

Pre-Marital Seclusion (*Kahiya*) from the Perspective of Islamic Law

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ABSTRACT: *The pre-marital seclusion (Kahiya) tradition is still practiced by the people of Wambuloli Village, Central Buton Regency, as part of a custom aimed at maintaining the honor and readiness of the bride-to-be. However, in its implementation, there are a number of customary practices that raise questions about their compliance with Islamic legal principles. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the pingitan (Kahiya) tradition and examine these practices from an Islamic legal perspective. This study uses a qualitative method with a normative-empirical approach. Data were collected through observation, structured interviews, and documentation involving traditional leaders, religious leaders, and women undergoing seclusion. The data were analyzed descriptively and analytically through the stages of data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results show that the pingitan tradition contains positive values in the form of maintaining the honor and mental development of the bride-to-be, however, some practices such as neglecting sharia obligations and certain symbolic beliefs have the potential to conflict with Islamic legal principles. This study concludes that the pingitan tradition can be preserved as long as adjustments are made to align with the principles of public welfare and the basic values of Islamic law. This research emphasizes the importance of dialogue between customs and religion in maintaining a balance between cultural preservation and the implementation of sharia.*

Tradisi pingitan (*Kahiya*) pra-nikah masih dipraktikkan oleh masyarakat Desa Wambuloli, Kabupaten Buton Tengah, sebagai bagian dari adat yang bertujuan menjaga kehormatan dan kesiapan calon pengantin perempuan. Namun, dalam pelaksanaannya terdapat sejumlah praktik adat yang menimbulkan persoalan kesesuaian dengan prinsip hukum Islam. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis bentuk pelaksanaan tradisi pingitan (*Kahiya*) serta mengkaji praktik tersebut dalam perspektif hukum Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan normatif-empiris. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara terstruktur, dan dokumentasi dengan melibatkan tokoh adat, tokoh agama, serta perempuan yang menjalani pingitan. Data dianalisis secara deskriptif-analitis melalui tahapan kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tradisi pingitan mengandung nilai positif berupa penjagaan kehormatan dan pembinaan mental calon pengantin, namun beberapa praktiknya seperti pengabaian kewajiban syariat dan keyakinan simbolik tertentu berpotensi bertentangan dengan prinsip hukum Islam. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa tradisi pingitan dapat tetap dilestarikan sepanjang dilakukan penyesuaian agar selaras dengan prinsip kemaslahatan dan nilai-nilai dasar hukum Islam.

Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya dialog antara adat dan agama dalam menjaga keseimbangan antara pelestarian budaya dan penerapan syariat.

Keywords: *Seclusion Tradition (Kahiya), Pre-Marital Seclusion, Islamic Law.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Marriage in Islam is understood as an institution that embodies religious values while also serving an important social function in establishing order and harmony in society. Islam positions marriage as a means of maintaining honor, establishing peace, and legitimately procreating children in accordance with Islamic law (Shihab, 2022). Therefore, the social practices that accompany the wedding ceremony, including pre-marital traditions, need to be reviewed to ensure they do not conflict with the fundamental principles of Islamic teachings.

In the context of Indonesian society, which is culturally diverse, customs still play a significant role in regulating social life, including marriage practices. Customs serve as behavioral guidelines that bind members of society socially and morally. In Islamic law, customs, or 'urf, can be considered as legal considerations as long as they do not conflict with the texts and fundamental values of Islamic law, as reflected in the principle of al-'ādah muḥakkamah (Zuhaili, 2018). Thus, the existence of customs is recognized as long as they do not override religious obligations and do not contain elements that undermine the faith.

One form of pre-wedding custom still practiced in Wambuloli Village, Central Buton Regency, is the tradition of seclusion known as *Kahiya*. This tradition involves limiting the bride-to-be's activities for a specific period before the wedding, accompanied by a number of traditional rituals believed to be a preparation for married life. Locally, *Kahiya* holds symbolic value, preserving women's dignity and fulfilling traditional demands that have been passed down through generations (Taufik, 2021).

However, the practice of *Kahiya* in reality raises issues when certain elements of the custom are inconsistent with religious obligations. The prohibition on performing prayers during seclusion, for example, contradicts the fundamental principle of Islam, which mandates the five daily prayers without exception except for clear Islamic reasons. Ignoring this obligation contradicts the purpose of Islamic law, namely, safeguarding religion (ḥifẓ al-dīn), the primary foundation of religious life (Nurhayati, 2022).

