

Salasika

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The Role of Dayak Bakati Women in Kiung Village in Making *Bia* as a Form of Maintaining Food Traditions

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ABSTRACT

The role of the Dayak Bakati women in Kiung Village is very important in preparing the traditional *maka'k dio pade* ceremony. This tradition uses processed farm produce as complementary materials for carrying out traditional rituals. This study aims to determine the role of Dayak Bakati women from Kiung Village in food processing to sustain food traditions and customs. This study uses a qualitative approach with a direct interview technique used as the method. The result of this study indicates that the Dayak Bakati women live daily as farmers and fulfill household needs from farm and field products. This shows that they are closely related to nature, society, and customs. In conclusion, the Dayak Bakati women not only become housewives but also practice farming to achieve food sovereignty. The improvement and fulfillment of food traditions relate to the food sovereignty of the community and the method of processing *bia* for the *maka'k dio pade* tradition. This tradition is rarely practiced due to the belief in individual religion, but this is not the major reason for the decline. The *maka'k dio pade* is rarely carried out by the 2000s generation because they have migrated to study

KEYWORDS: *tradition, food sovereignty, the role of women, maka'k dio pade ceremony.*

INTRODUCTION

In the food system of Kiung Village, Dayak Bakati women play an important role in daily life and livelihoods (Niko, 2019). The majority of these people have to

raise chickens, collect water, cultivate and work in the fields, and grow spices such as *sahang* (pepper), corn, beans, vegetables, and fruits in the farm. They also play a role in the provision and processing of food from the harvest. These tasks are

very important to household need fulfillment and survival.

Furthermore, the annual food supply is a priority for Dayak Bakati women to prevent hunger (Deffrinica *et al.*, 2020). Based on the beliefs, fulfilling the food needs in one year is very difficult. Therefore, they choose to store crops such as rice, corn, *sahang*, and beans in a proper and safe place. The food storage process is carried out not only to fulfill daily needs but also to maintain the traditions and culture of Dayak Bakati.

In this tradition, the role of women also appears in preparing traditional ceremonies, especially in the new year rice ceremony commonly called *maka'k do pade* (Wina & Habsari, 2017). Before the ceremony, the Dayak Bakati women prepare snacks, wine, palm wine, and processed vegetables. Additionally, they also prepare *bia* as a complementary food in the traditional rituals. The materials used are obtained by the women and then processed into food for consumption. Made from rice, corn, cucumber, and eggs, *Bia*, in Kiung Village, is not only made during *maka'k dio pade* ceremony but also for household needs.

Bia is also prepared as a form of gratitude to Jubata, the embodiment of God and the spirit of the ancestors, for the harvests. In the Dayak Bakati sub-ethnic, the two entities are still believed to exist. *Bia* is also commonly used as a medium to communicate with ancestral spirits to ask for blessings and abundant harvests (Zakalius *et al.*, 2013).

Furthermore, it is a symbol of women's right to produce food and

is a form of culture or tradition of the Dayak Bakati community (Nugraha *et al.*, 2016). The cultural attachment to the process of producing food in Kiung Village has led to a form of food sovereignty that is usually very diverse because it tends to strengthen various contexts, cultures, and production methods to ensure that people's rights to food are fulfilled.

To fulfill daily food needs, food sovereignty is determined by the production system and contributions from women. It provides an opportunity for the food system to always prioritize justice and sustainability (Bernstein, 2014). The people of Kiung Village are sovereign in the fulfillment of healthy food by adjusting the culture, economy, and social aspects.

Several previous studies have discussed the perspectives and attitudes of the Dayak Bakati tribe and focused on folklore. Similarly, discussions on other sub-ethnic women have been carried out. Wina and Habsari (2017) explored Kanayatn Dayak women's role in the tradition of *naik dango pula* ceremony. Meanwhile, Niko (2019) discussed Malian Dayak women who are close to nature. Meanwhile, this study aims to examine the role of the Dayak Bakati women from Kiung Village in processing food into *Bia* to fulfill community traditions or customs. Referring to the concept of food sovereignty, the study explored the role of individuals in food processing to maintain and preserve food traditions and customs. The process of increasing food sovereignty is reflected in the processed products, the raw materials processed into food for consumption.

