



THE BETEL NUT TRADITION IN THE ENGAGEMENT CEREMONY PROCESSION IN SUMBERDANTI VILLAGE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF 'URF

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Abstract :

The betel nut tradition in the engagement ceremony in Sumberdanti Village is a cultural heritage that remains preserved by the local community amidst the tide of modernization. This tradition not only serves as a symbol in the proposal procession but also serves as a means of respect, social communication, and affirmation of a man's seriousness in proposing to his future wife. This study aims to understand the meaning and position of the betel nut tradition from an Islamic legal perspective, specifically through the concept of 'urf'. The study used a qualitative method with a field approach, through interviews, observation, and documentation of the community members who practice the tradition. The results indicate that the betel nut practice has strong social and historical value, but from an Islamic legal perspective, it is classified as 'urf fasid', meaning a custom without an explicit basis in sharia law. Nevertheless, this tradition is still recognized as a form of local wisdom as long as it does not conflict with sharia principles. Therefore, the preservation of the betel nut tradition needs to be accompanied by a reinterpretation to align it with Islamic values and maintain its cultural identity in Sumberdanti Village.

Keywords : Tradition, Betel Nut, Engagement, 'urf, Islamic Law.

INTRODUCTION

In the increasingly strong current of modernization, rural communities face significant challenges in preserving the existence of ancestral traditions. (Khawismaya et al., 2024) However, the people of Sumberdanti Village still maintain the tradition of betel nut as an important symbol in the engagement process. This tradition is not just a formal ritual, but a means of social communication and a symbol of a man's seriousness in proposing to his future wife. The people of Sumberdanti Village are still very attached to the customs and traditions left by their ancestors, and the existing traditions there are considered an important part of the community's life.

As is common in most traditions, the betel nut tradition has inherent meaning. Philosophically, this tradition symbolizes the manners and seriousness of the groom-to-be in proposing to a woman he wishes to make his wife. (Touwely et al., 2020) Therefore, this tradition cannot be carried out carelessly because there are several rules in its implementation that the local community believes are a form of the tradition's sacredness, including the process of picking



betel nuts. According to the local community's beliefs, if the betel nuts being picked fall to the ground, it will have a negative effect on the relationship between the two prospective spouses. Therefore, based on the community's advice, when picking betel nuts, one must climb the tree and keep the betel nuts being picked from falling to the ground.

In Islam, engagement or *khitbah* is not merely a formal means of proposing to a woman for marriage, but Islamic law also emphasizes upholding high moral standards and ethics as a sign of the seriousness of the intention in proposing to a woman. (Hamdi, 2017) The phenomenon of engagement practices in Sumberdanti Village violates sharia law, as there is no evidence in Islamic teachings that regulates the implementation of the betel nut tradition in the engagement process. (Mawardi & Konita, 2021) Additionally, upon deeper analysis, there is also a discrepancy between the reality of the Sumberdanti village community and the formal Islamic legal sources outlined in the Islamic Law Compilation (KHI).

Although the tradition of betel nut is not explicitly mentioned in the texts, Islamic law recognizes all forms of community activities that have been repeated or have become *'urf* (custom) in that community's life. (Putri, 2020) In fact, this custom can also serve as a legal basis for the local community in its implementation, provided that the action does not violate the norms of Islamic law. (Rizal, 2019) The differences between traditional practices and Islamic law can pose challenges in implementation and public understanding. Often, long-standing traditions are considered socially binding, even extending to the realm of informal law. (Hainadri, 2021) In fact, according to Islamic law, engagement is a moral promise without legal sanctions. (Awang & Mahdie, 2018) This condition demands a comprehensive and balanced study to provide understanding to the public and policymakers, ensuring that customary practices can be preserved without causing inconsistencies with the principles of Islamic law and national law.

Therefore, this research is highly relevant as an effort to understand how the betel nut tradition is not only a customary ritual but also to find definitive laws regarding culture with religious norms in community life. This research aims to delve into the betel nut tradition in the engagement process in Sumberdanti Village as a complex social phenomenon, by analyzing it from the perspective of *'urf*. This approach is expected to reveal the normative, historical, and philosophical values contained in the tradition and its implications in the lives of the local community.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method suitable for the study titled "Betel Nut Tradition in the Engagement Process in Sumberdanti Village from the Perspective of *'Urf*" is qualitative research with a case study approach. This approach was chosen because it aims to deeply understand the social phenomenon related to the betel nut tradition in the engagement process in the village. The qualitative approach allows researchers to explore the meaning, values, and perceptions of the

community regarding this tradition, as well as how this practice is viewed from the perspective of 'Urf, which is a science in Islamic law related to community customs and traditions.

