



Preservation of Cultural Values and Religious Character Through the Art of Gembyung Art

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| ABSTRACT | ARTICLE INFO |
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| <p>The cultural diversity that is owned by the Indonesian nation is a beautiful thing to be maintained and preserved so that it has an important role in building good relations in the progress of the nation. As a good citizen, one must maintain and preserve every culture that belongs to the Indonesian state. One of the cultures that Indonesia has is the Gembyung culture, which originates from Sumedang, West Java. In this study, researchers used a qualitative approach with the case study method. The participants in this study were the Sumedang Regency heirloom group with data collection techniques through interviews, observations and literature studies. The data analysis technique used is data reduction, data presentation and conclusions drawn by researchers. The results obtained from this study are: (1) Knowing the art form of gembyung in Sumedang Regency to preserve culture and religious character, (2) Management of Gembyung art in Sumedang Regency in preserving cultural values and religious character, (3) constraints and solutions in managing gembyung art in Sumedang Regency in preserving cultural values and religious character.</p> <p>© 2021 Jurnal Civicus</p> | <p>Article History: <i>Submitted/Received 25 Mar 2021</i> <i>First Revised 20 May 2021</i> <i>Accepted 10 Jun 2021</i> <i>First Available online 26 Jun 2021</i> <i>Publication Date 26 Jun 2021</i></p> <hr/> <p>Keyword: <i>Gembyung Art,</i> <i>Preservation of Cultural,</i> <i>Values and Religious</i> <i>Characters.</i></p> |

1. INTRODUCTION

Art activities carried out in areas in West Java that hold a variety of traditional arts are found in Sumedang Regency, which has seven traditional art forms that are recognized by the Culture Tourism and Sports Office of Sumedang Regency, including the arts of Tarawangsa, Renggong Horse, Sundanese Reog, Seren/book ceremony year, Gembyung, Ngaruwat jagat, and Nyadap. Most of these traditional arts were born and developed in villages in Sumedang Regency because life in rural areas generally still adheres to traditional ways of life, Rural areas have long been a repository of traditional arts, various forms of art such as sculpture, dance, performing arts, oral literature and so on have long attracted attention, both because of their high quality, and because of their authenticity, this is a part that must be preserved and cultivated within the community.

Of the many traditional arts in Sumedang Regency, the author takes Gembyung art as research material (Setiawan, 2013). These traditional arts are usually played for people's entertainment, also used for traditional ceremonies such as *ruwatan bumi*. When viewed from the form of presentation of Gembyung art, the art is influenced by two cultures, namely Hindu culture and Islamic culture (Hadi & Suparli, 2019). The influence of Hindu culture can be seen in the presentation of the offerings, before the Gembyung show is shown. Meanwhile, the influence of Islamic culture can be seen in the use of *terebang* as the main musical instrument and in the form of poetry in the form of praises to Allah and the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Notes on all kinds of art are included in the art of flying or sholawatan, perhaps because the element of flying as a musical instrument is known since the arrival of Islam in Indonesia, and then it became a hallmark of art Islamic music.

One area that is currently still preserving the Gembyung traditional art is Buganggeureung Village. The village, which until now still holds fast to its customs and traditions, has an artistic environment called Gembyung. This artistic environment is *Pusaka Mekar* led by Abah Adang. Judging from the development of the show, Gembyung *Pusaka Mekar* has remained steadfast in maintaining tradition and upholding the norms that have been in effect since Gembyung was first introduced until now. In other words, in every performance of the Gembyung art in Buganggeureung Village there should be no changes either in terms of the appearance of the performers, the arrangement of the songs and the *waditra*.

Gembyung art found in the Buganggeureung community is not only an expression of art, but also the actualization of their religiosity towards God and their ancestors. For them, the Gembyung art is a medium to express their gratitude to God by reciting poems that glorify His greatness and on the other hand, they traditionally thank their ancestors. The purpose of this research is to find out the role of gembyung art in efforts to preserve cultural values and religious character in Sumedang district as time goes by and the times are increasingly rapid, the Gembyung art tradition begins to fade and begins to be forgotten by society, Gembyung art only survives in certain areas only those who still hold fast to their ancestors and pay respect to the departed ancestral spirits through rhythmic verses that are sung, so that the lack of the role of the younger generation in preserving the Gembyung art is due to ignorance of the existence of traditional arts in their area.