METHODS

A qualitative approach was used with an in-depth interview with Dayak Bakati women in Kiung Village and participatory observation. The in-depth interview was conducted to determine the participants' perspectives on *Bia*. Meanwhile, participatory observation was used because the method was a means to directly observe the activities of participants in the *Bia* making process. The study focused on women who processed food as participants and the inclusion criteria included women (housewives) living in Kiung Village who were directly involved in the making of *Bia* to continue the tradition of the Dayak Bakati. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria were women who did not belong to the Dayak Bakati sub-ethnic nor understand the *Bia* making process.

The study was carried out for four months from September to December 2020 and continued in January 2021 in Kiung Village, Suti Semarang Sub-district, Bengkayang Regency, Indonesia. This village was selected as the study location to explore the Dayak Bakati sub-ethnic that has numerous traditions. This study also aims to identify the women in Kiung Village who process food products into *Bia*, which is considered a symbol to communicate with ancestral spirits. The participants were five housewives who were experts in making *Bia* and a village customary head who knew about the process. Furthermore, data collection was carried out using a recording device at the time of the interview. The researcher then transcribed the recording, carried out coding, and analyzed the data obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Dayak Bakati Women's Daily Life

Dayak Bakati women in Kiung Village work as farmers to fulfill household needs. They often go to the forest every day to clear land for farming. The cleared land is then planted with rice, corn, cucumbers, and other vegetables. After harvesting, the former fields are cultivated and burned to plant *sahang*, sweet potatoes, beans, and vegetables.

A similar [study](#) conducted in West Kalimantan province suggests that although experiences can be diverse, based on certain factors such as age, ethnicity, social status, and so on, women are especially vulnerable to palm oil development. A few of the ways in which women are disproportionately impacted by palm oil is that they have unequal access to land, resources, and opportunities. Pre-existing social norms in which women's labor is consistently devalued and underpaid have been exacerbated by palm oil development. Dayak women are also frequently excluded from leadership roles and public forums where decision-making takes place, and their interests are often underrepresented in these spaces.

Dayak Bakati women are required to work every day to take care of the farming land and fields to prevent hunger and lack of food. Based on field observations, in a family experiencing food shortages, women tended to act first by seeking several ways depending on the food. They often bartered with neighbors who had excess food that could be in the form of services or goods. The exchange of services was carried out by working on the neighbor's land or

farm without being paid, while the exchange of goods (barter) was carried out by exchanging other foodstuffs such as nuts, cucumbers, and chilies for rice. Meanwhile, when the women lacked vegetables, they looked for food such as bamboo shoots, sweet potato leaves, *miding* (red fern), and green fern (*Diplazium esculentum*) in the forest. They also fulfilled the protein needs by looking for fish like catfish, *betok* (*Anabas testudineus*), snakehead fish, and *tengkuyung* (conch) in the river using a tool called *tangguk*. This is also consistent with the answers of Participants 1 and 4 (personal communication, October 2020) stating that "*Bakati Dayak women often look for vegetables in the forest and fish with a tangguk in freshwater.*"

Women in Kiung Village also harvest local foods from the farms, including rice, corn, sweet potatoes, cucumber, and vegetables such as cucumber leaves, spinach leaves, pumpkin leaves, and mustard greens. The harvest is processed into food that is consumed by family members. Based on the observations, when the local food produce was abundant or excessive, women in Kiung Village sold the extra produce to middlemen in the village or the Bengkayang market. The types of food that are usually sold include corn, peanuts, and cucumbers. This was also observed among the Dayak Banyadu women as reported by Vuspitasari *et al* (2020) stating that women contribute to the use of crops obtained for consumption by the family and sale when they were in excess.