The data collection techniques to be used include in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document studies. In-depth interviews will be conducted with informants directly involved in the engagement ceremony, such as parents, traditional leaders, and authorities within the tradition (Sesniati et al., 2024). Participant observation will be conducted by directly attending the engagement ceremony to record the practices, symbols, and meanings of the betel nut tradition. Additionally, a documentary study will be used to collect data related to literature or legal sources that discuss this tradition, from both customary and Islamic legal perspectives.

In this study, the data analysis technique used is thematic analysis. Thematic analysis allows researchers to identify and group the main themes that emerge in the data, such as the symbolic meaning of betel nut in the context of engagement, the role of tradition in shaping cultural identity, and the relationship between custom and religious teachings. Each theme will be analyzed to find the connection between the betel nut tradition and the principles of 'Urf applied in the Sumberdanti community.

It is important to use a hermeneutic approach in data interpretation, where researchers strive to understand the social texts and customs associated with this tradition within its social and historical context. (Fink, 2019) With this approach, researchers will attempt to delve deeper into the meaning of betel nut practices, which are not only seen as a cultural custom but also as a reflection of the values that exist within that society.

As part of the ethnographic approach, the researcher will also delve deeper into how the Sumberdanti village community views the betel nut tradition in their engagement ceremony. This will help to understand whether there have been changes or adaptations in this practice over time, and how the community responds to it within the existing social and religious dynamics.

By using a qualitative method, this research is expected to provide a clearer and more in-depth picture of the betel nut tradition in the engagement ceremony process in Sumberdanti Village, as well as its relevance from the perspective of 'Urf in Islamic law. This research is also expected to contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between local traditions and religious teachings, as well as the role of culture in shaping social norms in society.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Epistemologically, tradition comes from the Latin word (tradition), meaning custom or culture. (Fabiana, 2019) In general, tradition can be understood as actions that have existed for a long time and are carried out continuously, and these actions have become an integral part of the life of a community group. (Hainadri, 2021) In the Indonesian Big Dictionary, tradition is a custom passed down thru generations (from ancestors) that is still preserved by society as culture and is considered the most correct. (Sendari, 2021)

Meanwhile, according to experts, tradition is the legacy or inheritance left by ancestors, whether in the form of rules, norms, culture, wealth, or principles that are still related to society. (Putra, 2019).

For the people of Sumberdanti Village, the betel nut tradition is an integral part of the engagement ceremony passed down by their ancestors, containing high social and symbolic elements. The betel nut tradition is usually performed during important celebrations, one of which is the engagement procession. An engagement is an event held when a man intends to propose to a woman. In general, the concept of engagement is a celebration for both the bride and groom-to-be. (Rofiatul Nurhasanah et al., 2023)

1. The Practice of the Betel Nut Tradition in the Engagement Ceremony in Sumberdanti Village

Based on the information obtained, there are several rules in the implementation of this tradition, from before to during the ceremony, that must not be broken. Among them is the rule that betel nuts cannot fall to the ground. According to them, if the betel nuts reach the ground when harvested, it will have a negative impact on the engagement of the two prospective brides. Therefore, the local community requires that the nuts be harvested by climbing the tree and picking them directly from the trunk, and they must be held tightly until they are brought down to prevent any nuts from falling.

During the engagement ceremony, the betel nut and areca nut tradition is performed when the dowry is delivered from the groom's family to the bride's family. The betel leaves and areca nuts are presented in a container different from other dowry items. According to information from the local community, in the past, the container used was a betel box, but as times changed, the container underwent changes, from large basins to food cartons. That container not only holds betel leaves and areca nuts, but also several other important components that are part of their customary practices, including tobacco slices, lime, chicken, and traditional cakes.

The betel nut and areca nut dowry, in the past, was usually offered to guests by the community because people in the past had the habit of chewing betel leaves with areca nut, tobacco, and lime. However, in this modern era, there is no one in Sumberdanti Village who still chews betel nut, so the betel nut and areca nut dowry brought by the groom-to-be is simply discarded after the ceremony is over.

In fact, a tradition is not merely a societal custom, but rather a hereditary activity passed down by ancestors with various meanings contained within it, such as symbols, ethics, and so on. (Sidik & Herdianto, 2022) Functionally, tradition not only serves as a cultural identity but also as a medium for maintaining the historical continuity of each succeeding generation and fostering solidarity among community groups. (Mardhiah & Hidayat, 2023) For example, traditional celebrations often serve as a moment to strengthen family and social bonds, as well as provide space for human reflection on the values held dear by society. (Aziz, 2017)

Based on the interview results presented above, it can be concluded that

the betel nut tradition is indeed an ancestral legacy there, which will be carried out during the seserahan handover session from the groom to the bride. The betel nut seserahan brought by the groom is placed in a basin, and in addition to betel leaves and betel nuts, it also contains other items such as chicken, tobacco slices, lime, and traditional cakes. In ancient times, the betel nut and areca nut package was offered to guests. However, now the betel nut and betel leaf offering will be discarded after the ceremony, as there are no longer any people there who consume it.

