

## **Semarga Marriage Practices in the Alas Tribe in Lawe Bulan District Southeast Aceh Regency**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The main focus of this paper is to review the practice of marriage since it is a marriage practice that is prohibited in the customary rules of the Alas tribe community. This marriage procession is almost the *semarga* as other marriage customs, only before the wedding, the family first pays a customary fine. The purpose of this study is to find out the practice of clan marriage, clan marriage factors and public view on clan marriage in Lawe Bulan district, Southeast Aceh Regency. This study uses a qualitative type of research. The research instrument used are observation, interview and documentation. Data analysis techniques are in the form of data reduction, data presentation and verification/conclusion. This study found that the implementation of marriage since giving a sign (*sakhi pinang*) asking for blessings, (*nganpeken*) determining the marriage schedule (*mahan janji*), paying a dowry (*ngatatken mas*), distributing invitations (*mebagah*), a three-day party (*jagai*), *ijab qabul* (marriage contract) attended by guardians and witnesses, escorting the bride and groom (*nakhuh*), *ngembakh* and *ngankuh*. The causes of intermarriage are lack of understanding of the customs of the Alas tribe, lack of insight, low education, lower middle class economy, social media influence, establishing a dating relationship, social strata, being caught alone in a lonely place and getting pregnant out of wedlock. The community's view of intermarriage is generally disagreeable, because in addition to violating customs and not being good for their offspring, such as physical disabilities, mental weakness and idiots.

### **ABSTRAK**

Fokus utama tulisan ini adalah meninjau praktik perkawinan semarga merupakan sebuah praktik pernikahan yang dilarang dalam aturan adat masyarakat suku alas. Prosesi perkawinan ini hampir sama dengan adat perkawinan lainnya hanya saja sebelum melangsungkan pernikahan pihak keluarga terlebih dulu membayar denda adat. Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mengetahui praktik perkawinan semarga, faktor perkawinan semarga dan pandangan masyarakat terhadap perkawinan semarga di kecamatan Lawe Bulan Kabupaten Aceh Tenggara. Penelitian ini menggunakan jenis penelitian kualitatif. Instrumen penelitian yang digunakan adalah observasi, wawancara dan dokumentasi. Teknik analisis data berupa reduksi data, penyajian data dan verifikasi/kesimpulan. Penelitian ini mendapat hasil bahwa pelaksanaan perkawinan semarga memberi tanda (*sakhi pinang*) meminta restu, (*nganpeken*) menentukan jadwal nikah (*mahan janji*), mengantar mahar (*ngatatken mas*), menyebarkan undangan (*mebagah*), pesta tiga hari (*jagai*), *ijab qabul* (*akad nikah*) dihadiri oleh wali dan saksi, mengantar pengantin perempuan dan pengantin lelaki (*nakhuh*), *ngembakh* dan *ngankuh*. Penyebab perkawinan semarga kurang pemahaman tentang adat suku alas, kurang wawasan, pendidikan rendah, ekonomi menengah ke bawah, pengaruh media sosial, menjalin hubungan pacaran, strata sosial, tertangkap berduaan ditempat sepi dan hamil diluar nikah. Pandangan masyarakat terhadap perkawinan semarga secara umum mereka tidak setuju, karena selain melanggar adat dan tidak baik bagi keturunannya seperti cacat fisik, lemah mental dan idiot.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Aceh is one of the provinces located at the tip of the island of Sumatra which has special characteristics, namely culture, customs, Islamic law, art and so on (Manan et al, 2022). Aceh is bordered by the Bay of Bengal to the north, the Indian Ocean to the west, the Strait of Malacca to the east and North Sumatra to the southeast and south (Saprijal et al, 2023). The Acehnese tribe is a tribe that has a long history and has a variety of cultures from the past to the present (Sufi, 2004). The Acehnese people from the past to the present have maintained the preservation of customs and Islamic values as a basis for everyday life (Manan et al, 2022).

The majority of the Acehnese people are Muslim and have a diverse cultural wealth (Badruzzaman, 2008). The ancestors of the Acehnese people came from various regions outside Indonesia, namely Arab and Malay and India. Each certain period has cultural characteristics from different ancestor (Manan, 2018). This is because the Aceh region is one of the most frequently visited stopovers for traders around the world. Because of this, each region has various traditions that differ from one region to another (Manan, 2013; 2014; 2017). In addition, the Acehnese people have various traditions, one of which is the marriage tradition or known as *khitbah*. This traditional procession is an important part of Acehnese society with various forms of implementation (Zulfidar et al, 2024).

