



## *Laras Slendro In Traditional Music Gamelan Banyuwangi Changes*

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### Abstract

Traditional music group from the Banyuwangi region with unique qualities is called Gamelan Banyuwangi. The peculiar laras known as the slendro sliring that distinguishes the Banyuwangi gamelan from other gamelan is one of its distinguishing features. The laras slendro sliring, however, became less common as time went on due to changes. This study set out to identify the variables that affected how the laras slendro changed in relation to the Banyuwangi gamelan. Descriptive qualitative research methodology was employed in this study. The laras on the Banyuwangi gamelan serve as the study's formal and material objects, respectively, together with the notion of change. Secondary information was gathered from records, such as old music videos and some pictures of previous forms of gamelan music. Data collection techniques used in this study include observation, interviews, and document studies. To get the validity of the data the author triangulated the sources. The analysis technique used by the author includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study, there are two factors that affect the change in the laras of the Banyuwangi gamelan slendro, namely changes in evolution and acculturation. Evolutionary changes occur in the decrease in the tone of the laras slendro sliring to the slendro that is used today because the younger generation cannot follow the use of the laras slendro sliring so there is an evolution in Banyuwangi gamelan music. Second, there are changes due to acculturation factors that occur during tuning, so Banyuwangi gamelan craftsmen use standard Western music tuners to make tuning easier.

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## INTRODUCING

Indonesia is a country that has various types of traditional musical instruments that are scattered in several parts of Indonesia. The traditional music is very much and has its own characteristics. One type of traditional music group that is widely known and found in several regions is the traditional gamelan music group. The types of gamelan in Indonesia are also very diverse. For example, there are Central Javanese gamelan, West Javanese gamelan, East Javanese gamelan, Balinese gamelan and many other gamelan (Prier, 2014: 13). East Java Province itself consists of several cities and regencies. One of them is the Banyuwangi area.

One of the musical arts owned by the Banyuwangi region is the Banyuwangi gamelan. Gamelan Banyuwangi is a musical art that has its own characteristics compared to other regional gamelans. These characteristics include the tunings, materials of manufacture, musical instruments in it and how to play. "The Banyuwangi gamelan group consists of several instruments which include drums, *keplak*, *kluncing*, *pantos*, *saron*, *pekling*, *kethuk*, *angklung*, violin, and gong *kempul*" (Mahendra, 2020). The materials used in making Banyuwangi gamelan also have differences from common gamelan. The materials for making Banyuwangi gamelan include bamboo which is used to make *angklung*, *glugu* (coconut trees) which is used to make the body of the *keplak*, the skin of a female calf which is used as a membrane for *kendang* drums *keplak*, rattan rope which is used to tie the membrane to iron plate used to make *balungan*, scrap iron from *tangka* used to make *pencon* musical instrument

beaters *balungan* and jackfruit wood used to make *balungan* and supports for *pencon*.

Besides that, Banyuwangi gamelan also has a distinctive feature, which is found in the *laras*. *Laras* is a group of tone groups produced by musical instruments that have characteristics (Siswanto, 2012:5). In the language of Western music, a tune is the same as a *scale* or scale. In the division of culture, the earth is divided into two regions, namely the West and East regions. The western region of the earth uses a scale called diatonic, which totals seven notes, namely do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-si, while the eastern region uses a scale known as pentatonic or five notes (Ester, 2006:36). The pentatonic scale is very diverse and different. Every country in the eastern region has its own scale. An example is that India has a scale with the name *baheerav*, the Middle East has a scale with the name *maqhomprah*, Japan has a scale with the name *iwato*, and many others (Kuns, 1968: 54-55). Indonesia also has its own distinctive scales known as *pelog* and *slendro*. *Laras* or *pelog* and *slendro* produced by traditional music groups, namely gamelan (Soeroso 1980:27).

Based on interviews conducted by the author with Mr. Wan as a Banyuwangi traditional music artist and humanist, explained that traditional Banyuwangi gamelan music groups are known to often use *slendro* compared to *pelog* tunings. However, several Banyuwangi gamelans are also made specifically using *pelog* only to accompany certain arts such as *janger art*. The rest of the use of the *laras* in Banyuwangi gamelan often uses the *laras slendro*.

