

5-31-2020

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Recommended Citation

Wijayanti, Lucky (2020) "KUASA ATAS RUANG PEMBEBASAN': THE RESILIENCE OFWOMEN IN SASAK CULTURE," *International Review of Humanities Studies*: Vol. 5: No. 3, Article 9.
Available at: <https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/irhs/vol5/iss3/9>

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**‘KUASA ATAS RUANG PEMBEBASAN’:
THE RESILIENCE OF WOMEN IN SASAK CULTURE**

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ABSTRACT

The Sasak tribe on Lombok island - West Nusa Tenggara, have traditional values and are applied through the social structure of their communities in daily life. Some existing customary values place women in irreplaceable positions. Even so, the existence of financial needs makes them work abroad as laborers, which indirectly results in the occurrence of divorce and early marriage. This is a problem for Sasak women in terms of survival in the Sasak culture. An ethnographic approach derived from Malinowski, the opinion of Svasek, and the value system framework from Kluckhohn are used in this study. This research concludes that art activities are the livelihoods of Sasak women while at the same time functioning as a 'liberation room' for them to express themselves.

KEYWORDS: *Sasak, Culture, Women's Toughness, Lombok*

INTRODUCTION

The Lombok Island, which is surrounded by mountains, forests, sea, and hills, provides an experience and practice for the people who live and survive on the island. The experiences, slowly transforms into knowledge and is subsequently applied in daily life as a habit in the social order. Knowledge comes from the thought process and interpretation of the experience itself. Cosmological thinking relates to mountains, sea, land, water, fire and wind, giving birth to values or norms which are further understood as customs by a group of people who inhabit the area, the Sasak Tribe.

Women have their own positions in Sasak society. This is reflected through *Gumi Nina*, which means motherland or mother natures. In details, *Gumi Nina* is a concept in Sasak society which states that women have an important role in the process of human existence, from birth to death. Indirectly, based on this concept it can be concluded that women have an important position in the socio-cultural structure of Sasak. Another thing that supports the position of women is *Wastu Citra*, a room in the Sasak traditional house that functions as a resting room for mother's (women), as well as being called the center of the cosmos of the house. This space is referred as *Wastu Citra*.

Two concepts about the position of women - *Gumi Nina* and *Wastu Citra* - in Sasak culture, sufficiently provide an understanding of the importance of women's position in the Sasak society. Fundamentally, the position of women is elaborated through *Gumi Nina*, while the realization stage is explained through *Wastu Citra*. Both are common understandings that apply to every Sasak community. The application of this concept can be seen from the daily routine of Sasak women who have a livelihood through arts such as; making weaving (*tenun*), plaiting, and pottery. These

three activities indirectly provide space for them to express themselves and are presented through a variety of media, in addition to the primary purpose of the activity as a livelihood.

Even so, the existence of livelihoods that are able to provide space for their release is not necessarily able to cover their daily needs. Many Sasak women eventually migrate abroad into labor in the hope that financial needs will be met. But this actually results in divorce and early marriage (underage marriage). This condition clearly makes women's position in society getting worse.

The position of women who are so important in Sasak society is not necessarily the same in terms of their application or realization. Based on field facts, there is a contradiction that occurs in terms of earning a living. On the one hand, women must live their lives based on Sasak cultural customs that apply from generation to generation. But on the other hand, the urgency in meeting the financial needs of life, provides a paradox of its own for Sasak women. The contradiction between the ideal pattern of life and the reality of life that women must face, raises the question of problems; How do women survive in the Sasak culture? Research on women's issues will be linked to several perspectives, namely: a) the Sasak cultural rules adopted and carried out by the Sasak community in Lombok, b) the social facts experienced and happened to some women, especially the artisans in several villages in Lombok, and c) critical thinking about women based on cultural perspectives.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted with a qualitative ethnographic approach. The approach mentioned seeks to describe a culture that exists in a social environment in a particular region. The main purpose of this activity is to understand a view of life from the point of view of the native population (Spradley, 2007: 3), as stated by Malinowski in Spradley (2007: 4) that the purpose of ethnography is to "understand the perspective of the native population, its relationship with life, to get his views on his world ". The researcher not only observes the behavior and, but also investigates the meaning that exists in the behavior. Researchers also investigate the meaning given by individuals or groups of the community to the object of artifacts or natural events that occur. It can be said that ethnography is a series of learning activities about the world of certain individuals or groups who have learned how to see, hear, talk, think, and act in different ways. Thus, ethnography not only *studies* the community, but also *learns* from the community (Spradley, 2007: 4).