Aceh is the highest plain area and has various tribes, namely the Alas, Gayo, Aceh, Minang, Jawa, Aneuk Jamee, Kluet, Singkil and Batak. The Alas tribe is the largest tribe inhabiting Southeast Aceh and has become a habit that applies repeatedly. As for customs that come from the same root word, thus forming an expression. Customs mean regulations regarding behavior, attitudes and ways of socializing with society. Customs are interpreted as habits but are not written but regulate marriage regulations (Sufi et al, 2002).

Marriage is part of the culture that is a picture of various ethnic groups that grow and develop as a community unit with different backgrounds (Puteh, 2021). In addition, in the order of community life, it still upholds customary and cultural values both at big events and weddings (Fatianda et al, 2020). Marriage as something that is considered sacred and as a means of connecting two new families is interpreted by the application of certain traditions (Badruzzaman, 2008).

Marriage is a very important event in life. Basically, the law of marriage for indigenous people who are Muslim is mostly a combination of Islamic law and customary law because marriage does not only concern women and men who then become husband and wife, but also the parents of both parties, their siblings, and even their respective families. Marriage is carried out in accordance with the teachings of religion and the beliefs of the parties who

will marry are also recorded as an interest in marriage administration. The marriage is also carried out according to the traditions of the tribe, customs and other things. To add sanctity to the marriage.

The practice of marriage for the community is kinship to maintain and continue the lineage according to the paternal or maternal line, for the happiness of the family/relative household, to obtain cultural customs, peace and to maintain the tribe. Therefore, because the descent and kinship system between the Alas tribes has the same purpose of marriage. From several related writings, namely the marriage of the same clan with the binding of a marriage vow carried out by two people with the intention of formalizing the marriage bond that is established between the two, legalized according to their respective religions and beliefs and accompanied by certain customary traditions. from both parties. For the Batak Mandailing tribe, marriages that occur in the community are exogamous and marriages are carried out with people of different clans because people who have the same clan (Nasution, 2019). In addition, there are also marriages of the same clan carried out by the Batak Mandailing migrant community experiencing a shift in meaning from the Batak traditional culture, from an exogamous marriage system to an *eleutherogami* marriage system (Pohan, 2018).

This phenomenon also occurs in the Alas community related to the ideal marriage of the limitation of the matchmaking that causes people to have to marry outside the boundaries of customary marriage that does not have kinship (Selian, 2007). Therefore, it is strictly forbidden to marry someone with the same or with the *semarga* as a man with a Marga Selian is not allowed to marry a woman with a Marga Selian, thus it is permissible to marry if a violation occurs, the customary sanctions that have been determined will be imposed (Waryanti et al, 1990).

Customs of marriage within the same clan, especially in the era of globalization, have changed, especially the existence of marriage within the same clan and the various values contained in ancestral customs are certainly in accordance with our customs. Marriage restrictions in the Alas tribe marriage are clan exogamy. Basically, one clan usually lives in one village as well as other clans. Therefore, in addition to being called a marriage restriction, in this case it states that in the Alas community anyone can marry, both from the nobility and the common people, the rich and the common people, although later it can be considered, but as long as it is not the same clan (Azka, 2020).

Equal marriage does not have to come from noble descent however, it can be done by way of *merimpal* marriage, and namely the child of the father's sister (cousin) the Alas people call it *ipal pagit*. This marriage aims to strengthen the brotherhood again, therefore, this change of surname, there is an assumption that the surnames of the two couples become different and become in accordance with the provisions of customary law. In addition, it is also often done by couples with the same surname in the present day by removing the

surname or eliminating the original surname so that the husband and wife are considered no longer to have *semarga*. After the husband and wife pay the customary sanctions, then, the marriage process will be continued with an official discussion event held in a customary session or giving a message to the husband and wife at the wedding party. Based on the explanation above about the practice of *semarga* marriage which is still carried out by some Alas people, even though there is a prohibition by the traditional leaders and families. However, this is still done until now. Therefore, it is very interesting to study in depth and to find out the practice of *semarga* marriage, factors of *semarga* marriage and the community view of *semarga* marriage in the Alas tribe in Lawe Bulan district.

