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# A Review on Cultural Customs of Marriage Traditions Among Banjar Ethnic Women in Banjarmasin Indonesia

*by Ilmi Fajrul*

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## A Review on Cultural Customs of Marriage Traditions Among Banjar Ethnic Women in Banjarmasin Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

This study reveals the tradition of the Banjar inland tribes in their marriage rituals. For a Banjar ethnic woman, who adheres to her cultural customs, a marriage for them will only take place when it is arranged by the family. Arranged marriage means a marriage determined by the family with the prospective husband chosen by the family on certain factors. Family is the dominant factor that determines the future of a Banjar ethnic woman especially in the aspect of marriage. The research methodology used in this research is a literature review that reveals the secrets behind conventional marriage practices using a phenomenological approach. Firstly, this study found that for the Banjar ethnic group, traditionally arranged marriages are compulsory. Second, there is a culture of giving money in a nominal amount to the bride's family before the wedding takes place. Third, the bride's home must be filled with donations such as furniture or daily household necessities. If things as stated cannot be met, then the bride's family will look for another prospective husband for her daughter. Such a marriage tradition is the practice and belief of the ancestors of the Banjar tribe, it is an ancient practice of dynamic animism.

**Keywords:** Rituals; marriages; customs; Banjar; Indonesia.

## **1** **INTRODUCTION**

Sociologists define marriage as a socially supported union involving two or more individuals in what is regarded as a stable, enduring arrangement typically based at least in part on a sexual bond of some kind. While Zegeye (2020) stated the only way to satisfy human existence, to canalize the urges and to sell their sexual desires is through marriage. Marriage is the best way to give birth to babies, to multiply generation by holding Islamic people attentive to their survival. Marriage has many advantages, among them marriage calms the mind, regulates emotions, closes the view to all the prohibitions of God instead of legalizing sacred love between men and women. The marriage procession is, of course, often distinguished by a distinctive, unique and unique tradition that is usually one for each ethnic group (Adida, Combes, Lo, & Verink, 2016).

The interior of Banjar, South Kalimantan, Indonesia are one of the tribes that still preserve customs and traditions in the marriage system. In addition, marriage according to traditional characteristics is also practiced in various parts of the world (Choi & Hamilton, 2016). Researchers are currently experimenting with the Banjar backland community 's marriage rite.

As a result of the observation process, it is found that one of the interesting issues with this study is that marriage in the culture of the Banjar Inland Tribe is so strong in traditional practices in rituals or customs. Respect for the role of women is immense in traditional Banjar marriages. This is evidenced by the fact that most important events are heavily focused on the bride's family. One of the important traditions in Banjar marriages is the agreement of acceptance of the marriage consent between the prospective groom and the bride. An agreement between the two parties must be reached, if there is no agreement between the family then the marriage will not take place. In a stipulated agreement, traditionally the bride will set a dowry amount. The determination of this dowry will be mutually agreed by both parties and is bound by a specific time period. When the sign of agreement is reached, the groom agrees to pay a small amount of dowry out of the actual amount as a sign of the bond of agreement. Sometimes to add value to the deal, some of them give a ring as a sign of engagement. During the engagement period, the bride and groom will strive to be honest and stick to the promises they have made. Meanwhile, for the Minangkabau tradition, the bride and groom from Minang will visit the bride's family, and exchange gifts between the two parties as a sign of bonding (Mila, 2019). The groom will be hindered and prevented from meeting the bride by wearing a long shawl, as will the people living in the highlands of southern Sumatra, the people of Ogan. The prospective groom must bring the items requested by the bride's family to meet his prospective wife. Similar to the Ogan people (Manik, 2012), a custom in the Batak culture, there is a procession called Sinamot, which is a dowry negotiation between the two families

The amount of dowry to be given is usually determined based on the level of education, career or social status of the bride's family. The higher the level, the higher the number of dowries (Muzainah, 2019). This practice is not seen as an

element of mere materialism, as we also do not want these couples to divorce because they are burdened with expensive dowries. But on the contrary, as a manifestation of the seriousness and commitment shown before marrying the bride. Next, interesting research and observations in this tribe, on how the rituals of the Banjar tradition in weddings and regions in Indonesia or other countries are implemented.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

For this study, the research methodology used is a field study with a phenomenological approach (Giorgi, 1997). It has become a habit of Banjar people who perform this traditional marriage to perform it upstream with the Banjar tribe. Through this method, observations are made on a family planning to marry their child. The traditional practices performed start from the engagement process to the wedding. The research work lasted for three months between January to March 2020. The study was more focused on knowledgeable and informed sources of data or informants, specifically conducting exploratory research on the question of representing the matrimonial culture within the Banjar in Indonesia..

