

CHANGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EARTH CHARITY TRADITION TO WELCOME 1 MUHARRAM IN THE KIRI BANDUNG SUB-DISTRICT OF LUBUKLINGGAU CITY

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Abstract

The Sedekah Bumi tradition in Bandung Kiri Village, Lubuklinggau City, has undergone significant transformation since it was first implemented in the 1970s. This article discusses how the tradition of welcoming the Javanese New Year (1 Suro) or Islamic New Year (1 Muharram), which was previously associated with mystical practices such as offering rituals, has evolved into a religious and prayer-centered Islamic activity. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with interview techniques involving local community leaders. Based on the theory of cultural acculturation, the transformation occurs through a process of adaptation between local traditions and Islamic values without eliminating social harmony. The findings show that the transformation of the Sedekah Bumi tradition has strengthened social solidarity, increased community participation, and strengthened relationships among residents.

Keywords : Earth Alms, 1 Muharram, Cultural Transformation, Cultural Acculturation, Bandung Kiri, Lubuklinggau.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with diverse cultures and customs passed down through generations. Culture not only defines a group's identity but also serves as a guide for social life. In anthropological studies, culture is understood as a system of inherited meanings that continually evolves with changing times.

According to Clifford Geertz (1973), culture is a pattern of meanings inherited historically through symbols that humans use to understand their lives. Therefore, culture is not fixed, but can change as society's thought patterns and understanding evolve.

Cultural changes have occurred frequently in Indonesian traditions, particularly those related to local beliefs and religion. One such tradition is Sedekah Bumi (Earth

Almsgiving). The Sedekah Bumi tradition is widely known in Javanese society as a form of gratitude to God for the safety, the harvest, and the community's livelihood. In practice, this tradition often undergoes adjustments to reflect social and religious developments.

This change can be seen in the implementation of the Sedekah Bumi tradition in RT 02, Bandung Kiri Village, Lubuklinggau City. This tradition was originally brought by people of Javanese descent and is held every year to welcome the 1st of Suro (1 Muharram). In its early days, the Sedekah Bumi tradition still employed traditional spiritual practices, such as offerings at crossroads as a form of prayer for safety.

However, as people's understanding of religion increases, the form of implementing traditions has changed. Elements that were considered contrary to Islamic teachings began to be removed and replaced with religious activities such as group prayer, reciting salawat, religious lectures, and eating together.

This change demonstrates a process of cultural acculturation, the adaptation of local culture to religious values without losing the community's cultural identity. The Sedekah Bumi tradition remains preserved as a cultural heritage, but its content and implementation are adapted to the Islamic values prevailing in the community.

This article aims to explain the history of the Sedekah Bumi tradition in Bandung Kiri Village, the process of changing its implementation, and the social impact it has had on the local community.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method with in-depth interviews as the data collection technique. Qualitative methods were used to understand changes in the Sedekah Bumi tradition based on the experiences and perspectives of the local community.

The primary sources for this research were Mrs. Efi Diana, the Head of Neighborhood Association (RT) 02 in Bandung Kiri Village, and her husband, the Head of the Bandung Kiri Village Student Association (LPM). Interviews were conducted in person in May 2026 to obtain information on the history, development, and changes in the Sedekah Bumi tradition in the area.

In addition to interviews, research data was also obtained through audio recordings of interviews stored in the file AUD-20260525-WA0037.aac. The data obtained were then analyzed using a descriptive approach by linking the interview results to theories of cultural acculturation and the social function of traditions in society.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Early History of the Earth Alms Tradition

According to an interview with the Head of the Bandung Kiri Village LPM (LPM), the Sedekah Bumi tradition began around the 1970s by a community leader named Mbah Ikem. This tradition was brought to us by the Javanese community living in the Bandung Kiri area.

In the early days of its implementation, Sedekah Bumi was carried out as a form of request for safety from the guardians of nature or ancestral spirits. People at that time still believed in traditional spiritual practices which were manifested through the use of offerings at road intersections.

According to the source, "In the past, people would place offerings at four-way intersections as a form of prayer for safety. This tradition is still strong, based on old beliefs."

This tradition is carried out every night of 1 Suro, where certain foods are placed at various points along the road as a symbol of respect for the supernatural powers believed to guard the area. In the past, this practice was quite common in Javanese society, which still retains animist and dynamist influences.

However, this tradition stopped for quite a long time after Mbah Ikem's death because there were no community leaders to continue its implementation.

Changes in Tradition and the Process of Cultural Acculturation

Around 2019, the Sedekah Bumi tradition was revived by the local neighborhood association (RT) head, Mr. Joni. However, the tradition no longer incorporates mystical elements such as offerings, as they were deemed inappropriate for the community's evolving understanding of religion.

