

THE SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL MEANING OF THE BANTAN-BANTANAN TRADITION IN THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY OF NEGERI AGUNG

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Abstract. This study aims to examine the "Spiritual and Social Meaning of the Bantan-Bantan Tradition in the Negeri Agung Village Community.". Spiritually, this tradition is not merely viewed as a routine ritual, but also as a form of offering and communication with the supernatural, which the community believes can bring blessings and safety, as well as ward off disaster. Through in-depth analysis, it was discovered that bantan-bantan reflects cosmic balance and the harmonious relationship between humans and their surroundings. Furthermore, socially, this tradition plays a crucial role in strengthening kinship ties and solidarity among residents. The preparation and implementation of bantan-bantan often involve all members of the community, from young to old, indirectly creating a space for intense social interaction. This serves as an effective medium for maintaining social cohesion and preserving shared values. The results of this study indicate that the bantan-bantan tradition is not simply a past ritual, but a living tradition rich in meaning, serving as a guardian of spirituality and a pillar of social cohesion for the Negeri Agung Village community.

Keywords: Tradition; Social; Spiritual; Society

I. INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian nation has many cultural heritage, such as customs, community traditions that are still carried out today. In addition, the Indonesian nation consists of various sub-ethnicities or ethnic groups. Based on the results of the 2010 population census, the number of ethnic groups in Indonesia as a whole reached more than 1,300 ethnic groups. In addition to its diverse types, the number of each type of ethnic group also varies greatly [1]. The island of Sumatra has a number of large tribes that are famous including the Aceh, Batak, Minangkabau, and Malays. These tribes are widely spread across South Sumatra Province. Muara Enim Regency consists of several tribes, including the Rambang Malay tribe, the Belide tribe, the Semendo tribe, the Enim tribe, the Rambang Lubai tribe and many more [2].

Negeri Agung Village is part of Rambang District, Muara Enim Regency which is located at the end of Rambang according to the distribution of the Negeri Agung Village tribe, including the Rambang Malay tribe. This Rambang Malay is spread across several areas in Muara Enim and Prabumulih, namely in the Districts of Rambang, Rambang Kaax Tengah, Rambang Dangku, Rambang Niru, Lubai, and Lubai Ulu. The Rambang Malays are the majority of adherents of Islam [3].

Tradition is an integral part of people's lives that serves as a binding identity and community value system. In the midst of modernization and lifestyle changes, traditions often experience a shift in meaning or even the threat of extinction.

One of the cultural heritages that still survives but faces the challenges of the times is the Bantan-Bantan tradition in Negeri Agung Village, Rambang District, Muara Enim Regency. This tradition is not just a mechanical ritual, but a manifestation of the harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and God expressed through sacrificial symbols [4].

Negeri Agung Village has a rich cultural background, where the community is still very thick with traditional values and local beliefs. In this context, bantan-bantan is one of the traditions that is carried out with solemnity and gratitude. This tradition is usually carried out in order to commemorate certain moments, such as harvests, weddings, deaths, circumcision, and religious ceremonies. Bantanagan involves the active participation of all members of the community, thus creating a strong sense of togetherness [5].

Spiritually, the tradition of bantan-bantan contains many meanings. This ritual is often seen as a form of devotion to God and an expression of gratitude for all the blessings received. In its implementation, there are various symbolisms that show the relationship between humans and nature and supernatural forces. For example, the use of offerings consisting of food and drinks that have been finished cooking which are considered sacred. The community believed that by carrying out this tradition, they would gain protection and blessings from God and the spirits of their ancestors [6].

On the social side, the bantan-bantan tradition functions as a means to strengthen the bonds between community

members. In its implementation, the villagers work together to prepare everything, from the collection of materials to the implementation of the ritual itself. This process not only increases social solidarity but also builds a network of relationships between individuals. This is especially important in the context of an agrarian society such as the Agung State Village, where collaboration and mutual help are the key to achieving common prosperity [7].

However, although the bananas have many positive meanings, there are also challenges in their preservation. Changes in people's lifestyles, the influence of foreign culture, and economic pressure are some of the factors that can threaten the sustainability of this tradition. Therefore, it is important to conduct in-depth research on the spiritual and social significance of the bantan-bantan tradition in order to provide a better understanding and encourage efforts to preserve local culture [8].

