

# **Banjar Women's Cultural Patterns in Building Local Awareness About Welfare (A Study on the Tradition of Reading the Manakib Siti Khodijah at the Ar-Rahmah Sekumpul Recitation)**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper aims to examine local cultural patterns in building community awareness and knowledge of values. In particular, this paper tries to explore the methods of the Banjar community, especially Banjar women in building, growing and transforming knowledge about welfare through reading Siti Khadijah's manakib. The reading of Siti Khadijah's manakib is a tradition among Banjar women which is carried out on various occasions when certain religious rituals are carried out. Especially the reading of Siti Khadijah's manakib is also routinely carried out at the recitation institution every 11th day according to the hijriyah calendar every month. Banjar women in this study are not only seen as passive actors who only accept and become objects of socio-cultural transformation but also play an active role in the transformation process. Even women, who have been considered subordinate in various religious activities, in this Islamic religious study institution have a role in transmitting Islamic knowledge and also transforming local socio-cultural values, especially welfare values. Through recitation institutions, especially through the ritual reading of Siti Khadijah's manaqib, women have played a role in dynamizing the economy and teaching world asceticism. The reading of Siti Khadijah's manaqib reflects the ways in which local people grow and raise hopes for welfare for the sustainability of life and society. Even women, who have been considered subordinate in various religious activities, in this study institution have a role in transmitting Islamic knowledge and also transforming local socio-cultural values, especially welfare values. Through recitation institutions, particularly through the ritual reading of Siti Khadijah's manaqib, women have played a role in dynamizing the economy and teaching world asceticism. The reading of Siti Khadijah's manaqib reflects the ways in which local people grow and raise hopes for welfare for the sustainability of life and society. Even women, who have been considered subordinate in various religious activities, in this Islamic religious study institution have a role in transmitting Islamic knowledge and also transforming local socio-cultural values, especially welfare values. Through recitation institutions, especially through the ritual reading of Siti Khadijah's manaqib, women have played a role in dynamizing the economy and teaching world asceticism. The reading of Siti Khadijah's manaqib reflects the ways in which local people grow and raise hopes for welfare for the sustainability of life and society. Through recitation institutions, especially through the ritual reading of Siti Khadijah's manaqib, women have played a role in dynamizing the economy and teaching world asceticism. The reading of Siti Khadijah's manaqib reflects the ways in which local people grow and raise hopes for welfare for the sustainability of life and society.

**Keywords:** *component, koran, manaqib, women, welfare.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Women are often identified as weak, passive and only complement men. In various fields of life, women are often ignored and subordinate, including in the religious field. Apart from various histories and religious interpretations of

women, in fact there are quite a few women who are involved in various fields of life and even religion as found in the Banjar community of South Kalimantan. Among the Banjar community, there have been many female actors who are able to play a role in the process of socio-cultural

and religious transformation through the Islamic Koran institution. As a religious education institution, Koran has long been present and grown in the midst of the Banjar community, especially in South Kalimantan [1, p. 19]. The recitation was also the forerunner of the birth of a teaching institution which became known as the *punduk pesantren* in this area. The recitation system, which was originally introduced by a leader from Demak, Khatib Dayyan, was later developed by Syekh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjary to become a system that approaches *pesantren* institutions. He developed a new teaching and learning model where the recitation which was previously carried out at the house, *mushalla* or king's palace was then carried out in a complex that had a *mushalla*, a place for teaching and learning and a dormitory for students [2, p. 54].

Even though in the history of early development in South Kalimantan, the recitation of the Koran mostly featured men, but over time, women also began to be actively involved in the transformation process in this institution. If in the past the recitation was led by a pious male teacher and had extensive religious knowledge, the output of a boarding school or a sitting *mangaji*, now there are also many women who become teachers or recitation leaders. Like male teachers, female teachers in recitation teach various religious sciences, both *tawhid*, *fiqh*, and *tasawwuf* with a reference to a book that is considered *mu'tabaroh* to their students. The recitation of women is usually carried out routinely either in the mosque, in breaking the mosque or at the house of the teacher concerned or commonly known as the recitation committee. This recitation of women can be followed by anyone, regardless of age, educational background or status. Students only need to come and listen to what the teacher has to say. Those who understand Arabic script or script will bring the book taught by the teacher, so that in addition to listening to him, he will also listen to the contents of the book.

