



Pregnancy Tradition Ceremony in Javanese Society

Zulkifli^{*1} , Yenni¹ , Dila Yulinda Sari¹ , Angeline Rachel¹ , Dirga Elland Sasihade¹

¹Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, 20155, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: zulkiflirani47@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received: 20 February 2023

Revised: 20 March 2023

Accepted: 30 March 2023

Available online: 3 April 2023

E-ISSN: 2745-536X

P-ISSN: -

How to cite: Zulkifli., Yenni., Sari, D.Y., Rachel, A., Sasihade, D.E. (2023). Pregnancy Tradition Ceremony in Javanese Society, Indonesian Journal of Medical Anthropology. 4(1), 19-23.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International.
<http://doi.org/10.32734/ijma.v4i1.11594>

ABSTRACT

Javanese is one of Indonesia's main ethnic groupings. In daily life, Javanese culture influences people's conduct, particularly the custom of maternal care. During pregnancy care, the Javanese adhere to their predecessors' traditions, which have become generations-old customs. This article employs a literature review approach to describe the behavior of Javanese people in carrying out pregnancy care according to Javanese culture. Many Javanese continue to believe in and adhere to maternity care traditions because they feel these cultural customs and practices benefit pregnant women. Not only are pregnant women educated about pregnancy care, but so may their husbands.

Keyword: Java Culture, Pregnancy Tradition, Cultural Heritage

ABSTRAK

Suku Jawa merupakan salah satu etnis terbesar yang ada di Indonesia. Budaya Jawa mempengaruhi perilaku masyarakat dalam kehidupan sehari-hari termasuk dalam tradisi perawatan masa kehamilan. Dalam masa perawatan kehamilan masyarakat Jawa masih mempercayai tradisi-tradisi nenek moyang mereka yang sudah menjadi kebiasaan secara turun-temurun. Jurnal ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan perilaku masyarakat Jawa dalam melakukan perawatan kehamilan menurut budaya Jawa itu sendiri. Dalam membuat jurnal ini menggunakan metode literature review. Masyarakat Jawa masih banyak yang mempercayai dan mematuhi tradisi-tradisi perawatan kehamilan, karena mereka yakin bahwa tradisi dan praktik budaya tersebut mempunyai dampak positif pada ibu hamil. Pengetahuan perawatan kehamilan tidak hanya disampaikan kepada ibu hamil saja, akan tetapi dapat disampaikan kepada suami.

Keyword: Kebudayaan Jawa, Tradisi Masa Kehamilan, Warisan Budaya

1. Introduction

Javanese are among Indonesia's most populous ethnic groupings. In daily lifelines, culture influences people's conduct, particularly the custom of maternal care. In everyday life, the Javanese are inseparable from the laws and traditions they continue to observe and believe in (Koentjaraningrat, 1985). Many Javanese continue to believe in the supernatural or taboos by engaging in various traditional ceremonial rituals, such as conventional ceremonial care during pregnancy, based on the subject matter (Rholand Muary, 2021). Including the tradition of maternal care, Javanese culture influences the behavior of individuals in daily life. Numerous Javanese continue to believe in the supernatural or taboos by engaging in various traditional ceremonial activities, such as conventional formal care during pregnancy, based on the nature of the subject matter (Cukarso & Herbawani, 2020a).

Household married couples anticipate pregnancy with great anticipation. No husband and wife do not desire the birth of a child as the next generation to emerge from their wombs. Therefore, pregnancy till labor requires attention and direction (Siregar et al., 2021).

Humans are social beings with inherent qualities that protect and uphold moral standards. The principles of goodness, regarded as the basis of moral education, can be instilled in children as early as the womb. In the Javanese community, there are a variety of traditional ceremonies associated with human life,

beginning when the child is in the womb, continuing through birth, adolescence, and adulthood, and concluding with death.

The traditional rites of the Javanese people are inextricably linked to the local wisdom of the local community, which derives from the teachings and cultural values of the people that have existed since ancient times or since the days of the Javanese people's forebears. This traditional ceremony performed during pregnancy is intended to pray for the unborn child's safety and the absence of complications during childbirth (Cukarso & Herbawani, 2020b).

