
THE VALUES OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION AND THE POSITION OF TUNGGU TUBANG WOMEN IN SEMENDE'S CULTURE

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Abstract

The present study aims at investigating detailed information vis-a-vis Islamic educational values and the position of the daughter called Tunggu Tubang based on Semende's culture in Pulau Panggung Village. Resting upon a phenomenological approach using a case study design, five traditional figures of Semende's culture in Pulau Panggung village were involved as participants. The data were solicited from in-depth interviews, which were continuously conducted during the study for the sake of reaching the data's credibility. The current study revealed a number of cultural terms representing the values of Islamic education wherein those terms were reflected in some Qur'anic verses. Those cultural terms ranged from 'beganti', 'bepatian', 'besindat', 'bemalu', 'besingkuh' to 'besundi'. Furthermore, there were also revealed a couple of Semende's cultural symbols representing the position of Tunggu Tubang women. Those symbols encompassed 'paok', 'jalah', 'guci', 'kapak' and 'tombak'. This study makes a contribution in terms of zooming in the values of Islamic education and women's position in Semende's Tunggu Tubang culture. Further studies are expected to be oriented towards scrutinizing the efforts made to make Semende's Tunggu Tubang culture sustainable.

Keywords: culture, gender, equality, women, Islamic education

1. Introduction

Currently, the discourses of gender-based studies addressing the portrait of women in Indonesia have been oriented towards several contexts. Hidayah and Munastiwi [1] and Suardi and Ibrahim [2] see the portrait of women in the context of leadership. Nurhadi and Haris portrayed women related to the issues of professional achievement and competences [3]. Razak and Mundzir viewed the portrait of women in the context of their role as scholars [4]. Furthermore,

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Mursyidi viewed women from the use of social media and the global impact they are vulnerable to [5]. However, studies on the portrait of women in a cultural context still seem to have not been developed much. On the other hand, Indonesia is a multicultural country [6-12]. Indonesian multiculturalism will naturally make culture a context that willy-nilly associates with various issues in scientific studies, including gender studies when photographing the figure of Indonesian women. Thus, the present study seeks to portray women from the perspective of local wisdom, which is still preserved in South Sumatra.

In the area of South Sumatra in Indonesia, there is a village called Pulau Pangung. In this village, the people are known as Semende's people because their social life is framed by Semende's culture. Semende's culture draws the researchers' attention because there is a unique cultural element that raises women to play a big role in the family and carry great responsibilities. In Semende's culture, the first daughter is given a special treatment. Familial legacy will be largely passed down to the first daughter. A first-child daughter in a Semende's family is called Tunggu Tubang. This title will be pinned after she gets married [13]. With that title, she will also be culturally inherited a great responsibility including in the application of various cultural rules.

2. Semende

Terminologically, the word Semende has two meanings. Semende can mean *Syahadatain* based on the philosophy that Semende's people are all Muslims who only believe in Allah as the God and the Prophet Muhammad PBUH as a messenger of Allah. In the other aspect, more precisely from a social viewpoint, Semende is defined as working together. Etymologically, the word Semende is rooted in the morphemes *Se*, *Mah* and *Nde* that convey special but interrelated meanings. *Se* means union, *Mah* represents the meaning of house and *Nde* means right, belonging, or ownership. When combined, Semende is etymologically defined as a shared residence.

As explained by the leader of Semende, the term Semende has been used as a call for the community since 1650 AD. Such a call was pinned by an elder named Sheikh Nurqadim. He had a genealogical connection with Sunan Gunung Jati from the marriage of the eldest daughter of Cirebon's queen with Mpu Hyang Dade Abang. Sheikh Nurqadim, with the guardianship and wisdom inherited from Sunan Gunung Jati, was also a scholar in the region of South Sumatra at that time. He then married a girl from a settlement in the foothills of Mount Dempo. Today, that place becomes a village known as Muara Siban [14].

Another interpretation explains that Semende symbolizes the meaning of equal position. Semende symbolizes that both male and female genders have the same position as human beings in the eyes of Allah SWT which is associated with their respective roles, rights and obligations [14]. Furthermore, the word Semende is also interpreted to mean islands, or in the Indonesian national terms, it is called Nusantara.