Dayak Bakati women also have nature-related and social roles through farming and gardening

activities. The role close to nature is observed when they produced and processed the food from the fields and farms. The closeness to the natural environment enhances traditional knowledge about farming. Furthermore, the interactions carried out during farming are also a form of social role. The social role is obvious not only in the home environment but also through farming and cultivating activities. Observations in the field showed a form of solidarity when the yields obtained by farmers were different. When some farmers had abundant harvests and others had less, the sense of togetherness was shown by exchanging food or sharing crops with neighbors to fulfill the food needs. Through farming, the Dayak Bakati women also show social concern by forming groups to take turns slashing fields without having to be paid with money. This activity is performed every day until the land is ready for planting rice and corn (Participant 2, personal communication, October 2020).

Women in Kiung Village also work in the private and public spheres. As housewives, for example, they cook, wash, and clean the house. This is in line with Participant 1 (personal communication, October 2020) stating that "The tradition preserved by the Bakati Dayak people starts with farming, which is usually followed by bentaan't and then slashes". Before cultivating, the women determine and observe the location of fields. Meanwhile, the men or husbands in the Dayak Bakati usually go to tap rubber. During the day, the husbands often follow the wives when there is no work, but sometimes choose to hunt

in the forest. The slashed land is planted with a wood called *bentaan't* which is the remains from the slashing of the land for a field. Furthermore, when the woman or a man does not dream to meet destructive animals such as birds, rats, monkeys, and wild boars, the land is turned into a field. However, when a woman or man dreams of many birds or mice, the location is changed. The activities carried out by the Dayak Bakati women starting from slashing, farming, to harvesting, are considered normal as a form of an annual tradition. This tradition continues when the harvest is ready to be stored in the rice barn. During a traditional ceremony, Dayak Bakati women prepare *Bia* as a custom requirement.

***Bia* and Processing**

Dayak Bakati women in Kiung Village practice the customs, such as the *maka'k dio pade* ceremony, which is translated as raising rice in the barn. This tradition has been passed down from generations since the time of the ancient ancestors (*datuk*) and is carried out once a year to ask for blessings on the harvest. The emergence of the divine religion in the Dayak Bakati causes the tradition to fade. Catholicism was introduced by the Portuguese and Spanish in the 16th century. Furthermore, Catholic teachings were spread to the interior communities of West Kalimantan by missionaries during the Old Order era (1950-1965) (Aritonang, 2004). This was also explained by one of the participants during the interview,

People in Kiung Village rarely perform traditional ceremonies because of the

changing era and religion. The religion widely embraced by the people of Kiung Village is Christianity, hence they practice Christian worship more than traditional ceremonies (Participant 5, personal communication, October 2020).

During the *maka'k dio pade* ceremony, *Bia* is used to give thanks to Jubata (God) and the spirits of the ancestors for the rice harvest. This is consistent with participant 5 (personal communication, October 2020) stating that "The meaning of *Bia* in the custom of the Dayak Bakati is to summon the spirits of the ancestors and be grateful to Jubata for the success of the rice harvest and to ask for a blessing. Therefore, the rice can be enough to be eaten for many years." For Dayak Bakati, *Bia* is defined as a collection of local food ingredients such as rice, cucumber seeds, and eggs served with wine and slaughtered and processed animals such as chickens, dogs, and pigs. These processed foods are commonly known as *Bara*, *Tumpi*, *Sunce*, *Latok* (popcorn), and *Turah ansak* (boiled eggs). The components are processed by roasting, burning, frying, boiling, and pounding.

