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## **Bridal Parade Music As A Cultural Expression of The Kikim in Lahat Regency**

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### **Abstract**

One of the arts that is very full of Islamic nuance with the Kikim Tribe is the art of "*Arakan*" or "*Ngarak*" (parade) or better known as the Kikim bridal parade. The problem raised in this study aims to analyze the music of the Kikim bridal parade as a cultural expression of the Kikim Tribe in Lahat Regency. This research used a qualitative method with a case study research design. Data collection techniques involved observation, interviews and document studies. The results showed that the *Arakan* which was staged in Kikim District, Padang Bindu Village, was a form of cultural expression for the Kikim community living in Lahat Regency. The performance is often staged for accompanying the bride and groom from Kikim Tribe. In the organological framework, *Ngarak* or *Arakan* music consists of compositions of poetry (vocals), tambourines (rhythm), tambourines/*terbangan genjring* (rhythm), and gongs (rhythm). Meanwhile, if they are classified based on the characteristics of instruments used, they fall into the category of percussion instruments. The songs in *Arakan* use *sholawat* and *berzanji* lyrics (prays and praises for Prophet Muhammad SAW) and they are performed by dancers (as well as vocals). Therefore, the role of vocals in *Arakan* is to play the melody of the song sung by the dancers to clarify the meaning of the song through poetry in addition to providing an element of aesthetic variation.

**Keywords:** Tambourine music, Parade (*Arakan*), cultural expression

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## INTRODUCTION

*Kikim* is one of the tribes that live in Kikim District, Lahat Regency, South Sumatra Province. Based on its geographical location, the Kikim Tribe is surrounded by hills directly adjacent to the Besemah Tribe, which is right under Mount Dempo. The Kikim community used to be adherents of the belief in dynamism, namely the worship of ancestral spirits believed to occupy particular places. After spreading the Islamic teachings, the Kikim Tribe began to abandon their previous belief in dynamism. The Islamic teachings seem to mingle with the life of the Kikim community quickly. Thus it affects many things that exist in aspects of the Tribe's culture and customs. Therefore, the customs and culture that existed in the Kikim Tribe slowly began to be influenced by the strong nuance of Islam.

The solid Islamic nuance of the Kikim community is manifested in the arts that use tambourine music as the basis, Islamic poetry, and dances that are influenced by Islamic Malay culture. The influence of Malay culture on the Kikim community can be seen from the language they use, which is characterized by the ending letter "e," and they have similarities in almost some areas of South Sumatra. Rengki Afriaa, Dimas Sanjayab, Mesha Tiarac (2020) wrote that based on their research results and data analysis presentation of "Lexicostatistics and Glottochronology of Palembang Malay, Basemah Lahat, Basemah Pagaralam, and Kayuagung: A Comparative Historical Linguistic Study," they concluded that: a. From 200 Swadesh words, there are twenty four identical word pairs, seven phonemic correspondence data, namely: e-i, R-r, w-Ø, e-Ø, e-a, e-a. Based on a religious point of view, most of the Kikim community are adherents of Islam. In this position, it can be understood that there is a mixture of culture and Islamic religious teachings, which is then manifested in the tambourine art presented by the Kikim community. This phenomenon can also be found in art products in several places, for example, Keroncong music (an old-

fashioned folk Indonesian music). Ganap (in Abdul Rachman, Udi Utomo, 2018) explained that Keroncong music is original Indonesian music in which some music experts explain that "keroncong" has a huge influence from the Portuguese. In line with this idea, Kurniawan, Arif & Firmansyah Dedy (2020) stated that one of the performing arts of Hadrah ethnic music in Jayaloka District is also presented in an ensemble format and had an Islamic nuance. The musical instruments used also amount to more than one musical instrument, namely the dominance of rhythmic musical instruments using percussion techniques.