3. A daughter of Tunggu Tubang in Semende's culture

A Semende's daughter called Tunggu Tubang is the inheritor of most of her parents' assets. She is trusted by the family to manage the inheritance for the benefit of all family members. She holds family responsibilities including, for example, guaranteeing her younger siblings' educational fees. Her brothers or sisters will also inherit the familial legacy but at a rate that is not as large as her portion. A Tunggu Tubang daughter's big role and responsibility also naturally implies that she must have good educational values, social competence and cultural values in accordance with her parents' expectations. Those variables become her indicators as a Tunggu Tubang daughter.

In Semende's culture, it is stipulated that a man who is married to a Tunggu Tubang woman should stay with his wife's relatives. They (the husband and wife) act as stakeholders of the family. Literally, Tunggu means a person who has a duty to keep goods or a house and is given the right to stay in the house that is shared. Tubang means a piece of bamboo used to store various needs [15].

In the discourse of gender equality, the Semende's culture of Tunggu Tubang seems to elevate the status of women equal to men. This condition is described in studies that discuss issues related to equality of roles between women and men [16]. This context is also in line with the principles of Muslim feminists. Historically, Muslim feminists developed their vision and missions in an Islamic context. They rejected the existence of discrimination leading women to disadvantages. They also refused any marginalization of women [17-22].

4. The relationship between culture and education

Every culture must have educational values in it. Culture is a way of life that develops from the familial environment to the community's environment. This way of life includes various visible and invisible aspects such as how to communicate, how to perceive social relationships, rituals, habits and even ways of thinking [7, 10, 12, 23-27]. In another perspective, culture is also defined as the concepts, beliefs, values and norms adopted by a society so that it influences people's behaviour in an effort to answer the challenges of life in their environment. Hence, with culture, humans can manage the nature with awareness and ideals that formulate what is meaningful, and what is not meaningful in life [28]. Concepts, values, and beliefs can influence a society so that the people are able to answer problems or challenges that exist in their environment.

Culture in general covers educational values in it. Education is a process to improve, strengthen and enhance human abilities and potential. Education, if viewed in more detail, is also associated with efforts to foster and build personality in line with the existing culture and values prevailing in the community [29-34].

Educational values from Semende's culture of Tunggu Tubang are basically inseparable from their connection with Islamic education. Islamic values to some extent have gone hand in hand with the culture of Tunggu Tubang, paving the way for Islam to be a religious guide in the midst of human life [35] in the context of Semende's people. Islam also regulates the order of women's lives. Islam glorifies women and maintains their existence to strive, be responsible, get rewarded and value themselves as noble human beings, likewise every man [35, p. 107].

Based on the existence of Semende's culture of Tubang Tubang, which emphasizes the position of women and the essence that Tunggu Tubang's culture embodies Islamic educational values in it, this study seeks to dig in-depth information on the values of Islamic education and the position of women in Semende culture of Tunggu Tubang.

5. Method

This article applied a case study method resting upon a phenomenological approach to reveal detailed information regarding the values of Islamic education and the position of women in the Semende's culture of Tubang Tubang in Pulau Panggung village. The rationale was because Tunggu Tubang's culture represented a social order system. This context is in line with the definition of case *per se* [36-40].

The data of the present study were garnered from five traditional figures in Pulau Panggung Village. All participants were over 50 years old and were trusted by the community as traditional figures. Of the five participants, three of them were religious leaders who understood the values of Islamic education in Tunggu Tubang's culture. All participants were selected using a snowball sampling technique in which individuals were selected from continuous and ongoing interviews with the community in Pulau Panggung village.

The data with respect to the values of Islamic education and the position of women in Tunggu Tubang's culture were obtained from in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews were conducted gradually to obtain detailed data related to the research focus. Interviews took over a period of two months. The pursuit of data credibility was done by involving more than one resource person and by conducting repeated interviews. This technique was used to avoid the bias of data [41].

The data were then analysed using an interactive model as suggested by Miles et al [42], in which the analysis procedures included data collection, data condensation, data presentation and data conclusion. As previously mentioned, the data collection was carried out using in-depth interviews and documentation. For data condensation, the data were mapped based on the emerging themes to make it easier to report the data. After the data were processed properly, the data were further presented in the form of interview excerpts and summaries of documentation. At the final stage, the data were concluded.