Through this research, it is hoped that various dimensions of meaning contained in the bantan-bantan tradition and its impact on the social life of the people of Negeri Agung Village can be revealed. This research aims not only to document the tradition but also to provide recommendations for communities and local governments in efforts to preserve this valuable local culture. Thus, it is hoped that the tradition of bantan-bantan will not only become a cultural heritage but also remain relevant in the context of modern society's life today.

The literature review in this study is prepared to provide a theoretical basis and map the position of relevant previous research [9].

After conducting a literature review, there are several themes about the study that will be examined:

One of the main references is research [10] who examines the sacrificial ritual in Pagar Agung Village through the perspective of Islamic Law. In the study, it was revealed that rituals involving the slaughter of sacrificial animals as offerings to the spirits of ancestors or puyang must be led by a chief *menyan* so that the procession is considered customarily valid. The focus of Sumitra's research provides an overview of the normative aspects of religion towards the practice of offering in areas that are geographically adjacent to the location of this research.

Another research that was also highlighted was the [11] which explores traditional marriage in Jelmu Island Village using an anthropological approach. Choiri's findings show how strong the community's bond is with the tradition of *balik belanjun* as a cultural identity, where the giving of offerings to ancestors is still maintained in the wedding procession [11].

Sri Wahyuni also discussed the symbolic meaning of offerings in the construction of Javanese houses in Banyuasin. Wahyuni emphasized that offerings are a manifestation of prayer and hope to Allah SWT through the symbols of the produce of the earth, which signifies a shift in meaning from just a physical ritual to a religious spiritual expression [12].

To analyze the phenomenon of the Bantan-Bantan tradition in more depth, this study integrates two main theories, namely the Theory of Cultural Acculturation and the Theory of Structural Functionalism. The Theory of Cultural Acculturation developed by [13] in his article "Immigration Acculturation, and Adaptation" it is used to dissect how

elements of the local Rambang Malay tradition interact and integrate with Islamic values, resulting in a new meaning that is syncretic but still religious. Through this theory, researchers can see the process of reinterpreting sacrificial symbols that were once ancestry-oriented into a means of gratitude to God. This analysis is then strengthened by the Structural Functionalism Theory of [14] in his book "The Social System" to see the role of this tradition in maintaining social balance. This theory views that the Bantan-Bantan tradition survives because it has a vital function in strengthening solidarity, creating a space for equality, and maintaining cohesion among the residents of Negeri Agung Village, so that this tradition becomes an inseparable part of the social structure of the local community.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type to explore in depth the spiritual and social significance of the Bantan-Bantan tradition in Negeri Agung Village, Rambang District, Muara Enim Regency. This location was chosen deliberately because it is the cultural center of the Rambang Malay tribe which still preserves the tradition in the midst of modernization. This research involves traditional leaders such as Mr. Darman and Mr. Hamsidi as historical sources, the village government such as Mr. Riyadi Evan and Mr. Irawan Bambang, as well as the active participation of local communities such as Mr. Erwin to understand the implementation of traditions in daily life.

The data collection technique was carried out through triangulation which included participant observation by directly observing ritual practices, in-depth interviews to explore informants' interpretations of customary and Islamic acculturation, as well as document analysis of village historical records and photos of related documentation [15]. The data that has been collected is then processed using thematic analysis that begins with data reduction to sort out relevant information, followed by the presentation of data in the form of a descriptive narrative based on the categories of meanings that appear. The final stage of analysis involves verification and drawing conclusions by linking field findings to theories of cultural acculturation and structural functionalism to obtain a complete and valid understanding [16].

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The tradition of bantan-bantan in Negeri Agung Village is an ancestral heritage that has undergone a transformation from an offering ritual to an ancestral spirit into a form of gratitude to God along with the entry of Islamic teachings. This acculturation phenomenon is in line with research [10] in the Rambang area, where local traditions are reinterpreted to be in harmony with Islamic law without losing the essence of their reverence. Spiritually, this ritual functions as a collective prayer and a medium of rejection to ask for the protection and safety of the village from danger. This meaning reinforces the findings [12] that offerings are a symbol of human prayers and hopes to Allah SWT for the welfare and

luck of life. As revealed in an interview with Mr. Rohidin, the banantan is now a means of learning for the younger generation about the importance of gratitude and prayer in community life.