In an effort to implement this approach, researchers became 'Sasak Women' by carrying out a series of activities similar to those carried out by Sasak women in their daily work. The activity orientation focuses on activities related to their livelihoods, such as: making weaving, plaiting, and pottery. The daily use of Sasak clothing such as cloth is also carried out in this research. Regarding the research period, this activity was carried out in the period 2011-2017. Related to the acquisition of research data, the series of activities carried out is not only intended for the sake of data documentation, but also in the framework of 'animating' the customs of the Sasak Tribe from the viewpoint of researchers as 'women' Sasak itself. Thus, this approach not only produces accurate, relevant and real data, but also has implications for the accuracy of the perspectives used, and indirectly impacts the quality of research results.

The daily activities of Sasak women are a reflection of Sasak customs and culture. Both directly and indirectly, some or even all of their daily life is the application of a culture that developed in the Sasak tribe community. Conversely, cultural customs can continue to live because of the existence of certain activities such as rituals that are carried out and are still needed by the supporting community. Then, an understanding is needed related to Sasak culture itself. As a supporter of this need, cultural understanding according to Svasek (2007) and universal cultural elements (Kluckhohn: 1952) are utilized in this study.

Culture is a mechanism derived from the results of human thought. Cognitive science and ethno-aesthetics explore the use of local languages to identify the principles of structuring language and art. Some artifacts cross social boundaries. Evidently, 'ancestral power' can be transformed from active power into interesting, exotic and aesthetic stories (Svasek, 2007).

Culture has the elements that make up the culture itself. According to Kluckhohn (1952: 140-144), there are seven elements of universal culture consisting of: 1) religious systems and religious ceremonies, 2) organizational and social systems, 3) knowledge systems, 4) systems of living, 5) technological systems and supplies of human life, 6) language, and 7) art. Meanwhile, regarding the form of culture, there are three parts: 1) the form of culture as ideas, ideas, values, norms, rules, and customs, 2) the form of culture as human behavior in society, and 3) the form of culture as objects of human work. Then, based on the framework of Kluckhohn (1961), the cultural value system is divided into five problems, namely: 1) the nature of human life, 2) the nature of human work, 3) the nature of human position in space and time, 4) the nature of human relations with the natural surroundings, and 5) the nature of human relationships with each other.

Table 1:
Relationship of Problems, Analysis, and Cultural Synthesis

| No | Problems | Analysis | Synthesis |
|----|---|---|---|
| 1 | The Essence of Human Life | Human live with 'good-bad-better' view | Will bring faith, rituals |
| 2 | The Essence of Human Work | Work to earn a living – position and rank | Will multiply the works, the motion of life |
| 3 | The Essence of Human Position in Space and Time | Life based on past (reincarnation) Life for the future (in the world) Live for the future (afterlife) | Future-oriented and life plan |
| 4 | The Essence of Human Relation with Nature | Humans are destroying nature – Keeping nature in harmony | 'Mastering' the nature |
| 5 | The Essence of Human Relation with Each Other | Equality in human relations – relationship with important people, superior, etc. | Individualism, prioritizing on personal interest and strength |

Source: Kluckhohn, 1961.

RESULT

Sasak, for the Sasak people themselves, are a tribe or *bangse* in the local language, which has a valid value system. Sasak people recognize the value required from a series of learning about everything around them through rituals. Cosmological thinking related to geographical conditions (mountains, land, and sea) and elements in nature (fire, water, wind) gives birth to traditional values through ritual activities. According to Fathurrahman (2007), Sasak culture has a value system that builds the personality of individuals and communities as a group. The value system consists of three levels, namely:

- a. *Tindih*, the deepest layer or the center of philosophical values that has meaning of consistency, commitment, and militancy, in order to maintain and control the individual personality.
- b. *Maliq* and *Merang*, the second layer or buffer value that serves as a defense instinct and motivation. *Maliq* is a value that regulates issues related to whether or not on a matter. This value is useful for maintain the quality of personality as individual. Then, *Merang* is a value that used as a motivation for social solidarity in order to maintain the self-esteem and identity of Sasak society.
- c. *Patut, patuh, pacu, reme, tatas, itiq, gerasaq, and tuhu*, is the outermost layer, has a qualitative level of values and covers all aspects of Sasak community life and serves as a reference for behavior both individually and collectively.

The value system in the Sasak culture is then applied through 'tradition' (*adat*) which is carried out by the Sasak community in a social system. For the Sasak people, 'tradition' which is considered synonymous with culture, functions as a means of guaranteeing harmony in three relations; human with God, human with human, and human with nature. The existing social system is a means of implementing the value system to all aspects of life.

