

## **BEGADISAN SOCIAL INSTITUTION IN ETHNIC GROUPS IN BENGKULU: PAST TIME AND PRESENT TIME**

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**Abstract;** *Begadisan* is a social event that institutionalizes between bachelor (*bujang*) and maiden (*gadis*) in order to find a girlfriend or future wife/husband. Such activities were found in all ethnic groups in Bengkulu Province, such as Pasemah, Serawai, Lembak, and Rejang. It happened at night at the maiden's house. This activity is based on knowledge that is socially understood together, generally applicable, and socially binding. In practice, this happened several times, consisting of standard stages, until an agreement between the two parties, single and girl, was fulfilled. Today, the social events of *begadisan* have indicated changes both at the practical level and at the ideological level. Based on the survey that we conducted in a number of regions, it seems that this change was caused by among others (1) the decreasing intensity of transmission and the transformation of cultural knowledge from the older generation to the younger generation, in line with the decline in social-traditional practices due to various constraints, (2) the education availability for all social strata and the social isolation as well, and communication technology that has provided 'unlimited' convenience and breadth among young people to achieve various social goals, (3) decreased appreciation and pride of socio-cultural knowledge and practices among the young people because of the change in cultural orientation.

**Keywords:** *Begadisan, Bengkulu, Social Institution, Social Change*

Bengkulu people have a variety of cultures, traditions and customs. One of the cultures that is still implemented, namely the *begadisan* tradition. *Begadisan* activities that are still carried out by the people of the Bengkulu ethnic group are a place for singles and girls to get to know each other personally before they decide to establish further relationships or to get married. *Begadisan* visits are carried out at night, ie on Sunday evenings or school holidays. The *begadisan* process is carried out at the girl's house or at certain events such as weddings, birthdays, and other meals.

This *begadisan* activity is a medium of communication that is institutionalized socially for the single and girl before they decide to continue to the marriage level or the household mahligai. Institutionally socializing in this case is that *begadisan* is a place that is provided for singles and girls to look for a partner (boyfriend) or a spouse with customary rules and regulations that apply in the community of the Bengkulu ethnic group. In addition, *begadisan* is not carried out for someone who has a kinship, a bachelor and a girl in a hamlet, and also a married person.

In the process, this is very attention to context. Halliday (1992: 6) says context is the text that accompanies the text. The text is not only written and written, but includes other nonverbal events or the entire text environment.

This research on *begadisan* has previously been carried out by Sairah Asnili (2002) on "*Teks Begadisan pada Masyarakat Pasemah*". In this study researchers only discussed and described the texts that existed in the tradition of traditionalism carried out in the Pasemah community. In addition, the latest research conducted by Sarwit Sarwono (2014) on "*Teks-teks Ulu Adat Pernikahan pada Kelompok Etnik Serawai di Provinsi Bengkulu: Representasi Fungsi Sosial Ketua Adat Atas Tindakan Dalam Praktik Pernikahan*". This study discusses the practice of Serawai ethnic community marriage based on manuscripts found in Ulu texts.

Related to the above, *begadisan* is an important issue to be studied as a guide in maintaining one of the regional cultures, especially the culture in the Bengkulu ethnic community. Therefore, the author wrote this article entitled "*Begadisan Social Institution in Ethnic Groups in Bengkulu: Past Time and Present Time*".

### **Method**

The author uses descriptive methods. This method is used to describe the *begadisan* process in Bengkulu's present and past ethnic groups. The phenomenon observed in the object of this study is based on existing facts.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **The process of *Begadisan***

*Begadisan* is carried out by single girls who live and settle in one area. However, there are also others who come to the area where the girl lives. This process is carried out in an atmosphere that is not in a state of sadness, sorrow (disaster). The BEGADISAN process is usually done on Saturday nights, school holidays and at wedding parties. Marsden (2016: 393-394) suggests that the young people can meet and talk at the event undecided or any other celebration that was held at the local village hall. At this event single people who are single will gather together, dance, and sing in groups.

*Begadisan* activities can be done repeatedly (as often as possible), as long as the girl is willing and willing to accept. However, it can also end on a one-time basis or cannot be continued on the following nights. Activities that are not carried out to be continued on the following nights are usually caused by being banned from doing so again. The prohibited activities, for example there is a kinship between the girl's family and the bachelor is known to be married. To find out if the girl and the bachelor have been dating or not just done three or four times like this. On the third or fourth visit, usually the *pengerbai* has asked his daughter, whether they have decided to date or not, so before the girl and the single decide to date or not only be allowed three or four visits *begadisan*. If they have visited five times or more, they are already dating. However, if the *begadisan* process is only three or four times (does not continue) it means they do not agree to dating and usually the bachelor is looking for another girl or like the other girl's house.