Within the context of this article, the researchers will focus on observing the mixture of art products that have Islamic values. In addition, it will be taken from religious activities mixed with the rules of art (Gazalba, 1989:50). One of the arts that is related to Islamic nuance mixed with the Kikim Tribe is the art of "*Ngarak*," or better known as the Kikim bridal parade.

In the Kikim bridal parade, the bride and groom are paraded from the celebrant's house to the stage where the wedding reception will be held. In the custom of the Kikim community, the place where the celebration is held is in the bride's house. After the marriage ceremony is held, the bride and groom will be welcomed by the "*pengarak*" (parade performers) who are already waiting for them on the road while tapping the Tambourine.

One of the requirements for the parade performers is that they should consist of married women and men. The women in the bridal parade serve as dancers, while the men play accompaniment music such as Tambourine. Besides dancing, the women also sing Islamic verses, such as *sholawatan* and *Barzanji* (prays and praises for Prophet Muhammad SAW). The *Barzanji* book is a book that contains praises to the Prophet Muhammad. In addition to singing Islamic songs, *pengarak* sing songs containing rhymes and advice from the married *pengarak* to the bride and groom.

*Pengarak* of the Kikim bride can be anyone as long as they are married. In its heyday Kikim wedding parade could create long lines for up to 40 people. While the current number of *pengarak* is very few, even it was once that there were only tambourine players and there was no one who was dancing and singing shalawat and advice poetry. The lyrics sung in the bridal parade as a whole does not experience any significant changes, however, this shift is very influential with the value in the parade music of itself.

Based on the description above, the researchers are interested in studying the bridal parade music from the sociological perspective, which is related to the values of the user community related to socio-cultural changes in Kikim. The research focus is on the form and structure used in the parade for the Kikim Tribe's bride and groom ceremony. Therefore, the researchers are interested in examining the musical performances of the parade in Padang Bindu village which are blueprinted on the form of the musical structure and the socio-cultural changes surrounding the existence of the parade itself.

## METHODS

This research used qualitative method. The method means that the data generated is descriptive data in the form of words (it can be spoken for religious, social, cultural, philosophical research), notes related to meaning, value and definition. This method model in observing research data is not limited and isolated with certain variables, populations, samples, and hypotheses. In addition, qualitative methods are holistic, namely the interpretation of data in relation to various aspects that may exist (Kaelan 2012:5).

The approach used science education approach with a case study research design. The research location is in Kikim District, Padang Bindu Village, Lahat Regency, South Sumatra Province. Data collection techniques used observation, interviews and document studies. The observation method in this

research used ordinary observation. It means that the researchers do not need to be involved in emotional relationships with the individuals who are the targets of their research (Rohidi 2011: 184). In addition, the interview technique in this study used an in-depth interview.

The data validity technique used data triangulation techniques. The flow of data analysis techniques used is the flow of interactive model analysis starting from the data is collected, reduced, presented and verified the data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Kikim Tribe Arakan Art at a Glance

Among several types of art, there are some music art in the village of Padang Bindu, such as: vocal music (*Berjungan*, *Tembang*), instrumental music (*Serdam*/*Ginggong*), *Arakan* (parade) which is more familiar to local residents. When it is viewed from the substance of its formation, *Arakan* is included in the form of performing arts because it combines the types of musical arts (vocals, instruments), motion (dance), and visuals (costumes) of the players. In other words, if the researchers perceive it from the musicological perspective of the *Ngarak* or *Arakan* that developed in Kikim District, especially Padang Bindu Village, Lahat Regency, it consists of two substances, namely vocal and instrumental music. Under the organology framework, *Ngarak* or *Arakan* music is composed by poetry (vocals), tambourines (rhythm), tambourines/*terbang genjring* (rhythm), and gongs (rhythm); therefore, when it is classified based on the characteristics of the instruments used, they fall into the category of percussion instruments.