In the relationship between humans and God, given the majority of Sasak people who embrace Islam, then in their lives cannot be separated from the social religious rites. However, in its application, there is a tendency for syncretic patterns or adjustment of cultural elements to religious elements, mostly done by the Sasak community so that people's behavior in practicing religion as a traditional belief. This is reflected through the *Wetu Telu* concept.

Wetu Telu is a growing understanding in the Sasak community related to the implementation of rituals or routine worship in religion. In Islam, there is a ritual in the form of prayer that must be done five times a day for its adherents. Each prayer has terms and times that are different from each other; *Subuh* at dawn, *Zuhur* at noon, *Asr* in the afternoon, *Maghrib* at dusk, and *Isha* at night. But in *Wetu Telu*'s understanding, the time for carrying out the ritual is divided into three times; *Subuh* in the morning, *Zuhur* and *Asr* in the afternoon, and *Maghrib* and *Isha* at night. This shows that there is a syncretic pattern adopted by the Sasak people towards their religion. Even so, *Wetu Telu* raises a confusion for the community in order to understand the teachings or the law in carrying out their religion.

According to Haji Amir, a traditional figure and head of the Bayan Village period 1968-1998, in the writings of Muhammad Syairi, Kompasiana (2012), *Wetu Telu* is a philosophy in Bayan, North Lombok. *Wetu Telu* comes from the word 'Wet Tau Telu' which describes three parts of the government system, namely: *Adat* (local customs), Religion and Government. When

International Review of Humanities Studies
www.irhs.ui.ac.id, e-ISSN: 2477-6866, p-ISSN: 2527-9416
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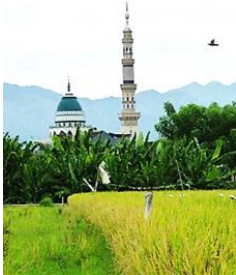
viewed based on its function, there are parts of these three elements that can be carried out simultaneously, and some are carried out separately according to their respective functions.

In human relations, according to Fathurrahman (2007: 184), in general the Sasak community is an egalitarian society. One of the values in the Sasak community as the foundation of the social system of society is the *kupu* which in term is an adaptation of the word *kufu* (equivalent). This value implies equality, and at the stage of its implementation in social life will form a system of cooperation or mutual cooperation as *besiru*. Regarding the level of an individual or class in society, social stratification is more functional. Individuals are placed in certain positions because of their function in the social order, in addition to their personal qualities.



Related to the relationship between humans and nature, the *Wetu Telu* concept can also be applied in this relationship. Another understanding of the term *Wetu Telu* is related to three aspects of life; wind, water and land. All three are elements that humans need in life. It can be said that, through this understanding, *Wetu Telu* is needed by the community. In addition, *Wetu Telu* is also understood as three relationship concepts; human with God, human with human, and human with nature. These three relationships must be applied simultaneously and in line, because they have their respective functions which do not collide with each other, in order to maintain life balance.

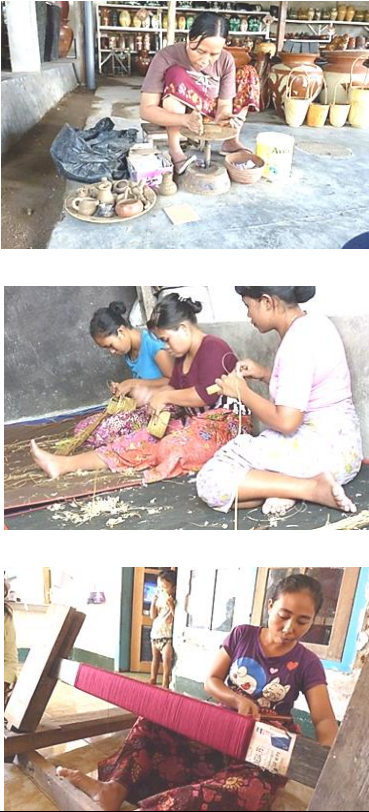

Based on the data obtained, it can be described the shape of the cultural structure using Kluckhohn's understanding of culture; elements of universal culture, cultural manifestations, and cultural value systems. In the element of universal culture, religious systems or religious ceremonies are marked by the existence of means of worship as a center for the implementation of religious rituals. The organizational and social system is visualized through the construction of roads and the location of the burning of earthenware vessels, which are considered to be the result of carried out community organizations. Knowledge systems are demonstrated through community livelihood support tools. The livelihood system, is represented by documentation of the Sasak community in making pottery, weaving, and plaiting. Technology and living equipment, seen from the structure of the house and rice field irrigation. The language elements in this study were represented through the traditional Sasak script called Jejawen. The last element of culture, art, is shown through a typical Lombok dancer costume. In detail, the seven elements of Sasak culture are explained in table 2.



