

# Salasika

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# Analysis of the Local Wisdom and Role of Women Weavers in Samarinda

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the values of local wisdom of the Tepian people illustrated in the Samarinda *sarong* and looks at the role of traditional women weavers and the values of the Samarinda woven motifs. It is a qualitative study employing observation, interview, documentation, library research, and source criticism. Interview guides were used to collect data from interviewees. The findings suggested that the Sengkang Wajo Bugis tribe first introduced woven fabric to Samarinda. As they lived and mingled with the Samarinda community, the woven fabric was assimilated into the local culture and known as Samarinda *sarong*. In the past, weaving skills were regarded as an indicator of women's maturity and readiness to get married. Consequently, women learned weaving from generation to generation and became the main actors in weaving. Some of them even managed to contribute to the household income through weaving. Samarinda woven fabric had various patterns bearing philosophical meanings.

KEYWORDS: *Women's Roles, Local Wisdom, Woven Fabrics, Sengkang Wajo Bugis Tribe, Samarinda*

## INTRODUCTION

Human sociality can be understood as an organism. Almost all aspects of life can be understood in a phenomenological sense as part of a life system. A proper perspective for considering life and interpreting social reality is extremely important in determining the direction and orientation of humankind.

The aim of this paper is to describe a new methodological point of view to discover the nature of social reality in the study culture in Indonesia. In taking a perspective from philosophy, this research endeavors to provide a new perspective in the study of local wisdom in Indonesia. This paper

presents a philosophical view on approaching the study of local wisdom: first, human social systems are systems of self-reference; second, human sociality is actualized in contingent social systems.

Local wisdom can be viewed as a social and communicative system that produces a kind of self-organization (autopoiesis) within a culture. Basically, local wisdom is a joint effort in a community to maintain resources that are used continuously to support the community and maintain environmental balance. Local wisdom is a positive attitude of the community when interacting with nature and the environment around them, which comes from their

values about rituals in religion or messages from elders or local culture formed naturally in a community so that people can adapt to the surrounding environment. Local wisdom can also be interpreted as a human effort using their ability to think (cognitive power), run, and behave towards an object or condition in a particular place.

Local wisdom can also be defined as a variety of local ideas that are wise, full of noble values, well embedded, become a tradition, and run by the local community naturally. In general, local wisdom occurs because of an internal process in a community that is maintained for generations in a relatively long time and results from the interaction between humans and the surrounding environment. In other words, local wisdom can be interpreted as a communal social system rather than an individual.

In his research, Sartini (2004) concludes that local wisdom combines noble religious values with various values found in society, from those related to sacred life to the profane (not holy). Although local, the values in local wisdom are universal. In addition, Adimihardja (2008) and Sartini (2004) explain that local culture directly or indirectly influences the formation of local wisdom.

According to Soedigdo, Harysakti, and Usop (2014), there are two main elements of local wisdom. First is the human aspect and mindset, and the second is the local natural and climatic conditions. Local wisdom also consists of tangible aspects, such as writing and buildings, and is intangible, such as

the advice of elders and traditional songs that contain hereditary teachings.

The development of culture-based products was explained by Smith (2015), who emphasized the importance of this in meeting the potential demand in the tourism market that is dynamic and supports the sustainability of the industry in the future. There are at least five elements of culture-based products, among others: physical buildings, services, hospitality, freedom of choice, and involvement.

Culture is interpreted as the embodiment of the life of a person or group in treating their natural environment. Therefore, there are demands to constantly develop abilities, creativity, and various new discoveries. Ideally, to ensure sustainability in the future, the development of culture-based products is centered on the interdependent relations between the social and economic dimensions of culture.

In addition, the use of new media, such as the internet and social media, in developing social and cultural communication initiatives also enables various networks to open up previously unimaginable tourism markets. The right marketing mix to carry out established marketing strategies is also essential to ensure that culture-based products are competitive and have the proper positioning in the eyes of tourists as a target market.

