



THE EXISTENCE OF THE ALAS TRIBE COMMUNITY IN PRESERVING WEDDING CULTURAL PRACTICES IN KUTACANE, SOUTHEAST ACEH

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Abstract

The study entitled *The Existence of the Alas Tribe Community in Preserving Wedding Cultural Practices in Kutacane, Southeast Aceh* discusses how the Alas Tribe maintains the sustainability of wedding traditions and what cultural practices are still carried out. The purpose of this study is to understand the efforts of the Alas Tribe in maintaining these traditions. The approach used is descriptive qualitative, with research subjects including Traditional Leaders, Village Secretaries, and the Alas Tribe community from the younger generation to the elderly who understand wedding customs. Data collection was carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using data reduction, presentation, and verification techniques. The results of the study indicate that the sustainability of wedding culture in the Alas Tribe is supported by community participation in traditional rituals, learning cultural values, and the application of tradition as a community identity. The sequence of traditional rituals of the Alas Tribe includes Sari Pinang, Matokken Upah, Ngampeken, Mekhadat, Mido Pudun, Bagah Pelawanken, Malam Jagai, Tangis Dilo, Pemamanen, Mekhaleng, Antar Nakhuhken, and Senubung. These rituals are an important part of preserving cultural heritage and strengthening the identity of the Alas Tribe.

Keywords: Existence; Alas tribe community; Marriage cultural.

Abstrak

Penelitian berjudul eksistensi komunitas suku alas dalam melestarikan praktik budaya pernikahan di Kutacane, Aceh Tenggara membahas bagaimana Suku Alas menjaga kelestarian tradisi pernikahan serta praktik budaya apa saja yang masih dijalankan. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah memahami upaya Suku Alas dalam mempertahankan tradisi tersebut. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif, dengan subjek penelitian meliputi Pemuka Adat, Sekretaris Desa, serta masyarakat Suku Alas dari generasi muda hingga orang tua yang memahami adat pernikahan. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan teknik reduksi, penyajian, dan verifikasi data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kelestarian budaya pernikahan di Suku Alas didukung oleh partisipasi masyarakat dalam ritual adat, pembelajaran nilai-nilai budaya, serta penerapan tradisi sebagai identitas komunitas. Urutan ritual adat Suku Alas meliputi Sari Pinang, Matokken Upah, Ngampeken, Mekhadat, Mido Pudun, Bagah Pelawanken, Malam Jagai, Tangis Dilo, Pemamanen, Mekhaleng, Antar Nakhuhken, dan Senubung. Ritual-ritual ini menjadi bagian penting dalam melestarikan warisan budaya dan memperkuat jati diri Suku Alas.

Kata Kunci: Eksistensi; Masyarakat suku alas; Budaya pernikahan.

INTRODUCTION

The Alas Tribe is one of the tribes in Southeast Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, which borders directly with Karo Regency, North Sumatra. The Alas Tribe is often referred to as "Tanoh Alas Metuah" because the geographical location of the Alas Tribe is on the surface of the foot of Mount Leuser. If you look at the map, the position of Tanoh Alas is surrounded by Mount Leuser and



the location of Tanoh Alas is also filled with a very famous river flow, namely Lawe Alas or Alas River ¹.

The history of the emergence of the Alas Tribe comes from the word "Alas" which is the name of an Ethnic Tribe chief, namely the grandson of King Lambing who is a descendant of King Pandingan in Tanah Batak. This can happen because Alas lives in the oldest village in Tanah Alas, namely Batu Mbulan Village. The Alas Tribe has its own regional language, namely "Cekhok Alas" or Alas Language which is a group of regional languages of Karo Regency ².

This study reveals how the Alas Tribe maintains the existence of the Alas Tribe's cultural wedding practices and how the Alas Tribe's traditional rituals still survive because they are upheld as the identity of the Tanoh Alas community and region.

The fact that the Alas Tribe has a high level of community existence in implementing the Alas culture as a way to maintain cultural practices in marriage is a form of community identity that is very attached to the community. This can be seen from the use of their regional language which is very thick with its pronunciation accent and community participation from children, adults, and parents have their respective roles when the Alas traditional ritual procurement process ³.