Table 2:
Seven Elements of Sasak Culture

| No | Elements | Documentation | Information |
|----|------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Religious System |  | The dome and tower part of the mosque on Lombok which is the center of Islamic religious worship |

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www.irhs.ui.ac.id, e-ISSN: 2477-6866, p-ISSN: 2527-9416
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| | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| 2 | Organizational and Community Systems |  | <p>Top: Village roads with trees that are used as a barrier and keep nature stable during an earthquake.</p> <p>Bottom: Pottery kilns, which are placed centrally to be effective and efficient</p> |
| 3 | Knowledge System |  | <p><i>Gedhogan</i>, a tool used for weaving</p> |

| | | | |
|---|-------------------|--|--|
| 4 | Livelihood System |  <p>The top photograph shows a woman in a purple shirt working with pottery on a wheel in a workshop filled with finished ceramic items. The middle photograph shows three women sitting on the floor, plaiting palm leaves. The bottom photograph shows a woman in a purple shirt operating a traditional wooden loom to weave a red fabric.</p> | Top: Pottery craftsmen Middle: Plaiting crafters Bottom: Weaving Crafters |
| 5 | Technology System |  <p>The top photograph shows two traditional Sasak houses with steeply pitched, thatched roofs. The bottom photograph shows a lush green rice field with a traditional irrigation system, including a small dam and channels.</p> | Top: The typical Sasak house shape Bottom: Sasak community rice field irrigation system |

| | | | |
|---|----------|--|--|
| 6 | Language |  | <p>The Sasak script (second row) which represents the Sasak language in the comparison table</p> |
| 7 | Art |  | <p>Sasak community dancer costumes consisting of weaving and songket</p> |

Source: Private documentation, 2015

Cultural forms are generally divided into three categories, 1) ideas, values, and / or tradition, 2) behavior, and 3) objects (tangible). In the first category, the cultural form of the Sasak people can be found in the *Wetu telu* concept. Furthermore, the existence of traditional rituals in a variety of life processes such as births and weaving, is categorized as a manifestation of behavioral culture. Finally, the realization of the cultural form of objects is shown through a series of household furniture made from plaits and pottery and ritual equipment such as weaving. Related to the cultural value system according to Kluckhohn which is divided into five essence and subsequently has their own synthesis of the Sasak community, each synthesis has an example of application in the real life of the community. In detail, an explanation of the relationship between the value system, synthesis, and the results or examples of the embodiment of the synthesis are in table 3.

International Review of Humanities Studies
www.irhs.ui.ac.id, e-ISSN: 2477-6866, p-ISSN: 2527-9416
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Table 3.

The Value System of Sasak Society based on Kluckhohn's Framework

| No | Problems | Synthesis | Results |
|----|---|-------------------------------|---|
| 1 | The Essence of Human Life | faith, rituals | Rituals carried on for generations |
| 2 | The Essence of Human Work | Works, motion of life | Art which is a reflection of life, a means of ritual, as well as entertainment media |
| 3 | The Essence of Human Position in Space and Time | Future-oriented and life plan | Stories or advice given through <i>wayang</i> (art) or rituals |
| 4 | The Essence of Human Relation with Nature | 'Mastering' the nature | Such management of the natural surroundings with the purpose of livelihood. Example: rice field |
| 5 | The Essence of Human Relation with Each Other | Individualism | A social system that provides a patron-client relationship |

According to Fathurrahman (2007), there are three levels in the social system of society called: the elite, the middle class, and the general public. In the social order of society, one of the symbols of the elite is the existence of the *Tuan Guru* who is considered a leader both traditionally and religiously. Literally, *Tuan Guru* is an embedded term for those who study and deepen religious knowledge. But in its development, the scope of the power of *Tuan Guru* is not only limited to the religious environment which becomes the spiritual realm, but also on traditions and other aspects of life. In general, the pattern of *Tuan Guru's* leadership is religious and tends to be 'dogmatic', and has a patron-client system as a symbol of primordality mixed with mystical-magical patterns. Almost all crucial interests, such as the hajj pilgrimage or political regional elections, *Tuan Guru* has power over such matters as granting permits or 'blessing'.