All stages of bantan-bananan represent the balance of human relationships with God, others, and the universe through the use of sacred traditional symbols. The religious values, mutual cooperation, and equality contained in it make this tradition not just a ritual of the past, but a living tradition that continues to revive the spirituality and brotherhood of the residents of Negeri Agung Village. According to Mr. Jentara, the presence of village elders in leading prayers is very important to maintain sacredness and ensure that these noble values are conveyed correctly to all participants. Through the integration of local cultural values and religious teachings, the bananan succeeded in maintaining its existence as a collective identity that strengthened the social structure of society.

The bantan-bantan tradition is a traditional ritual that is believed to have existed since the establishment of Negeri Agung Village. Although there is no exact year record, this tradition is thought to have been carried out since the time of the village's ancestors as a form of gratitude for the harvest. The word bantan itself in the local language means offering or offering. This ritual was initially carried out to ask for the safety and blessings of spirit beings or ancestral spirits so that the rice harvest would be successful and not disturbed by pests. As the times develop and the entry of Islamic teachings, the meaning of this tradition has shifted to a form of gratitude for the sustenance given by God.

At first, the banangan was carried out only once a year, namely after the harvest. The community will work together to collect crops such as rice, vegetables, and fruits to be placed in the middle of the rice fields. This form of offering is not only in the form of crops, but also special dishes such as nasi tumpeng and side dishes cooked together. This ritual is led by traditional elders or traditional stakeholders who offer prayers. All citizens, from children to adults, participated in this event, creating a very strong atmosphere of togetherness [17].

Nowadays, bantantans are not only carried out after the harvest, but also when there are important events such as Traditional Wedding Parties, Circumcision, Aqiqah, Yasinan, and Kidah-kidahan. At weddings, circumcision, aqiqah, yasinan and kidah-kidahan, the bantan-bantan tradition is part of a series of traditional ceremonies. The bantan served is usually in the form of various kinds of food and traditional symbols. This procession is usually carried out at the house where the event is held and is a symbol of asking for blessings so that the bride and groom live a prosperous life.

The procession of implementing the bantan bananan tradition in the people of Negeri Agung Village generally begins with the preparation stage. This stage involves all family members in preparing ingredients such as rice, coconut, banana leaves, other staples that will be on the food menu at the event to be held and other ritual equipment. Preparations are carried out by mutual cooperation because apart from being a means of ritual, this tradition also teaches the value of togetherness. The materials used are considered to have symbolic meanings, for example rice as a symbol of life and coconut as a symbol of purity. After the preparation is complete, the next stage is the preparation of bantan or

offerings. Bantan is usually formed in such a way as to follow traditional ordinances, placed in a place that has been purified, such as the yard of a house or village hall.

This preparation process is carried out with great care because it is believed that the shape and neatness of the bantan are related to the perfection of the prayers offered. The symbols in the bantan represent the prayers for salvation, fertility, and life balance expected by the community [18].

The core implementation of this tradition is usually led by traditional leaders or village elders who have in-depth knowledge of prayer and ritual procedures. Prayers are offered to God as a form of gratitude for the sustenance received and a request for protection from danger. In this procession, all participants follow solemnly, bow their heads, and unite their hearts to ask for blessings together. The presence of elders is considered important because he is an intermediary in maintaining the sacredness of traditions. The last stage is the closing of the procession which usually ends with a meal together or the distribution of offerings to the community. This moment shows the value of togetherness and brotherhood, as well as strengthening social ties between citizens. With the distribution of bantan, every member of the community is reminded of the importance of sharing sustenance and maintaining harmony in life. This tradition is not just a ritual, but also contains a symbolic meaning about man's relationship with God, others, and the universe [19].

A. Spiritual Meaning of the Bantan-Bantan Tradition

The people of Negeri Agung Village view banan-bantan not only as a traditional tradition, but also as a means of religious expression related to belief in God. This tradition is often interpreted as a form of gratitude for the blessings given, as well as a collective prayer so that the community always receives protection from danger. The religious values inherent in it show how people still view the importance of ritual symbols as a medium of communication between humans and the Creator, even though they are still adapted to the teachings of Islam adopted by the majority of the population [20].

In addition to being spiritual, the practice of bantan-bantan also strengthens collective awareness in religion. Through shared rituals, people feel bound in the same social and religious bonds, which strengthen social solidarity and harmony. Thus, the religious value in this tradition not only touches the vertical realm of human relationship with God, but also the horizontal realm that unites villagers in a bond of faith and togetherness [21].