In developing culture-based products, the community, as the primary agent in the change process, must always be involved so that they can actively participate and not only be seen as limited to the subject of

development. The community is also the party that best understands the potential of the region that can be developed into an integrated cultural product.

On the other hand, tourists, as the main clients of the product, must also be given the opportunity to be involved in the development of culture-based products. In the context of tourism, involvement is not limited to being understood as physical participation but also active participation to enjoy tourism services fully.

According to Benur and Bramwell (2015), cultural products can be concentrated or diverse. First, concentrated cultural products imply that the development of cultural products is only focused on one or a few products. This can be advantageous because the product offered can have a unique identity and reputation that attracts many tourists, even though there is a risk of problems with the product due to limited choices. Second, cultural products can also be diverse, which can increase the attractiveness of tourist destinations, increase the likelihood of being able to provide services that can be tailored to the needs of customers (customized), and ensure greater flexibility in meeting the tastes and demands of tourists who keep changing as with the times.

Indonesia is a large country stretching from Sabang to Merauke. As a large country, Indonesia is rich in natural and human resources. It is a host for various ethnicities, languages, and cultures. The *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, unity in diversity, motto unites existing diversity.

Indonesia comprises 38 provinces, including East Kalimantan. The capital of this province is Samarinda, the home to various tribes, including Dayak, Banjar, Bugis, Jawa, and many more. Samarinda has a distinctive cloth inspired by the local wisdom of the Mahakam River.

Samarinda woven fabric was brought by the people of Sulawesi, who settled in the lowlands of *Samarinda Seberang*. They came to Samarinda as nomads and asylum or protection seekers to the Kingdom of Kutai Kartanegara. Weaving has been part of their daily activities since they settled there. As they mingle with the indigenous inhabitants, the woven fabric is influenced by the local wisdom and is known as Samarinda woven *sarong*.

Most traditional weavers in various regions in Indonesia are women and have learned weaving techniques from generation to generation. It makes the researcher wonder why traditional weavers are primarily women and their roles.

Therefore, this research will examine the typical roles of women weavers in Samarinda and the main reasons why most weavers are women.

## **METHODS**

This qualitative research aims to describe the role of women weavers in Samarinda. Data were gathered through observation, interview, documentation, library research, and source criticism. The interview used interview guides to facilitate the data collection.

The data covered primary and secondary data. Primary data sources were obtained directly by the researchers through the first source, such as archives and early notes of the existence of woven sarongs in Samarinda. In contrast, the secondary data were obtained through media, such as books, newspapers, journals, and articles related to this research. The data analysis technique used was source and interpretation criticism. Source criticism is useful for clarifying and sorting the data collected. The critical stage is to assess the data considered relevant and vital in the research and dispose of data considered less relevant.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Awareness of local wisdom was rampant after the fall of the New Order regime. During the New Order regime, leaders initiated all policies, setting aside the people's will. At the end of the New Order, a government program was implemented to open up a million hectares of peatland farms and bring migrants to Central Kalimantan. It turned out that the mega projects spending high cost and clearing many forest areas failed. This is the phenomenon of orientation to the state and market authorities who make economic and political configurations of cultural reality or validity to weaken human positions in various forms (Abdulah, 2008)

Learning from the experience, the participation of the community in development becomes an inseparable part. Following the demise of the New Order government, Indonesian NGOs had a vast opportunity to engage in

various community development activities, and local governments had the opportunity to plan development strategies based on local needs and capabilities (Ahimsa-putra, 2009, p. 5)

Amid the strengthening of the desire to broaden the knowledge of local communities or local wisdom, the first thing to do is to understand the local wisdom. Some experts try to define local wisdom. According to Ridwan (2007), local wisdom is an explicit knowledge emerging in the past that evolved with the community and its environment in the local system. Local wisdom can be in songs, proverbs, *sasanti* (motto), adverbs, slogans, and ancient books inherent in everyday behavior (Ridwan, 2007).

