

# Desa Sioban Tato Tradition Policy in Preservation in Mentawai

Refni Yulia<sup>1</sup>, Zulfa<sup>1</sup>, Kaksim<sup>1</sup>, Hendra Naldi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>STKIP PGRI Sumatera Barat, Prodi Pendidikan Sejarah, Padang, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia

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**Abstract:** The tattoo tradition is extinct in the village of Sioban, which makes this tradition no longer exist. The purpose of this study was to determine the traditional tattoo policy of Sioban Village in preservation in the Mentawai. The method of this research is qualitative research with a historical and ethnographic approach. The results of this study indicate that the local government of Sioban village, Mentawai district has a policy in terms of preserving the Mentawai tattoo tradition. The wisdom of the local government in preserving the tradition of tattoos in the Mentawai are: 1. Conducting Mentawai tattoo batik training, 2. Becoming a facilitator for the tattoo batik group in developing a home industry, 3. Becoming a mediator in developing cultural traditions as a potential to get Mentawai district government funding, 4. Working closely with dance studios in Sioban village, 5. Participate in the Mentawai Enchantment Festival every year. Supporting the preservation of tradition in Sioban village are 1. Government and 2. Cultural Community. Inhibiting factors in the application of cultural traditions are: 1. Modernization, 2. Lack of interest in young people in learning the Sabulungan tradition by using Mentawai tattoos.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Law Number 32 of 2004 contains Regional Governments which give birth to various implications including social changes that give birth to opportunities for regions to rise up in developing regional potential. Development of regional potential which is an integral part of Indonesian society. This condition is based on an understanding of the diversity of tribes, religions and cultures spread throughout the archipelago, each region has a different culture that is characteristic of their respective regions. Culture is a national identity, the characteristics of a nation, national character or as a sign that the country has a life history from the beginning of a country that can be formed. Culture is a symbol of pride for a particular society and even determines the progress of a country. In preserving culture is closely related to what has been aspired to by the independence of this nation, namely the ideals of "intellectualizing the life of the nation", in this case, is not a meaning based on the concept of science and technology or a social concept, but a cultural conception. Educating the life of the nation is an effort to increase the level of national culture,

as a process of humanization to elevate the dignity and degree of people from the nation. One part of culture is traditional art. Traditional arts have great weight in culture. The progress of the nation's culture and its civilization brings it together, and reciprocally brought along, by the advancement of art. The art of tradition is also a means used to express the sense of beauty in the human soul. In addition to expressing a sense of beauty in the human soul, art also has other functions Abdullah Irwan, (2006), This is related to tattoos which are part of the Arat Sabulungan tradition ritual. Tattoos are part of the Mentawai community that can carry on customs and cultural values as part of inheritance. Since 1954 tattoos have been banned by the central government (Yulia, R., Zulfa, Z., & Naldi, H. 2018).

The process of tattoo extinction which is part of the ritual art of Arat Sabulungan, is caused by various things. The roots of all traditional Mentawai cultures are Arat Sabulungan, which is used as a guide for the Mentawai community. But in 1954, Arat Sabulungan was abolished from the Mentawai Islands, especially in the Sioban Village, Sipora Selatan District and all the ceremonial equipment was destroyed by the police. As for arat sabulungan,

in its ritual there are tattoos that are almost extinct. The condition of the Mentawai traditional culture by itself was shaky, everything related to Arat Sabulungan was tattooed, evicted. The external cultural pressure driven by the government, to eliminate Arat Sabulungan, was caused by the opinion that the indigenous Mentawai customs hampered the development process that was being promoted by the government at that time (Yulia, R., Zulfa, Z., & Naldi, H. 2018).

The Mentawai people have their own unique culture of various ethnic groups in Sumatra. The uniqueness of the Mentawai island absorbs the attention of observers and national and international institutions. One of the real indications can be known by the enumeration of skin or tattoos on the whole body, with motifs consisting of simple geometrical lines that cross across various parts of the body and end with curve lines on both cheeks on the face.