If it is traced from the history, *Arakan* music is a type of art that is the result of acculturation obtained from a culture mixture from several regions around Lahat Regency. It is a type of art that has lived and developed in the community for a very long time, which is passed down from generation to

generation. In the past, this art was not just an expression and fulfillment of entertainment, but it pocketed noble values because the show was held in the context of a citizen's wedding. When it is viewed from the poetry sung, the instruments played and the dancers who dance, *Arakan* can be qualified into a sacred art form. The lyrics sung with Islamic nuance are *sholawatan* or *berzanji* (prays and praises for Prophet Muhammad SAW), while the musical instruments are dominated by *genjring* music or tambourine music. As the author said in the beginning, the *genjringan* or Tambourine is the main musical instrument used in the *Arakan* tradition.



**Figure 1.** Musical Instrument Tambourine/*Kumpang*

Based on the point of view above, *Arakan* has nobility for its community. It is because it contains symbols, functions of social norms and ratification of social institutions. This condition is almost the same as traditional art which is full with moral values, for example the *Guritan* art in Pagar Alam City (Dedy Firdiansyah, Tjetjep Rohendi Rohidi, & Udi Utomo, 2016), the meaning of the *guritan* lyrics is that an advice to be kind and help one another as well as not to give up in living life because every problem has a way out. Another moral value is that we must always respect our parents. In line with the phenomenon above, Nandhy Prasetyo (2020) wrote the function of *Jemjaneng* music for community in Kebumen city: 1) "Symbolism", as *Jemjaneng* music has slowly tempo, which tells song lyrics that containing praises to God and the teachings of the Prophet for his people, 2) "social norms", as its lyrics contain advice as

the Prophet's teachings for his people in ancient times, and 3) "ratification of social institutions" as it was used as a lyrics for the spread of Islam in Kebumen. *Jemjaneng* was created by Syeh Jamjani which at that time was intended for the spread of Islam through music. Justifying the affinity of art with religious values, Hasan Bolkhari Ghehi (2014) explains that, based on the description above, it can be concluded that religious art reflect the main principles and teachings governing that religion. As a legacy in the following research, the researchers attach a blue print related to *Arakan* based on some speakers.

*Until now, Arakan age has passed at least 5 generations. Arakan is a traditional art that residents have been waiting for at that time. In about 1990 the Arakans could be played by more than 40 people, between musicians and dancers." (Headman of Padang Bindu Village)*

Here is other information that the researchers obtained from an informant, who is the owner of *Arakan*, as follows:

*I'm not only here as an Arakan performer, but it's my hobby and I adore it. It's true that around 1990, even my house, often used as a place to practice, and a place to store musical instruments. Today there are still Arakans because they are mandatory in weddings, but they are only as a requirement. (Yi, Arakan Artist and Secretary of Padang Bindu Village)".*

Based on the information above, it can be concluded that the art of *Ngarak* or *Arakan* is a typical musical art of the Kikim Tribe that developed in the Padang Bindu village, Kikim district. In the process of its development, the *Arakan* for bridal in Kikim District was once victorious in its time. The enthusiasm of the community in Padang Bindu village towards *Arakan* can be seen from the enthusiasm of the community when the performance is presented in parading the bride and groom.

### The Existence of Arakan Art from Kikim Tribe

Since 1990s to 2005, this art grew and developed very rapidly because almost all members of the community of all ages had direct contact with *Arakan*. It can be said that everyone (the community) in Padang Bindu is bound and has the potential for art, especially the art of music. Related to this, Barak in Nandhy Prasetyo (2020) said that neuro musical makes all babies have the potential exclusively for music. On the other hand, Michael J. Silvermen (2015) wrote that the nature of music is close to humans because it is effective for reducing anxiety, normalizing the environment, and entertaining children.