2. METHODS

The researcher used a qualitative approach to obtain in-depth information regarding the preservation of cultural values and religious character through gembyung art in the Sumedang Regency heritage group because qualitative research has the goal of explaining the phenomenon in depth through data collection during the field.

This research does not prioritize the size of the population or sampling, even the sampling is very limited. If the data collected is in-depth and can explain the phenomenon under study, then there is no need to look for another sampling to answer every question in the problem formulation, this is also supported by expert opinion which states that qualitative research places more emphasis on the problem of depth (quality) data not the amount (quantity) data ([Mulyadi, 2013](#)).

Data collection techniques in this study were by means of interviews to make it easier for researchers to obtain information directly, Observations to see the process of implementing gembyung arts in the heritage group, documentation studies for taking pictures by researchers to strengthen research results and lottery studies to complement the results research is carried out by reading, studying and reviewing existing literature to be processed by researchers.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 RESULTS

3.1.1 Gembyung art in Sumedang Regency as an effort to preserve cultural values and religious character

The university is one of the highest educational institutions at the education level, namely tertiary institutions after the senior high school period has been completed. Education is a basic need in everyone's life. Education is inseparable from the academic field, namely teaching and learning. Learning is a theory and knowledge that cannot be separated from education. Education is learning to gain knowledge in all fields to gain knowledge ([Qodir, 2017](#)). By getting a theory in a particular field. For this reason, a university that has high quality is needed to create quality and reliable human resources in all fields and be able to get involved in the community to apply their knowledge. Along with the development of time, universities/colleges continue to grow and compete in the academic and non-academic fields. Each university has different rules and requirements. Superior human resources are those who are creative, innovative, productive, and have noble character. Therefore, the importance of tertiary institutions or universities through the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, higher education will become the backbone of future economic, social, and community development. Amid today's very rapid technological changes, higher education institutions must be able to prepare human resource competencies, with good and quality competence, it will be easier to get a job with a good position as well.

One of them is through the Merdeka Learning Campus Merdeka program, which is a breakthrough for the future of college graduates. And currently, our universities are preparing superior, creative, productive, and noble human resources. Higher education has three important things, namely quality, relevance, and attractiveness. "Quality is very important because if the quality is not maintained then public trust in tertiary institutions will fade and they will be abandoned. For tertiary institutions to be of high quality, management must be professional. In terms of relevance, in organizing higher education far from the needs of the community, the relevance of higher education is very important. Thus, higher education is still needed by the community. "Relevance means an independent campus, how do we bring professionals, and business actors into the class, we bring modern farmers into the class, and we bring the class into the best learning problems and best learning projects. Meanwhile, regarding attractive campuses, he emphasizes that currently what students expect is space for discussion, interaction, building dialectical spaces, and interacting between students and lecturers, making the campus dynamic.

Based on the results of interviews with the head of the DA *Pusaka Mekar* group, it was revealed that the geographic situation of the village. Beuganggeurang Kab. Sumedang is a plateau or mountains so it is very suitable for agricultural land. This resulted in the majority of the population having a livelihood as farmers. This type of livelihood greatly supports the birth of various traditional arts, such as the birth of the Gembyung art. Where these traditional arts grow and develop in agrarian areas where most of the people still preserve traditional arts.

The background to the birth of the Gembyung art was born at the same time as the emergence of Islam and was used as a medium for spreading Islam. This was supported by the DA as a community figure in the gembyung art. , which comes from Mataram. He is the one who spread Islam in the Sumedang area.

In the development of religious character, the Gembyung art is an art that functions as a means of ritual. The presentation of this art is always associated with the ritual interests of the people of Sekarwangi Village, such as *ngaruwat bumi*, *hajat roses*, and *ngabeungkat (hajat cai)*. The time for the Gembyung performance is not limited, meaning that the art can be performed in the morning, afternoon, evening and night.

