaining or caring for the environment, resulting in humans losing the necessities of life that are urgently obtained from nature (air, wind, water, and agricultural or plantation products). And do not let the impact on the destruction of ecosystems or logs that are not expected (strong winds, storms, floods, landslides, and the like).

Second, the role of religious figures in the village tradition of *ritual Sesaji*. In addition to the teachings of ancestral values in caring for *Kebhinekaan*. There are several traditional figures who play a role in the implementation of village traditions in the form of *ritual Sesaji*, traditional figures here known as Mr. Sutowo, known as “*Mbah Wo*” who understand deeply about the meaning of each tradition and the sequence/stages of rituals that must be carried out. *Mbah Wo* became the leader in every village tradition ceremony as well as leading prayers. A tradition will exist if any cultural actors, figures who are considered to have a concern in caring for, reviving, conveying information from generation to generation/descendants of sustainable descendants. This implementation can be followed up with various methods/ways in community life. One of them is through the culture/ritual tradition, whatever the form and model that is mutually agreed upon. As stated by the elders of Sarangan Lake (Mr. Sutowo), that:

“I became an elder in Sarangan Village counted three descendants, estimates from my great-grandparents. The origin of the Sarangan Lake story I also got from my great-grandfather who at that time was still *sweet/alive*. Therefore, the story and understanding of Sarangan Lake I convey to my grandchildren and the community, so that the culture that exists/belongs to Sarangan Village is maintained and sustainable. Yes, this is one of them through “procession” which is now the term ‘*kirab Budaya*’ is done once a year (Friday *Pon*

Ruwah mont). This is to commemorate the story/legend of Sarangan Lake as well as the embodiment of gratitude to the Almighty is important to be preserved. “ (Sutowo, 2022)

Religion and culture are two elements that cannot be separated. Religion is a belief that is used as a guide for human life/society. What they do and believe is culture, because it is done by humans or people who adhere to that religion/belief (Agus, 2006). In the cultural context “*Ritual Sesaji*” at Sarangan Lake is also carried out by heterogeneous layers/backgrounds of the community, both from the indigenous people of Sarangan, immigrants/foreigners, ethnicity, religion, men, women, youth, children, and elders of the village, etc. This is all in an effort to ground (belief, hope, purpose/motivation) the rituals contained in the noble values of humanity based on local wisdom. This is in line with the expression of Mr. Djoko Trihono (Head of Sarangan Tourism and Culture Office), that:

“Indeed, one of our main tasks at the Tourism Office is to escort and accommodate local culture/wisdom in the Region, one of which is in routine/annual activities at Sarangan Lake (*Sesaji Ritual*). This is in an effort so that local wisdom owned by the region/Sarangan can be remembered as well as preserve it (not extinct), even though digitalization hit the world. With the digital era being a means as well as a tool to preserve and perpetuate the ritual of *Sesaji* at Telaga Sarangan with innovations to add more vibrant/festive events without reducing the meaning/motivation of the event. “ (Trihono, 2022)

Third, the role of the village government in the tradition of *ritual Sesaji*. In addition to the noble values that continue to be carried out by traditional leaders and the community in caring for diversity, researchers also found that there is a role for the village government in caring for diversity which is also in charge through the implementation of the village tradition of *Larung Sesaji*. The local government becomes responsible both in preserving culture and in caring for diversity. The village government

in this case gives a new touch, namely holding a village clean tradition in accordance with the era of digitalization. The village government provides many video recordings that will be uploaded on social media and promotes village standardization activities through social media. Any information that can be accessed via mobile can be found instantly and faster.

The digital era if implemented according to the needs needed, the effect is very significant for the goals/expectations. Likewise, the needs needed in tourist devices in Sarangan Lake, greatly affect its progress. Both domestic and foreign visitors easily get information and transportation makes tourists at Sarangan Lake more developed and many visitors come to enjoy the beautiful, comfortable, and cool nature at Sarangan Lake. All of this is cooperation, both intent and external. This is in accordance with the statement of Mr. Lurah Sarangan, that:

“I have served as Lurah Sarangan for 4 years and continue the existing local wisdom culture/owned by the people of Sarangan and surrounding communities. This activity is carried out every year, even though there was a pandemic (2 years). However, in 2022 we revive again thanks to the cooperation of the Tourism Office (extern), and our surrounding villages in Sarangan Village (intern). The ritual event of Sarangan Lake is part of the cultural wealth of the Nation. Therefore, we who are in the Region are obliged to preserve it to introduce the younger generation to the cultural wealth of the nation (local wisdom).” (Suhardi, 2022)

The dignity of a Nation will be appreciated by other Nations if its citizens get along well, care, and care for the culture of local wisdom that they have. This is as proof, that its citizens still strengthen the sense of unity and unity among its citizens, through caring for the culture of local wisdom, even though the era of digitalization hit the world. This is used as a reference to add innovations in creation by involving village youth according to the times. Because village youth as a millennial generation have many new and more creative ideas. Therefo-

re, the youth are entrusted by the village to become a committee in the village tradition (*Ritual Sesaji*). The explanation of the involvement of youth in caring for culture and part of diversity is described in the points below.

