

Identity and Meaning of Marriage in Samin Society, Blora Regency

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Abstract

Marriage has a deep meaning in the Samin community, a Javanese ethnic group in Blora Regency, Central Java. This study uses an ethnographic approach to understand the meaning and identity of marriage in Sami culture. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with community leaders, family members, and direct observation. The results of the study show that marriage in the Samin community is a social bond that involves two families, not just two individuals. Marriage ceremonies strengthen bonds between generations and maintain harmony within social groups. Marriage is also closely related to the concepts of religion and spirituality. Traditional wedding rituals and ceremonies, such as the marriage procedure for the Samin indigenous people, are carried out through the stages of nakokke, mbalesi gunem, ngendek, nyuwito, ngenger, paseksen, and tingkepan, which are passed down from generation to generation and become an integral part of the marriage procession. The role of traditional and religious leaders is central to formalising marriages. Overall, the meaning of marriage in the Samin community reflects the rich culture and spirituality that are deeply rooted in their lives. Marriage is one of the foundations for maintaining their cultural identity and determining the direction of social life in the future.

Keywords: Meaning; Marriage; Samin Society; Culture; Spirituality

1. Introduction

Marriage is a deeply meaningful social institution that has a significant impact on people's lives. The Samin people, an ethnic group with distinctive traits in Indonesia, have their own traditions, norms, and values towards marriage (Victor Turner, 1966; Harun, 1984). These traditions, norms, and values are exclusive to each community group. In this essay, we'll look at what marriage means to the Samin community, study it from a social, cultural, and religious perspective, and offer our insight on how this institution helps this society maintain its traditions and sense of identity. The Samin people are renowned for having a rich cultural heritage and unique customs as well (Soekanwo 1968; Hutomo 1996). A system that highlights the value of strength is one custom that is deeply ingrained in their lives

and regard for one another among neighbours. The Samin people are renowned for their skill in managing land and conducting agriculture. They use ecologically friendly, conventional techniques to practise sustainable agriculture.

The Samin community is one of the Javanese ethnic groups that inhabit certain areas in East Java, Indonesia. They have characteristics in their religious beliefs and cultural values that are strongly maintained today. The social life of the Samin people is influenced by the teachings of Saminism, a belief that emerged in the early 19th century and is rooted in Javanese tradition. According to Hutomo (1996), this school is associated with kebatinan teachings, also referred to as Sangkan paraning dumadi or more commonly known as the teachings of Manunggaling Kawulo Gusti (King 1973; Benda & Castel 1969), where Manunggaling kawulo Gusti is defined as a keris that sinks into a sheath or scabbard. Harmonious coexistence with nature is vital to indigenous people's values, embodied by the Samin community formed in 1890 by Samin Surosentiko, emphasizing positive life principles. Samin's legacy continues through the Sedulur Sikep community in Sambongrejo Village, one of them led by Pramugi Prawiro Wijayo, practicing agriculture based on his teachings (Gorda, 2020; Purwasito 2023 and Kunriasari, 2018).

This uniqueness makes the Samin people have a unique perspective and outlook on marriage, which involves very rich religious, cultural, social, and spiritual aspects. The unique culture and traditions of the Samin people make them an object of attention and study for anthropologists and cultural researchers. Even though they live in simplicity, the Samin people persist in maintaining their local wisdom and teaching these values to future generations. The Samin Blora people also have a unique culture, local wisdom, and a distinctive way of life (Rosyid, 2010).

They are inspiring examples of how to respect nature, live simply, and still preserve culture and traditions despite the times. In the context of the Samin community, marriage has a much broader purpose than just forming a bond between two individuals. Marriage is considered a sacred ceremony involving the whole family and community. This is reflected in Samin's saying, "Wedding ning gusti, pangemponing jagad," which means "Marriage is an event that unites the world." Thus, marriage is considered a means to strengthen social relations and form strong bonds between community members. In the marriage tradition of the Samin people, the matchmaking process plays an important role. Usually, parents or traditional leaders act as intermediaries in finding suitable life partners for their children. This matchmaking process is seen as a very important step because marriage not only binds two individuals but also unites two families and forms a wider relationship between the two groups of families. Therefore, there is a special ceremony that is carried out to determine the marriage agreement and ensure that the two are compatible socially, culturally, and religiously. In addition, cultural values and customs in the marriage of the Samin people also play a central role. Some of these values are contained in oral traditions passed down from generation to generation, including ethics in family life, the rights and obligations of husband and wife, and the role of each family member in maintaining household harmony. This oral tradition is a guide for newly married couples to lead a happy and harmonious household life. In the Samin community's marriage tradition, there are also many traditional rituals and ceremonies involving all members of the community. One of them is "Ngunduh Mantu," which is a procession that takes the bride from her family of origin to the family of her future husband (Noor, 2011). This procession is accompanied by a variety of distinctive traditional dances and music, reflecting the spirit of togetherness and joy in welcoming new family members. This tradition also reflects the importance of social and family integration in Sami marriages. Apart from that, religious elements are also very dominant in the marriage ceremonies of the Samin people. The Saminism religion teaches about the importance of balance with nature and the universe, as well as the role of