In the socio-cultural life of the community in an area is very important. This is because each region has a socio-cultural life that is different from other regions, which is its own characteristic for that area. The socio-cultural characteristics of the population are generally shown by customs, cultural characteristics, folk crafts, architectural characteristics of buildings, everyday language, special foods and others. The socio-cultural conditions of the Beuganggerang Village community can be seen from several aspects which include religious, educational, social (change and mobility) aspects as well as the traditional values that develop in the life of the local community. The size of the population will be one of the potential basic capital for the development of a region if it is supported by good quality human resources.

3.1.2 Management of Gembyung art performances in Sumedang Regency as an effort to preserve cultural values and religious character

- (i) Preparation of art supplies
Equipment that must be prepared before the Gembyung art performance is shown such as preparing mats and preparing offerings. The offerings are divided into three, namely: *Parawanten*, *Pangradinan* and *Parupuyan* offerings.
- (ii) Players
The players in the Gembyung art, according to the number of waditra used. In this art performance, the *nayaga* also plays a role as a *sekar* interpreter, in other words, the *nayaga* has a double role, namely as a musician, as well as a singer. The number of gembyung players is 7 players, 5 people act as *nayaga* and 2 people as dancers.
- (iii) Waditra (Musical Instrument)
According to AM (interview 20 February 2020) Lingkungan Seni Gembyung Pusaka Mekar uses 5 waditra (musical instruments), namely 3 *terebang* consisting of ovary *hiji*, ovary *dua* and *kempring*, plus 1 *kecrek* and 1 *drum*.
- (iv) The songs are presented
The songs that are usually presented in the Gembyung art have a simple rhythm pattern. In addition, the songs in the Gembyung art generally have short verses. In each presentation of the Gembyung art, each song presented is repeated many times using different song lyrics. When viewed from the variety, the song in Gembyung art consists of fifteen songs, namely the song Ya Bismillah as the opening song. The song is sung by a show leader.

3.1.3 Obstacles in managing the Gembyung art in Sumedang Regency and what are the solutions in preserving cultural values and religious character

Constraints in managing the Gembyung Lingkung arts Seni Pusaka Mekar adheres to the rules and does not want any changes in the Gembyung arts that they perform, both in terms of songs, costumes, and *waditra*. On the one hand, this has resulted in the Gembyung Lingkung Seni Pusaka Mekar Saluyu not developing. However, on the other hand, this is an advantage possessed by the Mekar Pusaka Art Circle because among the other Gembyung Art Circles, Gembyung Pusaka Mekar is the only Art Circle that has been able to survive with its authenticity.

The Gembyung Pusaka Mekar Art Circle is not well organized. Although the Arts Circle has a chairman, it does not have a deputy, secretary and treasurer. The organizing system that most impedes the development of Gembyung art is the lack of ability to manage finances. Finance is one of the important factors that support the continuity of the Gembyung art to survive. Funds obtained by Gembyung art artists in general only come from proper summons, there is no income.

Another view is that art has not experienced regeneration. The Gembyung players are still dominated by people who are already elderly. Meanwhile, there are only a few players from the younger generation. At this time, the younger generation has begun to shift their tastes towards modern art because traditional art is considered outdated. It is feared that it will threaten the existence of the Gembyung art and become one of the inhibiting factors for the development of this art in the future.

3.2 DISCUSSION

3.2.1 Gembyung art in Sumedang Regency as an effort to preserve cultural values and religious character

Gembyung art is an art that functions as a means of ritual ([Supriatna, 2010](#)). The presentation of this art is always associated with the ritual interests of the people of Sekarwangi Village, such as *ngaruwat bumi*, *hajat roses*, and *ngabeungkat* (*hajat cai*). The time for the Gembyung art performance is not bound, meaning that the art can be performed in the morning, afternoon, evening and night. This agrees with Agustin explaining that the Gembyung art in the Banceuy community functions more as a ritual function ([Agustin, 2011](#)). Unlike people in other areas who are now starting to abandon their traditional arts, this is the case with the people of Kampung Banceuy, they are still preserving the traditional art of Gembyung.

According to Edi Sedyawati performing arts in Indonesia depart from a situation where it grows in ethnic environments that are different from each other, so that gembyung arts grow and develop in society to foster religious attitudes and cultivate character ([Islami & Rukiah, 2019](#)). Society contained in the understanding of interpretation Zulhawati in ([Sidin et al., 2020](#)) character is behavior that is carried out automatically. Character has the most important position in life, therefore gembyung art is one of the formation of character for society.