2. The Betrothal Tradition in the Engagement Process from an 'urf Perspective

In Islam, it is recommended to get engaged first before getting married, with the aim of preventing misunderstandings later regarding the circumstances between the two parties. (Muqoffi, 2020) The majority of scholars describe engagement as a man's request to a woman to become his wife in a manner that is widely known and practiced by society. (Nuroniyah & Maula, 2022) The legal basis used is the holy verse of the Quran, Surah Al Baqarah, verse 235:

وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا عَرَّضْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ خُطْبَةِ النِّسَاءِ أَوْ أَكْنَنْتُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ ۚ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ سَتَذْكُرُونَهُنَّ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُؤَادُوهُنَّ سِرًّا إِلَّا أَنْ تَقُولُوا قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا ۚ وَلَا تَعْزِمُوا عُقْدَةَ النِّكَاحِ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْكِتَابُ أَجَلَهُ ۚ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُ ۚ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

Meaning: And there is no blame upon you for proposing marriage to those women with hints or for concealing (the desire to marry them) in your hearts. Allah knows that you will mention them, but do not make a secret promise with them except to say a kind word. And do not intend to marry before the end of her waiting period. Know that Allah knows what is in your hearts, so fear Him. And know that Allah is Forgiving and Kind. (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2019)

The concept of engagement in Islam is only ta'aruf, which is the process of the prospective groom seeking the consent of the prospective bride to become his wife. (Mawardi & Konita, 2021) Because the standard for the validity of engagement in Islam is the offer (ijab) from the groom and the acceptance (qabul) from the bride. (Mulyadi, 2019)

Traditions or customs in Islam are known as 'urf'. 'Urf' refers to the general behavior of society that is considered good and does not contradict the norms of Islamic law. (Furqan & Syahrial, 2022) Etymologically, the word 'urf comes from the Arabic language (الْعُرْفُ), which means "something that is known and accepted." Terminologically, 'urf is a state inherent in human beings, rationally sound, and accepted. (Aripin, 2016). From an Islamic legal perspective, Sharia recognizes the existence of traditions or customs that exist in the world. This is based on the word of Allah SWT in Surah Al-Hujarat, verse 13, which reads:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۚ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ

Meaning: O mankind, indeed We created you from male and female and

made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most honorable among you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous. (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2019)

The betel nut tradition in the engagement ceremony in Sumberdanti Village can be used as an example of the customs referred to by Islamic law, because this tradition is considered 'urf amali, which means a custom of the community that has been practiced repeatedly and accepted as a social norm. (Baydar, 2021) As long as the tradition does not contradict the principles of Sharia, the betel nut tradition can be categorized as 'urf sahih (valid custom). This is in accordance with the principles of Islamic jurisprudence.

الْمَعْرُوفُ عُرْفًا كَالْمَشْرُوطِ شَرْطًا

Meaning: Something that is already known as a custom ('urf) has the same status as a condition in a contract. (Adhari et al., 2021)

So, based on the explanation above, the betel nut tradition in the engagement ceremony is a custom passed down thru generations, and in general, Islamic law recognizes the existence of customary law. However, it should be emphasized that this tradition does not violate Islamic rules. Meanwhile, the betel nut tradition in the engagement ceremony in Sumberdanti Village is classified as 'urf fasid, which means a custom that was never taught by Islam and is forbidden to be practiced.

CONCLUSION

The betel nut tradition in the engagement ceremony in Sumberdanti Village is a cultural heritage passed down thru generations that still holds a place in the lives of the local community. This tradition is not just a symbol in the proposal process, but also represents social values, mutual respect between families, and cultural identity, strengthening family bonds. Despite this, modernization and changes in people's lifestyles have shifted the meaning of this tradition—which once served as a form of respect, it is now purely symbolic without the practical function it once had.

From an Islamic legal perspective, the betel nut tradition can be viewed as 'urf, which means a custom that has developed and is accepted by society. Islam allows for customs as long as they do not contradict Islamic law, as stated in the legal maxim *al-'adah muhakkamah ma lam tukhalif asy-syar'a* (custom can be considered law as long as it does not contradict Islamic law). However, based on a study of practices in Sumberdanti Village, this tradition is classified as 'urf fasid because it does not have an explicit basis in Islamic teachings and is more cultural in nature. Therefore, although it is still recognized as part of local wisdom, its implementation needs to be limited so as not to cause misunderstandings in understanding Islamic values.

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