

## **STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY UNITY AND UNITY THROUGH PRESERVING BEJAMU SAMAN ART**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The bejamu saman art in Gayo Lues has a uniqueness that is not found in other arts, namely that it is able to strengthen the unity and integrity of society. The aim of this research is to explain the unity and integrity of the Gayo Lues community from the preservation of Bejamu Saman art, explain the uniqueness of Bejamu Saman art which differentiates it from other arts, and to find out the importance of Bejamu Saman art for the Gayo Lues community. The method used in this research is a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews and documentation. The results of the research show that in the process of implementing this Bejamu Saman art, it can strengthen the unity and integrity of the community, because the Bejamu Saman art can knit ties of friendship because in this Bejamu Saman art invites people from other villages to come and stay for two days and two nights in their village. and the occurrence of social contact in society because preparation for the implementation of this art requires close cooperation. The art of Bejamu Saman is also unique, so this art attracts a lot of public attention. The uniqueness of this bejamu saman lies in its poetry which contains songs with the theme of the human relationship with Allah SWT and its movements produce sounds that are beautiful to hear and each movement of the saman contains meaning as an instruction for the next movement that will be played.

Kata Kunci : Bejamu Saman, Preservation of arts, Strengthening unity.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Gayo Lues is a district located in the highlands of Aceh Province. Its area is at an altitude of 500 - 2,000 meters above sea level, surrounded by forests in the Leuser Ecosystem Area (KEL), the largest forest in Southeast Asia with a variety of flora and fauna. Around Seribu Bukit Regency, there are forests

covering an area of 554,991 hectares, consisting of protected forests, Gunung Leuser National Park, and production forests. Its beautiful natural landscape is a special attraction for tourists to come, both local and foreign (Wati, 2021).

Bejamu Saman is a community arts event in Gayo Lues district, where this event is held by inviting people from other villages to come together to perform the Saman dance together, taking turns showing their best Saman performances (Raditya, 2019 ). It is felt that this bejamu saman art journey can strengthen relations between villages or between groups in Gayo Lues. The preservation of this art will become a strength for society, so that divisions between groups do not easily occur in various matters, both political, social and family. Therefore, it is very important for the Gayo Lues community to preserve this Bejamu Saman art, because of the values contained in this Bejamu Saman art. It can be said that the art of Bejamu Saman has the value of unity and unity which must be maintained properly.

In the researchers' observations, it appears that the Bejamu Saman art can unite the people in Gayo Lues, because this art is a medium for the people in Gayo Lues to build friendships with people from other villages. A resident of Singgah Mulo village said that an accident had occurred in Singgah Mulo village. Then, when we investigated it, it turned out that the hitman was the grandson of the victim's father's serinen (friend), so because they felt like they were family, the problem was resolved peacefully.

In the process of implementing the art of Bejamu Saman, the youth leader from one of the villages in Gayo Lues Regency will first prepare an invitation which is then addressed to the village youth leader who will be invited to build inter-village friendship. Then, after the invitation is approved, the appropriate time for the event will be discussed according to the agreement of both village parties. On the day of the event, all the men from each family member from the village who are invited will come and stay for two days and two nights or in Gayonya Saman Roa lo roa ingi (Saman two days and two nights). The number of people who come must be balanced with the number of hosts, because each person will get one serinen (friend) who will build a family relationship. And for two days and two nights they will stay, eat and drink at the serinennya (friend's) house.

The first time the host provided various drinks, ranging from water, coffee, milk, to syrup, this was done so that he could understand what drinks his friend (his friend) liked. If Serinen drank coffee, for two days and two nights he would drink coffee. serve the drink. The next process goes on as usual, they will tell stories to get to know each other better in order to strengthen ties of friendship and bonds of brotherhood. And in between these approaches there will be a saman performance performed by the two villages in turn (Bahry,

2014). After two days and two nights, the banjamu saman process had ended, so before they went home there was a procession of giving selpah (gifts) from their respective serinen (friends), these gifts started from typical Gayo food, clothes, pillows, mattresses, cupboards, Some even provide gardens that can be managed to show how much they want to build friendship. Not only that, this friendship will continue until the end of life, once this friendship is established between the two of them, it also applies to relatives, including children. their grandchildren (Gusmail, 2020).