This paper describes the customary ceremonies performed during pregnancy in Javanese society, passed down from generation to generation since the Javanese people's ancestors. The *Mapati* traditional ceremony, a ceremony that marks the period of pregnancy entering the age of 1 to 5 months (Hall, 1996); the *Tingkepan* traditional ceremony, namely the traditional ceremony, which denotes that the gestational age has entered seven months; then, the *Mrocoti* traditional ceremony accompanied by the *Ndadung* tradition, a traditional ceremony that marks the period of pregnancy entering the age of seven months; and finally, the *Mrocoti* traditional ceremony attended by the *Ndadung* ritual, a traditional ceremony that marks If the infant has not been born at a gestational age of ten months or more, however, the *Ndaweti* traditional rite is performed.

2. Research Method

This paper used the literature review method (Oxman & Guyatt, 1993). A literature review or "systematic literature review" refers to the research technique that uses this procedure. This method thoroughly searches the existing literature, including academic journals, books, conference proceedings, and other pertinent sources, to find and evaluate pertinent research papers, theories, and concepts associated with a specific study topic or question. The procedure entails defining the research question or topic, selecting pertinent keywords and search phrases related to the Javanese pregnancy care tradition, choosing and screening sources for inclusion, extracting data and synthesizing findings, and summarizing and presenting the outcomes in a structured and organized way.

3. Result and Discussion

In every part of their lives, the Javanese adhere firmly to their traditions and beliefs. These traditions are rich in moral ideals and virtue in their meanings and values. It may be a blessing and a gift from God Almighty and the ancestors. The rites and traditions detailed in this article are those performed by the Javanese during pregnancy to celebrate the birth of a child. Each set of rituals performed during this pregnancy has significance and worth, with positive goals for the newborn's future. The following is a series of ceremonies in question.

3.1 Mapati Traditional Ceremony

Traditional rites for pregnant women begin between one and two months of gestation. When a woman experiences young pregnancy, the period between 1 and 4 months is typically called the period of *nyidam* or *ngidam* (cravings). Generally, a short ceremony or mini *slametan* acknowledges the beginning of pregnancy (Mangunjaya et al., 2020), also known as *baca'an*.

Changes in the pattern of people's lives considerably impact the implementation of traditional rites, especially birth rituals. Many Javanese do not perform traditional ceremonies preceding childbirth, including ceremonies marking the first one to five months of pregnancy.

The *Mapati* ritual occurs during the fourth month of pregnancy (Melina et al., 2020). Generally, the implementation to congratulate and pray for the baby and the expectant mother is reasonable (Rohmanu, 2016). In the Islamic *Mapati* rite, when the fetus is four months old, its spirit is blasted. Life begins with the soul when the fetus (embryo) is 120 days old (or four months). It is then determined how it will continue to live in the world until the afterlife: "...ditentukan rezekinya, ajalnya, langkah-langkah perilakunya, dan, sebagai orang yang celaka atau orang yang beruntung" ("...determines his sustenance, his death, the steps of his behavior, and, as a person who is wretched or a person who is lucky").

So, to honor this resolve, a *Ngapati* (*Ngupati*) ceremony should be held, consisting of prayer (as an attitude of gratitude, submission, and submission); submit a request to Allah so that the child will be born as a complete human who is perfect, healthy, endowed with excellent and ample sustenance, has a long life filled with religious values, and is fortunate in this world and the next. Likewise, donate alms. We are aware that prayer and charity are two forces that can penetrate fate. It is a beautiful ritual known as *Ngupati* or *Mapati* (in the fourth month), as a ceremony in which many people are asked to pray and pray; there is also a kind of charity. Through spiritual mysticism, many Javanese people continue clinging to this life perspective.

3.2 Tingkepan Traditional Ceremony

Mitoni is a common name for the *Tingkepan* ceremonial, derived from the Javanese term *pitu*, which means seven. The *Mitoni* ceremony or *Tingkepan* ritual in the first pregnancy is performed when the gestational age reaches seven months (Maharsiworo, 2013). This *Tingkepan* ceremony is typically held on dates with seven values, such as the seventh, seventeenth, and twenty-seventh. Among these dates, the Javanese community favors the 27th since it bears the value of 7, making it the eldest day of the month.