Furthermore, the practice of eyebrow shaving during *Kahiya* has given rise to differing views within Islamic law. Most scholars view this act as unjustified because it constitutes an alteration of God's creation, except in certain circumstances with a strong Islamic justification (Fatimah, 2023). Furthermore, belief in certain symbols associated with fate or a soul mate has the potential to lead to superstitious practices that are inconsistent with the Islamic principle of monotheism (A. Amin, 2022).

However, the *Kahiya* tradition is not entirely contrary to Islamic values. This tradition contains positive elements, such as efforts to maintain women's honor, cultivate patience, and prepare the prospective bride and groom mentally and socially before entering married life. These values align with the objectives of sharia, particularly in maintaining honor (ḥifẓ al-'ird) and reason (ḥifẓ al-'aql). In several other areas of Buton, the pingitan

tradition has even been adapted to Islamic teachings without losing its inherent cultural identity (I. Nur, 2024).

This situation demonstrates the need for a contextual Islamic legal study of the *Kahiya* tradition. This research is crucial for objectively assessing the boundaries between customs that can be maintained as 'urf ṣaḥīḥ and those that need to be corrected because they conflict with sharia principles ('urf fāsid). This approach is expected to achieve harmony between the preservation of local culture and the application of Islamic values oriented towards the welfare of the community (Auda, 2018).

Based on this background description, the research questions are formulated as follows: 1) How is the tradition of seclusion (*Kahiya*) practiced before marriage in the Wambuloli Village community, Central Buton Regency? 2) How does Islamic legal analysis examine the tradition of seclusion (*Kahiya*) before marriage in the Wambuloli Village community, Central Buton Regency?

Based on the problem formulation stated above, the purpose of this research is to determine the implementation of the tradition of seclusion (*Kahiya*) before marriage in the Wambuloli Village community, Central Buton Regency. to find out how Islamic law studies the tradition of seclusion (*Kahiya*) before marriage in the Wambuloli Village Community, Central Buton Regency.

II. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with the aim of in-depth understanding of the practice of the pre-wedding seclusion (*Kahiya*) tradition and its assessment from an Islamic legal perspective. This approach was chosen because the research focuses on the meaning, processes, and social realities within the community, rather than quantitative measurements. The method employed was normative-empirical research, examining traditional practices in the field and analyzing them against relevant Islamic legal norms.

The research subjects included traditional leaders, religious leaders, and women who had practiced the *Kahiya* tradition in Wambuloli Village, Central Buton Regency. The object of the study was the implementation of the pre-wedding seclusion (*Kahiya*) tradition and its accompanying practices. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation, with the aim of obtaining a factual picture of the stages of the tradition, the meanings attached to it by the community, and its implications for the implementation of religious obligations (Moleong, 2021).

Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive-analytical approach, with the stages of organizing data, grouping them by theme, and drawing inductive conclusions. Empirical data obtained from the field were analyzed by comparing them to Islamic legal principles to assess their suitability. This analysis process is carried out continuously from the data collection stage to drawing conclusions, so that the research results reflect empirical conditions as well as a complete normative analysis.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Seclusion Tradition (*Kahiya*) Before Marriage

According to Rajlun Fahiran, the Posuo traditional ceremony is a traditional ceremony performed by the Buton people of Southeast Sulawesi. This ceremony is held when a woman transitions from a kabuabua (adolescent girl in the Butonese language) to a kalambe (adult woman). This tradition lasts for eight days and eight nights in a suo (special room) (Fahrian & Yunus, 2024).

The culture of seclusion is a tradition that thrives in Indonesian society and can be found in various regions, including Java, Sumatra, and Sulawesi. One form of seclusion is found in the Wambuloli Village community, East Mawasangka District, Central Buton Regency.

In the Wambuloli community, seclusion is known as *Kahiya*. This tradition is held periodically, every three years, precisely after Eid al-Fitr. The *Kahiya* ceremony lasts four days and four nights, starting with the sound of a traditional drum, marking the beginning of the activity, and is aligned with the traditional lunar calendar, known as the three-month calendar or tualono wula. During the implementation of *Kahiya*, women who undergo seclusion are placed and locked in a traditional house called sabua as part of the customary procession that must be carried out. (Afamery, 2021).

Based on the above description, the pingitan (*Kahiya*) referred to in this study refers to a series of traditional ceremonies with specific provisions and stages, namely:

The first stage involves the seclusion participants being placed in a special place called a penitentiary or sabua. This stage is mandatory and aims to limit interaction and viewing by outsiders. While in the sabua, seclusion participants are not permitted to be seen by many people, especially men, pregnant women, menstruating women, and women who have never undergone the tradition of pingitan. Prayers are not permitted within the sabua during *Kahiya*. These provisions are part of the customary rules believed in and practiced for generations by the local community.