This paper will try to examine the involvement of women in one of the rituals in the recitation, namely the reading of Siti Khadijah's *manaqib*. The involvement in this ritual provides an overview of the role of women in the process of socio-cultural transformation among the Banjar community through the recitation institution, especially in one of the recitations in the Sekumpul area which was carried out by Mrs. Hajjah Nafsiyah. This recitation is quite special because it is led and carried out by a female teacher with a large number of congregations. Until 2019, there were around 500 members of this recitation who came from the Martapura and Banjarbaru areas. However, before discussing further the ritual of reading the *manaqib* in this recitation, we will first describe the history of the existence of women's recitation in this area.

## 2. METHOD

The approach used in this research is a cultural approach using qualitative methods. Qualitative methods are used in order to describe in depth about local cultural events which are then interpreted to find the meaning behind these events. The local culture that is described in this research is the tradition of reading the *manakib* Siti Khodijah among

women which is carried out at the Ar-Rahmah Sekumpul recitation. The key informant in this study was the leader of the recitation which was then continued to several congregations who were considered to have sufficient knowledge and involvement in this recitation. The data source used is the speech of the community, especially the Al-Rahmah recitation congregation, all of whom are women about their involvement in the reading of the *Manakib Siti Khodijah* at the Ar-Rahmah recitation. In addition, data is also obtained from observation and documentation of *manakib* reading activities, both the process and the meal, especially in routine activities that are carried out every 11th of the *hijriyah* calendar every month during the period 2017-2019.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 History of the Women's Koran

The history of the emergence of recitation institutions in the South Kalimantan region cannot be separated from the entry of Islam in the land of Banjar. Islam entered and was spread intensively in the Banjar area at the beginning of the sixteenth century in a way that was not much different from what happened in Java, namely through traders, preachers and Sufis. In certain limits, Islam actually entered South Kalimantan between the end of the XIII century to the XV century [3, p. 232]. This is very possible, because at that time Muslim traders have been found in this area. Islam as a religion of course has begun to be recognized by the local community through Muslim traders, but its teachings may not be widely known due to the absence of systematic preaching. Abdullah [4, p. 1] doubt that Muslim merchants who were so busy and more interested in making profits had the interest and ability to spread Islam. Therefore, scholars and Sufis seem to have a more important role than traders in the Islamization of the South Kalimantan region.

The intensive spread of Islam in Banjar was preceded by the Islamization of Pangeran Samudra or Sultan Suriansyah, the first king to be domiciled in Banjarmasin. This happened after Pangeran Samudra with the help of Demak's army won the battle against his uncle, Raden Tumenggung, who ruled in Daha State [3, p. 234]. Along with sending military aid, Sultan Demak also included a leader known as Khatib Dayyan [5, p. 188].

Khatib Dayyan tried to spread Islam by teaching various Islamic knowledge to the Banjar people. So far, insufficient information has not been found to further describe the contribution of Khatib Dayyan in the spread of Islam in Banjar, both regarding the target group, the material, and the method of his *da'wah*. However, considering Khatib Dayyan's background and his arrival at the same time as the sending of reinforcements from Demak, it is possible that his Islamization was still limited to the elite in Banjar society, especially in the court. Meanwhile, Islamization among the majority of people in remote areas was probably carried out by Sufis. In remote areas, graves of religious figures are often found accompanied by myths about sacredness and services in spreading Islam.