In addition, Mr. Wan also explained that the Banyuwangi gamelan has a *slendro* very distinctive

slendro tuning and is called the *laras sliring*. The *laras slendro sliring* has a fairly high pitch. Therefore, the crooked vocals and timbre of Banyuwangi gamelan instruments that use *slendro sliring* are sometimes a little sloppy or not quite right. The tune sloppy or doesn't fit the tunings of traditional Banyuwangi music, making it a hallmark of the music. *Laras Slendro sliring* has 5 tones which start from the range of D# if measured from Western music tunings. However, the D# tone is not really right on the D# tone, but sometimes it can be more  $\frac{1}{4}$  or less  $\frac{1}{4}$  if measured by *microtonal*. But with the changing times, *slendro sliring* underwent a change and slowly disappeared. This event occurred due to several factors. In this case the author is interested in conducting a study that examines the factors influencing the changes that occur in the *laras slendro sliring*. This research is important to study because there is a change in a tuning which makes this research an insight for general readers and traditional music artists.

## METHOD

The method used in this study is using a descriptive qualitative method. In qualitative research there are several stages consisting of research objects, data sources, data collection techniques, and analytical techniques (Sugiono, 2017: 74). The material object of this research is the *laras* of the Banyuwangi gamelan and the formal object is the theory of change. Primary data sources come from informants and alignment events.

The resource persons were Mr. Wan as an artist and historian of traditional Banyuwangi gamelan music and Mr. Ridwan as a Banyuwangi gamelan craftsman. While the tuning event is carried out

directly during the tuning process of traditional gamelan music. Secondary data was obtained from documents such as previous music video recordings and photographs of earlier gamelan music forms. The data collection techniques used in this study include observation, interviews, study of documents and audio-visual materials (Creswell, 2015: 222). To get the validity of the data, the authors triangulate the sources. The analysis techniques used by the authors include data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A. The Process of Change *Laras Slendro*

Change is a process that occurs, both big and small in society. One of the things that there is a change in society is culture. The culture that exists in society is not a fixed state, but a process of change within a certain time (Sriyana, 2020:2). In a culture change is not always positive, but there are some changes that are negative. This change was caused by several factors. Saepulloh and Rusdiana (2015:65-67) explain that there are three factors that influence changes in a culture, namely the process of acculturation, the process of assimilation and the process of evolution.

Acculturation is a process of shifting or changing when a group of people who have their own culture is brought together with a foreign culture, gradually the foreign culture is accepted and processed without leaving the original culture of that group of people. Assimilation is a process of shifting or changing where two or more cultures are brought

together and give birth to a new culture. Innovation is a shift or change where people are aware of the lack of a system in the old culture so that the community makes a new discovery thereby changing the old culture. In this case, the changes that occur are in a traditional Banyuwangi gamelan musical tunings. But before discussing the factors that influence these changes, the author will first discuss the developments in the Banyuwangi gamelan itself.

Discusses the *gamelan*, which is a local traditional music that continues to grow. The development of *gamelan* is inseparable from several related arts, namely the *gandrung*, *Angklung caruk*, *kebo-keboan*, *seblang* and *dance* many others. *Gamelan* Banyuwangi has experienced many phases of development related to cultural influences from the surrounding area and immigrants. Based on interviews with local artists and historians, Banyuwangi begins with the *gandrung dance culture*.

*Gandrung* is one of the iconic dances that still exists today. The art *gandrung* uses *gamelan* with a classic format as well. The instruments used include the *keplak drum*, *gong*, *angklung*, *sruling*, and *khetuk* (Mursidi, 2018:). The arrival of the Dutch in the archipelago influenced the development of language, knowledge, technology, religion and art. *Gamelan* Banyuwangi was one of the arts that was influenced by the arrival of the Dutch. This influence brought changes to the formation of traditional Banyuwangi music groups with the addition of violin and *triangle musical instruments*. Before the 19th century Banyuwangi people used musical instruments to accompany the *gandrung* with the formation of *keplak*, *angklung*, *kempul*, *triangle*,

violin, flute and *gong*. and *triangle* used is slightly different from that used by the Dutch. *Triangel* used by the people of Banyuwangi is a little bigger and heavier, using a thick plate type of iron along with the beater and is called the term *kluncing*. The use of thick and large plate iron on the *kluncing* with the aim of making sound which is produced it's harder. When using a *triangle*, you generally won't hear it because the sound of *drums* and other musical instruments produces a loud sound too.

Furthermore, the violin music instrument version of the people of Banyuwangi is also different from the violin in general. The material for making the violin of the Banyuwangi community uses teak wood. The choice of teak wood is due to the fact that the desired violin sound has a distinctive *low* and *mid sound*. In addition to using teak wood, sometimes there are also those who use wood from jackfruit.

How to play the violin version of the Banyuwangi community is also different, if playing the violin should place the violin over the left shoulder and clamped by the neck, the Banyuwangi community plays the violin supported above the left hand. This is due to the influence of *tunings* from violins in general.