The sensitivity and closeness of Padang Bindu community to this traditional art makes the parade a distinctive cultural identity. The art of parade is the pride of the citizens that must be displayed at the wedding, so that almost everyone talks about it, even the practice sessions are held every night. Almost every *masala* in Padang Bindu village and several residents' houses become routine places for *Arakan* practice. In the past, *Arakan* was not only a mandatory topic of conversation for its community, but it was as a form of their mutual love and voluntarily paying fees to buy tools and costumes independently. The simplicity of *Arakan* for local people has noble values because it is passed down from generation to generation. *Arakan* is not just an entertainment and a complement to the wedding ceremony, but it is a requirement for religious content because the sung lyrics contain divine teachings as well as the teachings of the Prophet. In the past, *Arakan* was staged by at least 30 people consisting of several rows of female dancers and male musicians. The excitement of *Arakan* is not only from the quantity, but also from the spirit of the dancers who are also in charge of singing *sholawatan* or offering *berzanji*.



**Figure 2.** Presentation of *Arakan* Performing Arts in Padang Bindu village, Kikim, South Sumatra

In the past, the parade was accompanied by several sets of instruments such as a tambourine, a *kencer* tambourine and a gong. Today, although the existence of *Ngarak* or *Arakan* art still exists in the village of Padang Bindu, it has experienced a significant decline in both interest and enthusiasm of local residents. The shift era and its dynamics seems to have eroded the art which has become a cultural identity. The pride and identity, that has been maintained, nurtured and passed down continuously by the predecessors, is in danger of sinking and being torn apart by the times. Fredric Jameson in Nava Sevila (2015) explained that as a-historic, and today's society as bereft of all historicity and its denies which is modified into a vast of image and thus effaced altogether. In the midst of competition between modern arts and technology, *Arakan* is drowning in terms of both quantity and quality.

This can be seen from the quantity of the *Arakan* performers themselves at the time of the show, which is getting less. Even sometimes, the *Arakan* only displays the accompaniment music players, without any dancer who once served as the singer of *sholawat* or Mawlid al-Barzanji. For example, in terms of presentation of traditional art in Palembang, Maulidiawati & Kurniawan Arif (2021) explained that in Tanggai dance, Malay drumming is always accompanied from the start to the end of the show. Each performer has their own role, some act as musical accompaniment, and some act as dancers.

In the past, *Arakan* was played with more than one set of musical instruments. However, the current show is even not accompanied by a core instrument such as gongs and *kencer* tambourines. The indecision of the people who own the *Arakan* art when presenting the performances nowadays does not attract too many audience.

The shift in composition and arrangement in the presentation of *Arakans* in Padang Bindu Village, before 1990-2005 and from 2005 until now, has become a fact that it certainly requires serious attention. The phenomenon of the ups and downs situation of this traditional art certainly becomes our collective duty as the next generation to preserve culture and maintain this local culture, which we can do in various ways. We can do some efforts, for example, by documenting the *Arakan* tradition and then publishing it. These methods are a new breakthrough in the hope that this traditional art can later be continued by the next generation.

#### **The Rhythm of Kikim's Bridal Arakan Music**

During the performing of *Ngarak* or *Arakan* (parade), all rhythm-forming music consists of percussion instruments, either directly by hand or with a stick. Therefore, the overall sound produced from each instrument is rhythm or beat in Javanese terms. If it is viewed from the overall instrument used in the art of *Ngarak* or *Arakan*, the core game is held by tambourines. It is proven from the results of interviews with several performers who state that the difference between the past and current *Arakan* is in the musical instruments. In the past, the performance used Tambourines, *Kencer* Tambourines and Gong while the current performance only uses Tambourine. Based on that explanation, it can be concluded that the type of instrument commonly used to accompany prayer songs, especially in Indonesia is the Tambourine.

However, it is important to underline that the name of the art performance used in *Arakan* is different with other regions, for

example, *rebana* performance, *genjring*, *genjringan*, *tabuhan*, *terbangan*, or *marawis*. Nandhy Prasetyo (2020) asserted that *sholawat* is the folk art that is passed down from generation to generation and it is also called as the art of *terbangan*, *genjring*, or the name is adjusted based on each region. Therefore, the accompanying instruments in the *Ngarak* or *Arakans* are included in the type of traditional instruments.