Apart from the problem of limited historical sources that can be used to reconstruct the history of Islamization in

Banjar, it can be said that the preaching of Khatib Dayyan and the Sufis was quite successful. Many Banjar people have embraced Islamic teachings, and even since the XVII century many Banjar people began to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Apart from performing the pilgrimage, they also learned Islamic knowledge from the scholars of Mecca. Upon returning to their hometowns, they then taught the knowledge they had acquired to the Banjar people with material content and using methods as in Islamic teaching in Mecca. Since then the religious teaching system called *pengajian* has become known in the Banjar community. Even though Islamic teachings have been widely adopted, they are generally limited to Malays; Islam is only able to enter very slowly among the Dayak tribes. Even among Malay Muslims, adherence to Islam is minimal and is nothing more than reciting *shahadah*. Under the sultans from generation to generation to the time of Muhammad Arsyad, it was clear that no serious efforts were made by the rulers to advance the life of Islam. However, they used Arabic script for the Sultanate's correspondence with other Malay-Indonesian, Dutch and British rulers. Apart from that there were also efforts by traveling preachers to carry out further Islamization of the area but progress was minimal [6, pp. 251-252].

Islamic teaching through recitation developed further during the time of Syekh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjary (1710-1812), a great scholar who is considered to be the pioneer of the spread of Islamic teachings in Banjar which originated from Mecca [7, pp. 12-13]. The lessons that were given at that time included the science of *fiqh*, the science of *Tawheed* and the light of Sufism. In addition, there are people who want to deepen their religious knowledge by learning Arabic passively. In addition, lessons are also given to read the Koran. This recitation develops in homes, in *surau-surau* and consists of groups of children to adults. In the Arsyad al-Banjary period, the recitation was more oriented to the teaching of the Koran. Besides reading, memorizing and chanting the Koran, teaching is also accompanied by understanding the contents of Arabic lessons, *tafseer*, *tajwid* as well as *khat* and calligraphy. The latter is Arsyad's expertise. In the teaching of *fiqh*, it has been arranged very systematically from *taharah* to *hajj*. In the field of monotheism, various schools of theology in Islam, the concept of faith and all of their details, are discussed. In teaching *tasawwuf*, Arsyad prefers Sufism which is still acceptable by the *Shari'a* rather than those that are contradictory. In addition, he also teaches astronomy (astronomy) [8, p. 48], a field of science which makes him one of the most prominent experts among Malay-Indonesian scholars [6, p. 252]. In this context it seems that the reading of *manaqib* has not become part of the tradition of recitation carried out by Arsyad.

Although Syekh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjary emphasized the teaching of Islam on the religious aspect, through recitation he also paid attention to aspects related to increasing social welfare. An example is the introduction of an irrigation agricultural system through recitation which is carried out in *Dalam Pagar Village* by utilizing the river that divides the *Sungai Tuan* village in the *Martapura* area. The river that divides the *Sungai Tuan* village in the *Martapura*

region, for example, is the result of the transformation carried out by Arsyad in agriculture and the environment (The name *Sungai Tuan* is used as a form of respect / appreciation for the role of Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad. In Banjar society, the term *Tuan*, or in full *Tuan Guru*, is used to refer to respect for religious figures).

The recitation carried out by Syekh Muhammad Arsyad shows that the learning carried out does not fully comply with the recitation system implemented by his teachers when he studied in Mecca. In the recitation he conducts, he not only provides lessons on religious theory and practice, but also directly guides his students to be able to arrange their future livelihoods. In other words, the recitation of Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad aims to prepare people who have religious knowledge and can stand alone in society.

It is said that the recitation carried out by Sheikh Arsyad was not only attended by men, but also opened recitation for women. This recitation resulted in clerical figures who were then spread throughout Banjar and other places in Kalimantan and even Sumatra. One proof of how much influence Arsyad held religious studies for the Banjar community is that the *Parukunan Book* is still being held by the people of this area, which is a lesson note received by one of the brightest female students of Syekh Arsyad named *Fatimah binti Usman* [9, p. 5].

At this time, recitation in the form of a complex with a *mushalla*, a place to study and a dormitory for students is a new tradition for teaching and learning in this area. This is because previously the recitations were carried out in the house, *mushalla*, or palace of the king. During the time span between Khatib Dayyan and Sheikh Arsyad, which took approximately one and a half centuries, Islam tends to be taught or broadcast based on the sitting Koran model which is held at home, *langgar* (*mushalla*) or palace [1, pp. 18-19]. Until the end of the XIX century, recitation was the only Islamic education system that took place in this area [7, pp. 2-3]. Unfortunately, the restrictions on the space for movement and the supervision carried out by the Dutch authorities on Islamic leaders, who were feared would endanger Dutch rule, resulted in the progress of the recitation being choked up. As a result, the contribution of recitation to social transformation has also been very slow. Even so, through the teachings that were developed in the XIX century, various views and beliefs related to spirits began to be put down in particular. Life practices that are more oriented towards magical actions have also begun to be left behind and move into a rational mindset.