Related to the position of women in the structure of Sasak society, there is a concept about women developing in that culture. Based on interviews with Lalu Agus Fathurrahman, a local leader, came up with the term *Gumi Nina* which means mother land or mother natures. That is, a woman will naturally conceive, give birth, nurture, care for, and raise children with tenderness, love, and affection. The important thing in this life process is that all these activities are carried out by women, ranging from children, mothers, to grandmothers, and assisted by men or their husbands. It can be said that the existence of this term indicates how the placement of women in the social structure of the Sasak cultural community as a crucial manifestation with an irreplaceable role.

Furthermore, in daily life, based on observations and interviews, the lives of Sasak women are inseparable from livelihood and artistic related activities; planting rice, gardening, raising livestock, cooking, taking care of the household, *lontar* reading, dancing, weaving, plaiting, and making pottery. This series of activities is carried out not only just to survive, but also as a social rite so that life has more benefits and meaning. Then, referring to the existence of art-oriented activities (dancing, weaving, making pottery, and plaiting), it can be concluded that 'art' grows into

a part of the daily routine of Sasak women. Art, as the basis of life, means that if women do not weave, plaiting, or make pottery, then there is no commodity that can be traded. This makes women not get money as income for the family. But if women do weaving, plaiting, or making pottery, then the activity which was originally only intended to fill free time, will have economic value.

Related to the relationship between art and economics, Sasak women have relatively different livelihoods between villages as their place of residence. At the village level, art as economic products produced has a relatively uniform form. For example, making pottery is done in Banyumulek Village, while weaving is commonly found in Village of Taman Ayu. Then, plaiting production in large quantities conducted in the Village of Nyurbaye. Detailed information regarding this is elaborated in the presentation of the following interview results.

a. Banyumulek Village (Interview conducted on December 2012)

Hunaeni, a 30-year-old woman with two children, works as a potter. Hunaeni learned how to make pottery since middle school from her mother. He works at a gallery from 8:00 to 16:00. Wages received per month + Rp. 200,000. If there are guests who come to the gallery and learn to make pottery, Hunaeni sometimes gets tips from guests because of her friendliness to teach or just do a demonstration of making pottery. Hunaeni works while taking care of her two children. If he does not work, then there is no financial income for his family. So, Hunaeni must keep working to live her life.

b. Taman Ayu Village (Interview conducted on December 2012)

Nurhaeni, a 25-year-old woman, has learned to weave since junior high from her mother and weave until now. The women in this village are skilled in weaving and have become their livelihood. Each house has a loom located in the yard. The women - ranging from teenage girls, mothers, to the elderly - do weaving activities with products such as scarves or sarongs. In completing one piece of scarf size 50x200 cm, it takes 9 working days. The price for a shawl is Rp. 125,000, -, while the price for a sarong is Rp. 200,000. They work around 10:00 to 16:00, after cleaning up the house. This work is done while looking after and caring for children. Raw material in the form of yarn, obtained from the city. They tend to choose threads with bright colors, such as: yellow, orange, red, green, and blue. If the woven fabric is finished, the result is a shawl (*dodot*) with bright stripes motif, which is used for traditional ceremonies, *nyongkolan*, the wedding procession ceremony held on the street in the procession of the bride and groom. As for the cloth *gaet* (called *gae* cloth, because it uses 2 colors of yarn) woven for men is usually darker, such as dark brown, dark red, and dark green.

c. Nyurbaye Village (Interview conducted on December 2012)

The interview was conducted on Mawar (30 years), a plaiter who has woven since high school. The women in this village work on woven *ketak* to supplement their income every month. The women work from 10:00 to 16:00. They plaiting at home after homework is done while looking after children or socializing. They plaiting for orders coordinated by a gallery that arranges large orders. Plaiting handicraft made of *ketak* for the inside and wrapped with skin bark (*Lygodium Circinatum*). This plant grows in the forest near the village. The skin of this plant is dried and then shaved into strands that are easy to wicker. The women work starting from making a frame to plaiting. Raw materials in the form of

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www.irhs.ui.ac.id, e-ISSN: 2477-6866, p-ISSN: 2527-9416
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bark skin are found in gardens or forests, which can be collected by children, and done after school. This work is done after homework is done. In completing one bag product measuring 25x25x8 cm, it takes about 6 days, depending on the model. Then, in one month they get a wage Rp. 500,000.