The explanation above can be emphasized based on the basis of the Structural Functional Theory, namely Adaptation, Goal Achievement, Integration, and Pattern Maintenance in culture. The existence of the Alas Tribe community does occur because of the structure of customary rules that create adaptation as a form of maintaining cultural practices in the Alas Tribe's marriage.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a type of qualitative research using the Descriptive method because the description of the approach to the object of study being studied ⁴. According to Nazir (1988) in the book "Examples of Research Methods", the descriptive method is a method in examining the status of a group of people, an object, a set of conditions, a system of thought or a class of events in the present. The purpose of this descriptive research is to create a description, picture, scheme systematically, factually, and accurately regarding the facts, characteristics and functions of the names and their relationships between the phenomena to be studied. The subjects of this research are Traditional Figures, Village Secretaries, and the Community including young people and parents. In this study, the variables to be measured are how the community acts in maintaining the cultural practices of the Alas Tribe. This study uses data collection techniques, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. Briefly inform about the materials and methods used in the study, including the subjects/materials studied, the tools used, the experimental design or design used, sampling techniques, variables to be measured, data collection techniques, analysis and statistical models used ⁵.

¹ Radiyah Hanum Pinem, Abdul Karim Batubara, and M. Nasihudin Ali, "Nilai-Nilai Islam Dalam Tradisi Adat Budaya Suku Alas Di Kabupaten Aceh Tenggara," *Warisan: Journal of History and Cultural Heritage* 4, no. 3 (December 29, 2023): 132–37, <https://doi.org/10.34007/warisan.v4i3.1997>.

² Silmi Diani, "Tinjauan Hukum Adat Terhadap Prosesi Pernikahan Adat Alas Dalam Eksistensi Keadatan Suku Alas Kutacane Aceh Tenggara" (Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, 2022).

³ Dina Fadhila, "Fenomena Pergeseran Tradisi Mepahukh Dalam Perkawinan Masyarakat Suku Alas Di Aceh Tenggara" (Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2024).

⁴ Suharsimi Arikunto, *Prosedur Penelitian Sejarah Suatu Pendekatan Praktek* (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 1993).

⁵ Miftahudin, *Metodologi Penelitian Sejarah Lokal* (Yogyakarta: UNY Press, 2020).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Preservation of the Marriage Culture of the Alas Tribe

The existence of the Alas tribe in maintaining the practice of wedding culture in Kutacane is due to the rules in the customs of the Alas tribe, namely Mekhadat. Based on the results of research by Suci Dani Hari regarding "*Mekhadat Tradition in the Alas Tribe Wedding Ceremony*" that the relationship with the existence of the community maintaining the practice of Alas culture is that Mekhadat must still be carried out by every community who wants to get married in the implementation of the Alas tribe wedding ceremony because if in a marriage does not carry out Mekhadat, then the next generation cannot carry out the Alas culture practice because their parents did not carry out the Mekhadat Tradition when they got married, then the requirements must be made first by implementing their parents' wedding customs ⁶. That is a loss for one of the couples if they do not carry out the Alas culture practice later when they have children and make a wedding or circumcision event for their child, they cannot carry out the harvest / invite the guardian from the woman's side to the event because the initial custom / mekhadat has not been carried out ⁷. So if Mekhadat is not carried out, the wedding ceremony will take place irregularly or the implementation of customary law first and then the marriage process continues, making the marriage process take a long time. In every wedding ceremony, whether in the Alas Tribe marriage or in other tribes marriage, there will definitely be a mekhadat, maybe the name and the procedure for its implementation are different. In the sense that carrying out the practice of the Alas culture is a way to maintain harmony between relatives in order to continue to maintain relationships.

Another factor of the strong existence of the Alas tribe in maintaining cultural practices in marriage is the existence of the mepahukh tradition, a cultural practice of the Alas tribe's marriage, which must be enforced to fulfill the implementation of customary law based on the principles of Islamic law as a benchmark in implementing a culture in Kutacane. The purpose of the mepahukh tradition specifically is as an arena for socialization in order to have marriages between young men and women of the Alas tribe, so that children from the descendants of the Alas tribe are reborn ⁸. This marriage path is carried out in order to maintain the integrity of the tribe and can maintain the customs of the Alas tribe authentically ⁹.

The Alas Tribe has a unique cultural tradition and the similarity of the Alas traditional culture with other cultures is very different because it has a distinctive characteristic as the original identity of the Alas Tribe community ¹⁰. In particular, the cultural practice of the Alas Tribe's marriage ceremony alone has almost 12 stages of the process to carry out a marriage in the Alas tradition and all of these stages are still strongly implemented because there is a habit of

⁶ Suci Dani Ari, "Radisi Mekhadat Pada Upacara Perkawinan Suku Alas (Studi Kasus Di Desa Lawe Sumur Kecamatan Lawe Sumur Kabupaten Aceh Tenggara)" (UIN Ar-Raniry, 2023).