The tattoo tradition is found in various ethnic groups in Indonesia such as the Mentawai ethnic group in West Sumatra Province, Dayak ethnic in Kalimantan, and Sumba ethnic in NTB. Each of these ethnicities has its own characteristics in the art of tattoos and has a different view of the meaning of a tattoo, although there are few similarities in the function and how to make it. The tattoo tradition has long been known by the Mentawai people since their ancestors were still alive. According to Ady Rosa, a Mentawai tattoo researcher that the tattoo tradition in the Mentawai islands appeared in the metal age 1500 BC-500 BC. This tradition is inherited by their ancestors from generation to generation.

The position of the tattoo is governed by the beliefs of the Mentawai tribe, " Arat Sabulungan ". This term comes from the word sa (se) or group, as well as bulungan or leaves. A collection of leaves is arranged in a circle made of palm shoots or thatch, which is believed to have magical or knit energy. The process of making Mentawai tattoos goes through the ritual process, and takes a long time. Before carrying out the tattoo, a traditional ceremony called "punen kepa" was held which was a "bulepak" event, with the aim of getting rid of evil influences and the threat of bloodshed against the villages they inhabited. After the event was finished then the tattoo was held.

For the Mentawai people, tattoos are the spirit of life. Tato has four positions in the Mentawai community, one of which is to show identity and differences in social or professional status. Tattoo shaman sikerei, for example, is different from tattoo hunting experts. Hunting experts are known through

pictures of their catches, such as pigs, deer, apes, birds, or crocodiles. Sikerei is known from the star tattoo that is bald on his body. In addition tattoos also have a function as a symbol of natural balance. Therefore objects such as stone, animals, and plants must be enshrined on the body. But in its development in the Mentawai archipelago, especially in Sioban Village, Sipora Selatan District, the meaning and function of traditional Mentawai tattoos underwent a change or expansion of meaning, so the existence of tattoos in Sioban Village, Sipora Selatan District was threatened with extinction. The process of tattoo extinction which is a ritual art of Arat Sabulungan, is caused by many things. Extinction of tattoos in Sioban village needs to be improved by village policies or regulations in preservation in the Mentawai (Yulia, R., Zulfa, Z., & Naldi, H, 2019).

## 2 RESEARCH METHODS

This research used qualitative Method with Ethnographic and Historical approach. There are several steps taken to collect the required research data. The first step in this research is to identification the research problem, the second step traces the previous studies that are relevant to the object of research. Literature study is also one of the stages in this research in order to find concepts, theories and information that are based on the research theme. The next stage is conducting research in the field, namely: 1. Conduct observations or direct observations. Observations were made to systematically look at the cultural activities that exist in the Mentawai community in Mentawai district. besides, observations look at everyday people's lives and facts about the object of research. 2. Conduct interviews with informants. The selection of informants refers to the concept of Spradley (2018:69) whose principle requires that an informant must understand the culture needed. Informants can explain the purpose of the study into consideration. Cultural actors (traditional leaders), government, academics, and artists became key informants in this study.

## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tattooing is one aspect of the cultural part that has great potential in the development of culture and tourism in an area. The success of the preservation

of traditional arts of a region is largely determined by the ability of the local government to formulate programs and policies for the preservation of traditional arts which will later be carried out by local government officials along with community groups in the village of Sioban. Local government policies in preserving traditional arts in Sioban village by implementing policies in the context of preserving traditional arts. This does not go easily as expected. The Sioban village government will be challenged as an obstacle to its duties and functions in order to preserve traditional arts, but on the other hand the Sioban village government also has several supporting factors to carry out its duties and functions in the context of preserving traditional arts.

The policies (government activities) of Sioban village in order to preserve (care for, protect, develop) traditional tattoo art are as follows: 1. Implementation of Mentawai tattoo batik art development. This collaborated with the village of Sioban and the Sioban sub-district office as part of carrying out group development in Sioban village. The development of art groups was carried out in the form of cadres carried out by Sioban village with a group of Simatorai Monga art studios in the village of Sioban. This art studio which has implemented cadre will be given facilities by the service of culture and tourism, facilities provided in the form of facilities and infrastructure (traditional clothes, traditional musical instruments). In addition to the facilities, in terms of mentoring the Mentawai district cultural and tourism agency, it also helps art groups in Mentawai regency to be active and participate in activities and events organized by the government and non-government, the program also helps introduce art groups to the wider community both inside and outside the Mentawai district and promoting the traditional traditional arts of the Mentawai tradition. 2. Working with art groups in the Mentawai district. The Culture and Tourism Office of the Arts section uses media from art studios / groups in Mentawai district to work together in preserving traditional arts. One way is to activate these art groups in activities or events organized by the Government such as the Mentawai Festival which has been running for 4 years. 3. The government becomes a facilitator (facilities / infrastructure) in the preservation of traditional arts activities in the Mentawai district. One way to support the preservation of traditional arts, namely from the Office of Culture and Tourism, provides facilities for traditional arts groups and organizations to carry out their activities in the context of