Wahyu (2005) emphasizes that the advantages of local wisdom are its flexibility and resistance in adapting to environmental changes for sustainable natural resources and environment. Local knowledge also leads to adaptation to ecological systems to maintain the ecological system's sustainability (Wahyu, 2005).

In addition, Ahimsa-putra (2009) defines local wisdom as a set of knowledge and good practices that originate from previous generations and the experience of dealing with the environment and other communities used to deal with various problems and/or difficulties encountered.

Of the three definitions above, some view local wisdom as a process of evolution and its manifestation, such as in the form of writing and speech. On the other hand, Wahyu (2005) sees local wisdom as an experience, not just a process of the



past, to deal with problems. Ahimsa-Putra (2009) states that it combines experience and something inherited. Wahyu (2005) and Ahimsa-Putra (2009) agree that local wisdom helps to deal with the problems experienced by the local community.

Two essential points in local wisdom, knowledge and practice, are patterns of interaction and action (Ahimsa-Putra, 2009). Knowledge, which is less permanent, can be obtained from various sources such as mass media or oral sources. In contrast, the relatively permanent experience or memory is obtained from direct experiences throughout the human life journey (Sairin, Semedi, & Hudayana, 2006).

In his research on experience conducted in Java, Bali, and Morocco, Geertz (2013) describes how individuals approach ideas by imagining themselves as others, peasants or tribal sheiks, then searching and analyzing the forms of symbolic words, images, institutions, and behaviors. The culmination is the structure of meaning in the relation of the individual or group of individuals to survive in life, especially with symbols to incorporate themselves into a set of meaningful forms, the web of meaning they weave themselves (Geertz, 2003).

Thus, the local wisdom of the population is a system of knowledge of the local population acquired as a legacy (blueprint) from generation to generation and is a process of life experience. The knowledge system operates at the level of everyday life as an individual and collective effort to solve life problems. Local wisdom can be written or oral, such as

advice, *pantun*, local language expression, and fairy tales. In daily practice, local wisdom comes through the meaning of the phenomenon occurring in the vicinity.

Traditional woven fabric has a special place in Indonesian society. It is not only used as a cloth to cover *aurat* (private body parts) but also has excellent philosophical values in terms of its uniqueness and meaning. In Indonesia, traditional clothes are mandatory in traditional ceremonies and symbolize one's status in society. Traditional Indonesian fabrics are also sacred. Not all people can wear or use them.

Kartiwa (1983) suggests that Indonesia is one of the countries in Asia producing a variety of standout traditional fabrics. It can be seen in various types of fabrics, fabric manipulation techniques, cloth motifs, and fabric functions. Indonesian woven fabrics bear high cultural values, especially in terms of technical, aesthetic, symbolic, and philosophical meanings. Budiyo et al. (2008) state that weaving is a technique for making fabrics using a simple principle, combining warp and weft or, in other words, inserting weft over and under the warp. According to Anas (1995), woven fabric is a piece of cloth weavers produce by inserting weft over and under warps based on a particular weaving pattern.

The local wisdom of the Batak people is a hand-woven cultural heritage called *Songket* (Mandar). *Songket* is very closely related to the life of the Batak indigenous people to this day. Apart from being used in traditional ceremonies, *Songket* is known as one of the hallmarks of

Batak culture and is used as a souvenir. The weavers, Batak women, make *Songket* their main livelihood and a side job. *Songket* weavers still use traditional tools requiring a longer production time resulting in less efficient work (Berlianti & Siagian, 2018).

Weaving is Indonesia's wealth with philosophical, social, and legal meanings and clothing, aesthetic, and economic functions. One of the challenges faced is the diminishing interest of young women in the village to weave because there are alternative employment opportunities. Currently, the average weavers are over 40 years old. To increase young women's interest in weaving, the economic value of weaving needs to be increased (Ndolu & Sulistiyono, 2020).