The saman dance that will be performed during the banjamu saman event is played by dozens of saman dancers or even dozens depending on community agreement. However, the thing you need to pay attention to is that the number of dancers must be odd, not even. The saman dance is played in a sitting kneeling position, the dance movements start slowly at first and then gradually begin to increase the speed which ultimately becomes very fast. Accompanied by very strong body, head and chest movements. Speed and uniformity are the characteristics of the Saman dance.

To be able to adapt all the movements of the dancers, there are poems sung by the sheikh (leader) of the saman, which in this saman poem contains unique meaning in its poetry. The poem is sung from the moment the saman dance begins. In the saman dance, the sheikh (leader) of the saman plays a very important role in synchronizing the movements of the saman dancers. However, the saman dancers also have a responsibility to maintain good cooperation with the saman sheikh (leader) so that the results are as expected.

Based on this problem, researchers are interested in researching the preservation of the Bejamu Saman art in strengthening the unity and integrity of the Gayo Lues community, because the researcher sees how great the community unity is in the Bejamu Saman art in Gayo Lues, because the presence of the Bejamu Saman art can unite the community. between one village and another so that they can establish family relationships even though they didn't know each other before.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The research method used is a descriptive research method, meaning research that is directed at providing symptoms, facts, or events systematically and accurately, regarding the characteristics of certain populations or areas.

This research was conducted in Singah Mulo Village, Putri Betung District, Gayo Lues Regency, Aceh Province. The choice of this location was based on initial known customs that there was Bejamu Saman art among the people of Kampung Singah Mulo. This research was conducted from 23 August to 30 March 2023.

The research used a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling technique is a method used to target various aspects of research data sources. These aspects include, for example, people who know and understand the most about what the author will research, or people who are experienced, so that it can make it easier for researchers to study the object of study or social situation, in this way the data obtained will be has high quality.

Data collection techniques are the methods used by researchers to obtain data in a study. The data collection technique was carried out by triangulation (combining) several techniques, namely observation, interviews and documentation. Meanwhile, data analysis is inductive to deductive, and qualitative research results emphasize meaning rather than generalizations in research.

The data analysis technique used in this research is qualitative data analysis, namely describing and interpreting data obtained in the field from informants. The objectives of qualitative data analysis are: (1) Analyzing the process of a social phenomenon and obtaining a complete picture of this process; (2) Analyzing the meaning behind information, data and processes of a social phenomenon.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. History of Singah Mulo Village**

Singah Mulo Village is one of the expansion villages of Marpunge Selamat Village in Putri Betung District. The history of Singah Mulo Village is that in the 60s, Singah Mulo was still a wilderness and there were no residents yet, it was only in the 70s that the Gayo Lues community migrated. looking for a new life with a profession as a farmer, then as time went on, the population began to increase, opening up plantation land, so that in the 80s, a community group was formed with the population status of Gumpang village, Blangkejeren subdistrict.

Then, due to the large number of residents in the 90s who came from Gayo Lues and Southeast Aceh, Gumpang village was expanded by the Southeast Aceh district government, the eastern region of Gumpang village became Marpunge Selamat village, and Singah Mulo village at that time had the status of a hamlet from Marpunge Selamat village, in 2002 Gayo Lues developed into a district and Singah Mulo in the following year, 2003, became a preparatory village due to the administrative needs of the Gayo Lues district government, and at that time Muhammad Saharudin was elected head of the preparatory village for approximately five years, in 2008 the status of Singah Mulo became a definitive village.

### **2. Process of Implementing Bejamu Saman Art**

The steps for implementing the art of Bejamu Saman are as follows:

a. Process Before Implementing Bejamu Saman Art

Before the art of Bejamu Saman is held, there are several processes that will be carried out by the community, so that when the event is held it can run well and according to expectations.

Before the jamu saman is held, the community needs to make preparations so that the event can run smoothly. First, a meeting will be held to determine which village the guests will be invited from, after the results of the meeting have been reached and it has been agreed that the village will be invited, then next Committees will be formed and their respective tasks will be divided. After the division of committees is complete, invitations will be sent to the villages that have been agreed upon at the time of the meeting. If the village accepts the invitation and agrees to it, the entire community will prepare everything they need for the Saman banquet event and all the Saman dancers will also practice every night.

Based on the results of observations, the author saw that there were a lot of preparations made by the community before implementing this Bejamu Saman art, starting from holding a meeting or deliberation of the entire community which aimed to determine the village that would be invited to berrinen (friendship), in this meeting the author saw that the entire community would submit a proposal. the village they want to make a serinen (friend). After all the community's votes have been collected, the village that will be invited to be friendly (befriend) will be the village that has received the most proposals from the community.