The 19th century, traditional music again experienced development. It begins with one of Banyuwangi's regional arts, namely *Angklung Caruk*. The word *caruk* is the language of the osing ethnic group which means fighting, so *angklung caruk* is a fight or duel in the Banyuwangi *angklung* game. The *angklung* duel is a competition between studios that win. The dueling system is that one *angklung* player plays a song or a tone from the

angklung which the other angklung players try to imitate and take turns with each other. If one of the angklung players cannot imitate the jury will be declared defeated and at the same time ridiculed or made fun of. Initially the musical accompaniment of the angklung *caruk* used traditional musical instruments consisting of *keplak* drums, *kempul* gongs, *kluncing*, *kethuk*, flutes and violins. But as development progressed, the *caruk* began to add traditional *pantos* (*demung* Banyuwangi version), *saron* and *pekhing*. It was from here that the development of the *gamelan* began, and then the three *balungan* were included in the presentation format of other traditional Banyuwangi music.-type musical instruments *balungan* to use materials made of plate iron or pears, so that in ancient times it was difficult to find bronze materials.

In addition, because the character of Banyuwangi's traditional music, which on average has a fast tempo, chooses iron plate or pear to create characters that have short tension or length. So there is no need to *clamp* or hold the sound of the blade as a whole when playing it. The types of blade or *balungan* in the traditional Banyuwangi music group format consist of *pantos*, *saron* and *pekhing*.

Initially the number of blades in the type of *balungan* Banyuwangi

Along with the times and the art of angklung *caruk* began to be popular among the people, on the *balungan* songs were added to become nine. Then it increased again to ten until now. According to the results of an interview with Mr. Wan as one of the Banyuwangi music artists, he explained that the selection of materials for making *balungan* has used plate iron until now. The reason

for using the material from plate iron is because the Banyuwangi people want to make a distinctive sound so as to produce a more *treble* and rough tone. Besides that, the selection of beaters or drummers for the *balungan* is also made of hard wood such as yellowish wood.



Figure 1. Traditional Banyuwangi Music Format as Accompaniment *Gandrung* Classical



Figure 2. Format of Angklung *Caruk* Banyuwangi

The following is the process of changing or shifting the *laras* of the *slender* *slender* in the Banyuwangi gamelan caused by several things. That matter . Based on the analysis conducted by the authors regarding the data obtained by interviewing several informants, the process of changing the *slendro sliring* is caused by two factors, namely the process of acculturation and evolution.

### Evolutionary Process

In this case, one of the causes of the evolutionary process of changes

in the *laras slendro sliring* is the result of innovations made by the younger generation in the late 90s-2000s. The next generation felt unable to maintain the existence of the *laras slendro sliring*. These things include, firstly, the younger generation feels unable to imitate *crooked slendro sliring* which are dominantly very high-pitched like the previous generation. The two younger generations feel that the tuning of *the slendro sliring* not quite right and the sound is sometimes different.

### Acculturation

Process Another change process in the *laras slendro sliring* is caused by the acculturation factor. The existence of social relations between indigenous peoples and foreign nations can have an impact. This happened due to technology and knowledge being disseminated, so that some of the indigenous traditions and knowledge possessed by the indigenous people had to be replaced (Hidir, 2009:22). As happened in the process of making Banyuwangi gamelan musical instruments. The process of tuning the *laras slendro sliring* is quite difficult because the previous generation when tuning *balungan* or *pencon* used flavors or *fillings*. Therefore Mr. Ridwan as a gamelan craftsman in the present era uses a standard tuner system for Western music because Mr. Ridwan and several other craftsmen find it difficult to reach *slendro sliring tunings*. However, even though the tuning process uses a tuner, it still does not eliminate the traditional gamelan-making technology.

### B. The Form of Change in *Slendro*

The form of change is a new manifestation after experiencing a process of change itself. In this case the

change in *slendro* has a new form that can be listened to today. The following is a form and comparison between the *laras slendro sliring* the *and* used at this time.

In the process of evolution, the younger generation made a change from the *slender slender tuning*, which initially started from the D# range and then lowered to C# so that the vocal sound is not too high and easy to learn. In the process of acculturation, Banyuwangi traditional music groups are the result of a process of mixing cultures, one of which is the way of tuning. Gamelan craftsmen in the current generation use standard tuning tools for Western music to make it easier to tune *slendro tunings*. The current generation of craftsmen find it too difficult to adjust a *slendro sliring* that must use *filling* or feeling. This event is a concept of changing a culture caused by technological advances and slowly the previous tradition disappears (Wiranata, 2011: 67). In addition, Haviana & Sukmayadi (2021) explain that the use of technology can help speed up an artistic process, in this case, namely making a musical instrument.