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The marriage tradition according to the Banjar ethnic tradition practiced in South Kalimantan is the ancestral heritage that is still practiced to this day. As a result of observation, this traditional practice is still maintained and has become a culture in the Banjar ethnic community. In addition, despite practicing traditional culture, Banjar ethnic adherence to Islamic teachings remains a priority. This means that in practicing customs, religious teachings are not forgotten. The need to carry out this tradition according to the informants found is an obligation as it has been taught from the ancestral heritage of the Banjar tribe (Al-Sharmani, 2018; Takvam Kindt, 2019).

The Banjar tribal community still maintains the customs, religious system, and family environment (Hastuti & Sumarmi, 2017). Based on the findings, that the traditions carried out on the customs of Banjar hinterland communities, behavior in the present is influenced by the circumstances and the environment so that these activities take place continuously and still maintain the original custom. For the Banjar community, the practice of marriage can be observed as a very detailed one in the marriage model.

Marriage in customary law is not only a bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife but also leads to the preservation of the tribe and marriage between two large families as part of the tradition. In the tradition of marriage in the Banjar community, when a man wants to marry a woman, then the man should ask the woman. However, usually the question needs to be represented by both sides of the family. This is in accordance with the teachings of Islam which forbids close relations between men and women before marriage. Therefore, the man's family will ask the woman's family whether the woman still has no bond with anyone. If

not, then discussions can continue for the proposal and the marriage process. Next for a woman who has not yet received any proposal, then her parents can try to marry her to relatives who are considered close and suitable for her family. Although not all are the same, but mostly in the Banjar Hinterland, that the marriage agreement was carried out by his female family.

### **Rituals Performed in Banjar Tribe Wedding**

In the traditional marriage system of the Banjar interior, several stages must be passed until the marriage procession is carried out. Based on information obtained, that there are some rituals performed. Among them are matrimonial patterns, *sekufu*, *badatang*, honesty, submission, marriage agreement with the same religious approach, wedding procession activities (Nuruddaroini, 2019).

The first part to do is a discussion among family members, it involves a large number of family members. At the discussion, it was a good time to identify some of the groom candidates who were considered suitable to be married by his daughter. This customary thing is referred to as "*basususuluh*", which is to find a suitable husband for her child. If deemed appropriate, they will hold more serious discussions in the practice of seeing and feeling comfortable between men and women as well as families. If deemed appropriate, then it will be extended with the "*Badatang*" process, which is a discussion between the two parties on the amount of shipments and so on. The delivery was as a gift desired by the woman's family and agreed to by the man's family. During the meeting, they will also discuss about the engagement period, venue preparation and most importantly the wedding ceremony. For the Banjar community, honesty is one of the conditions that must be met by men who want to get married. As for honesty which is a tradition as a Banjar community, judging by its status if mentioned in the marriage contract, its status is a dowry, if not mentioned then only a gift. This tradition is considered noble because it can respect the honor of women, when married or in the event of divorce.

Actually, what is ideal about determining honesty is not to see the number of surrounding communities, but the results of deliberations between the two families must be a benchmark for the amount of honesty. This ritual is performed because it is considered an obligation for the Banjar tribe. After this is done well, the next process is to surrender or hand over some assets and household necessities which will be prepared for the bride and groom. This surrender is a must-do ritual that aims to be considered that the bridegroom can foster a good household in the future. Then proceed with the marriage contract process and proceed with the wedding ceremony.

Usually, in a supernatural way there are interesting things in the customary procession of the Banjar community, namely there are some ritual activities carried out during the marriage. The first thing to do is "*adat bamandi*" (bathed) by using seven flower shapes and flowers from coconut fronds. This showering tradition is carried out with some readings spoken by a woman when splashing water on the bride. This method is considered mystical because many things are included in the

activity, the water is full of flowers, the clothes use jasmine woven flowers, and this is believed to bring forth a good aura for the bride and groom later.