Each visit in the *begadisan* program was carried out in three stages. The three stages or processes are, *negur gadis* stage, the *nyayap gadis* stage (the core of the process), and the *pamitan* stage.

### ***Negur Gadis* Stage**

The stages in the first visit of *begadisan* are the stage of *negur gadis*. The *negur gadis* stage is an interaction between the bachelor, the girl, and the people involved in the beginning of *begadisan*. This *negur gadis* stage is the stage the bachelor asks permission from the girl's parents to tell the purpose and purpose of their arrival. At this stage, one of the singles starts knocking on the door, wall or window of the house while greeting the host as a sign asking for permission to enter the house. At this stage the bachelor tries to use appropriate language and as accurately as possible, for example the expression "***anu bung amu pacak kami ni ndak begadis nga gadis kamu Bung***". This sentence shows that the bachelor begged without coercion. It aims to respect the girl's parents and to attract the girl's sympathy.

In this *begadisan* tradition, if it is known that the guest who comes is a bujang who wants to *begadisan*, then the host who opens the door is *Pengerbai* (his mother's girl) not *Mamang* (his father is a girl). This was done because *Mamang* (the girl's father) was the most respected by the bachelor when he wanted *begadisan*.

The *begadisan* process cannot be separated from the name of the role of involvement. Involvement in the *begadisan* tradition is the people who participated in or participated in the *begadisan* process. The involvement in the *begadisan* tradition is from the girl and there is also from the bachelor party. Involvement that comes from the girl can be a parent, sister, brother, or friend of the girl. While the involvement from the bujang party is single friends who participated in the *begadisan* process. Meanwhile, the number of involvement in *begadisan* has no rules or limitations. However, usually no more than five people. However, of the few involved in this role, *begadisan* is the girl and her bachelor.

The person who plays the most role in the *begadisan* tradition in the Bengkulu ethnic community is a girl and a bachelor. Girls and singles are people who determine the success or failure of the communication process in such a manner. The bachelor in *begadisan* is basically to convey or express hope, willingness, joy, and hope to the girl. That way, the girl has the right to make her choice for the single person who comes *begadisan* with her.

In addition to girls and singles, in the tradition of *begadisan*, the next person who plays the role is the District (the girl's mother). The girl's parents or in the Pasemah (ethnic Bengkulu) language called the *pengerbai* play a very important role in the process. *Pengerbai* (the girl's mother) in the process of this process plays a role from the stage of the girl's stage to the last stage, the farewell stage. At the stage of the girl's *negur*, *Pengerbai* (the girl's mother) is the person for the single person asking permission to be like this and the first time. Although in the family there are still male parents or their father, the girl's mother is the one who mediates the girl to accept or not the bachelor is like this. This can be seen in the conversation below. The *begadisan* 1 visit conversation at the time of the girl was as follows.

- Sandra : *Tuk, tuk, tuk, assalamualaikum.* (Knock on the door and say hello)  
 Ibung : *Waalaiikum salam, sape?* (Waalaiikum salam, who?)  
 Sandra : *Kami bung* (us)  
 Ibung : *Ngape?* (What is wrong?)  
 Sandra : *Anu Bung, amu pacak kami ni endak begadis nga gadis kamu Bung?* (If we may, we want to *begadisan* with your girl)  
 Ibung : *"Kudai au aku nanye inye kudai pacak ape dide"* (Wait a minute, I can ask him first or not).

The dialogue above is a conversation that shows the role of the *pengerbai* involvement in the *nengur gadis* stage *begadisan* process. At this stage *pengerbai* acts as a guest recipient in this case the bachelor. Whether or not the bachelor is accepted for such a thing and depending on the girl. However, it will all be conveyed to the bachelor through the *pengerbai* army, not the direct girl who delivered it to the bachelor. Besides playing a role in the *nengur gadis* stage, *pengerbai* also plays a role in the later stages. Thus, *pengerbai* in the process of visitation is very important.

This stage arises only talking about the request for permission for parents to *begadisan* with their daughter. This stage is very decisive in the next stage. In this case the bachelors try to use the language that is as comfortable and gentle as possible with the aim that the girl's parents can open their hearts to allow singles and girls to be in the house.

### ***Nyayap Gadis Stage***

After the *negur gadis* stage the next stage is *nyayap gadis*. The core at this stage is expressing feelings or chatting to get to know each other between the bachelor and the girl and the people involved in the *begadisan* process. The second stage or the core stage of this kind of phrases that arise have led to introductions, getting to know each other's personality, joking, and expressing their hearts.