Each component of *Bia* is processed uniquely. *Bara*, *Tumpi*, and *Sunce* symbolize the feeding of the ancestral spirits and *Jubata*. *Bara* is made by inserting the soaked rice into the bamboo that is then burned until the rice is cooked. Meanwhile, *Tumpi* is made from rice that is previously used for *Bara*, then set aside to be pounded into flour and fried into *Tumpi*. The process for making *Sunce* is very simple because

it is made from rice mixed with cucumber seeds that have been mashed with a mortar and then wrapped in leaves. Meanwhile, *Latok* is made from rice that is roasted until it looks like popcorn. *Bia* is also served with *Turah ansak* or boiled eggs that are put on top of the rice in a plate or bowl.

Besides *Turah ansak*, *Bia* is also garnished with slaughtered animals such as native chickens, dogs, and pigs, depending on the ceremony being held. Only the blood of the animals is used in the ceremony, while the meat is cooked for side dishes and consumption by local residents coming for the *maka'k dio pade* ceremony. Slaughtered animals bear meaning. Native chickens (*sio ampong*) are rice plant fertility guards, dogs (*asuk*) are guards from wild animal pests, and pigs (*dare'k*) are offerings to ancestral spirits. The women process the *Bia* ingredients at the house of the host because *maka'k dio pade* is usually a home custom attended by only neighbors, close relatives, and a tribal chief. This is in line with participant 6 (personal communication, October 2020) stating that "in the *maka'k dio pade* ceremony, the host is usually a married woman who is assisted by a tribal chief"

The *Bia* production or processing is carried out by women who are native to the Dayak Bakati sub-ethnic. This was emphasized by participant 1 saying that "food processing and household matters are typical of Dayak Bakati women" (personal communication, October 2020). Furthermore, women are always involved because of the assumption that they are considered more conscientious in cooking the *Bia*. When a man makes the *Bia*,

there might be inaccuracies, for example, the *latok* might be overcooked. However, in practice, *Bia* is also made by men, but it is rare. When it happens, the *Bia* is made by the tribal chief or traditional leader. These two individuals are able to participate due to their respective higher position in the Dayak Bakati custom. Participant 2 also said that "*Bia* is made by men. However, because men sometimes play a role in equipping tools or other materials and are usually busy at work, women take over the responsibility" (personal communication, October 2020).

The method by which Dayak Bakati women process local food ingredients into a *Bia* shows that they are closely related to the tradition. This is supported by Participant 3 saying that Dayak Bakati women are closely related to traditional traditions. The following is the participant's statement in the interview.

Bakati Dayak women have a very close relationship with tradition and they usually gather to make all the necessities needed during traditional ceremonies. Furthermore, they also eat food that has been prepared by the family according to the custom (Participant 3, personal communication, October 2020).

The relationship between Dayak Bakati women in Kiung Village and customs also occurs in South Kalimantan, among the Dayak Warukin sub-ethnic studied by Fatimah *et al.* (2020). In the tradition, women have the right and

obligation to contribute to organizing traditional ceremonies. They also have an important role in the smooth running of traditional ceremonies.

The Relationship of Women, *Bia*, and Food Sovereignty

The role of Dayak Bakati women in maintaining food traditions in Kiung Village is one of the keys to food sovereignty. This is often demonstrated in the ability to get food products. The food yields are obtained from slashing forests into fields, then burning, planting, grazing, harvesting, and also processing the results into ready-to-eat food both in the household and in rural communities. The relationship between women with food production and preparation was investigated by Park (2015) suggesting that women are seen as the center of food sovereignty. Therefore, to achieve food sovereignty, the Dayak Bakati women form groups to create fields and farms. Women's sovereignty in producing food through farming leads to independence. Although the method of farming is fairly traditional, it facilitates the development of individual knowledge.

By maintaining food sovereignty in the community, Dayak Bakati women in Kiung Village help maintain the traditional *maka'k dio pade* tradition by making *Bia*. This is seen from the interaction of women in producing local food from fields or farms such as rice, corn, cucumbers, pumpkins, and even vegetables for consumption. Turner *et al.* (2020) propose that the provision of daily food is important

to maintain uniqueness, and is often associated with food sovereignty. Moreover, Pimbert (2009) argues that women contribute more to local community food security, which enhances economic and cultural income, and even help provide nutrition to the body. Good harvest helps to fulfill the economic needs of the community. Also, when women serve food to families or rural communities, it helps provide nutrition for the people.

