

## ***Parika* in the Ritual Practice of *Defembula Kahitela*: Barangka Subdistrict, Muna Regency**



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### **Abstract**

This study aims to reveal the role of *Parika* itself, especially in the ritual practice in farming activity namely *Defembula Kahitela*. Besides, this study also aims to elaborate the prominent authority of *Parika* towards the community of Barangka Subdistrict. The research sites are located in Barangka Subdistrict consist of eight villages in West Muna Regency. The primary data are obtained from the various informants who acknowledge the *Defembula Kahitela* ritual practice and the farmers themselves, and others who serve as local informant leaders and the secondary data are obtained from the written data and field observation. The data are collected by field interview with the informants and direct observation in the farm field in Barangka Subdistrict. This study finds that the farmers in Barangka Subdistrict are using the services of *Parika* from the very beginning of their farming activity starting from the *pre-planting*, the planting, and the harvest and post-harvest stages. This study also finds that *Parika* has the authority in four aspects; determine a good day for each ritual, ritual requirements (ritual tools and materials), the amount of wages in leading ritual practice of *Defembula Kahitela*, and determine the rules related what should and should not do while farming from the *pre-planting* to the post-harvest stage.

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## 1. Introduction

The ritual practice of *defembula Kahitela* has been carried out by the Muna ethnic in Barangka Subdistrict for a long time, for it is believed that through the ritual practice, that corn plants planted by farmers are protected from diseases both from other plants such as weeds and natural disturbances. In the implementation of *defembula kahitela*, *parika* as an indigenous medical practitioner or *dukun* has a very important role, starting from the process of land clearing (*detambori*) to postharvest corn (Lindayani *et al.*, 2018).

In the ritual practice of *defembula kahitela*, there are a number of rituals that must be carried out based on the stages. For instance the land clearing (*detambori*), for Muna ethnic in Barangka Subdistrict, if there are some people who want to open a new field, then they will negotiate with the eldest in the village first, in order to determine the location of new fields. If there is an agreement, then this is conveyed to *parika*, thus this person will determine the good day to go to the chosen location. Through rituals, *parika* investigates whether there are objections from forest spirits and reed spirits if the location is processed into new fields (Couvreur, 2001).

The knowledge possessed by a *parika*, believed by Muna ethnic farmers is able to communicate with supernatural beings that cannot be seen by the five human senses. The community in Barangka Subdistrict is known as a community that has a tradition of metaphysical thought and is attached to mysticism or mysticism. This tradition of thought is applied in all aspects of culture, both material and non-material, such as farming. Therefore, the Muna ethnic community in West Muna District, especially in Barangka Subdistrict, highly respects *parika* who has a position as a leader in the ritual practice of *defembula kahitela*.

Based on the description of the background above, the author was then interested in looking more deeply at the role of *Parika* in the ritual practice of *defembula kahitela* in Muna ethnic communities in Barangka District, West Muna Regency and determined this study with the title "*Parika* in the Ritual Practice of *Defembula Kahitela* in Barangka Subdistrict, Muna Regency"

### *Review of Related Literature*

#### a) Concept of Ritual

The word ritual relates to rites, that is the procedures for religious ceremonies (KBBI, 2007). Koentjaraningrat, (1985), stated that rituals are procedures in ceremonies or sacred acts carried out by a group of religious people. Marked by the existence of various kinds of elements and components, such as the time and the places where ceremonies are performed, tools at the ceremony, and the people who carry out the ceremony. These elements are essentially bound to one another or interconnected. Usually, rituals cannot be carried out in any place, there are special places mentioned according to the type and ritual needs to be carried out. Then with the equipment used also has meaning that follows. The presentation of an object in a ritual implementation has its own reasons. As explained earlier that the implementation of rituals is closely related to the activities of religious groups, thus Koentjaraningrat said that;

"Anthropologically or sociologically, social entities that are religious in nature can manifest as (1) nuclear family or close relatives; (2) larger family groups such as clans, combined clans, tribes, clans, etc.; (3) village community units, or a combination of villages; (4) sangha organizations, church organizations, political parties with religious ideology, religious movements, secret orders, and others "(Koentjaraningrat 1987).