These three products have been produced for a long time until now and have not experienced significant changes, tend to be static. Changes occur only at the level of accent or detail. From the results of the study of visual data sources comparing objects found in the West Nusa Tenggara State Museum with similar products that are still produced by the public at this time, no significant changes were seen between the two.

Referring to Svasek's opinion, Sasak women will occupy a special and special position if the perspective is based on the role and skills of women in creating and surviving. Awareness in the mind or immanent will appear at a certain momentum and dominate the thoughts and feelings that exist. This momentum will then be the energy supply for performing art activities. At this stage women will have a 'ruang pembebasan' (liberation space), a condition where women have full 'power' over themselves. The liberation room is seen from women who weave, make pottery, plaiting and do other work through arts activities as the main livelihood. What they do is an attempt to meet the basic needs for survival, and make and maintain their existence as independent individuals.

The 'liberation space' of Sasak women is reflected in the system of space division in Sasak traditional houses. Physically, the house is made of wood and is built on an elevated land with a supporting pole as a foundation. On the yard of the house there is *beruqaq*, a wooden pyramid building that has a roof made from a tangle of sago palm leaves or a palm tree (*Borassus flalifer*), which functions as a reception area. The division of space in the house is quite simple, consisting of a bedroom and a living room, while the kitchen is located outside the house because it still uses firewood, with equipment made of earthenware and wood.

Overall, the Sasak traditional house is divided into two parts of space; inner space and outer space. Inner space, consisting of: 1) *Bale dalem ibu* or *Wastu Citra* (center of the cosmos of the house) which is a rest room for mothers, 2) *Bale dalem isi* is a place to store heirlooms or children's bedrooms, 3) Production space is a space where mothers work (weaving work is always in this room), and 4) Living room, a resting place for husband. Then, the outer space consists of: 1) a kitchen, a place for women (mothers) to do cooking activities, 2) a barn (a place to store rice), 3) a place for water, for bathing and washing, and 4) *beruqaq*, a place for receiving guests. Overall, the symbols of this division of space are: women are heirlooms that must be protected, homeowners (*epen bale*), and conquerors of time. Meanwhile, men are the owners of outer space (public), and conquerors of space. In detail this division is explained in Figure 1.

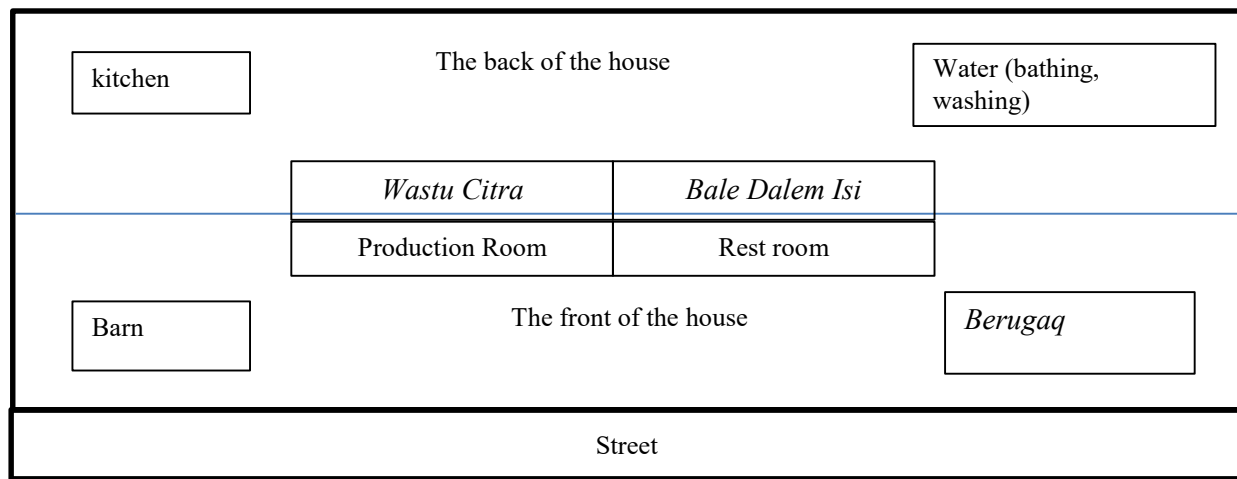


Figure 1:
 Plan of division of space in a traditional South Lombok house.

The production room is at the front of the house, and this is a symbol that the area is owned by women and is a place for weaving activities. When a woman is weaving, her husband cannot 'disturb', so her husband must wait until she finishes work. At work the woman is "entitled" to herself. Because, when working, this place is a 'liberation room' for women from male power. Indirectly, this division of space also places women as 'owners' of the house.