Fourth, the involvement of the younger generation and the community in caring for *Kebhinekaan* / diversity. Sarangan Youth become one of the sources of energy/potential in the implementation of village standardization as the researcher explained in the above point, that youth contribute new ideas in the implementation of village standardization procession without discarding ancestral values. The younger generation is the forefront/relay in the development of the Nation and State. One of them is needed by the miniature of the Nation, namely villages in all lines of every RW or RT. Therefore, the Head of Sarangan Village said, that:

“It has only been a few years (about 5 years) that we have involved young people through organizations (*Karang Taruna*) in Sarangan Village in the *Sesaji* Ritual activities. Previously this activity was dominated by the elders of the village because it was considered that they were more aware of the purpose of the ceremony. But as time went by the direction of the Regent, we/Village (*Kelurahan*) responded to the instruction for the follow-up *ritual Sesaji* by involving the youth and residents domiciled around Telaga Sarangan, as well as members of *Karang Taruna*.” (Suhardi, 2022)

The role of youth is very important in development both in the village and the city. Youth is a productive age (17-25 years), has a big role and responsibility in preserving the culture of the region/nation, so as not to become extinct/receding. This is in line with the expression of Shendy as the chairman of the Sarangan Village *Karang Taruna*, that:

“This Ritual Presentation Ceremony has become a routine/annual activity for Sarangan Village. I as a village youth am proud to have a *Ritual Sesaji* culture in this Sarangan Lake. I also learned and was given information/stories about the history/beginning of the emergence of this ritual offering by the original parents

from Sarangan and Ngluweng. And to the elders of the village (Mr. Sutowo) sometimes I ask him also. From their explanation, I was moved to participate in preserving the culture/*ritual Sesaji* and the ecosystem/environment of the Sarangan Lake area and its surroundings. Therefore, the awareness of maintaining and caring has a long-term hope, namely that Sarangan Lake can be sustainable to be seen by the next generation can be enjoyed by domestic and foreign tourists. Because in the Telaga area is a community business area, which includes hotels/inns, souvenir merchants, restaurants, etc. Thanks to Sarangan Lake, people can scavenge for sustenance from tourists who travel. "Sometimes *kirab Sesaji Ritual* culture is accompanied by Sarangan lake clean activities to be done together/*gotong-royong*. So that the lake looks beautiful, beautiful, clean, and comfortable." (Shendy, 2022)

Shendy added that young people are very enthusiastic in interpreting this tradition. Although the youth used to be less enthusiastic, but now the youth are involved and, in the future, will make a more interesting concept to attract the appeal of more youth involved in this tradition. In line with the spirit of Mr. Sutowo about the youth, that:

"*Ritual Sesaji* activities began to be held again this year, after two years of vacuum due to the pandemic. But it does not diminish the enthusiasm of young people to preserve. I am trying to improve/the concept of the program is more interesting so that the youth are more enthusiastic in celebrating the *ritual Sesaji*." (Shendy, 2022)

Entering the digital age, society experiences change and has a sense of self-reliance. So, when there are journalists who want to interview, they also want to get a reward. But this does not change the value or value contained in the larung event. In keeping the history alive and not forgotten, the village youths made a calendar containing Sarangan's past. (Sutowo, 2022) (village elder) said, the changes seen from the village youths are not yet fully involved in the activities, only a few are active in events like this. Moreover, two years of vacuum/pande-

mic. So, this year we are trying to re-engage in committee/events through village cadets' coral. This aims for the younger generation to know/understand the meaning of local traditions owned by the Village, as well as to grow the spirit of nationality through caring for and maintaining local traditions/wisdom. And more importantly, so that young people in this digital era, do not admire the culture from abroad. But on the contrary, they are amazed by the culture that belongs to the region, both leading to religious social activities and local wisdom.