6. Results and discussion

6.1. Islamic educational values in the Semende's culture of Tunggu Tubang

Based on the results of in-depth interviews, there were several values of Islamic education acquired by women entitled Tunggu Tubang. According to Participant 1, pursuant to the teachings of Nur Qoqim commonly called *Puyang Awak*, there are six basic things that must be understood and obeyed by the Semende's community and especially women receiving the title of Tunggu Tubang, namely: *beganti*, *bepatian*, *besindat*, *bemalu*, *besingkuh* and *besundi*.

6.1.1. Beganti

According to Participant 2, *beganti* means being alert or sensitive to help the family and helping others with materials and energy. Protecting the family is an obligation for every human being. Participant 2 explained that this is in accordance with the teachings of Islam found in Surah At-Tahrim (Al-Qur'an, surah At-Tahrim, no. 66, verse 6): as follows

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ

Meaning: *O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones.*

6.1.2. Bepatian

Participant 2 further explained about *Bepatian*. He elucidated that *Bepatian* means self-care, good, honest and diligent in performing worship, so that life becomes directed and achieves happiness. The foregoing is in accordance with the teachings of Islam found in the Qur'an Q.S. Al-Qashash (Al-Qur'an, surah Al-Qashash, no. 28, verse 77):

وَأَتَّبِعْ فِيمَا ءَاتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِنْ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفُسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ۚ ۷۷

Meaning: *Rather, seek the 'reward' of the Hereafter by means of what Allah has granted you, without forgetting your share of this world. And be good 'to others' as Allah has been good to you. Do not seek to spread corruption in the land, for Allah certainly does not like the corruptors.*

6.1.3. Besindat

The other Islamic educational value is also found in the term *Besindat* within Tunggu Tubang's culture. According to Participant 4, *Besindat* reflects polite speech, being gentle in speaking and good in deeds. For example, the way one talks to his parents should be different from the way he talks to his siblings, likewise the way of communicating between son-in-law and mother-in-law. The purpose of *Besindat* is to educate people to use good and proper words during communication. If discerned from the discourses of social science and language,

the conception of *Besindat* illustrates the role of social interactions emphasizing politeness [43]. In the context of Islamic sharia, the sharia teaches people to respect their parents, love each other, and love the younger as the words of Allah in Q.S. Al-Isra' (Al-Qur'an, surah Al-Isra', no. 17, verse 23):

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا إِمَّا يَبُلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٌ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا ٢٣

Meaning: *For your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And honour your parents. If one or both of them reach old age in your care, never say to them 'even' 'ugh,' nor yell at them. Rather, address them respectfully.*

6.1.4. Bemalu

Participant 4 continuously discussed the term *Bemalu* which is also a representation of an Islamic value. According to him, *Bemalu* means shame. Islam states that shame is part of one's faith. The Semende's people uphold the character of shame. *Bemalu* reflects being shameful when speaking unkindly, when taking the rights of others, and when abandoning one's own rights and responsibilities. The first daughter called Tunggu Tubang is closer to the family, so that family members understand about her character. In such a way, the family members do not feel hesitated to ask for her help. Therefore, the role of women represents a progress in the family and the social environment.

6.1.5. Besingkuh

Interview data with Participant 1 also extended to the term *besingkuh*. According to him, *besingkuh* is a term related to manners between men and women. In so doing, both respect and glorify the self-esteem of both men and women. *Besingkuh* in socializing covers not only the aspect of behaviour but also those of speech, nature and the relationships in terms of friendship and family. The function of *besingkuh* is to respect the dignity as well as self-esteem between men and women. With *besingkuh*, an act that leads to the bad can be avoided because it is forbidden in Islamic law and Semende's cultural rules [14, p. 25]. As Allah says in the Qur'an Surah Al-Isra' (Al-Qur'an, surah Al-Isra', no. 17, verse 32):

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزَّوْجَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فِجْشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا ٣٢

Meaning: *And do not approach adultery, indeed adultery is an abomination and a hasty path.*

6.1.6. Besundi

The other Islamic educational value is also known as *besundi*. According to Participant 1, *besundi* is almost the same as *besingkuh* but in a higher bond, which means exemplary. For example, when someone becomes a parent, or when he becomes a leader, he exemplifies good acts for others. This relates to the words of Allah in Q.S. Al-Hajj (Al-Qur'an, surah Al-Hajj, no. 22, verse 41).