The recitation institutes in South Kalimantan are spread across almost all cities. At the beginning of his presence, the recitation was held at the residence of the cleric concerned. But then a lot of things took place in violations and in mosques. Even until 1920 in certain areas according to Nawawi's research [7, p. 13] in the *Hulu Sungai Selatan* area, in almost every *langgar* there is a master guru who volunteers to carry out the recitation.

In South Kalimantan, the area that has quite a number of recitation institutions is Banjar Regency. Until early 2013, no less than 445 *majelis taklim* were registered at the Ministry of Religion, Banjar Regency. Of the 445, 43 of

them are in Martapura District & this sub-district is an area that has the largest number of majelis taklim compared to other sub-districts in Banjar Regency. In fact, some of them are recitation which is quite popular with thousands of congregations such as Guru Wildan recitation, Guru Syukri recitation, Munawwar recitation and Guru Muaz recitation. All these recitations are led and carried out by male teachers. Meanwhile, recitation with women leaders is still not very visible. One of the recitations with a female leader with a congregation of around 500 people is the recitation led by Mrs. Hajjah Nafsiyah, located in Sekumpul. This recitation, like recitation in general, is filled with teaching religious knowledge and activities of remembrance which are carried out on a regular basis.

### **3.2 *Manaqib Siti Khadijah and Local Wisdom in Building the Ideals of Welfare***

Apart from routine weekly recitations filled with teaching religious knowledge, a manaqib reading is held every month. Manaqib is linguistically defined as the story of the sacredness of the saints [10, p. 533]. Meanwhile, according to the term, manaqib are stories about the sacredness of the guardians which can usually be heard from the caretaker of the tomb, his family and students, or read in his life histories [11, p. 355].

Somewhat different from the general practice in Islamic boarding schools in Java, where the manaqib was generally held to commemorate the founder of the Qadiriyyah order, Syekh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani [12, p. 45]. In this recitation, the manaqib was held to commemorate a female figure who was also the wife of the Prophet Muhammad, Siti Khadijah. This ceremony in the recitation circle is known as pamb read manaqib Siti Khadijah (reading the story of Siti Khadijah's sacredness). The reading of the manaqib is usually done using a special book that tells about several sides of Siti Khadijah's life. There are three versions of the manaqib book that are commonly used in the recitation environment in the Martapura area, namely the first book of Sayyidah Khadijah by As-Sayyid Muhammad bin 'Alawi al-Malikiy al-Hasani translated by al-Haj Muhammad Syukry bin Unus Ibnu Ali bin Abdul Rasyid al-Banjary, the second is the Al-Sayyidah Khadijah al-Kubra manaqib compiled by Abu Fatimah al-Haj Munawwar bin Ahmad Gazali al-Banjary and the third is the Siti Khadijah manaqib compiled by Guru Syairaji Kandangan. The first two books were written using Arabic script or script in Malay or Indonesian which in the local language is called 'Arab Melayu'. This type of book is indeed common in most of the other books written by Banjar scholars. The third book is written using Latin script in Indonesian. This book model is indeed common in most of the other books written by Banjar scholars. The third book is written using Latin script in Indonesian. This book model is indeed common in most of the other books written by Banjar scholars. The third book is written using Latin script in Indonesian.

Apart from being told about keshalehan and the level of spirituality of Siti Khadijah, human and social values are also told. It is said that Siti Khadijah was a woman who was wealthy, generous or generous and had good trading skills.

Siti Khadijah is also said to have perfect knowledge and intellect as well as good and praiseworthy behavior (morals), wise in all matters and has great enthusiasm [13, p. 12]. As in the reading of miracle stories of certain characters (manaqib), the mystical and mystical atmosphere in this reading has the aim of increasing the esoteric degree of the participants (congregation) and in this environment, the teacher-student position becomes important for those who try to enter this circle of religious culture.