In society, generally for rural communities, ritual practices are often carried out and are expressions that are more logical than psychological. Representation means using language to express something meaningfully, or to present it to others. Representations can be in the form of words, images, sequences, stories, etc. that represent ideas, emotions, facts, and many more. Representation depends on signs and images that already exist and are understood culturally, in language learning and various marking or reciprocal textual systems. This is through the 'representing' function that we know and learn about reality (Hartley, 2010)

In this case, the practice of ritual stands as a representation of culture itself. Different rituals found in various cultural tribes in Indonesia represent their respective cultures. Rituals show the order of objects that are objectified, these symbols reveal behaviors and feelings and form the personal dispositions of devotees who follow their respective models, this distraction is important for continuity and togetherness in group togetherness. In addition to the obligation for the community to support the ritual is also carried out because of problems or obstacles and the

expression of gratitude for sustenance that has been received, so that in this effort humans utilize all the forces they believe in (Yusliani & Mansyur, 2015).

Another opinion says that a ritual is a form of ceremony that relates to several beliefs or religions which are characterized by special characteristics that give rise to respect that is noble in the sense of a sacred experience (O'Dea, 1995). Associated with its own religious concept, Koentjaraningrat (1987), also divides religion into three groups, namely (1) theories which in their approach are oriented towards belief in religion; (2) theories which in their approach are oriented to human attitudes toward the unseen things; (3) theories which in their approach are oriented to religious ceremonies. This is seen from the types or forms of concepts that are spread across the archipelago.

Durkheim (1989), put forward two main things in religion, namely beliefs and rites/ceremonies. Belief is thought, while rite is action. In conclusion, religion is a symbol of the collective representation in its ideal form. In this regard the ritual carried out in corn cultivation in the Muna ethnic group is a ceremony in the form of a series of actions carried out by a group of people according to local customs, which give rise to noble respect as a sacred experience. Related to this concept, Suryono (1985) adds, that tradition is a magically religious custom of the life of an indigenous population which includes culture, norms, and rules that are interrelated and then become a traditional system.

#### b) Concept of Farming

Planting is a farming activity (KBBI, 2007). In human history, farming activities are also referred to as a revolutionary activity or habit. It is caused by the changes in community lifestyle of life which originally was hunting and gathering, became farming. Requires good thinking skills to be able to start something truly new. Changes in this lifestyle also change the overall pattern of life of humans from nomads and then settle down and cultivate the land around them. When exactly humans change their pattern of life from hunting to farming, it is not known for sure, so Koentjaraningrat explained that:

The question of the origin of farming can only be a field for various assumptions and speculations which are actually difficult to prove. Apparently, farming does not happen suddenly, but intelligence arises gradually in various places in the world (Koentjaraningrat, 1987).

The quotation above explains how humans then change their lifestyle not immediately, of course, there is a long enough learning process accompanied by many trials to be able to decide that farming can be done and what kinds of plants can be planted and then what are the functions each type of plant that is around them. Supported by the good condition of Indonesian soil, it is then making it easier for people to plant the staple foods and other types of plants.

The farming system, known as the rice field system that can use the limited land and the fertility of the soil can be maintained through land cultivation, irrigation, and fertilization. It caused people no longer moving around and start to keep trying to produce food or known as the food producing system. The ability of food-producing brings great change, in the sense that it brings a deep and widespread effect to the entire life of society at that time, because the people who have settled will create a regular life (Noor & Mansyur, 2015).

From the description above, it is then known how further the changes in the pattern of living in farming also contribute to the regularity of human life. The development of agricultural science that began with the pattern of farming life has now become one thing that is constantly being developed because it involves the lives of many people, where agriculture occupies a position in food-producing, as food is one of the basic needs of humans. For farmers, the forest becomes a vehicle for dealing with supernatural things. This is due to the fact that the forest will give them life, and it is believed to be controlled by entities in the form of supernatural beings so that it causes the forest to have a high position.