In the view of religious and customary leaders, banatan is often reinterpreted so as not to contradict Islamic law. This shows the process of acculturation, where local traditions are preserved but still framed by the religious teachings embraced by the community. In this way, religious values are maintained, and traditions can be carried out without causing controversy in religious life. This reinterpretation process is also proof that the people of Negeri Agung have a selective attitude in caring for traditions, namely only maintaining elements that are considered to bring spiritual benefits. On the other hand, the existence of this tradition is understood as an ancestral heritage that contains educational value. For the younger generation, the banantan is a means of learning about the importance of gratitude, prayer, and togetherness in community life.

The religious values contained in it are seen as moral guidelines to maintain harmony with God and others. Although modernization brings challenges, the community still tries to maintain the banatan as a religious tradition as well as a culture of noble value [17].

The tradition of bantan-banatan for the people of Negeri Agung Village has an important position as a collective prayer medium. Through the symbols presented in the procession, the community believes that the prayers that are offered together are stronger because they involve all members of the community. This ritual activity is essentially not just a traditional procession, but a spiritual means to get closer to God, with the hope that the prayers they chant will be blessed.

In addition to functioning as prayers, bantans are also an expression of gratitude for the abundance of sustenance, the smooth running of events such as weddings, circumcision, tahlilan of the dead and the abundance of crops, as well as the salvation of life that has been received. This form of gratitude is expressed through a joint ritual, which signifies people's awareness of their attachment to the Creator. Thus, this tradition shows the existence of religious awareness that everything that humans have is entrusted to God, so it must be thankful and maintained [22].

In its implementation, the community also believes that assistance has a protective dimension. This ritual is considered to be able to be a repellent, protect the village from disasters, diseases, and other disturbances that can threaten the safety of residents. This belief is inseparable from the religious view that God is the main source of protection, while rituals are only a symbol of binding togetherness and a means of strengthening people's belief in divine power.

Furthermore, the assistance serves as a medium of spiritual education for the younger generation. Through this tradition, they learn that prayer, thanksgiving, and supplications for protection to God are an important part of life. In other words, bantans are not only traditional rituals, but also a means of inheriting religious values that emphasize the harmonious relationship between humans and God. This makes the tradition still relevant in the midst of modernization, because the value of prayer, gratitude, and protection from God is universal and eternal [18].

B. The Social Meaning of the Bantan-Bantan Tradition

The tradition of bantan-banatan in the people of Negeri Agung Village contains a deep social meaning because it is a forum for togetherness and social interaction between residents. This traditional procession is not only interpreted as a religious activity, but also as a place to strengthen brotherly ties. People from various backgrounds gathered, participated, and felt an atmosphere full of familiarity. Thus, bantan-banatan functions as a unifying medium that affirms a sense of belonging to culture and community.

Another social meaning of this tradition is reflected in the value of mutual cooperation which is carried out from the preparation stage to implementation. All residents, both men and women, young and old, are actively involved in preparing offerings and other equipment. This collective involvement fosters a spirit of togetherness, because each individual feels that they have a contribution in preserving traditions. In this context, bantans are not only rituals, but also a means of

social education that instills the value of solidarity in the younger generation [23].

In addition to mutual cooperation, bantan-bantan also contains social meaning in the form of equality in togetherness. During the procession, all people sat together regardless of social or economic status. They shared food and prayers, showing that this tradition puts all citizens in an equal position. This equality strengthens social ties and creates harmony in society, so that this tradition remains relevant as a binder of community life.

The value of mutual cooperation in the tradition of bantan-bantan in Negeri Agung Village was clear from the preparation stage. Residents help each other collect offerings, ranging from rice, coconut, to banana leaves used in the procession. This activity is not only to meet the needs of rituals, but also a means to foster a sense of care among residents. All parties, both men and women, participate in their respective roles so that harmonious cooperation is created [24].

Togetherness in this tradition is also realized when the community gathers to carry out prayers together. Everyone comes with the same goal, which is to ask for protection and blessings from God. This moment provides an opportunity for residents to interact, establish friendships, and strengthen social relationships that may rarely occur in daily busyness. Thus, the banatan becomes a social space that strengthens the bond of brotherhood.

In addition, the value of togetherness is reflected through the distribution of offerings after the procession is over. The offerings that have been prayed for are not only enjoyed by the family that organizes, but also distributed to the surrounding community. This indicates the spirit of sharing regardless of differences in social and economic status. This tradition teaches that happiness is more meaningful if it is felt together, not just enjoyed individually [23].