#### **The Chanting Vocals or Lyrics that are Sung during Arakan**

In *Arakan* musical performances, the individuals who are in charge of singing *sholawat* or *berzanji* songs are adults who also act as dancers. Based on the results of previous interviews, *Arakan* became a popular art during its history before 1990 to 2005. Therefore, it is not only in the training process until the stage of the performance, but everyone who involves in the performance feels proud. More than 20-25 women have participated as dancers and singers in the *Arakan* practices and performances. As it has a lot of dancers, they are divided into four groups of dancers to avoid a gap of understanding. For the performance itself, the dancers take turns and they are completed with their costumes. This phenomenon shows that gender in the presentation of *Arakan* art is not a problem. As stated by Udi Utomo (2006) in his research about one course in Semarang city that there is a tendency to choose the type of course that reflects the influence of gender stereotypes. Types of music courses such as guitar and drums has 90% male participants, while for the keyboard, vocals, and violin has 75% female participants. For the piano instruments, the number of female participants even reached 90%. It means that the case presented in this paper is an illustration that the influence of musical instruments played by artists has an effect on gender psychology.

If the average age of dancers who are also singers ranges from 19 years to 45 years in the context of this paper, the most important condition is that they are married. To further

strengthen the data in the field, the researchers conducted direct interviews with a number of senior singers who are active and directly involved with *Arakan* art in Padang Bindu Village, Kikim Regency, South Sumatra. The results of the interview with Mrs. Yati as the chairperson and vocal coach of the parade are as follows:

*"I have followed Arakan art since 1976, even from young age I was familiar with Arakan, because of the inheritance from my parents who are Arakan artists. Specifically, our group consisted of 32 dancers (vocals), with 3 tambourine musicians, 3 kencer terbang and 2 gong players. She also explained that the youngest Arakan player from the past until now is around 19 years old, because others are on average 25-50 years old. As for the song that is usually sung, it is sholawatan: Sullala Manawaro, Assolatu ala nabi, Sallu Allah and berzanji. (Mrs. Yati, chairman, senior and vocal coach of Arakan).*

In addition to obtaining an explanation from Mrs. Yati, the researchers also strengthened the results of the study through interviews with other dancers (vocals) in Arakan art, the results (interview on June 8, 2020) are as follows.

*"The past and current arakan is much different. Although the song or the accompaniment is still the same but it was more crowded in the past. Sholawat songs, berzanji sung by many people while dancing make the performance at the wedding ceremony of the community increasingly crowded. Personally, I got to know and participate in arakan practices when I was in elementary school, but I was only able to join Mrs. Yati's group after I got married. (Mrs. Lin, Arakan (vocal) dancer)".*

Vocals are literally often defined as the human voice. Therefore, Hamdani (2018) explained that vocals are music that originates from the human voice, which according to the discipline of music says that when it is sung alone/single it is called (solo) and when it is sung in a group it is called a collective voice (*Samen Zinger*). In line with that, Mudjillah (1998) explained that vocals can actually be considered as instruments because of the manifestation of the sound produced by the human vocal cords. Specifically in giving an

affirmation related to *Arakan*, Sumaryanto defined vocal as a singing activity in a musical activity to express human thoughts and feelings, which is followed by several basic techniques such as intonation, articulation, breathing, flashing and expression. Musically, the implementation of vocal techniques in the *Ngarak* or *Arakan* is manifested in *sholawat* lyrics by dancers (vocals) during the performance. So that it becomes clear that the role of vocals in *Arakan* is to play the melody of the song sung by the dancers to clarify the meaning of the song through poetry in addition to providing an element of aesthetic variation. For this reason, it is important for the researchers to attach one of the *Sholawat* lyrics (in Arabic) to *Arakan* music, as follows.