Allah states that those who are confirmed as leaders on Earth must call to do good deeds and to prevent evil deeds:

الَّذِينَ إِنْ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَلِلَّهِ غَيْبُ الْأُمُورِ ٤١

Meaning: *Those are the people who, if We give them a position on earth, they perform prayers, pay zakat, and call to do the good and prevent from evil, and to Allah return all matters.*

The six Semende's morals or manners above are a reflection of the Islamic educational values embedded in the Semende's culture of Tunggu Tubang.

6.2. The value of women as Tunggu Tubang

The position of women in Islam is respected. Islam recognizes women's abilities and potential. Islam never insults women and does not also praise women too much, but Islam places women in the right position. In so doing, women can be protected from humiliation of those who try to do arbitrarily towards women.

A woman who holds the role as Tunggu Tubang is educated as best as possible, so that she is able to become a trusted person with the assets that have been deposited by her family. The characteristics of the first daughter called Tunggu Tubang are reflected in the meaning reflected by the symbols that exist in Semende's culture. The symbols elevate Tunggu Tubang as a queen who is able to carry out her role as a leader in the family and take care of her family's property. Based on the results of in-depth interviews, there are several cultural symbols that reflect the position of women in the culture of Tunggu Tubang. The symbols are: *Paok* (fish pond), *Jalah* (fish net), *Guci* (jar), *Kapak* (ax) and *Tombak* (spear).

6.2.1. Paok (fish pond)

The first cultural symbol is *Paok*. Participant 3 explained that the philosophy of *Paok* depicts the position of a Tunggu Tubang woman. According to him, the *Paok* symbol depicts the calmness of a Tunggu Tubang woman. A Tunggu Tubang woman must have noble traits in the family to society. Such a trait that is not easy to complain is identical to a Tunggu Tubang woman in responding to her daily familial life. The beauty of the family is seen from her calmness. Patience and calmness will be of her goodness in the context of social life.

6.2.2. Jalah (fish net)

The second cultural symbol is known as *Jalah*. According to Participant 3, *Jalah* represents a central meaning. In this case, a Tunggu Tubang woman is the

centre for all relatives. She becomes one that connects the bonds of love for families who are far apart, and she improves all relationships in the family.

Tunggu Tubang is the medium of relationships of the whole family and her house becomes a place to return and to gather when familial activities are held. In addition, a Tunggu Tubang woman becomes a hanger of hope for families and the main guardian of the ancestral heritage [14, p. 29]. The house of a Tunggu Tubang woman becomes a centre for families to improve communication and familial relationships. *Jalah* is a trait that must be possessed by a Tunggu Tubang woman in order to be able to maintain relationships and unite distant families. Tunggu Tubang becomes the main medium in establishing a loving relationship in the family.

6.2.3. *Guci (jar)*

The third cultural symbol is *guci*. According to Participant 5, one's ability to see is very limited, and someone cannot see things inside a jar, which is well-covering, strong, and neatly adorned. A Tunggu Tubang woman has the ability to manage inheritance and make the familial situation safe and comfortable. She can also make bad conditions good and make good conditions better [14, p. 29]. *Guci* is a symbol of a Tunggu Tubang woman's appearance that is graceful, patient, clean and full of spirit. This means that a Tunggu Tubang woman can come up with her grace, patience, cleanness and great enthusiasm even though the familial situation is in trouble. A Tunggu Tubang woman has the ability to keep familial problems so that others (outsiders) could not see those problems. Keeping family's secret is a must for every human being, especially for a Muslim because opening up a family fault to others is not a good solution. The foregoing is in accordance with Islamic teachings, which prohibit opening other people's shame, especially the shame of one's own family. Allah SWT will open one's disgrace in return for him/her opening others' disgrace.

6.2.4. *Kapak (ax)*

According to Participant 5, the fourth cultural symbol is the philosophy of *Kapak*. *Kapak* serves to cut large logs. Someone chops large logs with *kapak* for ease and balance. As symbolized by *kapak*, it means that a Tunggu Tubang woman is a person who works hard and gives as much benefit as possible to the extended family and relatives. A Tunggu Tubang woman behaves fairly to every family member, either to her families or to her husband's families. This means that the symbol of *kapak* represents a Tunggu Tubang woman that is not partial. When a Tunggu Tubang woman has got married, those that must be honoured are not only the members of her family but also those of her husband's family because the husband will also share the burden of his wife as a Tunggu Tubang woman. In such a way, the familial mandate is undertaken by Tunggu Tubang and her husband together. In this case, the husband should also follow the rules that must be carried out by his wife as a Tunggu Tubang.