⁷ Reh Ulina Bintang, Muhammad Adika Nugraha, and Abdul Azis, "Peran Adat Alas Dalam Perkembangan Kaum Muda Di Aceh Tenggara," *Polyscopia* 1, no. 1 (January 26, 2024): 26–31, <https://doi.org/10.57251/polyscopia.v1i1.1236>.

⁸ Enggi Raseha, Ramdiana Ramdiana, and Tri Supadmi, "Ritual Adat Alas Pemamanen Di Desa Babel Kutacane Kabupaten Aceh Tenggara.," *Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Pendidikan Seni Drama, Tari Dan Musik* 3, no. 4 (2018).

⁹ Dita Pratiwi and Faisal Riza, "Mepahukh Dalam Upacara Pernikahan Suku Alas Sebagai Arena Sosialisasi Remaja," *Jurnal EDUCATIO: Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia* 9, no. 2 (September 20, 2023): 854, <https://doi.org/10.29210/1202323240>.

¹⁰ Umi Selamah, "Budaya Tangis Dilo Pada Upacara Perkawinan Suku Alas Di Kabupaten Aceh Tenggara (Studi Kasus : Desa Lawe Sumur Kecamatan Lawe Sumur)" (UIN Ar-Raniry, 2019).

the Alas community to maintain cultural heritage¹¹. The process of habituation of the Alas Tribe community in maintaining cultural traditions was created because of the high existence of the community to carry out or use the Alas traditional wedding tradition as a pleasure for the Alas Tribe community that it is included as a happiness in itself about the thickness in carrying out the culture¹².

Based on the results of the interview with Mr. Kasiman Sinaga as a Traditional Figure who lives in Pulo Sanggar Village, he said that "the strong tradition of Alas culture is due to the compulsion of young people who come from their parents' wishes to have to know and apply Alas cultures in life rituals that are considered sacred, namely in marriage". So the existence of the community is present when it is strong because it comes from the smallest scope first, namely the family as an important role in encouraging their descendants to play a role in developing the Alas cultural tradition".



Figure 1. Traditional Figures

According to Mr. Khairul Sinaga as the Village Secretary in Muara Lawe Bulan Village, he said that "The existence of the Alas Tribe community comes from the kinship relationship of the community. This is one way for the Alas Tribe community to maintain its cultural traditions because it comes from the ties between communities. The meaning of this bond is when relatives invite us to help in the process of their child's wedding customs, then we will invite them to help with the process of the wedding customs in our family and because of the kinship relationship that builds ties between one community and another to always carry out and apply the Alas Customary tradition".

Based on the results of interviews with other informants, namely one of the young people of Alas Tribe descent, namely Deby Febriani Selian who lives in Mbarung Village, said that "The existence of young people who are descendants of the Alas Tribe in maintaining the Alas Customary tradition by respecting the Alas Customary tradition by preserving their culture which is considered as the identity of the community, especially young people because the identity is already attached, then naturally follow the processes of Alas cultural practices in marriage based on their respective functions and roles for all groups. With the attachment of self-identity to culture, in general we young people also recognize the Alas culture itself because there is a role or our participation in the traditional ritual process, with that we are also able to develop the Alas culture as the identity of the Alas Tribe".

¹¹ Dina Fadhila, "Dampak Tradisi Meupahukh Terhadap Perkawinan Dibawah Umur Dalam Masyarakat Suku Alas Di Aceh Tenggara," *ASASI: Journal of Islamic Family Law* 4, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.36420/asasi.v4i2.488>.

¹² Desi Hasra Deva, Awaluddin Arifin, and Ibrahim Chalid, "Tangis Tukhunen Sebagai Medium Komunikasi Tradisional Dalam Prosesi Adat Pernikahan Suku Alas Di Aceh Tenggara," *Aceh Anthropological Journal* 5, no. 2 (November 17, 2021): 161, <https://doi.org/10.29103/aaj.v5i2.4781>; Adha Renaldi Selian and Rizka Syafriana, "Akibat Hukum Terhadap Perkawinan Bujul Suku Alas Di Aceh Tenggara," *JIHHP: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum, Humaniora Dan Politik* 4, no. 5 (2024), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.38035/jihhp.v4i5.2349>.