The recitation of Siti Khadijah's manaqib has started to bloom in recitations since the last 10 years, especially in the Martapura and Kandangan areas. In the Martapura area, the reading of Manaqib Siti Khadijah took place at the Munawwar Teacher Recitation in the Malay Village of Martapura, the Syukri Teacher Recitation at Antasan Senior Martapura and at the recitation of Ibu Nafsiyah Gang Muhaimin Sekumpul Martapura. As for Kandangan, it is done by Guru Syairaji. Recently, the Banjar community has increasingly recited the reading of the manaqib, not only in women's recitations but also in other religious rituals such as the pilgrimage salvation, the ritual of seven months of pregnancy and other religious rituals that involve women as participants. In this context, it seems that changes in society and campaigns of purification schools have been unable to stem the development of this tradition of reading manaqib. Supernatural help, miracles and faidah (benefits) that can be obtained from those who read the manaqib seem to add to the appeal of this manaqib reading. The following is quoted from several parts of Siti Khadijah's manaqib taken from the book by Al-Haj Munawwar Al-Banjary [13, p. 18]:

Whoever reads this Khadijah manaqib at the time of his haul on the eleventh day of Ramadan or on every eleventh of the hijriyah month, Allah will certainly expand his lawful rizkinya and be richly endowed. If he trades, Allah will give him a lot of profit, which is lawful and easy for all matters. If he is a person in either the world or the hereafter, Allah will raise his rank. If he is a claimant of knowledge, Allah will give knowledge of ladunni from Allah SWT. And if he has trouble like a lot of debt, then read this manaqib then if he has the power to slaughter a goat and share the meat then he will reward Sayyidah Khadijah Allah will expand his lawful rizkinnya and pay off his debt and Allah delivers all the needs of the world hereafter.

This statement made many congregations, especially Banjar women, try and wish to be able to carry out the ritual of reading Siti Khadijah's manaqib. To be able to carry out the reading of the manaqib by inviting many people, of course they are required to have certain financial capabilities. Therefore they try and work diligently in order to have more financial capacity so that they can carry out this ritual. This is what Kuntowijoyo said [14, p. 53] It is said that the charitable nature of Islam has the potential to become a new economic ethic. In addition, the institutions of baitul maal, zakat, zuhud and sacrifices are forms of Islamic asceticism in the world [15, p. 20]. In other words, Siti Khadijah's manaqib reading institution can also be said to be a form of Islamic asceticism in the world.

In addition, through this recitation, Banjar women were taught the ascetic way of life. Here are taught, among others, about various ascetic life attitudes oriented to worldly asceticism, intensification of religious service with enthusiasm for work, not escaping from the world. In this recitation, it was also conveyed that as a Muslim, "enriching oneself" is part of an effort to prove that Islam is rich. Accumulation of capital is not prohibited but must be used for the benefit of religious syi'ar [15, p. 167].

This reading of Siti Khadijah's manaqib marks a change in religious orientation towards an economic perspective. The hope of being given an abundance of sustenance and prosperity as described in Siti Khadijah's qib is part of the ideals of the congregation. The choice of manaqib read is reflected in the life ideals of Banjar women, from ethical issues, theology to problems of daily life.

The reading of Siti Khadijah's manaqib also reflects how Banjar women interpret welfare and how to obtain welfare from a local perspective. Prosperity for Banjar women is economic and spiritual success and success as reflected in the figure of Siti Khadijah. Welfare is not only abundant in wealth, but prosperity is when someone is given an abundance of sustenance and can be used for charity and worship. One of the ways to get this welfare is to read Siti Khadijah's manakib so that you get a blessing from the reading, one of the indicators of this blessing is the arrival of sustenance even from unexpected ways.