3.2.2 Management of Gembyung art performances in Sumedang Regency as an effort to preserve cultural values and religious character

The management of gembyung art performances is a process that must be planned in an appropriate and efficient way to make a decision based on culture, leaders and use human resources properly, gembyung art has combined this into art that is loved by the community

by musical instruments, preparation for a series of performances and the contents are sung by the players.

Gembyung art in preserving cultural values and religious characteristics must cultivate religious character within society first understanding of gembyung art in this matter agreed with Beru in the journal scientific divides the value of the character of one of them reflecting religious character belief in God Almighty embodied in behavior carry out religious teachings and beliefs embraced, respecting religious differences, uphold tolerance implementation of religious worship and belief others through art, it really is influential in the management of the show gembyung art in society (Perangin-angin, 2017).

Gembyung art is performing arts, according to Jacob Sumarjo different from other branches of art, performing arts are not "object" arts (Sutisna et al., 2019). A performance art begins and finishes at a certain time and at a certain place, after that there is no more form of performance art. A performing art is only performed once, another performance is another "form" of art, even though the art material remains the same. This is what makes gembyung art loved and preserved by the community.

3.2.3 Obstacles in managing the Gembyung art in Sumedang Regency and what are the solutions in preserving cultural values and religious character

The obstacle experienced by gembyung art is the process of globalization entering society where people are already very eroded to watch gembyung art performances and local youth do not preserve local indigenous culture is lost. Gembyung art must be preserved by the government and local indigenous peoples with the aim of preserving culture. Preservation of local culture is maintaining the values of cultural arts, traditional values by developing dynamic manifestations (Junaid, 2013), flexible and selective as well as adapting to situations and conditions that are always changing and developing, this is a common goal in overcoming obstacles in preserving culture, there are several problems that occur in preserving Gembyung culture, namely Gembyung artists, both managers and actors have a very low level of education, namely the elementary school level or at least junior high school (SMP). The low level of education is due to the low response and orientation of the community towards the importance of formal education. As a result of this, Gembyung artists are less able to develop themselves. Even though you have experience, if you don't want to learn in self-development and have an open mind-set to constructive inputs, then of course the result of the Gembyung art will stagnate or not develop which will eventually lead to extinction.

4 CONCLUSION

Gembyung art is an art that functions as a means of ritual. The presentation of this art is always associated with the ritual interests of the people of Sekarwangi Village, such as ngaruwat bumi, hajat roses, and ngabeungkat (hajat cai). The time for the Gembyung performance is not limited, meaning that the art can be performed in the morning, afternoon, evening and evening. The Gembyung series is divided into three parts, namely preparation, implementation and closing. In the preparation section before Gembyung is performed, offerings must be provided in the form of, pangradinan, and lumpurpuyan. Then prepare a mat, usually like to be installed in the house or in the yard.

Equipment that must be prepared before the Gembyung art performance is shown. There are three groups of offerings. First he called parawanten whose contents consisted of foods such as Sangu rosul (rice cone packed with leaves), Ambon bananas, one liter of rice, free-

range chicken eggs, opak, ranginang, noga, teng-teng (local specialties), various types of porridge including marrow porridge, red and white sticky rice porridge, lempur, syrup, sweet and bitter coffee, balagudeg coffee water mixed with coconut milk, roasted sticky rice, various salads such as rujak roti, rujak tamarind, and coconut rujak, then there is jelly, palm sugar and rock sugar. the existence of offerings is very important and must be present in every performance of this art let alone not having offerings, if the offerings are incomplete it will make the ancestors angry.

The organization of the Gembyung Pusaka Mekar Art Circle is not well organized. Although the Arts Circle has a chairman, it does not have a deputy, secretary and treasurer. The organizing system that most impedes the development of Gembyung art is the lack of ability to manage finances. Finance is one of the important factors that support the continuity of the Gembyung art to survive. The process of creating new creations of Gembyung art is a form of effort to preserve this art. This effort was made to increase the existence of Gembyung art so that it can be on par with other traditional arts in Sumedang Regency such as Sisingaan art. In addition, other efforts carried out by artists in Sumedang Regency are in collaboration with several schools in particular

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