Although it was eliminated due to the Covid pandemic, it did not reduce the spirit of village leaders and youth to conduct/program in commemorating the *Sesaji* Ritual. It can be seen that the youth/cadet corals are very enthusiastic through creative ideas in the procession of *ritual Sesaji*, as a tourist attraction at Sarangan Lake. As Mr. Edy Suparno (Citizen) said, that:

"The residents and *Kartar (Karang Taruna)* of Sarangan Village are very enthusiastic about performing the *Sesaji ritual* and are paraded starting in front of the office village until they reach the Sarangan Lake area. In addition to watching the procession of the event, which includes several horses, reog complete with gamelan with Javanese/Solo traditional clothing, they also make use of this ritual by recording, taking pictures, to capture the event solemnly. Because this event takes place once a year (*Friday Pon/Month Ruwah*), as if not to miss and hope this event is not only once a year, but often done. Seen the most carrying recording devices/handycams, *mobile phones*, etc. dominated by young people." (Suparno, 2022)

This is also confirmed by one of the Sarangan youths if the involvement of the youth in the committee in the procession of *ritual Sesaji*. The youth are involved to add new innovations because the youth also understand the meaning of *ritual Sesaji* that are felt to need to continue to be preserved. As stated by Sarangan/Iwan Saputro youth:

"This year's celebration is increasingly a variety of innovations, with the involvement of youth who join the coral cadets

active participation in village *ritual Sesaji*. They come from variants of backgrounds, both karangtaruna, business actors, students, etc. The youth really appreciate the elders, traditional leaders, with his program, and we only provide additional innovations to attract more citizens or tourists. The idea of youth was accommodated by Pak Lurah and traditional leaders. From the proposal of youth combined with the essence of the ritual so that it does not fade, and the present is also there/more interesting. Sarangan youth have a sense of rurality (ownership of local traditions/villages), although immigrants from outside Sarangan village still join in its preservation. “ (Saputro, 2022)

The relevance of cultural preservation (*Ritual Sesaji*) in Sarangan Lake in the digital era is very important in maintaining the culture of local wisdom. Kirab culture “*Ritual Sesaji*” Sarangan Lake will always exist thanks to the innovation/creation of the youth as the forefront in guarding it. In the hands of the youth a culture of local wisdom is preserved. Therefore, the role of youth is very important in the existence of local wisdom culture. Although the information and technology era has entered/hit the world, the role of youth must be maintained in caring/preserving their culture/local wisdom. It is precisely this moment that is important in conveying to the world, that the nation’s youth relay and maintain the culture of local wisdom (*Sesaji Ritual* at Sarangan Lake) which is visited by many domestic and foreign tourists. The youth are proud of their local culture, the result of the gift of the Almighty to then be knitted by the culture of their ancestors. The task of the youth is to maintain in preserving, imitating, interpreting the meaning of the philosophy contained in the story/history of the local culture owned.

The digital age becomes its own power in influencing the mindset of a person, both as an individual and a group/society. Therefore, it is necessary to be aware of the importance of the local wisdom culture as the identity of the nation. In other words, the role of the younger generation is highly expected in the effort to inherit the culture

of local wisdom that will be a force for the existence of local culture itself, despite the digital era. This can be achieved through cultural knowledge and experience (*culture knowledge dan culture experience*). The digital age is an era where information and technology are fast-paced and pragmatic, which affects the mindset of its people. Everything/that leads to community life cannot be separated from the problems/problems that surround it. Likewise, the presence (digitalization), also leaves its own problems. If digitalization is used proportionally/according to the capacity of knowledge owned by the user, then its presence can bring benefits to his life and can be for the benefit of the community. However, if digitalization is misused, disproportionate or violates community norms, it can backfire on users and affect the surrounding community.

Therefore, the village tradition as a tradition of local wisdom becomes a liaison or media to care for diversity requires the value and role of many parties in it. So that this restriction becomes a joint property not only belong to one group only. Village standardization in the era of digitalization is very important to always be preserved, by prioritizing the noble values of culture, the role of indigenous leaders as people who understand the ritual process, and require government intervention on behalf of the state, as well as the role of youth as the next generation who can preserve culture.

CONCLUSION

The values of *kebhinekaan* in local wisdom hold great significance in understanding, preserving, and strengthening the culture (*Sesaji Ritual*) in Telaga Sarangan Magetan. By respecting and appreciating local wisdom, we can pass down the cultural heritage from generation to generation, ensuring its preservation and preventing it from being forgotten or lost. Additionally, it can provide valuable insights for policymakers in formulating inclusive and diversity-supporting decisions regarding public matters. This can foster tolerance, strengthen dialogue, and promote intercultural cooperation.

Through local wisdom, the values of diversity emerge, enhancing unity and solidarity, utilizing digital media as a tool for creativity and innovation.

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