conservation. Facilities are not in the form of funds (money) but in the form of facilities and infrastructure such as traditional clothes, musical instruments, and others. 4. The government becomes a Mediator for the Community to get financial assistance from Non-Government Agencies in the context of preserving traditional arts. The government has a policy that is to help people who want to develop the potential of tourism in the Mentawai district in the field of traditional arts which is increasingly being improved. The Department of Culture and Tourism directs each sub-district and village in Mentawai district to carry out tourism community development, coaching in the form of teaching the community to develop tourism potential in each sub-district and making Madobak, Matotonan, and Mapejat villages as tourist villages . 5. Hold regular art performances. The Culture and Tourism Agency also conducts regular events in the form of typical Makassar art performances and groups of art groups scattered in Mentawai district as performers wherever invited. Routine events such as the Mentawai festival are held in collaboration with other agencies, namely non-governmental institutions in order to preserve traditional arts, especially the tradition of Tato. From the results of research conducted in terms of carrying out the preservation of traditional arts, there are several factors that support these conservation activities including:

#### A. Government.

One of the supporting factors that greatly influences the preservation of regional arts is the role of the central and regional governments. The district government involves and invites the local community in an effort to preserve cultural arts and the development of cultural tourism. The government provides equal opportunities to the community and the local cultural arts community to participate in the management and development of cultural tourism. So that the local community not only can improve their welfare but indirectly the community is also involved in efforts to preserve the Mentawai traditional arts. One form of support from the government for various traditional arts groups can be done by involving art workers in data collection, inventory, documentation, development of Mentawai traditional cultural arts. Indonesia is very interested in maintaining and preserving various traditional cultural arts so that they can continue to be enjoyed by the next generation, there needs to be a series of planned, comprehensive and integrated policies from the central and regional

governments to protect traditional cultural arts from the threat of extinction.

#### B. Society.

Humans who have a close relationship with culture, as well as to preserve human culture plays an important role. Because, humans who create culture, and humans also have to maintain, maintain and preserve the Mentawai culture. One element of culture is traditional art. The Indonesian people were awarded a large number of traditional types, both art and performing arts, but there were also many problems faced with regard to this valuable inheritance. One characteristic of advanced society is its ability to save and preserve the Mentawai traditional arts. Indonesia as a nation that is blessed with so many types of traditional arts should be very concerned with the efforts to save and preserve the Mentawai culture.

From the results of research carried out in terms of carrying out the preservation of traditional arts, there are several challenges that become factors that inhibit the preservation of traditional arts activities including:

1. The presidential instruction of the Republic of Indonesia Number 16 of 2005 concerning cultural and tourism development policies confirms that local governments take concrete steps to optimize the acceleration of cultural and tourism development in an effort not only to preserve but also to prosper the public, open employment, and equalize development. But in the present context where mindset and modernization continue to develop, the culture and art of tradition that once existed and grew in the community are increasingly marginalized, even clashing with the understanding of changing society. Mentawai Regency is inseparable from the name of modernization. These factors are usually the inhibiting factors of the course of a rule. Modernization has made the pace of information and communication more rapid. No wonder people compete to get something they want right away. Modernization causes life to become more modern.
2. Media Less Contains Information and Impressions About Traditional Art. This world with all its contents and events cannot escape from its connection with the mass media; on the contrary, the mass media cannot escape the world with all its contents and events. This is because the relationship between the two is so close that it becomes interdependent and needs each other. All content and events in the world

are a source of information for the mass media. The mass media has duties and obligations - besides being a means and infrastructure of communication - to accommodate all types of world contents and events in the world through reporting or publications in various forms (news, articles, research reports, etc.) of less attractive to the most interesting, from unpleasant to very pleasant - without any time limit. Therefore in communication through mass media, mass media and humans have a relationship of interdependence and mutual need because each has mutual interests, each of which needs each other. The mass media needs news and information for publication both for the interests of the media itself and for the benefit of other people or institutions; on the other hand, humans need reporting, publications for certain interests.