Women on the island of Selaru are not only weavers but also the successors of the *Ikat* culture who will bequeath it to their daughters. As a cultural heritage, woven fabrics are used only for traditional and ritual events, such as weddings and funerals. It is also used in traditional ceremonies with religious nuances or those related to the human cycle, such as church ceremonies, weddings, veneration of bodies, and the release of spirits (Pattipeilohy, 2013). This shows that *Ikat* contains cultural values continuously preserved by women as part of the local wisdom of the people on Selaru Island (Pattinama, 2019).

Based on the opinion above, it can be concluded that weaving is a fabric craft produced by inserting the transverse yarn (weft) under and over the longitudinal stationary yarn (warp) using non-machine looms. The woven fabrics produced with

traditional equipment bear high-value meanings. Holding and using a traditional woven fabric is like wading through a sheet of the society's historical documents. Woven fabric is a dead object but a living witness of a culture.

Yuniarti and Haryanto, in Berlianti & Siagian (2018) state that the income of female workers in the weaving business significantly contributes to increasing family income. Women's contribution serves as a support for poor households to meet their basic needs. Several research results show that the role of women in various industries in several regions is quite significant and decisive. Women's involvement in the work field is evident through the large number of regional women who become weavers.

In eastern Indonesian culture, women are the principal architects, from forming patterns to completing weaving. Almost every eastern Indonesian woman has weaving skills. Timo (2002) said that this skill is inherited by learning, observing, and practicing under the guidance of the mothers and the women's sisters. Weaving skill is a benchmark against the maturity of eastern Indonesian women. They are regarded as mature and ready to marry if they have mastered weaving. The eastern Indonesian people's paradigm of weaving characterizes eastern Indonesia's cultural values that distinguish it from other regions. Eastern Indonesian weavers are appreciated for the work requiring maximum energy and concentration from the main actors, the women (Therik, 2021).

Women weavers in Popalia Village, Togo Binongko subdistrict, contribute to improving the family economy and meet daily needs such as the cost of raising children and health. Besides helping to improve the family's economy, weaving also preserves the culture in the Togo Binongko subdistrict, especially in Popalia Village (Badje, 2022)

The explanation above highlights why women's role dominates in continuing the weaving tradition. Besides the flexible time, weaving does not require much energy and can be done anywhere. Moreover, weaving can increase household income as a support to the income from the head of the household or husband.

Women weavers, in general, will feel very happy and excited when they can finish the weaving work, and the woven cloth they produce can be useful for themselves and others. They admit that weaving gives them inner satisfaction. Weaving brings happiness, especially when watching other people wear woven fabrics they create. One of the motivating factors that encourages them to continue weaving is the desire to produce the best and give the best, especially for others (Lolo, 2018). In this way, they obtain inner pleasure from doing this work.

Weaving requires strong accuracy to determine the appropriate motif or pattern and to adjust and recognize the color of the

thread so that the colors are neither swapped nor intertwined. Women weaving Mandar silk must master the primary skill entailing knowing the loom, which consists of Passolorang, Passaq, Papamalingan, etc., the function of each weaving tool, the sitting position, and how to choose good quality yarn. The technical skills of the women weavers of Mandar silk in Pambusuang village, Balanipa district, Polewali Mandar regency allows them to produce good quality weaving with various distinctive patterns of a high-level difficulty. They even make various colors using simple dyes made from natural ingredients.

The Mandar silk weavers use interpersonal skills when dealing with consumers. Good interpersonal skills enable women to build mutually beneficial relationships with their customers. Interpersonal skills are also essential to face problems in the weaving process, such as broken threads, untidy patterns, or problems with customer complaints about products, which makes consumers unhappy (Mawadda, Ashdaq, Qamariah, & Fauzan, 2022).

To conclude, weaving activities in Poliwali Mandar involve women and their skills. Women weavers are expected to master the basic skills in weaving, especially communication skills for marketing and direct interaction with consumers.