This change indicates the process of cultural acculturation. According to Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936), acculturation is the process by which two cultures meet and influence each other, resulting in a new cultural form without losing the identity of the previous culture.

Through deliberations between community leaders, religious figures, and local residents, it was agreed that the Sedekah Bumi tradition would be maintained, but the activities would be transformed to be more religious and Islamic in nature. The previous offerings were replaced with the recitation of salawat (prayer offerings), religious lectures, communal prayers, and a communal meal of tumpeng rice brought by residents.

This change is also in line with the concept of "Indigenization of Islam" put forward by Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), namely the effort to harmonize Islamic values with local culture without eliminating the identity of the community.

According to Lastri Khasanah in the journal *Acculturation of Religion and Local Culture*, the development of Islam in Indonesia is inseparable from the process of cultural dialogue with local traditions. Islam developed by adapting to local cultures, giving rise to new traditions that maintain local identity.

This phenomenon is clearly evident in the changes in Sedekah Bumi (Earth Alms) in Left Bandung. The community hasn't completely eliminated the tradition, but has adapted its implementation. While the activity was previously focused on traditional spiritual rituals, it now focuses on religious and social activities.

The differences between the implementation of the Earth Alms tradition in the past and now can be seen in the following aspects:

1. The focus of activities that previously welcomed 1 Suro is now more focused on commemorating 1 Muharram as the Islamic new year.
2. The ritual media which previously consisted of offerings was replaced with tumpeng rice which was brought voluntarily by residents.
3. Activities that were previously of a traditional spiritual nature have changed into religious activities in the form of prayers, lectures and group prayers.
4. Food that was previously left at crossroads is now eaten together by the community as a form of togetherness and gratitude.

These changes show that community culture is dynamic and can adapt to developments in social and religious values without eliminating local cultural identity.

Social Function of the Earth Alms Tradition

The Sedekah Bumi tradition not only has cultural value but also serves a social function for the community. According to Koentjaraningrat (2009), customs serve to maintain social order, strengthen community ties, and create social solidarity in communal life.

Based on interviews, the Sedekah Bumi (Earth Alms) activities in Left Bandung have had a positive impact on the community, particularly in strengthening relationships between residents. This tradition brings people of all ages together to pray and share a meal.

The event also serves as a means of social education for the younger generation. Children are introduced to the importance of welcoming the Islamic New Year through positive and religious activities. Furthermore, the community is taught the importance of mutual cooperation and togetherness in community life.

Ahmad Rubai and Mohammad Rofiq's research on the social function of Sedekah Bumi (Earth Charity) explains that local traditions play a crucial role in maintaining community solidarity. Traditions serve as a medium for strengthening emotional bonds between community members and maintaining social stability.

This was evident in the involvement of the people of Bandung Kiri in preparing the event, bringing tumpeng (rice cone), and participating in communal prayers. Even residents from other neighborhood units (RTs) attended and participated in the event.

Besides strengthening community ties, the Sedekah Bumi tradition also strengthens the relationship between the community and the local government. This activity is regularly attended by village heads, sub-district heads, Babinsa (village

supervisors), and Bhabinkamtibmas (community police officers) as a form of support for the preservation of local culture that has been adapted to religious values.

The Earth Alms Tradition as a Local Cultural Identity

Despite changes in its form, Sedekah Bumi remains a part of the cultural identity of the people of Left Bandung. This tradition symbolizes Javanese cultural heritage and is still maintained today.

According to research by Shevia Putri Permatasari and Agus Machfud Fauzi in the Indonesian Journal of Sociology of Religion, local traditions play a crucial role in shaping a community's social identity. Traditions that are passed down from generation to generation foster a sense of belonging and strengthen cultural ties.

In the context of Left Bandung, the Sedekah Bumi tradition has become a symbol of community unity. The tradition is no longer understood as a mystical ritual, but rather as a means of gratitude to God Almighty and a means of strengthening ties.

These changes prove that local culture can survive amidst the developments of the times as long as society is able to adapt it to prevailing social and religious values.

CONCLUSION

The changes in the implementation of the Sedekah Bumi tradition in Bandung Kiri Village demonstrate that local traditions can be preserved without conflicting with religious values. Through a process of acculturation, previously animistic practices have been transformed into religious activities more in line with evolving community understanding.

This transformation does not diminish the tradition's primary purpose as a means of community togetherness. Instead, the Sedekah Bumi tradition now serves as a means to strengthen ties, strengthen social solidarity, enhance religious values, and preserve the cultural identity of the Bandung Kiri sub-district community.

Thus, the change in the Sedekah Bumi tradition in Left Bandung is proof that local culture and religious teachings can coexist through a harmonious social adjustment process.

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Oral Source: Interview with Mrs. Efi Diana and the Chairperson of the Bandung Kiri Village LPM, May 2026.