The social meaning of mutual cooperation and togetherness in bantan-bantan ultimately creates harmony in the life of the people of Negeri Agung Village. These values maintain social solidarity, strengthen a sense of mutual belonging, and form a collective identity of society. By preserving this tradition, residents not only maintain cultural heritage, but also affirm the principles of community life that uphold cooperation and brotherhood.

In the end, the bantan-bantan in Negeri Agung Village became an important symbol in building and maintaining social harmony. The values of togetherness, solidarity, and equality contained in it are able to strengthen relationships between citizens. By continuing to be preserved, this tradition not only becomes a cultural heritage, but also a social force that maintains the unity and identity of the village community [25].

c. Values Contained in the Bantan-Bantan Tradition

The tradition of bantan-bantan in Negeri Agung Village is one of the cultural heritage rich in noble values. This tradition is not only understood as a mere ritual, but also as a medium of cultural inheritance from generation to generation. The cultural values contained in it are seen in various aspects, ranging from preparation, implementation procession, to the symbolic meaning that accompanies it. Each stage in this

tradition teaches people how to maintain a balance in life, both in relation to God, fellow humans, and nature[17].

Religious values are one of the main cultural values in the bantan-bantan tradition. The prayer procession that is offered indicates that the community places God as the center of life. The prayers and hopes contained in the offerings indicate the belief that blessings, protection, and salvation come from the Creator. Thus, this tradition strengthens the spirituality of the community while building religious awareness inherent in daily life[26].

In addition to being religious, the value of mutual cooperation is also very prominent in this tradition. Bantan preparation involves the participation of all members of the community regardless of age, gender, or social status. Togetherness in preparing offerings reflects the collective culture of the community that upholds cooperation. This value is very important because it is able to foster strong social solidarity, while strengthening a sense of mutual belonging in the community.

The bantan-bantan tradition also contains the value of togetherness which is reflected in the atmosphere of the procession. The community gathers, performs prayers, and celebrates traditions together. There is no difference between rich or poor, old or young, because all citizens are seen as equal in the implementation of traditions. This emphasizes that togetherness is the core of culture that is able to create harmony in community life.

The value of equality in this tradition also has an important role. In the practice of assistance, everyone is given the opportunity to contribute according to their ability. The offerings offered are not a measure of status, but a symbol of sincerity and togetherness. This equality forms an inclusive society, where every individual is seen as having an equal position in preserving traditions [19].

In addition, this tradition is loaded with sharing values. After the procession is over, the bantan or offerings that have been prayed for are distributed to the wider community. This value of sharing shows that happiness and blessings will be more meaningful if enjoyed together. This culture of sharing strengthens social ties, fosters mutual care, and maintains balance in people's lives. Educational values are also contained in the tradition of bantan-bantan. Through the involvement of the younger generation, this tradition becomes a means to instill moral, social, and spiritual values. Children learn about the importance of cooperation, mutual respect, and maintaining good relationships with God and others. In this way, the tradition of bantan-bantan functions as a vehicle for cultural education that strengthens the identity of the people of Negeri Agung Village[18].

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The tradition of bantan-bantan in Negeri Agung Village is an ancestral heritage that represents the harmonious relationship between humans, God, and the universe through the process of acculturation of local values and Islamic teachings. Spiritually, this tradition functions as a means of deep religious expression, where people interpret it as a form of collective prayer, an expression of gratitude for all

blessings, and a medium of protection to resist the army. The shift in meaning from a mere offering to the spirit of the ancestors to a form of devotion to the Creator shows that this tradition is adaptive to the development of people's beliefs but still maintains its sacred essence.

Viewed from the social side, bantan-bantan plays a role as a pillar of cohesion that strengthens solidarity and brotherhood between citizens through the spirit of mutual cooperation. The process of preparation to the implementation of the ritual creates an intense interaction space that involves all levels of society regardless of economic or social status, thereby fostering the value of equality and a sense of mutual belonging. The distribution of food or offerings at the end of the procession also affirms the value of sharing, where happiness and sustenance are felt collectively to maintain the harmony of community life in an agrarian environment.

Overall, the bantan-bantan tradition is a living tradition that contains important educational values for cultural transmission to the younger generation. Through active involvement in every stage of the ritual, moral values such as cooperation, social concern, and spirituality are instilled as the identity of the people of Negeri Agung Village. Despite the challenges of modernization, the sustainability of this tradition is maintained because of its vital function in maintaining collective identity and strengthening the social and religious structure of society from generation to generation.

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