## 2. Materials and Methods

#### a. Location

This study was conducted in Barangka Subdistrict, West Muna Regency which consists of eight villages

#### b. Informant

The determination of the informants in this study was conducted by the purposive method. Numbers on the informant in this study is the farmers themselves, *Parika*, chief of the villages, traditional leaders, and agriculture

instructor. The chosen informants are they who understand well the ritual practice of *Defembula Kahitela*, the role of *Parika*, and the people who own a good knowledge related to the agriculture or farming condition of Muna people in Barangka Subdistrict

c. Data Collection Techniques

This study broadly using three data collection techniques, namely observation, interviews, and document studies.

d. Data Analysis Techniques

This study uses qualitative and interpretative analysis. The process of the data analysis is done by examining all the data from various available sources. The first step is to review data from various sources, make comparisons and illustrations, concepts, criteria, and abstractions. There is no particular way that can be followed to conduct an analysis so that each researcher must find his own method that is felt to be suitable with the nature of the research. The same material can be classified by different researchers (Sugiyono, 2009)

### 3. Results and Discussions

This study revealed that the ritual practice of *defembula kahitela* consisted of three stages, starting from the pre-planting stage, the planting stage, and the last stage, namely the harvest and post-harvest stages.

During the pre-planting stage, the Muna ethnic group in Barangka Subdistrict was inseparable from the ritual activities carried out by farmers to maintain the security of the field and even the farmers themselves from disturbances of wild animals and metaphysical beings. Rituals carried out during the pre-trial period include *katambori*, *dewei*, *tughori*, *desula*, *derangka*, *katondo*, and *kaago-ago* which are believed by farmers to have a positive impact on farmers in the continuity of their farming. However, to carry out these rituals, they must build relationships with *parika* so that the ritual practices can run smoothly because the ritual practice of *defembula kahitela* cannot be carried out individually by the farmers. Farmers need *parika* as people who will support so that during farming the crops planted are not attacked by pests and at the same time can bring safety to the farmers themselves.

The implementation of *defembula kahitela* in the tradition of the Muna community always begins with the determination of the good day in order to have a perfect ceremonial or ritual practice and also for sure to have a successful harvest at the end. For farmers in Barangka, the ability to determine this good day is only owned by *parika*. Therefore, the position of *parika* itself is important to ensure the perfect implementation of the ritual practice of *defembula kahitela*.

After passing the pre-planting stage, the time has come for planting. At this stage, again *parika* has an important role to play in the ritual stages. The first activity carried out by *parika* was to determine a good day to start planting, farmers trusted *parika* to choose a good day according to Muna's ethnic knowledge. Then, there is a *kaago-ago* ceremony that held at the time of welcoming the arrival of *bhara* (West) season, which is in mid-November. This season would bring a lot of distress, various diseases would emerge, and failures in farming, especially in maize (La Niampe, 2013). So that the idea of carrying out this ceremony in *bhara* season is actually to avoid the negative impact on their field and even to the farmers themselves.

During the planting period, farmers in Barangka must prepare themselves first, in the sense that farmers must be prepared for a sum of money that will be spent on buying consumption needs for other people who are giving the helping hands in their field. In addition, the farmers must prepare wages to be paid to *parika* after performing the ritual as well. The amount of wages that the farmer should pay is the *parika* to decide. Hence, it is also important that the farmer finds a good and not so high price *parika* as well.

During this planting period, the ritual practice of *defembula kahitela* was colored with various taboos or in Muna ethnicity called *falia*. *Parika* has the power to strictly prohibit and reprimand anyone who is in the field so as not to do any of the opposition, for it will eliminate the power of ritual practices that have been carried out from the very beginning. *Parika* power appears again when regulating actions that should not be carried out by farmers, this is in line with what Foucault said that power can be interpreted as the ability to influence or regulate and determine policies from the beginning, the process, to the level of decision making, power is so real in every human social relationship. Power does not refer to the system of domination of a person or group of people but rather is spread and diverse. Power can be placed in the frame of the relationship between men and women, parents with children, teachers with students, religious leaders with their followers (Eriyanto, 2001).

The ritual practice of *defembula kahitela* that held by the Barangka community is still in line with the rules and provisions of *parika*. Various efforts carried out by *parika* are still oriented to meeting economic needs. In the

implementation of ritual practice of *defembula kahitela*, there is a relationship between farmers' compulsion towards *parika*. On the other hand, the farmers are burdened with the low productivity that can only meet their daily needs, and on the other hand, the *parika* with its power makes the farmers submissive and unable to refuse any stipulated conditions.