This meaning makes it possible for everyone, rich or poor, have a job or not, to get this sustenance and prosperity. By practicing or intensifying the reading of Siti Khadijah's manaqib, sustenance and welfare will be approached. The reading of the manaqib, which in its implementation always presents and invites people, allows social interaction to occur which in turn can also lead to economic interaction. In some cases in this manakib reading ceremony, sometimes there are congregants who ask for prayers so that their business will run smoothly, others ask for prayers that what they are trying to sell and offer will be sold immediately. This prayer request that is delivered publicly certainly has a function such as a promotion or advertisement that allows the congregation to access this information.

Apart from that, through reading the stories of dates or the history of great people in Islamic history, the congregation tries to be able to take lessons from these stories. These religious traditions are still carried out with kyai as their motor. This is part of an effort to institutionalize religious understanding. The efforts to institutionalize religious understanding were carried out by these kyai according to Muhtarom [16, p. 270] is the traditionalist group's unique way of maintaining establishment in the belief system in society.

Regarding when this manaqib reading began to develop in the Banjar community of recitation, the writer found no explanation about this. Even though before the development of Siti Khadijah's manaqib readings in this area, Sheikh Semman's manaqib reading was developed and experienced intensification during the Guru Sekumpul era. Although it is not known whether at the time of Arsyad the reading of the management of Syekh Semman was carried out or not, Arsyad is considered the most responsible scholar for the

spread of the Sammaniyah tarekat in Kalimantan and Arsyad received the Sammaniyah tarekat from Al-Sammani [6, p. 253]. But according to Bruinessen [17, p. 381] In Arsyad's published works, there is no indication that he had ever entered the Sammaniyah tarekat. Bruinessen believes that the existence of the Sammaniyah tarekat in South Kalimantan is only thanks to Syekh Nafis. The scholars of the heir to the master teacher Arsyad in the Pagar Martapura also stated that they had never heard of Arsyad teaching the Sammaniyah practice but had popularized the qasidah of praise of Sheikh Samman which is still used today.

Apart from the reading of the manaqib, the recitation institute also held activities for celebrating haul and nisfu sha'ban as well as ceremonies on other big days such as the isra mi'raj and the Prophet's birthday. These activities are almost always filled with recitation of zikir and qasidah of praise to both the prophet and certain ulama figures such as Syekh Semman and Guru Sekumpul.

In all these activities, the teacher or master teacher almost never collects payment from his students, but the awareness of the students is what gives the teacher donations in the form of money or the need for food and clothing and shelter. So even though some celebration activities are complemented by serving dishes and distributing food, almost all of them are donations and participation from students who hope to get blessings from this participation.

The function of the Koran as a transformative institution in the socio-cultural and educational fields cannot be separated from the role of the master teacher. He is not just a mediator and communicator connecting the Islamic world centered in Mecca with local communities. Furthermore, the master teacher is an agent capable of 'packaging' and utilizing the Koran to motivate, mobilize, dynamize, and even change habits. The position and role of the master teacher as a cultural broker in the Banjar community is similar to the kyai in Javanese society [18, p. 23].

Pengajian also takes an important part in the implementation of development programs in the economic sector which often require the mobilization of capital and labor. This effort is carried out by the ulama by building motivation for the congregation to help each other and cooperate through the idea of friendship. Annual rituals such as haul and Hijri calendar celebrations such as nisfu sya'ban which emphasize cooperation and capital accumulation have also encouraged people to work optimally so that they can continue to take part in this circle. This idea has changed the individualist orientation that is often associated with the merchant community into a collective orientation [19, p. 85]. All the rituals carried out in the recitation, whether religious teaching, zikir, reading manaqib, haul, nisfu sha'ban have produced cultural encounters between santri and 'abangan' outsiders, or between urang alim and urang jaba.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The reading of manaqib as a tradition in Banjar women's recitation can indicate a change in religious orientation towards an economic perspective. The hope of being given an abundance of sustenance and prosperity as described in Siti Khadijah's qib is part of the common

ideals of female congregations. The choice of manaqib read is reflected in the life ideals of Banjar women, from ethical issues, theology to problems of daily life.

The material of study which supports the formation of ethics and behavior which are indispensable for development has made the institution play an important role in the transformation process. Values related to welfare and abundance of fortune as well as supernatural help for its practitioners have made the recitation of many people especially Banjar women and have survived for centuries until now.

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