6.2.5. Tombak (spear)

The fifth cultural symbol is *tombak*. Participant 3 told that adds *tombak* represents a Tunggu Tubang woman's character as well. *Tombak* is a traditional tool that is often used by people for hunting. The meaning of *tombak* symbol is loyalty. As a *tombak* is thrown into a valley, it will precisely slid into a valley. Once it is thrown into a mountain, it will slide up to the mountain. This means that a Tunggu Tubang woman should be identical to dignity and loyalty. She must be one that is respected by the family and the community. She is obedient to mothers and fathers, parents-in-law, and *meraje* (a large family leader). In Islam, this character is associated with *sami'na wa atho'na* [13, p. 6]. Her obedience in the family indicates her success as the queen of the family. However, the meaning of *tombak* symbol makes her lose her freedom because she is bound by her position as Tunggu Tubang. A queen in Semende's culture is different from the meaning of a queen in general. The queen in Semende's culture is one who takes care and manages what is entrusted to her. The queen in Semende's culture has a job that not many people are able to do. Therefore it is the role of *Meraje*, *Jenang Jurai* and *Payung Jurai* (the respected parties in the family) that guide and monitor the Tunggu Tubang woman so that she succeeds in taking her role as expected.

7. Conclusions

This study reveals two aspects of the Semende's culture of Tunggu Tubang, namely the values of Islamic education and the position of a Tunggu Tubang woman. Both aspects are represented by Semende's cultural symbols. The values of Islamic education are represented by several cultural terms such as *beganti*, *bepatian*, *besindat*, *bemalu*, *besingkuh* and *besundi*. First, the term *beganti* means an alert to help the family and to help others with both materials and energy. *Beganti* is associated with the Islamic value found in Surah At-Tahrim (Al-Qur'an, surah At-Tahrim, no. 66, verse 6). Second, the term *bepatian* means self-care, kindness, honesty and diligence in carrying out worship. *Bepatian* contains the value of Islamic education which is described in the Q.S. Al-Qashash (Al-Qur'an, surah Al-Qashash, no. 28, verse 77). Third, the term *besindat* reflects speech that is polite, gentle in speaking and good in deeds. *Besindat* contains the value of Islamic education as described in Q.S. Al-Isra' (Al-Qur'an, surah Al-Isra', no. 17, verse 23). Fourth, the term *bemalu* symbolizes an attitude of shame for bad or despicable actions as in Islam this attitude is associated with a person's level of faith. Fifth, the term *besingkuh* is interpreted as socializing manners between men and women in order that both of them respect each other and honour the dignity of men and women. In Islamic education, *besingkuh* is described in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Isra' (Al-Qur'an, surah Al-Isra', no. 17, verse 32). Sixth, the term *besundi* is defined as an example. In the view of Islamic education, *besundi* is described in Q.S. Al-Hajj (Al-Qur'an, surah Al-Hajj, no. 22, verse 41).

In the aspect of Tunggu Tubang woman's position, there are several cultural symbols that represent it such as *paok* (fish pond), *jalah* (fish net), *guci* (jar), *kapak* (ax) and *tombak* (spear). *Paok* symbolizes the calmness of a Tunggu Tubang woman. *Jalah* symbolizes that a Tunggu Tubang woman is the centre for each relative. *Guci* symbolizes that a Tunggu Tubang woman has the ability to manage inheritance, make the familial situation safe and comfortable, make bad things good, and make good things better. *Kapak* symbolizes that a Tunggu Tubang woman works hard and gives as much benefit as possible to the extended family and relatives. A Tunggu Tubang woman behaves fairly to every family, to her family and to her husband's family. Subsequently, *tombak* symbolizes the loyalty of a Tunggu Tubang woman. These cultural symbols demonstrate that a Tunggu Tubang woman has a noble position in Semende's culture.

This study contributes to uplifting the values of Islamic education and the position of women in the Semende's culture of Tunggu Tubang. However, this study is limited to the use of merely one research method, namely a phenomenological approach using a case study design to reveal qualitative data sourced from five traditional leaders who are knowledgeable about the Semende's culture of Tunggu Tubang in Pulau Panggung village. Albeit being limited by a single research approach, the data's credibility has been pursued and achieved by in-depth interviews conducted repetitively. Further studies are expected to work on the issue of cultural preservation of Semende's culture of Tunggu Tubang.

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