The second stage in the pingitan tradition is the bathing process for women undergoing seclusion. This bathing cannot be performed by just anyone, but rather by certain parties designated by customary law. The authorized party to perform the bathing is the kandangdu, or the woman's parents, particularly those who understand the procedures and prayers used in the procession. Before the bathing ceremony, the water to be used is first prayed over by the traditional elders. This prayer over the water is an integral part of the seclusion tradition and is believed to have spiritual significance for the women undergoing seclusion. The prayed-over water is then used by the kandangdu, or the woman's parents, in the bathing ceremony, in accordance with customary regulations.

According to one source, not everyone is permitted to bathe a woman undergoing seclusion (*Kahiya*). Only certain individuals with traditional knowledge and understanding of the procedures and special prayers are permitted to perform the ceremony. In the context of the Wambuloli Village community, the trusted individuals deemed to fulfill these criteria are limited to two individuals: Mrs. Army and Mrs. Nurita, who have been actively involved in the bathing procession.

The third stage of the pingitan tradition takes place after the seclusion participants have completed the bathing procession. At this stage, a female shaman, known locally as a bhisa, plays a key role in enforcing several traditional requirements. One of these requirements

is the provision of rice to the seclusion participants in a limited amount, typically one handful. This provision is symbolic and only occurs after the seclusion participants have fulfilled the established traditional requirements.

After this procession, the woman's parents are permitted to take over the provision of food to the seclusion participants. However, the provision of food remains within the limits and regulations set by the *bhisa* as part of local customary rules.

Furthermore, participants in seclusion are also subject to customary requirements, such as applying red turmeric powder for two nights and white turmeric powder for two nights. This process is carried out by the *bhisa* as part of a series of purification and customary symbolism. Once all these requirements are met, the *bhisa*'s role ends, and further responsibilities are fully transferred to the parents of the woman undergoing seclusion.

Furthermore, the *bhisa* also has the specific task of measuring four liters of rice (*ganta*) and preparing four free-range chicken eggs and Rp 50,000. This rice measuring process cannot be performed by just anyone, as it is accompanied by the recitation of special prayers in accordance with the traditional customs believed by the people of Wambuloli Village.

According to one source, the bathing procession in the *pingitan* tradition can only begin after the sound of the traditional drum is played in the *hambi tutura* pattern, which sounds like the "sound of the drum of flowing water" (*sakonduno ganda sakosapano oe*). This drumming serves as a signal for the start of the bathing and must not be stopped until the procession is complete. The drummer must be a member of the traditional elders who have special expertise in playing the drums in the *Kahiya* tradition, in accordance with applicable traditional regulations.

The fourth stage of the *pingitan* tradition takes place on the third day of the *Kahiya*. At this stage, a shaving ceremony is carried out, which in traditional terms is called a *cabindu*, namely the shaving of the eyebrows of participants in seclusion as part of fulfilling the customary requirements that have been carried out for generations. On the same day, a chicken slaughtering process is also carried out, consisting of two types, namely a rooster and a hen. The rooster is handed over to the *Kahiya* implementation location as part of a series of traditional rituals, while the hen is returned to the house of the woman undergoing seclusion in accordance with local customary provisions. In addition to fulfilling ritual requirements, this chicken slaughtering process also contains traditional beliefs, namely the direction and distance of the chicken's flight after being released is believed to symbolize the closeness or distance of the soul mate of the seclusion participant; if the chicken flies far, then the soul mate is believed to come from a far place, while if the direction of flight is close, the soul mate is believed to come from a nearby environment.

According to one source, according to local traditional beliefs, the direction and distance a chicken flies after being released is believed to be a sign of a soul mate for the seclusion participants. A chicken that flies far away is believed to indicate a soul mate from a distant place, while a chicken that flies close is believed to indicate a soul mate from the surrounding area. This belief is part of the customary ritual believed by the community and is based on experience passed down through generations, as conveyed by the interviewee.

The fifth stage is carried out on the fourth and final day of the seclusion tradition, known in the Wambuloli language as *Kafofolimba*. During this stage, seclusion participants are thoroughly bathed, from head to toe. The bathing process is carried out by a designated

cabindu (a traditional abode) appointed and required by the traditional elders. Procedurally, this stage is similar to the previous bathing stage, accompanied by the sound of traditional drums in the sakonduno ganda sakosapano oe pattern, marking the conclusion of the seclusion tradition.