This stage is actually the core, the bachelor wants to know whether the girl already has a boyfriend or not. This is the main thing the bachelor wants to know before they express their heart. At this stage researchers find expressions made by the bachelor in communicating with the girl to find out if the girl already has a boyfriend or not and expresses her heart to the girl. To ask that question the bachelor uses a style that is not too serious. This is for the purpose of not appearing tense and stiff. But the point is to want to know in advance the girl's relationship to her previous boyfriend. These expressions can be seen in the *begadisan* visit process which was conducted at the girl's house (Verda) in the village of Padang Leban below.

- Tedi : *Masih nga jeme Kinal mpaini?* (Still going out with Kinal people?)  
 Verda : *Ndik agi* (No more)  
 Tedi : *Kemane die?* (Where is he going?)  
 Verda : *Merantau.* (Wander)  
 Sandra : *Merantau ke mane?* (Where to go?)  
 Heldi : *Yak, luk mane tini ade aRapan amu luk itu?* (Yes, how come there is hope then)  
 Tedi : *Jadi sape kah nyimbanginye kire-kire.* (who will replace it?) *Kah nyimbangi nye waktu merantau?* (which will replace it when migrating)  
 Verda : *Tak ada.* (There is no)  
 Tedi : *Tak ada, kire-kire ye lebih tepat.* (othing? Which is roughly the right one)

Verda : *Ai, ude Tedi ngeramyam kaba.* (never mind Tedi you're kidding)

The conversation above is a conversation between the bachelor and the girl that has led to the core conversation in the *begadisan* tradition. In the dialogue the bachelor asks the girl's relationship with her boyfriend first. His girlfriend used to be a Kinal. This can be seen from the question of the Bujang (Tedi) to the girl (Verda) "*masih nga jeme Kinal empaini?* (Still going out with Kinal people?). Then, the girl (Verda) replied "ndik agi" (no longer) meaning that the girl no longer was dating the Kinal because she was left to migrate.

### **Pamitan Stage**

After the *negur gadis* and *nyayap gadis* stages (core stage), the next stage is the *pamitan* stage. The farewell stage is the last stage or closing during the *begadisan* visit. This stage is a sign that *begadisan* on that night will soon be ended or will be finished. At this stage the conversation is not only focused between the bachelor and the girl, but on all those involved in the *begadisan*. The expressions on this farewell are not conveyed or expressed directly to the girl but to the girl's mother. This is done with the aim of respecting the girl's parents and so that their actions look more polite. In this tradition, if they enter, they begin with excuse, then when they end they must excuse. Closing the discussion in the *begadisan* tradition is not delivered directly. However, the girls, girls, and parents of the girl usually always close the conversation using the language of speech, small talk, or words that essentially express goodbye. In the local language or Pasemah language called *bebamit*. The farewell stage can be seen in the following conversation.

Sandra : *Luk mane kite ah.* (How do we?)  
Heldi : *Malah kite,* (Come on)  
Ibung : *Bebebusik ke sini kebile-bile.* (Play here again next time)

The phrase "luk mane kite ah?" Said by the bujang (Sandra) above is not asking while being confused, but this expression shows that the bachelor has already wanted to end *begadisan* on that night. Then, it was welcomed by the bachelor (Heldi) who called "*lukmane kite*". The phrase revealed by the bachelor (Heldi) shows that he has agreed or followed what is meant by the bachelor (Sandra) who wants to end *begadisan*.

The expression "*bebebusik kesi ni kebile-bile*" conveyed by *pekerbai* in the conversation above is an expression of small talk aimed at the singles group. This expression shows that the host in this case is Pengerbai (his mother the girl) lets the bachelor want to go back to *begadisan* with his daughter the next time or the following nights. This shows that *pekerbai* (his mother's girl) was pleased with the arrival of the bachelor that night.

The expressions above are expressions in closing or ending the conversation in the process of occurrence. It aims to give the condition that the singles have wanted to say goodbye to the girl and her parents.

### **Communication and Recency in the *Begadisan* Tradition**

In every language communication there are two parties involved, namely the sender of the message (sender) and the recipient of the message (receiver) (Chaer, 2004: 20). In the context of the *begadisan* tradition, the sender or recipient of the message is the girl, the bachelor, *pekerbai*, and the people involved in the *begadisan* process. This communication uses utterances (sentences or sentences) to convey messages (in the form of ideas, thoughts, suggestions, etc.). The message can be information in the form of liking, feeling of pleasure, dislike, feeling of acceptance, and so on. But in this *begadisan* communication essentially the single with the girl exchanges information, thoughts, opinions that later they will decide to date or not.