At the time of distribution, the community committee will again hold a joint deliberation. When distributing tasks, Mr. Keuchik as leader will appoint people who will be given tasks according to their abilities. The reception officers chosen were several parents who understood the customs of the Saman banquet and youth leaders. Then the person who is appointed as the officer for singing (greeting words/the art of replying to rhymes) is a person who is good at putting words together and is an expert in replying to rhymes. Next, Mr. Keuchik will appoint people who will be security officers. The people chosen to be security officers are people who are firm and respected by the community, because during the event there is a risk of chaos because many spectators also come from other villages. After completing the division of committees, the youth leader will appoint 6 people consisting of 3 men and 3 women to go deliver invitations to the village where they will be invited to be friendly (befriend).

When the Bejamu Saman art event arrives, the whole community will gather and rejoice in welcoming their guests. When the invited guests arrive they are greeted with a *didong nalo* (dance of respect/welcome). Apart from that, the young men and women were ready to welcome the invited guests wearing traditional Gayo clothing, the head of the young women brought a flower arrangement in the form of a necklace which would later be given to the *keuchik* father and the traditional figures of the invited guests. Then they waited for the signal to carry out their duties. After receiving the signal, the *didong nalo* participants will contort their bodies and wave the long cloth while jogging towards the temporary stopping place for the group of invited guests, and after standing in front of the invited guests the *didong nalo* participants will present a few *didong* rhymes and poetry. After completing the *didong nalo* (welcome) procession, guests will be taken to the place provided. Upon arrival at the gate, the *keuchik*, traditional leaders and several other people will be wearing flower necklaces brought by the young women's leader. Next, the traditional leader or someone who is a representative of the guests is invited to sit on an *ampang pitu* (a small mat with a typical Gayo pattern covered with seven) as a sign of respect for the host.

Next, after the traditional leader sits on the seven-layered mat, the traditional leader from the host will open with a greeting in the form of *melengkan* (the art of making traditional speeches and responding to rhymes) as a welcome. Once the host has finished, the guest will reply.

After being answered by a reply (the art of making a traditional speech and replying to rhymes) from the guest, which contained the surrender of their group to the host and hopes for the safety of their group for two days and two nights in the village. After the welcoming ceremony was finished, the host then served snacks, namely *pulut inti* (sticky rice mixed with coconut roasted with sugar), black coffee, milk and sweet tea. Then, there is a division of *serinen* (friends), each person from the host has a *serinen* (friend) who will be adopted as a sibling. In the past, only young people were friends, but as time goes by and the times progress, now all guests are required to get *serinen*, both young and old, the young get the young *serinen* and the old also get the old *serinen* too, so that comfortable and connected in communicating.

After the distribution of the *serinen* is complete, each person will take their respective *serinen* home and they will be responsible for all the *serinen*'s needs for two days and two nights, starting from housing, food, drink, toiletries, and even clothes if the *serinen* is didn't bring clothes.

The initial event is the *saman* event which usually starts after the

evening prayer and all the hosts will bring their serinen back to the ward (the place where the saman dance event has been provided). The event was opened by the village leader or representative with great enthusiasm. This kekatar is a greeting phrased in the form of poetry which is a warning given by the village headman or representative community figure before the start of the saman event. This kekatar contains advice, sportsmanship during the implementation of the event is not permitted to utter words or poetry that insult or insult the opposing party because this violates customs.

After the Saman event is held for two days and two nights, on the last day there will be a send-off ceremony for guests who will return to their villages. When the Bejamu Saman arts event is finished, the guests will get ready to go home. Before the guests go home the host will prepare selpah (souvenirs) to take home, each person will give a selpah to their respective serine (friend). The hosts will compete to give big gifts to their friends (friends), there are no specific rules for giving gifts, it all depends on each person's abilities.

2. The media strengthens community unity and integrity in Bejamu Saman art
  - a. The ties of friendship are knitted

In the Bejamu Saman art, the community will knit ties with people from other villages in the hope of strengthening unity and integrity in society. Meanwhile, the implementation of Bejamu Saman art can indeed strengthen community unity and unity. Where during the implementation of the Bejamu Saman art, every adult male from each family will get one serinen (friend) whose needs they have to cover for two days and two nights. During those two days and two nights they will get to know each other better and build a close relationship. This bond of friendship will continue to extend to their children and grandchildren.