## **2. METHOD**

One of the tools to get the data needed to complete this research is to use a qualitative type of research. Discussion on the practice of intermarriage in the Alas tribe in Lawe Bulan District, Southeast Aceh Regency. Based on the data and information obtained previously, the researcher determined another sample to consider and provided more comprehensive data (Manan, 2015a; 2015b; 2021). To support the findings of this study, the researcher also examined relevant journals, books, research reports, articles, and magazines. How to collect data by analyzing accurately. Furthermore, the author conducted a literature review and field research to collect data (Moleong, 2002). After that, the author follows several processes in conducting field research, including observation, interview and documentation. Data obtained from libraries and fields are then analyzed using data analysis, data recitation, and conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The analysis process is in the interactive form (going back and forth between reductions, presentation, and drawing conclusion) during the research period. Conclusions can then be drawn based on the research results.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **a. Marriage Customs of the Alas Tribe**

The marriage procession in the Lawe Bulan community is the same as marriage customs in general, starting from the proposal to the marriage contract. According to Kasim in the marriage customs, there is a difference, namely before the marriage is carried out, the male family must first report to the traditional leader, that his son will propose to a woman of the same surname in the village. Then they are tried at home or at the local village hall and subjected to customary sanctions by paying customary fines according to the agreement of the traditional leader and the family (Kasim, 2024). Hasyimi explained that the Alas tribal custom already has a stipulation or regulation in the Alas tribal customary law regarding the restriction of matchmaking, namely it is not allowed to marry a half-brother/half-father, a half-brother but other than the father, a man is not allowed to marry a daughter of the father sister, cannot marry a half-brother. Even though it has been accepted by all Alas tribal

people, there are still some people who carry out the marriage and prefer to pay customary fines, rather than cancel their marriage (Hasyimi, 2024).

According to Alim's explanation, before holding the marriage procession, they first pay a fine to the traditional stakeholders in the village with a predetermined amount. However, the fine has a different amount starting from 3. 200,000 (three million two hundred thousand rupiah), 160,000, (one hundred and sixteen thousand rupiah) and Rp. 800. 000 (eight hundred thousand rupiah). After being informed of the number, then the man's family chose one according to their ability. The fine money will be used for public purposes, and a meal event will also be held at the house of the traditional leader or at the house of the village head by inviting all people (Alim, 2024).

In addition, there is also a fine in other forms that there must be a buffalo, otherwise it will cause a bad impact on the surrounding community, but usually the perpetrator prefers to pay the fine with money that has been determined by the customary apparatus. Apart from customary fines, some people also hold marriages because the procession is almost the same as marriage customs in general. The implementation of the practice of clan marriage in the Alas tribe is as follows:

- a) *Sakhi pinang* (giving a sign), at this stage, the male group comes to the woman's house to give a sign or ask for certainty. Then if the proposal is accepted, then both parties to the family immediately determine the dowry.
- b) *Nganpeken*, at this stage, the groom-to-be, comes to the bride-to-be's house to ask for the blessing of her parents.
- c) *Mahan* The promise, this stage, determines when the marriage contract will be held and at the same time *ngatatken mas*, which is to give the dowry to the bride-to-be's house.
- d) *Mebagah*, this stage is to start distributing invitations and inviting relatives, relatives and neighbors both in the village and from other villages.
- e) *Jagai*, at this stage, a three-day party event was held at the homes of the prospective bride and groom.
- f) *Ijab Qabul*, in this procession, the bride's parents are married directly by not attending the bride-to-be sitting next to the groom-to-be. In addition, there are also marriage guardians and witnesses and their families witnessing it, as shown in the picture below.
- g) *Nakhuh*, at this stage, the bride's entourage is escorted to the groom's place.
- h) *Ngembakh*, this stage is between a group of young women brought from the bride's village with a group of young men from the groom's side to make an introduction or called a one-night courtship.
- i) *Nangkuh* first, second, third, and fourth go to the house of the female surrogate parents after marriage.

### **b. Factors of Marriage in the Alas Tribe**

Since ancient times, the people of the Alas tribe have not practiced marriage and have always prioritized customary rules, this is for the good of their descendants. However, with the change of the times, the basic principle began to fade, especially for young people who had minimal knowledge of traditional values. The Alas tribe has many clans, and these fellow clans are prohibited from marrying such as the Bangko clan, the Cibero clan, the Desi clan, the Keling clan, the Pale Dese clan, the Keruas clan, the Pagan clan, and the Selian clan are native to the land of Alas. According to Arman, the cause of intermarriage is caused by the lack of knowledge of the younger generation about the customs of the Alas tribe, in addition to that it is also caused by social media so that it is easy for young people to get to know each other, establish dating relationships and then think about the marriage stage (Amran, 2024).

