



The Dekekan or Selehan Culture in the Poncokusumo Community with the Unique Subject Focused Intensive Study Approach

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the Dekekan or Selehan tradition in the village of Poncokusumo, serving as a concrete example of togetherness in society. Utilizing phenomenological and qualitative descriptive analysis methods, this study reveals that Dekekan is not merely a tradition but also a manifestation of solidarity and unity amidst Indonesia's cultural diversity. Interview results indicate that Dekekan involves providing assistance in various forms during wedding events or house construction, establishing a system of trust and collective responsibility within the community. The conclusion emphasizes the importance of preserving this tradition through innovation and respecting the values of social solidarity among ethnic groups. Recommendations include government support for the development and preservation of cultural traditions within diverse communities, with the hope of fostering harmony within the framework of national unity (Bhinneka Tunggal Ika).

Keywords: Tradition, Culture, Ethnicity

Introduction

Indonesia is a diverse nation with rich geographical and cultural diversity among its ethnic groups. Each ethnic group or region possesses unique cultural traditions influenced by specific societal conditions reflected in their collective thoughts. These differences stem from distinct histories and cultures, as well as adaptations to the surrounding environment (Parsudi, 1989). As social beings, humans are inherently bound by communal living, inspiring various cultural expressions and practices that enrich the shared human experience. Culture holds profound meaning, encompassing everything perceived, created, and composed by humans.

Cultural differences among ethnic traditions can be categorized into two aspects. First, observable signs or symptoms, such as distinctive cultural forms that become one's or a group's identity, including clothing styles, lifestyles, languages, and more. Second, variations in fundamental values, such as moral standards used to assess an individual's behavior. According to Fredrik Barth, an ethnic group is a community that can biologically reproduce, form its own communication and interaction networks, share common values, and have a sense of togetherness through a cultural form that distinguishes the group from others (Fredrik Barth, 1988).

A tangible example of a tradition fostering togetherness in society is the Dekekan or Selehan Tradition in Poncokusumo. This tradition originated from the local community's desire to preserve and strengthen familial bonds. It illustrates that humans are motivated by specific motives to form particular behaviors, a principle that applies to communal bonding or the formation of social groups within society. This tradition is practiced during wedding events where relatives, close friends, or neighbors not only attend but also contribute donations, whether in the form of money or groceries. These contributions are considered "savings" or "deposits," and the contributors can only enjoy similar contributions when they host their own events.

The abundance of Dekekan Culture within the Poncokusumo community reflects a traditional system where deposited money does not have a fixed nominal value. Instead, it depends on the policies set by the person depositing the money, known as "ndekek." This depositing process results in "kedelehan," the recipient of the deposit. In this culture, there are unwritten rules collectively agreed upon, where the returned money must be of equal value or even increased. This phenomenon creates a system of trust and collective responsibility among the community, shaping the identity and patterns of social interaction in Poncokusumo. From a psychological perspective, Dekekan culture reflects values of togetherness, mutual trust, and shared responsibility, serving as a mirror of the psychological strength of the community in maintaining solidarity and interpersonal relationships.

Method

This study employs phenomenological methods, descriptive analysis, and a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is a procedure that generates descriptive data in the form of written words, speech, and observed behavior from individuals or groups. The chosen method aims to interpret the actions

and behaviors of individuals, groups, and formal and informal organizations like Dekekan. By engaging in intensive interaction and communication with the researched parties, the researcher seeks to understand and develop patterns and analyses of social processes in the focused community (John, 1994).

The descriptive method is utilized to interpret factual meanings involving prevailing procedures in society, including situations, activities, attitudes, relationship patterns, perspectives, and ongoing processes (Nazir, 1985). This approach is grounded in a deep understanding of social phenomena, referring to social actions, cultural values, and thought patterns. A profound understanding of the meaning world held by social actors aids in comprehending social phenomena (Sanapiah, 2021).

Primary data sources in this study are obtained through interviews and observations of the actions, behaviors, and understanding of the Poncokusumo community regarding the Dekekan tradition. Secondary data, supporting primary data, are acquired through references from books, journals, archives, personal documents, and relevant literature related to the research focus. Both types of data are collected through observation methods, in-depth interviews, regular interviews, and documentation.

In-depth interviews are conducted face-to-face with informants purposively and through snowball sampling. The primary objective is to obtain a comprehensive understanding and information about the Dekekan tradition. The researcher conducts interviews with various parties with diverse insights into this tradition, such as group leaders, record keepers, members, and other Poncokusumo community members knowledgeable about Dekekan. The approach used is an unstructured interview model, where the interview process is not bound by specific guidelines but adapts to the conversation's development. Although unstructured, the researcher still focuses on crucial points, termed as focused interviews. To facilitate the process, the researcher combines this with free interviews, allowing a free transition between different topics. Additionally, the researcher uses a casual interview technique, where no prior selection is made for interviewees (Koentjaraningrat, 1989).

Data analysis techniques in this study involve three stages: data reduction, data display, and verification for drawing conclusions (Nazir, 1985). These stages form the basis for compiling the final conclusions, made based on testing interpretations in each previous chapter. The conclusions are structured logically, systematically, and reliably.

Discussion

Based on the conducted interviews, it is revealed that the Dekekan or Selehan culture actively practiced by the Poncokusumo community stands out as different from common practices. Dekekan is organized in the context of significant events such as weddings or house construction. Interestingly, Dekekan involves not only money but also basic needs like rice, groceries, or even construction materials like cement, bricks, and sand when someone is building a house.

The Dekekan system emphasizes mutual assistance among relatives or fellow citizens. For example, individual A provides assistance in the form of rice, sugar, and oil when individual B is getting married or building a house, and vice versa. The primary purpose of the Dekekan practice is to strengthen social ties among community members and serve as a platform for exchanging experiences and information. Thus, Dekekan is not just a tradition but also a form of solidarity and togetherness within the Poncokusumo community.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, several conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the community views Dekekan or Selehan as a cultural heritage that binds relationships from one generation to the next. Secondly, this tradition occurs at specific times, especially during wedding seasons or house construction. The essence of Dekekan or Selehan lies in providing money, groceries, or building materials to those hosting events or activities. The recipient (kedelehan) usually records this in a book prepared by the event host, ensuring that when the host organizes another event, the recipient can give something with an equal nominal value and similar items as previously given. Thirdly, this tradition not only integrates groups but also serves.

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