humans as part of harmony itself. In the wedding ceremony, religious rituals are held to ask for blessings from God for the marriage to be lived (Sastroatmojo, 2003)(Budiaman & Hidayat, 2022).

This reflects how marriage is seen as an act that does not only include two individuals but also involves the involvement of God and the universe. In conclusion, marriage in the Samin community has very complex and deep meanings and values. Marriage is seen as a sacred ceremony that involves the whole community, not just two individuals. Social, cultural, religious, and spiritual elements become integral parts of the institution of marriage in this culture. The matchmaking process, traditional values, and traditional and religious ceremonies are at the core of the Samin people's marriage tradition, which strengthens social relations and maintains their cultural identity. Marriage in the Samin community reflects the harmonious unity of humans and nature, as well as respect for the values of togetherness and kinship. Therefore, an in-depth understanding of the meaning of marriage in the Samin community can provide valuable insights into the rich culture and spirituality of Indonesia. Researchers have seen the dynamics of marriage experienced by the Samin people.

Samin's marriage in Klopoduwur Village, Blora, was studied by Asiah (2013). The group initially followed Adam, but after the G30 in September 1965, they converted to Islam. Samin's youth interaction with local Muslims became a catalyst. In Klopoduwur's research, Radendra and Masykur (2015) revealed that the Samin people he met remained faithful to follow Samin's teachings. He said that anyone's life is provided for by this. Researchers Mukodi and Afid (2016) from Blora found that the Samin people have remained consistent today even though they are modern. can even coexist peacefully with local abangan Muslims. Setyaningrum's study in Dukuh Bombong Pati in 2017 shows how the Samin people still adhere to religious principles, are modest, uphold decency and honesty, help each other, have a human perspective, and carry out acts of solidarity and peace. It's just that our attention is shifting from respecting nature to economic gain. According to Fauzia and Yohanis (2019), the Samin people value maintaining peace and upholding their beliefs. The findings of Suharto's research (2019) in Blimbing Sawur Hamlet, Blora, show that the local community has an attitude of sincerity, harmony, and mutual cooperation. This study focuses on problems with previous research.

2. Research Methods

Research on the Samin community in Blora Regency, Central Java, carries a qualitative approach with the aim of understanding deeply the culture, beliefs, and marriage values of the Samin people. This research will involve data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews with members of the Samin community, participatory observation during traditional activities and ceremonies, and the study of documents related to Samin culture and history. Sampling of informants will be carried out purposefully to ensure a good representation of various aspects of the lives of the Samin people. The collected data will be analysed using an inductive approach, with a focus on the thematic process for identifying Identity and the Meaning of Marriage in the Samin community.

3. Results and Discussion

The Identity and Meaning of Samin Marriage

Marriage in the Samin community does not only follow formal procedures but also reflects harmony between humans and nature as well as harmony with the teachings of the religion they adhere to. One of the hallmarks of Samin's marriage is the procession, which is held in a simple manner without exaggerating celebrations. Living together in simplicity and modesty is a value that is highly valued in their marital culture. In addition, the selection of a life partner is also carried out based on deep spiritual

and philosophical considerations, involving the role of parents and traditional leaders. Thus, marriage in the Samin community in Blora is not only a social event but also a symbol of cultural identity that is deeply rooted in their local wisdom. In many cultures, marriage is considered an important milestone in one's life, marking the transition from adolescence to adulthood and the readiness to form a family. Marriage procedures vary in each society, including the approval stage, the exchange of dowry or offerings, and the wedding ceremony, which involves special traditions and rituals. Marriage also serves as the foundation for the formation of the family, a social unit that is the core of society. Through marriage, there is emotional connection, support, and responsibility between husband and wife for building a harmonious and prosperous household. In addition, marriage also functions as a mechanism for maintaining and passing on cultural values and traditions from one generation to the next. Marriage ceremonies often contain symbolic and sacred meanings that bind individuals to the cultural heritage and spirituality of their society. In the modern world, marriage continues to experience changes and adjustments to the times and social values. However, the meaning and importance of marriage as a social and cultural institution remain an integral part of human life. Marriage is a reflection of how society perceives and values interpersonal relationships, togetherness, and a commitment to build a family and strengthen social bonds in a community (Hidayat, 2022).