The *Tingkepan* ritual occurred in the prospective mother's parents or the newlyweds' home. The ceremonial of *Tingkepan* is kept in the foyer or living area (Priyatiningsih, 2018). The future mother is brought into a well or bathroom for the program. The participants in this ritual included a married couple awaiting the arrival of their sons or daughters, a *dukun* infant, family and close relatives, and neighbors.

Several types of food in the form of *rujak* from fruits, namely seven kinds of fruits, *waluh* or pumpkin, *penden* nutmeg (tubers), a complete *tumpeng* with side dishes of sea fish, *ingkung* chicken, vegetables, *liwet* rice, *ketupat*, *lepet*, seven kinds of porridge, *jajanan pasar* (street food), and *dawet* (kind of traditional drink) are required for *tingkepan*. In addition to the ingredients listed above, there are several other items, including water from seven wells or sources, chicken eggs, *cengkir* (young coconut), *setaman* flower or seven sorts of flowers, and seven sheets of batik cloth with seven different patterns. In implementing the *mitoni/tingkeban* ceremony, two differentiating offerings are used. The offerings are distinguished as follows:

Group of nobles: *sajen*: *tumpeng robyong*, *tumpeng gundul*, *sekul asrep-asrepan*, live chickens, a coconut, five kinds of porridge, and market snacks. *Kenduri*: *majemukan* rice, seven pairs of rice, chicken *pecel*, *menir* vegetables, *kolak ketan* (sticky rice compote), *apem*, *nasi gurih* (savory rice), *ingkung*, *punar* rice, *ketupat* (kind of rice cake), *rujak* and *dawet*, *emping ketan*, flower water and *tabonan* coconut.

Ordinary people: *Sajen*: *sego jangan*, *jajan pasar*, white *jenang abang*, *jenang baro-baro*, *emping ketan*, *tumpeng robyong*, *sego golong*, *sego liwed* and *telon* flower. *Kenduri*: *sego gurih*, *sego ambengan*, *jajan pasar*, *ketan kolak*, *apem*, *raja* banana, *sego jajanan* (snack), seven *tumpeng*, *jenang*, *kembang boreh* and incense.

Typically, the ritual takes place at the prospective mother's parent's home or at the home of a married couple who hosts the event under the direction of elders or shamans. The *Tingkepan* ceremony began with a prayer by an elder or *modin*, followed by a customary event consisting of a splash in the restroom or well (Lestari et al., 2023). *Siraman* (splash of water) is performed by seven respected older ladies, who alternately water the body of the prospective mother with water from seven sources that have been given the appearance of seven flowers. After the splash, *siwur* (a coconut-shell dipper) and *pengaron* (a water jug made of clay) are broken down.

After the *siraman* ceremony concluded, the following stage of the procession involved the insertion of an egg from the potential father into the cloth/sarong he was wearing until the egg slid to the bottom. The *brojolan* ceremony was then done using two *cengkir* (young coconuts) decorated with the faces of Kamajaya and Dewi Ratih, or Arjuna and Sembadra. The female parents of the prospective father and mother received the two *cengkir* at the bottom of the future mother's body as they were launched from the abdomen into the future mother's womb. These two *gading* coconuts are then placed on the bed like infants. Occasionally, the painted *gading* coconuts are divided by potential fathers.

Following the *brojolan* ceremony was the shifting ceremony. Seven outfits are colorful *kebaya*, *kembandan jarik* (long batik cloth), and numerous motifs, including *sidomukti*, *sidoluhur*, *truntum*, *parangkusuma*, *udan riris*, *cakar ayam* (chicken claws), and *lasem* batik with *dringin kember* motive, have been produced for this ceremony. In some regions, in addition to the *jarik* themes described above, several *jarik* motifs, such as those of *wahyu tumurun*, *semen rama*, and *sido asih*, are distinct. The *jarik* symbol utilized in the *tingkepan* custom ritual is always viewed as something positive, with the expectation that it will bring happiness. The clothing exchange ritual occurs in the living area, allowing visitors to congregate.

The *Tingkepan* ceremony is a significant Javanese tradition that displays their beliefs and practices (Ayunda & Ningsih, 2022). In addition to emphasizing the significance of family and community, the ritual protects cultural knowledge and values (Maharsiworo, 2013).