Dayak Bakati women produce quality food seeds such as rice, corn, cucumber, and peanut from the fields and farms. The seeds are stored in a barn or a safe place to avoid being eaten by rats or termites. This is supported by Supriyadi, *et al.* (2018) stating that the independent fulfillment of seed needs is key to food sovereignty. Before the seeds are stored in the barn, Dayak Bakati women make *Bia* using rice, cucumber seeds, and chicken eggs to carry out the *maka'k dio pade* tradition. Therefore, the rice stored in the barn tends to last long and can fulfill the food need for a year or more.

However, this tradition has begun to fade. Women farmers in the village are now able to determine individual food by prioritizing local products for household needs as well as determining and controlling food production, distribution, and consumption systems according to the local, ecological, social, economic, and cultural conditions (Swastika, 2011). Participant 1 stated that tradition in the Dayak Bakati community is rarely practiced because the 2000s generation has migrated a lot. The following is the statement of the participants in the October 2020 interview.

Traditions such as farming, babion'k, the new year of rice, and maka'k dio pade, which have become habits need to be preserved. However, it is rarely carried out, because there is a religion that has been embraced by many people, and the children of the 2000s generation are increasingly going to schools outside the city and paying less attention to old traditions (Participant 1, personal communication, October 2020).

CONCLUSION

The Dayak Bakati women, apart from being housewives, also work as farmers to meet household needs and provide local food from the fields and farms. Hence, as demonstrated in the food processing method, they are closer to nature. Through farming, they are able to achieve food sovereignty and even produce local food for consumption. Furthermore, Dayak Bakati women carry out food processing by making *Bia* as a condition for fulfilling the traditional *maka'k dio pade* tradition. This shows that they are hugely involved with customs. However, the tradition in Kiung Village has begun to fade because the community now believes in religious teachings. Moreover, the generation born in the 2000s has now migrated to pursue higher education and jobs in the city.

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ABOUT

SALASIKA etymologically derived from Javanese language meaning 'brave woman'. SALASIKA JOURNAL (SJ) is founded in July 2019 as an international open access, scholarly, peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary journal publishing theoretically innovative and methodologically diverse research in the fields of gender studies, sexualities and feminism. Our conception of both theory and method is broad and encompassing, and we welcome contributions from scholars around the world.

SJ is inspired by the need to put into visibility the Indonesian and South East Asian women to ensure a dissemination of knowledge to a wider general audience.

SJ selects at least several outstanding articles by scholars in the early stages of a career in academic research for each issue, thereby providing support for new voices and emerging scholarship.

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SJ aims to provide academic literature which is accessible across disciplines, but also to a wider 'non-academic' audience interested and engaged with social justice, ecofeminism, human rights, policy/advocacy, gender, sexualities, concepts of equality, social change, migration and social mobilisation, inter-religious and international relations and development.

There are other journals which address those topics, but SJ approaches the broad areas of gender, sexuality and feminism in an integrated fashion. It further addresses the issue of international collaboration and inclusion as existing gaps in the area of academic publishing by (a) crossing language boundaries and creating a space for publishing and (b) providing an opportunity for innovative emerging scholars to engage in the academic dialogue with established researchers.

STRUCTURE OF THE JOURNAL

All articles will be preceded by an abstract (150-200 words), keywords, main text introduction, materials and methods, results, discussion; acknowledgments; declaration of interest statement; references; appendices (as appropriate); table(s) with caption(s) (on individual pages); figures; figure captions (as a list); and a contributor biography (150 words). Word length is 4,000-10,000 words, including all previous elements.

TIMELINE AND SCHEDULE

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