Sixth, after the bathing ceremony is complete, the clothing to be worn by the women undergoing seclusion is first prayed over by the traditional elders according to the applicable regulations. The clothing is then donned in a closing ceremony, where the seclusion participants are removed from the traditional house (sabua) through a procession known as Kafindaino Wite. This procession is accompanied by the sound of traditional drums with the rhythm of hambu mohansa, which serves as a sign of the end of the entire seclusion tradition. According to Mrs. Army, the clothing worn in the seclusion tradition has changed over time. In the past, seclusion participants wore traditional katula clothing, a handicraft from their elders. However, in current practice, this clothing has been replaced by kaboroko, a more commonly worn traditional Butonese dress. This change reflects the adaptation of the seclusion tradition to cultural developments without losing its fundamental meaning.

Based on an interview with one of the women who has undergone the seclusion tradition, it was discovered that during the seclusion period, there are a number of customary prohibitions that must be adhered to. One of these prohibitions is the prohibition of praying during seclusion. Furthermore, the amount of food consumed is also limited according to customary law.

During seclusion, there are several customary rules and prohibitions that must be adhered to, including refraining from making noise, refraining from eating large amounts, refraining from being seen by men, and refraining from being seen by pregnant women and women who have never undergone seclusion.

According to sources, the primary purpose of the seclusion tradition is to mark a woman's maturity. This maturity is marked by the onset of menstruation, so women who have undergone seclusion are considered adults and ready to enter the next stage of life according to local customs.

Islamic Legal Study of the Tradition of Seclusion (*Kahiya*) Before Marriage

In Islamic legal studies, customs that develop and are practiced in society can be used as a basis for legal considerations as long as they do not conflict with the provisions of the Islamic texts and the fundamental values of Islamic teachings. This principle aligns with the Islamic jurisprudence principle of *al-‘ādah muḥakkamah*, which asserts that community customs can have normative force if they are classified as *‘urf ṣaḥīḥ*, that is, customs that do not contain elements of violation of faith, worship, or morals (Syarifuddin, 2021).

The tradition of seclusion (*Kahiya*) practiced by the people of Wambuloli Village is essentially intended to maintain women's dignity, mark the stage of adulthood, and prepare prospective brides psychologically and socially before entering married life. Conceptually, this goal is in accordance with *maqāṣid al-syarī‘ah*, especially in efforts to protect honor (*ḥifẓ al-‘ird*) and reason (*ḥifẓ al-‘aql*) (Auda, 2021)

However, the assessment of a tradition from the perspective of Islamic law is not only based on the normative goals to be achieved, but must also pay attention to the real practices that accompany it. Based on the results of field research, a number of elements

were found in the implementation of the *Kahiya* tradition that need to be studied critically because they have the potential to conflict with the principles of Islamic law.

First, the existence of customary provisions prohibiting prayer during seclusion is a practice that is inconsistent with Islamic teachings. The five daily prayers are an individual obligation (*farḍ* 'ayn) that remains inherent in every Muslim and can only be abandoned for clear Islamic reasons, such as menstruation or postpartum bleeding. Therefore, the prohibition of prayer on customary grounds has no legitimate basis in Islamic law and contradicts the primary purpose of Sharia, namely preserving religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*) (Nurhayati, 2022). This practice can therefore be categorized as 'urf fāsid, which cannot be justified according to Sharia.

The prohibition on abandoning prayer is clearly emphasized in the Qur'an, where prayer is positioned as a fundamental obligation that cannot be abandoned without a Sharia-compliant reason. Allah SWT says:

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَوْقُوتًا

"Indeed, prayer is an obligation at set times for the believers" (Q.S. An-Nisa: 103).

This verse shows that the obligation to pray is inherent in every Muslim and is bound by a certain time, so that it cannot be canceled for reasons of custom or tradition. Therefore, the practice of prohibiting praying during the period of seclusion (*Kahiya*) has no basis in Islamic law and is clearly contrary to *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* in maintaining religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*). Thus, these customary provisions fall into the category of 'urf fāsid which must be abandoned.

Based on information from one of the sources, customs should be implemented in line with Islamic teachings. Leaving prayers for someone who has reached puberty is a forbidden act and has a clear rationale. Therefore, customary practices that cause neglect of the obligation to pray need to be studied so that they do not conflict with the principles of Islamic law.