Marriage in the Samin community in Blora Regency has a very deep meaning and is rich in cultural values. For the Samin people, marriage is not just a bond between two individuals but rather a union of two families and the continuation of ancestral traditions. The marriage process is seen as a sacred ceremony that requires careful preparation and the involvement of many community members. The meaning of marriage also includes a spiritual aspect, in which there is a belief that the marriage bond transcends worldly life and continues into life after death. Marriage in the Samin community is also seen as a way to maintain and strengthen social ties between families and communities. Through marriage, a close relationship is established between the bride and groom's families on both sides, and this is considered important to maintaining harmony and solidarity in society. In addition, marriage is also an event to strengthen Samin's customary and cultural values because, in the process, many traditional traditions and rituals are carried on from generation to generation.

In addition, marriage in the Samin community also has meaning as a form of loyalty, mutual respect, and cooperation between husband and wife. Husband and wife are expected to support each other, respect each other's roles, and together build a happy and prosperous family life. Marriage is also the foundation for continuing offspring, so it is considered important for the continuity of generations and the continuation of Samin's cultural identity. With such deep and varied meanings, marriage in the Samin community in Blora Regency is not only an event in personal life but also an important part of the overall social and cultural life of the community. In every wedding ceremony, various noble values and traditions are maintained, so that marriage becomes a strong symbol of the identity and cultural integrity of the Samin people.

For the Samin Blora people, marriage is a symbol of the unity of two individuals who unite two families and is the foundation for strengthening social relations and harmony in their community. The marriage procedure is carried out by following the customary system that has been passed down from generation to generation, maintaining the sanctity of the marriage ceremony. The meaning of marriage in the Samin Blora community also reflects strong spiritual beliefs. The wedding ceremony is carried out by involving rituals that have high religious and spiritual values and involves the role of traditional leaders and religious leaders who have an important position in formalising the marriage. In addition, marriage is considered a means to preserve ancestral culture and customs. Through marriage, cultural values and local wisdom are passed on from one generation to the next, so that they become a stronghold

in maintaining the cultural identity of the Samin Blora people. The meaning of marriage in the Samin Blora community is an integral part of their social life. Marriage is not just an individual event but also an event that involves the whole community, connecting them with their ancestors, with fellow members of society, and with God. Therefore, marriage is an important symbol for strengthening solidarity and maintaining cultural values that are upheld in the daily lives of the Samin Blora people.

Samin Marriage Procedures

Marriage procedures are a series of processes and ceremonies that the bride and groom undergo to formally unite their relationship. This process involves the agreement of both families, customs, and rituals that carry social, cultural, and religious meanings and values that vary from society to society. Marriage procedures in the Samin indigenous people are carried out through a series of stages that are full of meaning and rich cultural values. Where in a marriage event there is a system and identity that is illustrated, the system and identity of marriage in Samin culture is an aspect that is rich in meaning and unique tradition. Marriage among the Samin people is an institution that not only binds two individuals, but also connects two families and strengthens social ties within their community. Marriage in the Samin culture is governed by a customary system that has been passed down from generation to generation. This system follows strict regulations and respects traditional processions from start to finish, maintaining the sanctity and sanctity of the wedding ceremony. Samin's marital identity reflects local wisdom and spiritual beliefs that are continuously upheld by traditional elders and community leaders.