Furthermore, the tradition of breaking chicken eggs, this ritual is carried out so that nothing disturbs the supernatural while the wedding procession. The procession to break the chicken egg is done after the “*bamandi*” event. When it is finished, the “*bamandi*” water is taken and sprinkled on the participants who witnessed it. This is done in the hope that it can ward off feelings of anxiety and interference from the genie and is considered to be able to provide comfort to the bride and groom later (Humaidi, 2016).

Based on the results of interviews that the authors met, these traditions are all rituals that have been carried out by ancestors from time to time. The existence of good relations with humans and relations with the supernatural shows that the tradition of traditional Banjar tribal marriage rituals has a relationship in the past with jinn. Based on the writer's search, that this ritual must be carried out if it is not done there will surely be disturbed by supernatural beings in various ways.

As well as during the procession of the marriage contract, various kinds of cakes and food are prepared for humans and supernatural beings to be prepared by serving together. As well as the provision of a seat consisting of bitter coffee, coconut, and brown sugar which is placed under the chair when the wedding ceremony is held. Although in practice this culture is in conflict with Islam, but in practice it still has the habit of obligatory rituals inherited from previous ancestors.

### **Relationship Between Beliefs an Rituals in Marriage**

The occurrence of this integration according to Ralph Linton's theory is because in general elements that are sufficiently compatible with the recipient's culture will not destroy anything society or culture (Lee, Townsend, Troth, & Loudoun, 2019). Since both parties have amazing vitality and almost unlimited capacity to implement adaptation change. Based on Linton's frame of mind it can be understood that Islam came to this area by holding local cultural adaptations. Due to the vitality of Islamic teachings and the Banjar's cultural capacity to accept a new culture can be realized without having to cause emotional conflict, because it does not interfere with the core of local culture. Islam came in this area and became acquainted with local customs and subsequently filled the culture with the essential values of Islamic teachings by slowly but surely not changing and shifting the Banjar culture system. This is reflected in the customs of the Banjar marriage which illustrated Islamic religious values in addition to the non-Islamic values that remained attached to the ceremony.

The ritual values in the Banjar marriage custom are reflected in the form of cultural symbols and behaviors, as revealed in the series of marriage ceremonies (Yixuan, 2018). The people in the Banjar tribe who are predominantly Muslim, currently treat their customs the same as carrying out obligations towards their religion (Islam). This is done because of the habits and traditions inherent in society,

able or not in terms of its economy. The integration of culture and religion is now at the stage of perfecting values (Meng, 2020). This can be seen how the Banjar people treat old values such as the provision of a resident, offerings of various kinds of food and other equipment which are then converted and modified into a form of prayer so that God gives safety to the bride and groom them, not asking supernatural beings.

Although in general, the Banjar people are Muslim, they still cannot leave the old customs that embrace primitivism, such as sprinkling yellow rice with the intention that the bride is not disturbed by spirits, as well as the equipment used is still primitive magical, such as offerings, “*piduduk*” and forth is an expression of concern for the disturbance of the spirits of their ancestors.

### CONCLUSION

The traditional culture of Banjar ethnic marriage has a close relationship with the ancestral culture. The various traditions that must be followed are considered sacred and if not done will pose a big problem. Traditional culture is part of life in the interior of the Banjar tribe. The traditions practiced also have social values that still have a connection between humans and the supernatural. Rituals performed in the rural community of Banjar at least still follow the nature of primitive animism by combining new patterns of life by promoting the old traditions of the ancestors with various rituals.

Research efforts between the Banjar tribes in Indonesia and Malaysia have the potential to be explored. By observation there are similarities between the two. The ritual performed on the Malays in Malaysia ritual similar to the Banjar in Indonesia. It can be proved that the Malays on the outskirts of Malaysia, Batu Pahat, Johor, and around it are fragments (partial) Banjar quarter Kalimantan (Borneo), which since ancient times moving to Malaysia (Malaya) during the war with the Netherlands. Although separate, the cultural identity of the Banjar people can be evidenced by several rituals, languages, and traditions that still have similarities.

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