Second, the practice of shaving eyebrows during the Kabindu procession needs special attention from an Islamic legal perspective. Most contemporary scholars consider the act of shaving or thinning eyebrows for aesthetic purposes without medical reasons to be prohibited, as it involves altering God's creation (*taghyīr khalq Allāh*). Therefore, if this practice is carried out solely to fulfill a traditional symbol without considering sharia, it cannot be justified under Islamic law (Fatimah, 2023). The practice of eyebrow shaving in the kundangdu procession is contrary to sharia provisions as emphasized in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which explicitly forbids such acts. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

لَعَنَ اللَّهُ النَّامِصَاتِ وَالْمُتَمَصِّصَاتِ

"Allah curses women who shave their eyebrows and women who ask for their eyebrows to be shaved" (HR. Bukhari and Muslim).

The hadith emphasizes that eyebrow shaving is forbidden because it constitutes an alteration of God's creation (*taghyīr khalq Allāh*) without a shar'i basis. Therefore, the practice of eyebrow shaving performed solely as a symbolic custom without medical consideration is not justified under Islamic law.

According to the source, eyebrow shaving should not be practiced because it contradicts Islamic teachings. Therefore, customs should adhere to and not violate established Islamic regulations.

Third, the symbolic belief that links the direction and distance of a chicken's flight to the proximity or distance of a soul mate indicates a belief that has the potential to lead to superstition. In Islamic teachings, matters of soul mate and fate are entirely determined by the will and decree of Allah SWT. Therefore, mystical associations of cause and effect without a rational or shar'i basis contradict the principles of monotheism and need to be corrected to prevent the purity of faith (M. Amin, 2022). The symbolic belief in the direction and distance of a chicken's flight as a determinant of the proximity or distance of a soul mate is a form of belief that has the potential to lead to superstition and is contrary to the principle of monotheism. In this case, Rasulullah saw. Says:

مَنْ تَعَلَّقَ تَمِيمَةً فَقَدْ أَشْرَكَ

"Whoever hangs an amulet, has indeed committed shirk" (HR. Ahmad).

This hadith emphasizes the prohibition of relying on certain symbols, objects, or omens believed to influence fate or the future. In the context of the seclusion tradition, linking a soul mate to the symbol of a flying rooster has no rational or sharia basis, thus contradicting the principle of monotheism, which affirms that marriage and destiny are entirely within the will of Allah SWT.

According to the source, Muslims are not permitted to associate others with God, including believing in things that have not been determined by Allah. Therefore, beliefs and customary practices that have the potential to lead to beliefs outside of divine decrees need to be examined to ensure they remain in line with the teachings of monotheism in Islam.

However, not all seclusion traditions conflict with Islamic values. Limiting interaction with the opposite sex, fostering patience, and family involvement in supporting the bride-to-be are positive values that align with Islamic ethics in building a harmonious family. These values reflect preventive measures against deviant behavior and strengthen moral responsibility before entering marriage (A. Nur, 2024).

Thus, from an Islamic legal perspective, the tradition of seclusion (*Kahiya*) in Wambuloli Village can be classified as a mukhtalaṭ custom, containing elements that align with sharia (Islamic law) as well as elements that contradict it. This tradition can be preserved as long as a process of selection and adjustment is carried out, maintaining values that bring benefit and eliminating practices that conflict with the principles of monotheism, the obligation of worship, and the primary objectives of Islamic law (Hakim, 2021).

Therefore, efforts to harmonize custom and religion are an inevitable necessity so that the preservation of local culture can go hand in hand with the implementation of Islamic values. The maqāṣid al-shari'ah approach can serve as an analytical framework for assessing and reconstructing the tradition of seclusion so that it remains relevant, valuable, and in accordance with Islamic law in facing the dynamics of modern society.

IV. CONCLUSION

The pingitan (*Kahiya*) tradition in Wambuloli Village is a traditional practice aimed at maintaining honor and preparing women before marriage. In value, this goal is in line with Islamic teachings. However, in its implementation there are several practices that are not in accordance with sharia principles, such as prohibitions on praying, shaving eyebrows without sharia reasons, and symbolic beliefs that have the potential to lead to superstition. Therefore, the pingitan tradition can be categorized as a mixed custom (*mukhtalaṭ*) which needs to be selected and adapted to be in harmony with *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*. This research was only conducted in one location and relies on field data, so the findings cannot be widely generalized. This research strengthens the study of the relationship between custom and Islamic law by emphasizing the importance of the *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* approach in assessing local traditions. Collaboration is needed between traditional leaders and religious leaders to adapt seclusion traditions to Islamic values. It is recommended that further research examine similar traditions in other regions to obtain a broader perspective.

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