

Local Wisdom Values in Dowry of Indonesia's Bridewealth: A Study of East Java Horseshoe Communities

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia, especially East Java Province, has diverse and iconic cultural customs that must be preserved by any stakeholder including but not limited to the locals. One of the customs is the practice of bridewealth and dowry. Dowry in East Java Province is distinctive from those from other regions and shows some changes and advancements on the shapes and goods included depending on the local wisdom values applied within the society. Such practice might also be a source of inspiration to promote and preserve local wisdom values. This qualitative study aims to reveal the local wisdom values in several forms of dowry in East Java Province, especially in horseshoe areas. Data were collected using interview, observation, and documentation. Results conveyed data in accordance with dowry shapes, functions and significances along with the local wisdom values in the East Java horse shoe area

Keywords: *values local wisdom, bride dowry Indonesia*

I. INTRODUCTION

Marriage is an inner and outer bond between men and women as a spouse to be committed as a family under faith in the name of God Almighty. Javanese people, especially in East Java Province, have a complex ceremony in carrying out a marriage tradition. The ceremony of traditional Javanese wedding can be divided into three parts namely pre-, during, and post-ceremonies. One of the pre-ceremony agenda is bridewealth and dowry. The meaningfulness of this dowry is to strengthen both family relations so that the bridegroom will live ever after. Because family is one of foundational social institutional in all societies [11]. Dowry is carried out by giving items as gifts from the groom to the bride, of which the whole activities are often called as bridewealth. Dowry from each district of East Java Province has differences and similarities in the good types given depending on the potential or resources that the prospective bride has and the local community's customs. Since dowry culture is an ancestral heritage originating from local traditions, it must be preserved and instilled in the community to defend the local wisdom from any influence to extinctions [1].

However, along with the development of eras, dowry and bridewealth practice have been shifted much. The changes might occur differently between one region to another regarding how the locals behave on the dowry and bridewealth practices. Despite the changes, there are still philosophies of local wisdom values included in determining the types and goods of the dowry [2]. Therefore, this qualitative study is mainly to discuss the

dowry practices in East Java horseshoe areas by addressing two research questions: What is the form of dowry in the East Java horseshoe areas And, what is the local wisdom values carried by different types of dowry in the East Java horseshoe areas Further, this study is expected to be helpful in preserving the local wisdom values permeated in a dowry of bridewealth practices [7].

Methods

This study used qualitative and descriptive approach. There were two types of data sources namely primary and secondary data. The primary data sources were obtained directly from the informants, who were the committee of Harpi Melati (non-governmental organization of Indonesian make-up artists), culturalists, bridal grooming, and community leaders. The secondary data sources were obtained from written sources such as documents and photographs. The study was conducted in several districts of East Java horseshoe areas covering Banyuwangi, Jember, Lumajang, and Probolinggo. The data were collected using interviews, observation, and documentation. The research instruments used in this study included interview guidelines, observation sheets, and documentation guidelines. Further, the obtained data were analysed descriptively qualitatively. The descriptive data were in the form of narratives about dowry in the East Java horseshoe area [8].

II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2.1 Dowry Development in The East Java Horseshoe Areas

In accordance to the interview results with the Harpi Melati advisors in Lumajang, in 1960 the dowry given to the bride in Lumajang was carried out by the prospective groom with a convoy of almost eighty people, where in the front row of the accompaniment carried tumang (a stove) and in the second row brought various cakes such as steamed bread, tetel (traditional cake made from sticky rice and coconut), and jenang koleh (a traditional gruel), which were carried on a shoulder. The back row brought vegetable crops put in a large basket, moreover, some of the back row also carried mattresses and pillows. The rest of the convoy brought the bride's equipment including [6]:

- Prayer equipment, which meant that the up-going marriage must always be relevant to and based on religious values.
- Clothes, which meant that both prospective bride and groom must be able to keep their household secrets.
- Makeup sets, which were given to make prospective wife able to maintain their appearance and beauty in front of the husband.
- Sandals, meaning that the bride and groom were ready to live together in a household and always be on a good path.
- Fine jewellery, which meant that the prospective bride would be expected to continue to strive in order not to disappoint the husband and also to look fine and beautiful despite facing various household problems.
- Large steamed bread, tetel, and jenang koleh, which meant that both bride and groom would always be together until the end of life and the friendship between the two families would remain in harmony.
- Vegetables, fruits, and other secondary crops, which meant that the new family's life would be always fortune, harmonious, and happy.
- Stove or tumang, meaning that the bride and groom could always hide the hustle and bustle of the family and solve the problems well.
- Mattresses and pillows, which meant as a unity of heart and determination among some existing differences.