3.3 Mrocoti/Ndadung Traditional Ceremony

If there are no birth indicators at 9 (nine) months or longer, a simple *procotan* ceremony is held. At this ceremony, guests are offered *jenang* or porridge made from glutinous rice flour, coconut milk, and brown sugar. They are sometimes given bananas, also known as porridge or *jenang procot*. In this ceremony, the

prospective mother's neck is bound loosely with *ndadung* or rope, and her husband brings her to a buffalo or cow cage.

3.4 *Ndaweti Traditional Ceremony*

Ndaweti is conducted when the gestational age reaches ten (ten) months, and the baby has not yet been born. Rice flour, coconut milk, and brown sugar are combined to create ceremony equipment, a *plencing* drink. This sweet was sold symbolically to children throughout the home. Children pay with *kreweng*, roof fragments of clay-made home equipment. This traditional ceremony is conducted without *Kyai/Modin* serving as the ceremony guide.

This ceremony comprises two words: *dawet*, which refers to the parents' wish that their children will be blessed with a sweet life and great wealth like lovely and generous *dawet* grains. Not only does *dawet* mean parents' hopes for their children to live a rich life, but the second word, *plencing*, which translates to "running fast" in Javanese, has the literal sense of ensuring that childbirth proceeds without difficulty. The concept underlying the sale of *dawet plencing* to children is that children are a source of nourishment for their parents; therefore, if prospective parents sell these *dawet plencing* to children, they receive sustenance for the birth of their future children.

3.5 *The Meaning of Procedures in the Javanese Tradition During Pregnancy*

In this regard, to mark the gestational age of 1 to 4 months, a traditional ceremony is performed, which consists solely of the preparation and distribution of marrow porridge and *Juruh* (brown sugar syrup), which are symbolic of hopes and prayers for the unborn child. This ceremony is known as *mapati* or *ngebore-ebori*, and it signifies the presence of a young pregnant woman or *nyidam* (Juariah, 2018). *Ubo rampe* (ceremonial paraphernalia) in the form of white marrow porridge is a symbol of the male seed in the form of sperm that develops into a fetus/infant and brown sugar as a symbol of blood; thus, the meaning of marrow porridge and brown sugar is a symbol of the union of the male and female seeds in the reproduction vessel (place) of the prospective mother's female reproduction. This ceremony acts as a notification that the physical and spiritual protection of a future mother and her unborn child must be preserved.

In addition, the recital of the seven varieties of food accompanying the *tingkepan* has a specific significance relating to wishes and prayers for the prospective mother and her unborn child's safety and the absence of birth-related problems. Fruit is a hint that expectant mothers who have desires enjoy *rujak*, which is an essential dish but contains a variety of flavors such as sour, sweet, and salty, and represents a world with various flavors and difficulties that must be met with optimism and joy. Other meal options can be understood as follows. *Waluh* (pumpkin) is synonymous with *waluyo*, which denotes noble; *pendem* nutmeg (tubers) represents fertility and wealth. *Tumpeng*, consisting of *liwet* rice with side dishes of sea fish, *ingkung* chicken, and *kuluban* (vegetable anointing), represents the earth and its contents. The conical shape of a cone resembling a mountain signifies the devotion to God Almighty. *Ketupat* dan *lepet* represents the tremendous hope that the soon-to-be-born child will always be conscious of his flaws and limitations and be cautious to avoid making errors. Consequently, seven types of porridge represent the desire to achieve ease and fluidity in life. At the same time, *jajanan pasar* (street food) that is simple and tasty signifies that the baby will be simple, sociable, and able to get along with a variety of people; and *dawet*, which is known as a refreshing drink, represents the hope that the baby will be blessed with a sweet life and an abundance of wealth like *dawet* grains.

4. Conclusion

Traditional ceremonies for pregnancy related to the life cycle of the Javanese people were carried out for a long time. The purpose of carrying out these traditions in Javanese society is so that they are blessed and that all the activities they carry out in every aspect can run smoothly. Every traditional Javanese ceremony is always equipped with items and equipment that symbolize the ceremony's purpose, such as the presentation of certain foods in the *Mitoni* tradition, which all serve seven dishes in welcoming the mother's 7th month of pregnancy. This ceremony has meaning and symbols in every seven servings of food with good intentions and implications for the prospective baby and mother, so it is safe during delivery. It is hoped that the coming baby will provide happiness for the parents.