The main aim of this Bejamu Saman art is as a medium to strengthen community unity and unity, by inviting people from other villages to build ties of friendship and brotherhood with the hope that they can continue to be united and unified in all things. In this bejamu saman art, each person will get a serinen (friend) who will stay in their house and they will have to cover all their needs for two days and two nights. This will certainly be able to forge strong bonds of brotherhood

- b. Social contact occurs

In implementing the Bejamu Saman art, the community repeatedly holds deliberations because implementing the Bejamu Saman art requires careful preparation, starting from determining the village that will be invited, the location of the event, sound system, decorations, and snacks

for invited guests. To prepare for all this, the community works together and shares tasks with each other. Two days before the event day, the entire community will work together, they will share tasks, some will clean the event location, decorate the place and some will prepare the sound system and snacks for the participants. invited guests.

To make the Bejamu Saman art event a success, the entire community will repeatedly hold deliberations and mutual cooperation in preparing all the necessities for the implementation of the Bejamu Saman art, and the entire community will have to contribute funds to purchase various necessities for the implementation of the Bejamu Saman art.

As a form of cooperation which is one of the habits of Indonesian society, namely the habit of mutual cooperation in doing work, because it is encouraged by the nature of work whose benefits are for the common good (Stiadi, 2011).

There are two unique things contained in Bejamu Saman art, namely:

1) The poetry

In the saman dance there is something called poetry, where the poetry in this saman dance contains the meaning of the relationship between humans and the creator and the poetry is also sung with a melody that is melodious and beautiful to hear so that when people hear it they will feel its uniqueness.

The uniqueness of this bejamu saman lies in its poetry, which in this saman poetry has religious value because the songs sung when there are saman have the theme of the relationship between humans and Allah SWT and it is often said that this art of bejamu saman was previously used by religious figures as a medium for preaching, because the poetry used when playing this saman contains words that identify the Oneness of Allah.

The poetry of the Saman dance invites the public to always remember the creator because the song that is sung during the Saman has the theme of the relationship between humans and Allah SWT and it is often said that the Bejamu Saman art was previously used by religious figures as a medium for preaching.

2) The movement

Saman dance is a dance that moves all parts of the dancer's body, starting from the movements of the head, hands, body and feet. This saman dance movement has its own uniqueness, starting from the hand movements that produce beautiful sounds and the cohesiveness of the movements which is truly amazing.



The uniqueness of this saman lies in its movement, because every movement of this saman produces sounds that are beautiful to hear and each movement of the saman contains meaning as an instruction for the next movement that will be played, such as *gerpuk* (patting the chest quickly) which is a movement that becomes a pause to continue the next movement

Based on the results of Bejamu Saman's research, he has a very important role among the Gayo Lues community. The Gayo Lues community performs the Bejamu Saman art almost every year, therefore it is believed that the implementation of the Bejamu Saman art will continue to be preserved by the Gayo Lues community for the next generation.

Arts preservation involves various aspects, including performing arts, fine arts, music, dance, literature, and various other forms of artistic expression. The aim of art preservation is to maintain the cultural identity of a community, respect the heritage of ancestors, and ensure that future generations can enjoy and learn traditional art (Fadillah, 2022).

### 3. Public Perception of Bejamu Saman Art

In the implementation of the art of Bejamu Saman there are various perceptions from the public ranging from positive to negative. One of the people's opinions is that this bejamu saman art does take a lot of energy and money, but they here do not feel disadvantaged at all because with this bejamu saman art they can expand their brotherhood and they are happy about that, even though many things have been sacrificed. During the Bejamu Saman arts event, everything seemed to pay off when they got *serinen* (friends) from other villages. Based on observations during the implementation of the art of Bejamu Saman, it costs a lot of money and energy, but this pays off when the event takes place because there is a feeling of joy and happiness when you get a new sibling.

## CONCLUSION

Bejamu saman art is a medium for the people of Singah Mulo village to build relationships with other villages. This was done in order to strengthen the unity and integrity of the entire community in Gayo Lues.

Bejamu Saman art is said to be able to strengthen community unity because with the existence of Bejamu Saman art it can become a medium for building ties of friendship between one village and another village and with the presence of Bejamu Saman art it can also become a bridge for the community to build unity in work. together and continue to have social contact with the

entire community.

The public's perception of the art of Bejamu Saman is divided into two, there are those who think it is positive, there are also those who think it is negative, however, people tend to judge it positively because with this Bejamu Saman, people can build ties with people from other villages.

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