The same thing was also explained by Amran that intermarriage was due to a lack of understanding of customary regulations that apply in the Alas community, even though the prohibition of intermarriage had been in effect for a long time. In addition, it is also due to violations of laws and customs committed by the young people of the village. For example, being caught dating, or being pregnant out of wedlock. For this incident, the customary party must marry the perpetrator, even though both are from the same clan, so from these events, it became the beginning of the forerunner of the marriage in Lawe Bulan until now (Amran, 2024).

According to Jalal, the occurrence of intermarriage is caused by several factors, first, the low level of education makes a person not have extensive knowledge and insight. So that they cannot think long and hard to choose a life partner, second, the influence of social media opens up space for young people to communicate with each other more easily. Constantly knowing each other, liking each other and then thinking about getting married, and third, lack of ability or weakness in terms of economy makes a person unable in terms of cost to marry an outsider, let alone from another district (Jalal, 2024).

Furthermore, this was also explained by Mahmud, that intermarriage is caused by the community itself, because most of the young people live in the village and there is no initiative to migrate to other areas. It is also caused by some young people who consider the prohibition of marriage customs because it can be violated and only pay a fine, but according to Islamic law it is allowed (Mahmud, 2024).

In addition, Mursalin also explained that the cause of the first marriage, basically they knew each other and during the relationship they found compatibility both in terms of character and comfort from both, so they were committed to continuing at the marriage stage, the two backgrounds were similar, equality in the social strata, equality in the environment became the trigger for the occurrence of marriage from the beginning, Because they see more from the same position, the third has the same goal in fostering a household so that they

decide to get married directly, the fourth is a permanent job, everyone wants their partner to have a job and income so that the needs of their family can be met, therefore some people still choose to get married even though they have to put aside customs, but this is not uncommon among the current generation, especially in Lawe sub-district Moon (Mursalin, 2024).

Furthermore, Kamarullah also explained that the cause of the current clan marriage is not looking at customary sanctions or social sanctions, but due to a change in position in the clan structure, so there is room for clan marriage. This is also due to the non-realization of sanctions made by the ancestors of the Alas tribe, as a sanction for customary violators. However, intermarriage has been responded to as usual, as if it is no longer a serious violation for the perpetrator (Kamarullah, 2024).

### **c. Public Views on Marriage in the Alas Tribe**

Marriage in the Alas tribal community is a marriage that deviates and violates the customary provisions of the Alas tribe that has existed for hundreds of years and is still maintained by traditional leaders, village heads, religious leaders, and the community. However, this custom has begun to be violated by the current generation and has even begun to be ruled out under the pretext of various reasons, one of the reasons is that they are married to one clan. Arman explained that the average marriage since the last 6 years of marriage has been on average. The view of the community is that the perpetrators of this marriage are ordinary because most people do not know about the customs of Alas, especially in the people of Pulo Gandung village. Basically, it is allowed (*mubah*), but it is hoped that this tradition can be revived as the identity of the people of Alas Aceh Tenggara (Arman, 2016).

As Abdul Saman explained, marriage is not good and is strictly forbidden, because it is still one blood from the bond of previous ancestors. The marriage should be avoided so that there is no catastrophe for the Alas tribal community and especially for the perpetrators (Saman, 2024). Furthermore, Kamal also explained that he did not agree with intermarriage, because there was clearly a prohibition. Even holding the marriage is the same as degrading the Alas tribe itself. In addition, he revealed that in his family from the past until now, no one has been married since and still very much guarding the custom (Kamal, 2024).

Furthermore, Samsidin explained that it is against the morals and principles of the Alas tribe, even though the marriage is permissible from the perspective of Islam. However, it is still not good and has a bad impact on offspring in the future. He also emphasized that until any time the marriage is still not praised both for his family and other communities who are still one tribe (Samsidin, 2024). This was also explained by Karimun, that the custom of marriage has been made a common thing by some people of the Alas tribe. Although customary rules are not allowed, there are still those who do it until now. According to Islamic law, marriage is legal, but customarily the Alas tribe is prohibited, even if the

marriage is still held, the man's family must pay a fine first, after which the marriage is allowed in the village (Karimun, 2024).