References

- Ayunda, D., & Ningsih, A. R. (2022). Fungsi dan Makna Tradisi Upacara Tingkepan di Desa Mahato. *Journal of Literature Rokania*, 1(2).

- Cukarso, S. N. A., & Herbawani, C. K. (2020a). Traditional Beliefs and Practices Among Pregnant Women In Javanese Communities: A Systematic Review. *Journal of Public Health Research and Community Health Development*, 4(1), 71. <https://doi.org/10.20473/jphrecode.v4i1.20810>
- Cukarso, S. N. A., & Herbawani, C. K. (2020b). Traditional Beliefs and Practices Among Pregnant Women In Javanese Communities: A Systematic Review. *Journal of Public Health Research and Community Health Development*, 4(1), 71. <https://doi.org/10.20473/jphrecode.v4i1.20810>
- Hall, K. R. (1996). Ritual Networks and Royal Power in Majapahit Java. *Archipel*, 52(1), 95–118. <https://doi.org/10.3406/arch.1996.3357>
- Juariah. (2018). Kepercayaan dan Praktik Budaya pada Masa Kehamilan Masyarakat Desa Karang Sari, Kabupaten Garut. *Sosiohumaniora*, 20(2). <https://doi.org/10.24198/sosiohumaniora.v20i2.10668>
- Koentjaraningrat. (1985). *Javanese culture*. Oxford University Press. <https://opac.perpusnas.go.id/DetailOpac.aspx?id=683893>
- Lestari, O., Khoirunnisa, K., & Jazeri, M. (2023). Lingual Units in the Mitoni Ritual in Javanese Society in Lamongan District: An Ethnolinguistic Study. In *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Languages and Arts across Cultures (ICLAAC 2022)* (pp. 121–133). Atlantis Press SARL. https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-494069-29-9_14
- Maharsiworo, K. R. T. S. (2013). Islam in The Javanese Cultural Pluralism and the Keraton Performing Arts. *AL ALBAB - Borneo Journal of Religious Studies (BJRS)*, 2(1).
- Mangunjaya, F. M., Bahagia, B., Wibowo, R., & Yono, Y. (2020). Nujuh bulanan Tradition Value For Societies Resilience in Costumary Community Urug Bogor West Java. *Sosial Budaya*, 17(2), 106. <https://doi.org/10.24014/sb.v17i2.10960>
- Melina, M., Sany, U. P., & Mustolehudin, M. (2020). Tradisi Siklus Hidup Masyarakat Perkotaan di Era Normal Baru. *PUSAKA*, 8(2), 125–144. <https://doi.org/10.31969/pusaka.v8i2.413>
- Oxman, A. D., & Guyatt, G. H. (1993). The Science of Reviewing Research. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 703(1 Doing More Go), 125–134. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-6632.1993.tb26342.x>
- Priyatiningsih, N. (2018). Spiritual Quotient of Tingkeban Tradition in Javanese Culture. *Proceedings of the Fourth Prasasti International Seminar on Linguistics (Prasasti 2018)*. <https://doi.org/10.2991/prasasti-18.2018.42>
- Rholand Muary. (2021). The Sociological Meaning of Pregnancy and Baby Birth Ceremonies in Javanese People in Buntu Pane Village Asahan. *Lakhomi Journal Scientific Journal of Culture*, 2(4), 162–170. <https://doi.org/10.33258/lakhomi.v2i4.535>
- Rohmanu, A. (2016). Acculturation of Javanese And Malay Islam in Wedding Tradition of Javanese Ethnic Community at Selangor, Malaysia. *KARSA: Jurnal Sosial Dan Budaya Keislaman*, 24(1), 52. <https://doi.org/10.19105/karsa.v24i1.1008>
- Siregar, M., Panggabean, H. W., B. Regondola, J. P., & Aritonang, S. M. (2021). Traditional Beliefs in Postpartum Care among Indonesian and Filipino Mothers: A Comparative Study. *Iberoamerican Journal of Medicine*, 241–248.