Harvesting is the time for the last stage in the ritual practice of *defembula kahitela* in Muna ethnic communities in Barangka District. The ritual practice in the harvest period consists of three stages, namely *depasele*, *defolimba*, and *detongka*. In this period *parika* still has the power to determine a good day to start harvesting activities. The farmers cannot do the harvest stages although the age of corn is sufficient time for harvesting if there is no permission from the *parika* yet. In addition, when *parika* permit the farmers to carry out the harvest stage, there will be various things that should be prepared by the farmers as the ritual requirements as La Ode Fakiri (71 years) stated below:

"There is a *kafotobho* ritual that farmers must do after *pasele*. There will be a spell of mantra by *parika* in each ritual. We do not know what it means, only *parika* knows. Well, we are afraid if we break, especially if we have given a spell on the show. For me myself, the requirements for the ritual are *kamena-mena*, *kapiso-piso*, *kariwu-riwu*, *paratongku*, it is done in 4 corners of the field after the *dipasele*. The aim is to make the corn filled perfectly" (interviewed on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018)

Based on the interview above, to carry out the ritual in harvest stages, there are several requirements that must be prepared by the farmer as a condition in carrying out the ritual. The ritual was again led by *parika* and trusted by the farmers that the ritual activity was aimed at making the corn farmers' crops perfectly filled. The rituals are thick with symbols, in this case, the ritual of *defembula kahitela* carried out as the representation of local beliefs that cannot be separated from the religious system that they understand.

There are several activities of farmers in Barangka Subdistrict that must be done if the harvest period arrives, and this becomes a requirement in the ritual practice of *defembula kahitela*. First is that the farmers need to do the *depasele* ritual that is carried out the harvest stage earlier, in order to be used as the vegetables. The next activity is to carry out the harvest stage for the pale corn (*defolimba*) in a small amount. At this time, the farmers actually could gain a high price of their corn, but as stated before that they need to obey what *parika* said, so that they never carry out the harvest stage for the pale corn, except in small amount, as *parika* said. The total harvest will be carried out when the corn is well aged (*detongka*).

#### 4. Conclusion

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that *parika* handle the ritual practice of *defembula kahitela* in Barangka Subdistrict, West Muna Regency in three stages which includes the pre-planting, planting period, and harvest and post-harvest stage with different various ritual on each stage. On the other hand, it is also conclude that the authority or the power of *parika* in the ritual practice of *defembula kahitela* are as following:

- a) Determine a good day for each ritual  
In the ritual practice of *defembula kahitela*, the determination of good days is the beginning of all ritual processions themselves, and *parika* is the only one who has the ability to determine and choose a good day to begin the process of ritual practice of *defembula kahitela* from the pre-planting to the end in harvest and post-harvest stage.
- b) Determine ritual requirements (ritual tools and materials)  
As a leader in the ritual practice of *defembula kahitela*, *parika* can certainly have a role in determining and regulating what conditions must be fulfilled by farmers to begin the ritual practice of *defembula kahitela*, also starting from the pre-planting, planting, until the harvest and post-harvest stage.
- c) Determine the amount of wages in leading rituals  
There are several criteria that must be known by farmers before calling *parika*, among them are not expensive in determining the wages that farmers must pay for *parika*. It is important for farmers to know these criteria first because if they have called *parika*, there is no more wage bargaining between farmers and *parika*. Wage determination is carried out by *parika* as the leader of the ceremony in the ritual practice of *defembula kahitela*. This wage also applies to the processes of *defembula kahitela* from pre-planting to post-harvest.

d) Determining the rules/*pamali (falia)*

The ritual practice of *defembula kahitela* is colored with various kinds of taboos or in Muna community called *falia*. *Parika* has the role and power to strictly prohibit anything related to the farming process from the very beginning to the end.

*Suggestion*

The ritual practice of *defembula kahitela* is one of the rituals owned by Muna ethnic communities in West Muna Regency. In this study, the author blew up the role of *parika* in ritual practice of *defembula kahitela*. Basically, *Parika* in the Muna ethnic community does not only work in the range of *defembula kahitela*, but there are still many other rituals which are also led by a *parika*. Therefore, the authors suggest that other researchers who are interested in the cultural diversity of the Muna ethnic community can see the role of *parika* in other ritual practices besides defeating the bitter spirit or reviewing other ritual practices held by Muna ethnic communities as their cultural diversity.

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*Statement of authorship*

The authors have a responsibility for the conception and design of the study. The authors have approved the final article.





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