The position of women in the lives of Sasak people can also be seen from the objects or art products produced. In this case, the intended products are: woven cloth as a ritual media for the birth process, pottery products as daily household furniture, and plaiting ketak as handicraft products.

a. Weaving

The Sasak people use woven cloth as clothing used for traditional ceremonies such as the birth of a child, marriage, and someone's death. Sasak woven fabric is made by women and girls. This is a necessity for a woman before marriage. The Sasak Culture Rules which are still being implemented are women having the task to weave cloth. Men are not allowed to make weaving. Especially for ceremonial cloth, woven fabric can be made by the mother or women who are considered sacred, namely women who come from the descendants of traditional leaders and have entered the age of half a century.

The women in Lombok do weaving work, starting at the time of conceiving the baby by making *umbak* cloth (cloth to hold the baby when born). If the child has a male sex, then during adolescence must be circumcised according to Islamic law. The task of the mother in this case is to make *kerempen* woven cloth for circumcision rituals and *kuris* for haircut rituals.

There are rules before weaving, which must provide a woman, a kind of offerings (*sesajen*) in the form of a host consisting of betel, tobacco, gambier, yellow rice, yarn, and cloth. This dish is placed next to the loom. During weaving approximately 2 days, this dish must remain available next to the loom. The material consists of cotton yarn with a color

scheme on the fabric using natural dyes, such as: red comes from *sepang* wood, blue from tarum fruit, brown from mud, purple from pace fruit, yellow from turmeric, and green from pandan leaves or cinnamon.

After finishing weaving, this fabric is red, yellow, and black color, with striped motifs measuring 10 to 20 cm wide and 1 to 1.5 meters long. Furthermore, the cloth will be worn by the child as a belt until adulthood. At the time when this child dies, then the woven fabric will be cut in part and covered to his face which is called a *usap* cloth. The cloth physically accompanies the life of a child from the womb until the end of his life. This is a symbol that the affection of a mother or a woman for her offspring starts from the womb until the end of life.

Then, tradition regulates that women must be good at weaving before marriage. Men are not allowed to do the work. In making weaving, their role is limited to preparing work equipment and selling the weaving. This is a differentiator between Sasak women and women from other tribes or cultures.

Customs and rituals that are still being carried out using cloth media, are history that cannot be erased because they are related to the formation of Sasak society and culture, based on artifacts found like *gendhong* looms. This tool may have existed since prehistoric times, since the beginning of the emergence of culture until about the fifth century AD (Yudoseputro, 2008:3). Until now these looms can be found in almost all islands in Indonesia, especially the central and eastern parts of Indonesia. Decorative shapes are stripes, because they are formed from weaving systems of weft (horizontal) and warp (vertical). The geometric shape is the oldest ornamental variety in the history of the development of woven fabrics in Indonesia, (Wijayanti, 2013).

It can be said that the entire work process from the beginning to the end is carried out by women. If there are no women who weave, then there is no cloth as a medium for ritual, then one day the cultural tradition of Sasak weaving will end. How important is the position of a woman in life for a child and the development of Sasak culture. The following pictures are the motifs and colors of *umbaq* fabric, which are used as a ritual media.



Figure 2:

Umbaq woven fabric.

Source: Private documentation, 2015

b. Earthenware

Craft producing communities are found in Banyumulek Village, West Lombok. There are 1,500 families and thousands of pottery makers. Pottery making is carried out by women in this place, after working in the fields. The process of making earthenware works in a sitting position on the floor. Pottery made is a product of daily necessities, such as plates, containers, and candle holders. Men and women workers will sell pottery by going around the village using bicycles for the local market. Some products are also sold through galleries. They also accept orders that come from Bali, Java and abroad. The income from this activity is Rp. 50,000 per week, which is used to buy daily necessities.

The soil as a raw material for earthenware, originated from Lembar, North Lombok. It was purchased as much as 0.75 m³. Making pottery is done by women. After completion of the formation, the pottery is then dried in the sun to hard and burned in the field using straw and coconut husk. The combustion process is carried out in mutual cooperation at one burning center.

On the one hand, the women in this village only have limited skills, namely making pottery in order to sustain their lives and support their children. But on the other hand, prices to meet the necessities of life continue to rise. This makes many women in this village go abroad as workers with high enough income of up to Rp. 2,000,000 / month compared to pottery craftsmen. However, this condition makes women separated from their families, resulting in divorce and increasing the number of women without husbands (widows), and early marriage.