The function of dowry was generally to fulfil the needs of clothing, food, and place for the bride and groom. In the 1960s, the form of dowry was too simple because there was minimal use of materials and tools as well as lacks of creativity in packaging, i.e. using crepe paper and trays. However, in 1970 to 1980, the dowry given to prospective brides in Lumajang district was almost similar to that of in

the 1960s, including the way to carry the dowry. The difference was only by the presence of a gold ring given to prospective brides, of which the shape was simply round with betel leaves and no other ring decorations such as diamond and gemstones. The round gold ring was meant to represent an eternal love of the bride and groom. The betel leaves were meant that the couple only had one heart and bold determination without taking any difference into problems that could make their life less harmonious [4].

Furthermore, in 1990 to 2000, the dowry given by the prospective groom to the bride developed in the aspect of good types including woman clothes, traditional food, and fruits, of which the philosophies were drawn as follows [10]:

- Woman clothes, meaning that the prospective bride must be able to keep household's secrets.
- Traditional food consisted of jadah (traditional cake made from sticky rice), lapis (traditional pudding made from sticky rice), wajik (sweet traditional cake made from sticky rice), jenang (traditional cake made from sugar palm, sticky rice, and coconut). The sticky rice was meant that hopefully the bride and groom's love would last forever.
- Fruits, meaning that the bride and groom love would bear a child that benefitted the family and society.

Eventhough the dowry types were similar to those in 2000, the dowry packaging in 2018 was different and more varied due to creative organization and decoration. In the 2000s, the packaging or organization of the dowry was easier to do as there were so many tutorials shown in different media. Moreover, the results of the dowry packaging were more attractive and beautiful than the previous trends. In 2018, the addition of dowry contents included toiletries, shoes and bags, make-up, and woman's underwear. Toiletries were included in the dowry due to providing toiletries needs such as towels, soap, shampoo, body scrub, and others so that the bride always kept herself and her family clean and health. In addition, bags and shoes indicated that the prospective groom was able to finance all the needs of his future wife of different accessories. Make-up or other ornamental equipment has also been included in a set of dowry given to the prospective brides since the 60s but the number was very limited. In 2018, there were so many people using make-up as dowry contents. The meaning of giving make-up was the fact that the prospective wife was expected to be able to maintain her appearance and always look beautiful in front of her husband. Last, underwear in a dowry had a meaning of happiness by the presence of descendants and a symbol of the sanctity of the bride and groom [9].

2.2 Local Wisdom Values of the East Java Horseshoe Areas

Local knowledge means the local wisdom that can be understood as local ideas that are thoughtful, full of

wisdom, valued embedded and followed by their peoples. In the concept of anthropology, local wisdom is known indigenous or local knowledge or local genius that becomes the basis of cultural identity. The core values of local cultural policies can be used as guidance in life. Surely a lot of Indonesian society becomes the norm in the rules in life. Indonesia is a religious nation that the values underlying such wisdom. But there are also norms of the local wisdom that has been passed down from their parents for generations [3]. In general, local wisdom can be understood as a local idea that is good for a certain community to live. It is a part of culture and is deeply rooted in human life in connection with nature, culture, economic, security, and custom. It refers to both ways and practices developed by a group of people who come from an in-depth understanding of the local environment and are formed from across generations. It can be seen from the social phenomena such as agricultural activities, animal husbandries, mutual cooperation, and marriage celebrations or ceremonies. The manifestation of local wisdom is in the lives of conservative people who know their environment well, live side by side with nature in harmony, and understand how to use their potential resources wisely. Henceforth, those manifestations should be maintained and taught to younger generation to enable them preserve culture.

The East Java horseshoe areas have a lot of local wisdom values contained in some artefacts and traditions conveyed in local customs such as in bridewealth and dowry practices. The meaning of dowry indeed has cultural values, customs, religion, ethics, and morals that are very important to be explained to young people to pursue local understanding. The values of local wisdom contained in dowry include harmony and social solidarity. Along with the era changes, the practice of dowry in several regions such as Lumajang, Banyuwangi, and other districts in East Java Horseshoe areas are currently experiencing rapid growth in terms of the selection of goods, clothing, food, and also the packaging including the way of bringing the dowry. Thus, dowry in a bridewealth practice of East Java horseshoe areas is considered carrying the local wisdom values even some changes might occur and still develop in near future.

III. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The meaning of dowry in a region shows the local wisdom of the area and the ways community lives. It also explains the quality of the community system especially on whether the community members preserve the dowry customs that contain lots of religious, ethical, moral, and cultural

aspects. The practice of dowry is required to be applied across generations and involve local people to work together and help each other. It is suggested for further research to investigate on bridewealth and dowry practices in other regions of Indonesia to enrich the literatures of the related topic [5].

Acknowledgments

Authors would like to thank to Department of Home Economic at Universitas Negeri Surabaya for the endless supports to conduct the present study. They also would thank to any stakeholder involved who has helped the research process.

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