#### Assolaatu Alannabi

*Assholaatu 'alannabi wassalaamu 'alaar-rosuul  
Assyafi'il abthohii wa Muhammad 'arobii  
Assholaatu 'alannabi wassalaamu 'alaar-rosuul  
Assyafi'il abthohii wa Muhammad 'arobii  
Khoiru man wathi-ats-tsaroo almusyaffa'u fii waroo  
2X*

*Man bihii hullat 'uroo kulli'abdin mudznibi 2X  
Assholaatu 'alannabi wassalaamu 'alaar-rosuul  
Assyafi'il abthohii wa Muhammad 'arobii  
Assholaatu 'alannabi wassalaamu 'alaar-rosuul  
Assyafi'il abthohii wa Muhammad 'arobii  
Man lahuu min musybihin faaza ummatuhuu bihii  
2x*

*Man yamut fii hubbihii naala kullal mathlabi 2X  
Assholaatu 'alannabi wassalaamu 'alaar-rosuul  
Assyafi'il abthohii wa Muhammad 'arobii*

Based on the results of interviews with several informants, it is known that the lyrics sung in *Arakan* in Padang Bindu Village, Kikim District, Lahat Regency, South Sumatra are performed by dancers consisting of some adult women. Here is one substance that distinguishes the past and the current *Arakan*, where in the past there were 32 dancers (vocals) while now less than 5 dancers (singers). Vocals in *Ngarak* or *Arakan* actually give their own color. Apart from the quantity, they can add excitement and dynamism through motion and sound. It is known that the lyrics sung in the performance are *sholawatan* such as; *Sullala*



*manawaro, Assolatu ala nabi, Sallu Allah and sholawat berzanji.*

According to the *Arakan* artists, the songs above are their motivation. It is because they get two benefits as their way of channeling their hobbies and the feeling of inner peace by praying. When it is examined particularly from a vocal perspective, considering that all singers in *Arakan* are adult women, it can be concluded that the range of voices is in the area of soprano, mezzo-soprano and alto. It is justified by Kusumawati, H (2013) who stated that adult female voices have the range of soprano (highest female voice), mezzo-soprano (medium voice) and Alto (low female voice).

As a confirmation, Melissa C. Brunkan (2015) explained that women have an acoustic range of intonation of soprano, mezzo-soprano, alto, which is strongly influenced by low circular, pointing, and circular hand movements. To give a portrayal of the result of this research, the researchers have attached a documentation of Mrs. Rumayah when she gave an example of singing the *sholawat* song *Assholaatu Alannabi*.



**Figure 3.** Mrs. Yati Sings *Sholawat Assholaatu Alannabi*

To further clarify the vocals in the performing arts of *Ngarakan* or *Arakan*, the researchers have attached the sheet music of *Assholaatu Alannabi* melody below.



**Figure 4.** One vocal part of the *Arakan*

The fragment of notation above is part of the vocal melodies that are usually sung during *Arakans* in the Kikim District, Padang Bindu Village. The song that the researchers mean is a song entitled *Sholawat Assholaatu Alannabi*.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion above, the following conclusions can be drawn. More specifically, the *Arakan* which was staged in the Kikim District, Padang Bindu Village, is a form of cultural expression for the Kikim community who live in Lahat Regency. This performance is often staged while accompanying the bride and groom. In the organological

framework, *Ngarak* or *Arakan* music consists of compositions of poetry (vocals), tambourines (rhythm),

tambourines/ *terbangan genjring* (rhythm), and gongs (rhythm). Meanwhile, if they are classified based on the characteristics of instruments used, they fall into the category of percussion instruments. The songs in *Arakan* use *sholawat* and *berzanji* lyrics.

Therefore, the role of vocals in *Ngarak* or *Arak* is to play the melody of the song sung by the dancer in order to clarify the meaning of the song through poetry in addition to providing an element of aesthetic variation. The *sholawatan* and *Mawlid al-Barzanji* lyrics have deep meaning because it contains teachings of the Prophet and glorifying the greatness of God, so that the function of *Arakan* is not only in terms of entertainment and traditional arts but also sacred.

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