The following is the sequence of ritual practices of the Alas Tribe's culture in marriage in Kutacane, Southeast Aceh, namely:

1. *Sari Pinang* is a sign of a man's seriousness to a woman by giving money from the prospective groom's brother to the woman who is ready to be proposed to and will be married and the amount depends on the agreement of both parties.
2. *Matoken Upah* is determining the Mahar that will be agreed upon together according to the request of the prospective bride, at that time the two prospective brides and grooms will be accompanied by *sentue* (old or respected people) and young women.
3. *Ngampeken* is the term for asking for blessings where the prospective groom with friends and *si metue* come to the prospective bride's house.
4. *Mekhadat* is a group of the groom's party coming to the house of the parents or guardian of the woman to deliberate according to Custom, which is held at night around 20:00 WIB, attended by Traditional Figures, *Pengulu* (village head) and some of the community.
5. *Mido pudun* is asking for a promise of certainty of the day that has been agreed upon by the family of the prospective bride, a good step for the day. *Pudun* is pandan leaves that have been processed and then concluded as many days to the day.
6. *Bagah pelawanken* is an invitation in the determination of the promise and All the ingredients of *bagah pelawanken* are wrapped in banana leaves and tied, the ingredients of *bagah Pelawanken* are; Belo sepedi, one pack of Kapur, 4 Kacu grains, one roll of Sugi, 1 large Betel nut, 2 4 super Betel nuts, 4 4 super Betel nuts, 8 super Betel nuts, *Mayang medandan* (betel nut flower stems) 2 pieces, *Bebekhas Mayang* (betel nut flowers), *Pinang kobal* (peeled betel nuts) 8 pieces, *Pinang kekhas bekikh* (cut betel nuts).
7. *Malam jagai* is the prospective bride and groom will sit in front of the door of the house wearing songkek cloth with a mat that they themselves woven and in front of the bride and groom there is a tray filled with rice, water, and lime to *mengakhi* (peusejuk) the prospective bride and groom. Then the prospective bride and groom will change clothes and continue with the Adat takuti which will be applied by the village young women. Henna is a type of leaf that will be ground to redden the nails, palms, and feet. Henna in the Alas language is called *kacakh*. The henna event is carried out to inform the community that the one who wears henna is a sign that he has been proposed to.



Figure 2. *Jagai Night* Custom for the bride

8. *Tangis Dilo* is the cry of the bride before dawn. *Tangis* means crying, *dilo* means the time before dawn. *Tangis dilo* is done by the bride to her friends and her biological mother before the day of the wedding procession. *Tangis dilo* is one

of the traditional vocal forms of Alas. Southeast Aceh Regency which is sung while crying¹³.

9. This security is done before the *nakhuh* event (escorting the bride to the groom's house). The security is known as a horse riding procession.
10. *Mekhaleng* is the procession of picking up the bride after the security ceremony accompanied by *canang* and escorted by 2 people wearing *Bulang Bulu* and *Pisau Mekhemu*.
11. *Nakhuh* is the procession of *nakhuh* the bride walks in front while the groom and his entourage are behind, so *Nakhuh* is the procession of escorting the bride to the groom's house and followed by the local community.
12. *Senubung* is connecting the two families as a continuation of the Traditional Wedding procession. After the bride spends the night at her husband's house for one night, the next day the groom will come to the bride's house bringing the specified items as is usually done by the Alas tribe and spend the night at the bride's parents' house.

CONCLUSION

The Alas tribe is one of the tribes in Aceh Province, precisely in Southeast Aceh Regency, where the Alas traditional tradition upholds kinship relations in carrying out social life. This is marked by reciprocal actions between communities as a form of social solidarity which is considered as social capital that has great potential to become a place to develop creativity if it requires the role of the community as an agent of change. When the Alas Tribe community has great social capital, it becomes a way to develop traditional traditions to the next generation as a form of the existence of the Alas Tribe community to maintain the practice of wedding culture. Some of the Alas Tribe's cultural ritual practices in holding a wedding are *Sari Pinang*, *Matokken Upah*, *Ngampeken*, *Mekhadat*, *Mido Pudun*, *Bagah Pelawanken*, *Malam Jagai*, *Tangis Dilo*, *Pemamanen*, *Mekhaleng*, *Antar Nakhuhken*, and *Senubung*.

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¹³ Selamah, "Budaya Tangis Dilo Pada Upacara Perkawinan Suku Alas Di Kabupaten Aceh Tenggara (Studi Kasus : Desa Lawe Sumur Kecamatan Lawe Sumur)."

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2. Khairul Sinaga, Sekretaris desa Muara Lawe Bulan pada 24 Mei 2024
3. Deby Febriani Selian Tokoh pemuda Desa Mbarung pada 27 Mei 2024