Another change is in the number of blades described in the discussion above. *tunings, slendro sliring* if tuned using a Western music tuner system, start from D# more or less and have a total of 8 blades in *balungan type music*. As for *slendro*, it starts from the C# tone using a standard Western music tuner and has a total of 10 blades on a *balungan type musical instrument*. This is a development or change in the evolution of a traditional art with the aim of serving as a need for musical accompaniment in the arts of the current era (Hendarto, 2011: 8). In this

case the author will explain the differences between the *slendro sliring* tunings and *slendro* used today by using the example of the *saron*.

Bar Number <i>Saron</i>	<i>Laras Slendro</i> Current	<i>Laras Slendro</i> <i>Sliring</i>
1st	G#	A#
2nd	B	C#
3rd	C#	D#
4th	E	F#
5th	F#	G#
6th	G#	A#
7th	B	C#
8th	C#	D#
9th	E	
10th	F#	

Table 1. Differences between *Laras Slendro Sliring* and the *Slendro* Musical Instrument *Saron*



Figure 3. The Adjustment Process of Blades Using Western Music Tuning Standards

A change in a culture will have an impact on society itself. Like the change in the *laras slendro sliring* to *slendro* used today has an impact. There are positive and negative impacts. The following are some of the impacts that occur from changing the *slendro* for traditional Banyuwangi gamelan music groups.

### Impact of Changes in *Slendro Sliring*

Changes that occur in *slendro sliring tunings* in the Banyuwangi gamelan musical instrument group have an impact. Some of these impacts are positive and some are negative. Following are some of the data that has been analyzed which is the impact of changing the *slendro* in various aspects.

### Distinctive Characteristics of a Culture

The distinctive feature of a culture is a special pride for an ethnic group because these characteristics are only owned by that ethnic group. In this case, there is a change from the *laras slendro sliring* which was



regretted by many previous generations. Many senior artists are disappointed with the loss of the existence of *slendro sliring*, which has a negative impact. Therefore the change of *slendro sliring* tune eliminates the characteristics of traditional Banyuwangi music culture.

### **Banyuwangi Gamelan Craftsmen**

A change in the *laras slendro sliring* does not always have a negative impact, but for gamelan craftsmen this is an innovation that has a positive impact. Thanks to the existence of tuners that use Western music standards, the learning process for making Banyuwangi gamelan is easier to realize. In the current era, many young gamelan craftsmen produce Banyuwangi gamelan musical instruments. Compared to before, there were only a small number of craftsmen due to the difficulty of learning how to make gamelan using the old system, so production was not as much as today.

### **Education**

In the aspect of education, changes in the *laras slendro sliring* are very influential and have a positive impact. In addition to the increasing number of Banyuwangi gamelan craftsmen, many young people are also studying Banyuwangi music arts. One example is that many young people are studying vocals using the *slendro* used today because *range* of vocal tones is not too high when compared to vocal techniques that use *laras slendro sliring*. The next impact is that Banyuwangi's traditional vocal music is mandatory material in formal institutions such as schools and non-formal institutions such as studios. "This change event is one of the solutions so that the younger

generation can still learn several techniques, even though they are not the same as the previous tradition" (Mazlan et al, 2021).

### **CONCLUSION**

The traditional Banyuwangi gamelan music group is one type of gamelan group in the archipelago which has its own characteristics. One of them, namely Banyuwangi gamelan, often uses *slendro* compared to using *pelog*. Therefore the Banyuwangi gamelan also has a *slendro* tuning, namely the *laras slendro sliring*. However, as time went on, the *laras slendro sliring* was rarely found because there were several changes that made the *laras slendro sliring* turn into *slendro* used today. are factors for the change in the *slendro* Banyuwangi gamelan, namely evolution and acculturation. The existence of an evolution is caused by the inability of the new generation to use the *laras slendro sliring* like their predecessors because it is felt to be very difficult, especially for *crooked slendro sliring* which have a fairly high pitch. Therefore the new generation made an evolution, namely lowering the tone of the *laras slendro sliring* with the aim of making it easier to use so that Banyuwangi gamelan music still exists, although not the same as before. The second factor is the existence of an acculturation that occurs in the process of adjustment. At first Banyuwangi gamelan craftsmen adjusted *slendro sliring* with *feeling* or with *taste*. The new generation of artisans finds it very difficult to learn, so that the new generation uses a standard tuning system for Western music with a digital tuner.



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