3. Lack of interest in the Mentawai young generation in learning traditional arts. The younger generation tends to like to imitate the culture of the outside. The existence of facilities such as Android phones, internet, TV, radio, magazines that display a lot of foreign cultures make the younger generation unable to stem their curiosity to try and imitate, so that their local culture is regarded as old and outdated and their foreign culture think of as modern and advanced.
4. Social Change. Social change is a change that occurs as a variation of the way of life that has been received because of changes in geographic conditions, culture, composition of the population, ideology, and the existence of diffusion or new discoveries in society. Cultural changes that occur in today's society, namely the change from a closed society to a more open society. Science and technology have changed the world fundamentally. Communication and means of international transportation have eliminated the cultural boundaries of every nation. Such transcultural events will inevitably affect our artistic existence. Our traditional art is a part of national culture that must be preserved.
5. Less creative and innovative Trader Artists. Many think that traditional art is not entertaining compared to art which is often broadcast on television, most of which are modern art and leave traditional arts. If these conditions are not balanced with the creativity of the actors of traditional arts in order to adapt to the times, then slowly the traditional arts will lose followers or spectators. Traditional art without audience is like a teacher who has no students. Its existence

as an entertainment media will disappear so that traditional arts will be threatened with extinction. The form of the Mentawai tattoo tradition is used as part of the Mentawai Batik tattoo in tattoo preservation:



Figure 1: Mentawai Batik Tattoo

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

Local Government Policy in Preserving Mentawai Traditional Art, namely:

1. Implementation of fostering traditional arts groups in the Mentawai. The fostering of traditional arts groups is carried out in the form of cadres carried out by the department of culture and tourism to studios and art groups in the Mentawai district. Art studios and groups that have carried out cadres will be given facilities by the service of culture and tourism, facilities provided in the form of facilities and infrastructure (traditional clothes, traditional musical instruments). In addition to facilities, in terms of mentoring the Mentawai culture and tourism service and assisting art groups in Mentawai district to be active and participate in activities and events organized by the Mentawai district and non-government districts, the program also helps introduce art groups to the wider community both inside and outside in Mentawai district and promoting traditional Mentawai traditional arts.
2. Working with art groups in Mentawai in order to preserve traditional arts in the Mentawai. The Mentawai district Culture and Tourism Office cooperates with arts groups in the district in order to preserve traditional arts, the collaboration of which is that art groups are activated and included in art performances held by government and non-government agencies.

3. Become a facilitator (facilities / infrastructure) in art activities in order to preserve traditional arts in Mentawai district. One way to support the preservation of regional (traditional) arts is the Office of Culture and Tourism to provide facilities to traditional arts organizations to carry out their activities in the context of preserving traditional arts. Facilities are not in the form of funds (money) but in the form of facilities and infrastructure such as traditional clothes, musical instruments, and others.
4. Become a mediator for the community in developing tourism potential (traditional arts) to get financial assistance from private or non-government agencies. The government has a policy that is to help people who want to develop the potential of tourism in their local area (in this case traditional arts) to get financial assistance from private institutions.
5. Make routine events in the form of traditional arts in the context of preserving traditional arts. The Culture and Tourism Agency also conducts the Mentawai Festival every year which has been held for 4 years. Factors Affecting Preservation of Traditional Arts there are several factors that influence the preservation of traditional arts in Mentawai, among others: 1. Supporting Factors. a. Government. b. Community participation in traditional arts preservation events / activities. 2. Inhibiting factors a. Modernization makes life increasingly modern. b. Teenagers today tend to like to imitate the culture of the outside. c. Mass media which does not contain traditional arts. d. Social change. e. The perpetrators of traditional arts that are less creative and innovative.

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