Patterns	Meaning
Lebba Suasa	It is the first pattern made by Samarinda weavers. This pattern is no longer produced as it is difficult to find even in its origin, South Sulawesi. Two colors, black and white, dominate this pattern, with red color on the edge or side of the <i>sarong</i> .
Kamummu Hatta	It incorporates red and black (Hatama Mascara) colors. It is also known as the Hatta pattern. The name was adapted from Dr. Mohammad Hatta, the Vice President of Indonesia who visited Samarinda around 1950. RUWI (Rukun Wanita Indonesia/Indonesian Women Association) Cooperative Samarinda handed <i>sarong</i> with this pattern to Moh. Hatta during his visit. Since then, this pattern has been referred to Hatta style.
Tabba	This pattern has two types: regular <i>tabba</i> and <i>tabba</i> fierce. It is called <i>anyaman palupuh</i> because this pattern resembles woven bamboo. <i>Tabba</i> or <i>palupuh</i> means bamboo.
Assepulu Bolong	<i>Pulu</i> or <i>pulut</i> means sticky rice, while <i>bolong</i> means black (black sticky rice). The name describes the beautiful shiny dark pattern, which looks like black sticky rice.
Rawa-rawa Masak	It is named after a kind of guava fruit. The color is rosy pink or violet, like the color of guava fruit. It is called the <i>rawa-rawa masak</i> pattern because it resembles nature and its surroundings.
Coka Manippi	This pattern adopts the charming color a Kutai noble princess saw in her dream of entering the paradise <i>loka</i> . When she woke up, the princess was distraught and missed the color in her dream. The princess then called the weavers to weave a <i>sarong</i> with the color in her dream. The pattern is then called <i>Coka Manippi</i> , meaning conquered by the dream. Initially, ordinary people were not allowed to wear <i>sarong</i> with the <i>Coka Manippi</i> pattern. The Kutai noble family usually wears this pattern.
Garanso	This pattern incorporates black and dark blue colors. <i>Garanso</i> means fierce. It is because the combination of black and blue is viewed as fierce. Fierce here means the one wearing these bold colors will look dashing.
Billa Takajjo	The name means lightning. The phrase <i>Billa Takkajo</i> (when surprised) means seeing lightning. Red, blue, and white lines dominate this pattern.
Burica	It means pepper or <i>sahang</i> . This pattern is called <i>burica</i> because it depicts small round flowers as big as pepper, like pepper grains.
Siparape	<i>Siparape</i> means getting closer. This pattern is deliberately created for newly married couples. They get closer and love each other during their honeymoon.
Kudara	Similar to the Hatta style, this pattern is a <i>sarong</i> pattern presented to President Soekarno, the first president of Indonesia, when visiting Samarinda. <i>Kudara</i> means country. It is called <i>kudara</i> because it is given to a country leader.
Sabbi	This is a new creation made for women. It is usually worn with a shawl of the same pattern.
Pucuk	Similar to <i>sabbi</i> , this is also a new creation. Depicting plant shoots, the pattern is designed specifically for women along with the shawl.

Table 1. Patterns and Meanings of Samarinda Woven Fabric.

Source: [https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarung\\_Samarinda](https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarung_Samarinda)

## CONCLUSION

Local wisdom is human activities carried out from generation to generation in an area. Local wisdom is rich in philosophical meaning, guiding the surrounding community and unique to every region in Indonesia. The Samarinda woven *sarong* is the local wisdom of the Samarinda people existing since the arrival of the Sengkang Wajo Bugis tribe. It has undergone cultural assimilation, and it has become Samarinda's local wisdom. Woven fabrics play various roles in human activities. Apart from being used as everyday clothing, they complement religious and traditional ceremonies. They also reveal one's social status.

Besides that, woven cloth is also used as a traditional wedding dowry.

The role of women is very dominant in Samarinda woven sarong production. The women weavers also support for the family economy to increase household income. Weaving was also a standard for women's maturity in the past. A woman's thoroughness and skills in weaving determine her maturity and marriage readiness. Before getting married, women had to be able to weave and good at using a loom along with its equipment. Weaving is also an activity that women do in their spare time when they finish household chores and wait for their husbands to get home from work.

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