In addition, there is a view that marriage is only a transactional relationship. Overall, this condition results in a poor education system for children at the family level, and an inadequate level of health. Based on this, it was concluded that in the end women had to struggle independently to live as well as supporting the family economy. Here are pictures of pottery products as daily necessities.



Figure 3:

Pottery products as daily necessities.

Source: Private documentation, 2011

c. *Ketak* Plaiting

Other necessity products are containers, placemats, and so on, which are made from the skin of *ketak* plants. *Ketak* trees grow in forests in Lombok, and the bark of these plants is processed in such a way by plaiting techniques. This plaiting activity has been formed as a handcraft based industry and accepts orders both from within and outside the country with product designs that follow market tastes.

Demographically, there are around 500 women who pursue this activity with an age range of 17-40 years. They work at 08:00 to 17:00 after working in the garden. Their job is only to plaiting, because raw materials have been provided. In one day, per person can complete up to 20 medium sized plaiting bag products. The work system prevailing there has been like an industry, they work on matting and then collected to certain parties. In one month, their income is around Rp.700,000 up to Rp.1,000,000. Forms of government support related to this are raw material assistance and awards. As for men, they generally work as motorcycle taxi driver, farmers, or as a labor in oil palm plantation workers in Malaysia.

Making woven is one of the sources of income in this village, besides agricultural produce. The number of women plaiting makes this village quite productive. This village also has the potential to become one of the destinations of a culture-based creative industry. Based on this also, it can be said that this business can survive because it is supported by women workers. So, it can be concluded that the female workers in Nyurbaya Village are artists. Here are the products of plaiting leather as a creative industry.



Figure 4:

Ketak plaiting products as daily necessities.

Source: Private documentation, 2012

CONCLUSION

Overall, the condition of Sasak culture can be seen into 3 parts, namely: a) socially or social strata, b) traditions and rituals that are still being carried out using cloth media, and c) work procedures performed by women. This study also provides a classification of core information related to research issues, namely:

International Review of Humanities Studies
www.irhs.ui.ac.id, e-ISSN: 2477-6866, p-ISSN: 2527-9416
Vol. 5, No.1, May 2020 (Special Issue), pp. 393-409

1. There are social rites in Sasak society, such as ritual on birth of child
2. The existence of classification on art work in Sasak community based on product usage
3. The existence of other value in art product, namely the spiritual values, such as those contained in woven fabrics, both in making process and finished product
4. Utilization of arts in terms of ritual support tools
5. Utilization of arts as an economic product
6. Utilization of arts as a medium of maker's freedom of expression

Based on the statement above, the role of women in social structures is seen from a cultural perspective, so that it can be said that women's activities are the intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development of women both individually and in groups. The results of the third process are art products known as 'art', and have the power to describe the way of life, activities, beliefs, traditions, and habits of local groups or communities.

It can be seen that there is good potential in Sasak women who can be used as examples and role models as opportunities in building or reproducing new cultures that are good and superior as national identity, through lessons on 'women's resilience'. Resilience can be understood as a woman's power and potential for herself to engage in 'arts' activities that benefit. Women whose art activities are original sources of ideas belonging to the Sasak community and continue to grow and be sustainable in their social structure, so as to maintain and preserve cultural customs, support the family economy, and art activities can be used as a source of family income.

Conditions like this make the position of women as a 'buffer for the economic needs of the family' and self is the one who must save their lives. In Taman Ayu Gunung Malang village, women work weaving, becoming their own masters. The position of women in this village as 'guardians of Sasak cultural customs and traditions'. The woman who made pottery in Banyumulek Village, supported the family's economy. Meanwhile in Nyurbaye village, women work to make aesthetic and tasteful products. The position of women in this village as 'performers of art'.

Sasak women occupy a position within the framework of the socio-cultural system, as a central figure who runs 'civilization' and produces cultural products as livelihoods and sustenance of life, produces cultural artifacts as ceremonial media aimed at the Creator, and maintains harmony between living creatures for good future offspring. As forming culture, women cannot depend on others in order to maintain their lives. Sasak women must fight for their lives and dignity by working independently in order to provide for themselves both physically and financially through the 'liberation room'.

Sasak women in Lombok - West Nusa Tenggara, as objects of research on the problems of women workers are viewed with alternative perspectives in providing interpretations of women's resilience. The appreciation of Sasak women as artists in navigating the journey of life provides pure and essential truth values, so that it becomes a learning process in thinking, acting, and deciding on every matters in living the life every day by designing the way of life as 'achievement' as a woman.

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