The Samin people have specific steps that they must follow in order to complete the marriage, and every step of the marriage process includes traditional expressions. There are numerous stages in the marriage of the Samin people, including (Hidayat, 2023) :

- a) Nyumuk, or the visit of the intended son-in-law's parents to the intended daughter-in-law to enquire about the intended son-in-law's location, whether he already has a future husband, or whether she is still a girl (legan), etc.
- b) Ngendek, which is a declaration made by the prospective male Kemanten's parents to the male brokers of the prospective female Kemanten in response to the nyumk procedure. Typically, the mother of the prospective son's wife presents a gold coin during this procession.
- c) Nyuwito, or the day the wedding took place in accordance with the son's kemanten's desire to carry on the bloodline (genuine Wiji, Titine Anak Adam).
The two kemanten decide if it is appropriate for Nyuwito to stay for an extended period of time. When both parties engage in sexual activity, they are compatible.
- d) Pasaksen, which is an opportunity for the bride and groom to express their love and commitment to one another in front of their parents, families, and invited guests; this expression takes place after the bride and groom engage in sexual activity
- e) Tingkep A brokohan, or parade, is organised to save the unborn child once the bride gets pregnant at the age of seven months' gestation. The Samin elder (botoh), who stands in for the intention's owner, offers counsel (nyondro) during the Brokohan event.
- f) Wedding-related accessories, such as invitations, the venue of the pasuwitan, the number of guests that attended, the food served, the host's attire, and the kemanten attire.

In Samin's marriage procedure, the process begins with "nakokke," in which the groom's party conveys good intentions to propose to the bride-to-be. After the consent of the woman's family has been given in the "mbalesi gunem" stage, further processes such as "nendek" and "nyuwito" will be undertaken to better recognize and strengthen the agreement between the two parties. Furthermore, in

the "ngenger" stage, the bride wears special clothes and undergoes a series of symbolic processions that mark her readiness to become a wife. At "paseksen," the bride's hair is cut as a sign of her readiness to enter the adult phase and marks preparations ahead of marriage. The highlight of Samin's wedding is "tingkepan," which is a complete wedding ceremony with traditional processions and rituals. At this moment, the bride and groom officially become husband and wife, attended by the entire Samin community as a form of support and celebration of their unity. Samin's marriage system and identity becomes their cultural identity and community identity, strengthens a sense of togetherness, and symbolizes local wisdom values that must be preserved and passed on to future generations.

Marriage in the Samin culture is an important example of how local customs and traditions can be kept alive and relevant in the midst of changing times. The first stage is "nakokke," in which the groom and his family visit the bride to express their good intentions to propose. This stage marked the beginning of the process of introduction and approval of the two families involved. The next stage is "mbalesi gunem," in which the bride and groom answer the proposal by giving offerings as a sign of approval from the woman's family. After that, the "nendek" stage is carried out, namely the process of meeting the bride and groom to get to know each other more deeply, often with the assistance of family or traditional leaders. The next stage is "nyuwito," in which the groom and his family express their official intention to hold an engagement. This stage also involves an agreement regarding the customs that must be obeyed during the wedding preparation process. After the engagement stage, a "ngenger" is performed, in which the bride wears a Samin cloth called "kemben geni." This stage has a sacred meaning as a symbol of the readiness of the bride and groom to live a household life. The next stage is "paseksen," where the bride-to-be performs a hair-cutting procession as a sign of her readiness to enter adulthood and be ready to marry. The final stage is "tingkepan," which is the pinnacle of the Samin wedding ceremony. At this stage, a wedding ceremony is carried out complete with traditional processions and rituals involving family, neighbors and the entire Samin community. This event became a historical moment and strengthened social bonds between the two families who united each other in marriage. Through a series of beautiful and meaningful stages, the marriage procedure for the Samin indigenous people is not just a wedding ceremony, but also reflects local wisdom and cultural integrity which is upheld in their society.

4. Conclusion

For the Samin Blora people, marriage is not just a bond between two individuals; it also involves the union of two families and is the foundation that strengthens social relations in their community. The rituals performed in the marriage ceremony are a means to maintain and continue ancestral traditions and customs. Marriage in the Samin Blora community also plays an important role in maintaining their cultural identity. Through marriage, cultural values and local wisdom are passed on from one generation to the next, thus becoming a stronghold in preserving the cultural identity of the Samin Blora people. The meaning of this marriage also reflects the richness of culture and spirituality that are firmly embedded in the lives of the Samin Blora people. Marriage is an important symbol for strengthening solidarity and maintaining cultural values that are upheld in their daily lives. In conclusion, marriage in the Samin Blora community is a social and cultural institution that plays a central role in strengthening social relations, preserving cultural identity, and uniting both parties spiritually. The meaning of this marriage is a reflection of the importance of local wisdom and traditional values in maintaining the integrity and harmony of the Samin Blora community.

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