The language used in the tradition of *begadisan* is a language that may be as good as possible with the girl or with other people involved in the incident. This aims to attract the sympathy of the girl and the people involved in the *begadisan* process. There are several aspects of language that are used, one of which is the use of greeting words. The address is for example you and us. The use of these two words is used to respect the interlocutor, namely, the older person, the

mother of the girl or the girl greeting the bachelor. In Pasemah, the words *kamu* and *kami* are synonyms of the words *kaba* and *aku*.

In addition to the use of language in the *begadisan* tradition that has been explained above, the topic of the discussion also determines the smooth running of the *begadisan* process. This topic of discussion appeared differently according to where the context and situation of *begadisan* took place. On the visit of *begadisan 1* which took place in the village of Selika, the topic of discussion talked about whether the bachelor and the girl still had kinship or not. If it is known that it still has a kinship, then *begadisan* cannot continue on the following nights. This is because the *begadisan* process carried out is the first *begadisan*.

In contrast to the visit of *begadisan 1*, on the visit of *begadisan 2* which took place in Padang Leban Village, the topic of the discussion was no longer talking about kinship, but had discussed other discussions which were adapted to the atmosphere and circumstances of the time. For example, about the profession pursued by the girl's parents or the bachelor, asking about the season, the harvest, asking for identity, and asking about the situation / situation of the local village, and many other topics. This is because between one single and the girl already know each other but have not established a relationship. At this stage, usually the girl does not convey her feelings directly to the bachelor which she chooses for her lover. This aims to respect the other singles he refuses to establish a dating relationship. However, the girl's liking is shown on the next *begadisan* visit, if the girl is willing or accepts the singer's visit the following night (3rd or 4th and so on) that means the girl accepts dating as well as vice versa, if the girl refused the arrival of the bachelor the following night that meant the girl refused to date.

Such activities are a means of communication for singles and girls which is an event to get to know someone personally before the bachelor and the girl decides to establish a relationship to become a lover or even form a household mahligai. This *begadisan* process or activity is carried out with the aim of being a means or media for every single person and girl institutionally in the midst of the community to find a partner or seek a life companion.

This *begadisan* process has existed and was carried out from the past until now by the young people of the Bengkulu ethnic community. However, along with the technological advancements that exist, this process has also changed. These changes, for example, there was no HP right now, on average, everyone already has or has, so often after the incident and the singles have returned home, they still communicate with each other via the phone (call each other). Besides that, what used to be the language that was used was still very thick with bounces to say something, now young people are more expressing something in real language directly. This is due to the fact that there are not many young people who can work because they prefer modern things.

Another change in the implementation of the *begadisan* tradition is the place setting. In the past the *begadisan* process was carried out or took place in the kitchen, while now it is carried out in the living room or on the porch of the house. This was influenced by the decline in youth appreciation of practices and changes in cultural orientation. In addition, singles and girls now have extensive knowledge of other cultures such as foreign culture.

It is like one tradition. This tradition has rules that are bound to customs. One of these rules is that they should not be done if the girl with the single person still has a kinship or family relationship even though it is religiously permissible. The family relationship is for example the grandfather or grandmother of the girl with the single brother is still a brother. If this is known, then the girl with the bachelor is forbidden to establish a relationship. If the girl with the single person would still want to do this (violating customary rules), then their relationship must reach the level of marriage, while it is legitimate according to religion. If the girl or the bachelor is not willing, a familial relationship between the girl's family and the bachelor will be cut off or stretched. Because this will cause embarrassment in the midst of the community, either the girl's family or the bachelor's family.

## Conclusion

*Begadisan* tradition is a means or medium of communication that institutionalizes socially for singles and girls in the Bengkulu ethnic community to find a boyfriend or lover who is still being carried out to this day. However, the process has undergone changes both at the practical level and at the ideological level. Based on a survey conducted in a number of regions, this change

was caused by among others (1) the decreasing intensity of transmission and the transformation of cultural knowledge from the older generation to the younger generation, in line with the decline in social-traditional practices due to various constraints, (2) the opening of education for all social strata, the opening of social isolation, and communication technology that has provided 'unlimited' convenience and breadth among young people to achieve various goals, (3) decreased appreciation and pride in young people's socio-cultural knowledge and practices due to changes in orientation culture.

### **Suggestion**

The author hopes that this paper can contribute knowledge to the world of education, especially in the formation of students' character. After this paper, the authors hope that there will be further writing about the tradition of *begadisan* which the author has not yet elaborated on in this paper.

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