Furthermore, Murni explained that intermarriage has a negative impact on society. According to him, marrying another clan can expand the kinship system, while with a clan without a marriage bond, they are already brothers. However, in this case, the family still advocates marriage with outsiders. However, behind all that, also by divine will, if it is destined to marry fellow clans, the family can only accept and give in for the sake of their child happiness (Murni, 2024).

Asri then explained that marriage is not allowed in the customs of the Alas tribe and no parent wants their child to marry a person of the same clan. Even for perpetrators, they can be excluded from their families and environment. Because the person who gets married from that time mentions it as a bone (in-law) to the person who is actually his father or his father brothers. Therefore, the existence of clan family can damage the line of brotherhood, especially disharmony among families that were previously well established (Asri, 2024).

Furthermore, Maryam explained that marriage is considered bad in society, because in addition to violating customs, it also seems like there is no other person who is not a family to marry. According to him, men have an open space to find a mate in another village without having to violate the customs of their own tribe. However, today's generation, both men and women, still lack understanding of the prohibition of one-tribe marriage so it is easy to violate (Maryam, 2024).

According to Kausar's explanation, marriage is only prohibited by custom, but legally legal, because there is no blood relationship between the man and the woman. However, it is better to avoid it because it is feared that it is still connected to the fate of previous ancestors. Therefore, marriage in Islam in society is legally *mubah* (permissible). He continued that a marriage can be held if the woman who wants to be married is not included in the *mahram* category. However, Malek also explained that customarily marriage is strictly prohibited even though the perpetrator is not from one mother or father. However, the basis for the prohibition is not clear about the customary status for those who marry in the same family. Even the pedestal community considers their offspring to be abnormal or physically disabled (Kausar, 2024).

In addition, Rina Purnama, explained that the process of marriage has several problems in the community, namely the lack of knowledge so that it has experienced a shift in marriage customs (Purnana, 2018). Furthermore, Enni Fitriani, explained that the prohibition of marriage still has the same blood relationship. In terms of sanctions, previously sanctions were expelled from the local village and expelled from customs. There is a change in sanctions, namely paying customary sanctions in the form of one male buffalo to prospective in-laws. The prohibition of intermarriage will not result in the destruction of people's lives.



Therefore, marriage is *mubah* (permissible), because siblings are not included in the haram people to marry (Fitriani, 2022).

Furthermore, Idris Ramulyo presentation, marriage according to the compilation of Islamic law, marriage has no prohibition, as long as it does not conflict with Islamic law and state law. This is as long as it still follows the applicable rules and its purpose is to foster a household, nurture, maintain, and educate children until they are adults or able to stand on their own (Ramulyo, 1996). Furthermore, Riswandi Lubis, the integrity of the clan in the life of the community that continues to be maintained has existed from the past until now. This integrity cannot be influenced by globalization and the development of the times so that it can still be maintained from generation to generation (Lubis, 2015).

Based on several community responses, marriage is prohibited in the tradition of pedestals and in general the community does not agree and reject marriage of marriage, this is of course to maintain the integrity of the custom that has been preserved for a long time by the ancestors of the deceased. In addition, it will also have a negative impact both on the perpetrator, his family and on the alas tribe itself.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The practice of carrying out marriage in the Alas tribe is almost the same as marriage customs in general, starting from giving a sign, asking for blessings from both female parents, determining the schedule of the marriage contract as well as giving dowry to the bride, inviting relatives/distributing invitations, holding a party for three days, *ijab qabul* (marriage contract) is attended by guardians and witnesses, escorts the bride and groom from the bride's entourage and returns to the bride's house.

Factors of marriage due to lack of understanding of one-tribe marriage customs, lack of insight, low level of education, living in the village, lower middle economy, social media influence, establishing dating relationships, social strata, being caught in a lonely place and getting pregnant out of wedlock.

The community view of clan marriage, in general, the Alas tribal people do not agree with the existence of clan marriage, in addition to violating customary rules, it is also not good for their future descendants, for example children who are born with physical disabilities, mental weaknesses, and idiots. Meanwhile, some people of the Alas tribe continue to marry because witnesses pay customary fines both in the form of money and livestock such as goats and buffaloes.

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