

Representation of Women's Identity in Neke Tane in the Village of Tanahlein, Solor Barat Subdistrict, East Flores Regency

Evansia Lete Lein¹, Ni Luh Sutjiati Beratha², Maria Matildis Banda³

*leinlette@gmail.com

^{a,b,c}Udayana University, Denpasar 80114, Indonesia

Abstract

Neke Tane is from the Tanahlein language and consists of two syllables, namely: Neke which means tie, and Tane which means weaving. Neke Tane which means weaving. Weaving is a job for women on the Solor island, especially for the people of Tanahlein village during the dry season, and also to help the family's economy. In the Tanahlein, in traditional times, the weaving process still used traditional tools and materials or those that were still provided by nature. As time goes by, the weaving process in Tanahlein village has received a modern touch now, in this case, the materials, namely the colors and threads. The purpose of this study is to raise critical awareness in considering various socio-cultural phenomena in society, as well as to explain the form, function, and meaning of woven ties for women in the Tanahlein village, as well as add references to address various activities in society that are in fact currently at the level of modernization. The research, which is located in Tanahlein Village, West Solor sub-district, East Flores district, was conducted using qualitative methods and analyzed using capital theory and cultural representation theory. The results of this research show that female weavers in Tanahlein Village really appreciate the weaving. Engaging in weaving not only helps women to build specific skills but also directly supports their cultural traditions for example, by helping them develop the ability to weave a piece of cloth with motifs that are representative of their ethnicity and culture, but also helps them to develop a sense of purpose by providing them with the means through which they can contribute to their society. That is, by teaching friends, neighbors, and children in the community to weave. The women weavers of Tanahlein Village ensure the preservation and continuation of the weaving tradition so that the next generation of women can contribute to the Tanahlein Village community by weaving.

Keywords: Neke Tane, Cultural Identity, Modernization, Symbolic Interaction, Weavers

1. Introduction

Tanahlein is a village located within the Solor Barat Subdistrict of East Flores Regency in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). It is one of the 18 villages and urban areas that constitute the Solor Barat Subdistrict. Tanahlein Village is predominantly inhabited by the Lamaholot ethnic group, characterized by its unique cultural heritage and linguistic traditions. The primary agricultural commodities cultivated in this locale include candlenuts and cocoa. Besides, a significant portion of the local population engages in the traditional art of 'Tenun Ikat' (weaving), a craft primarily practiced by women. Weaving holds particular significance as it encapsulates varied facets of life, bridging both traditional and contemporary contexts. Notably, NTT boasts distinctive regional variations in the weaving art, with the indigenous population of Flores typically referring to the woven fabric as 'Lipa' (sarong).

Textile weaving stands as a prominent manifestation of Indonesia's rich cultural heritage, contributing to the nation's distinctive tapestry with a wide array of motifs and patterns. The geographical diversity of Indonesia has engendered a multitude of textile varieties and ornamental motifs, each serving as a reflection of the diverse societal patterns of the populace (Kartiwa, 2007: 9). The four distinct types of woven fabric that exist in Tanahlein village are Kewatek, Senawe, Nowi, and Ua. Kewatek, catering to the female demographic, and Senawe, intended for the male, form a traditional attire ensemble within the Tanahlein

community. Kewatek and Senawe exhibit disparities in terms of chromaticity, motifs, utilitarian functionality, and semiotic connotations. Nowi, denoting a sash, comprises a comparatively diminutive piece of woven, employed in the ceremonial context to honor dignitaries during specific ritualistic ceremonies or venerable personages such as religious authorities and governmental functionaries. Ua, a woven textile of reduced dimensions compared to a stole, fulfills the role of a waistband while donning customary attire.

Practically all ethnic groups within the region of NTT uphold a longstanding tradition of weaving, a cultural practice naturally transmitted across generations. Besides, particular ethnic communities, predominantly comprised of women weavers, allocate their leisure time towards productive endeavors aimed at augmenting their families' economic prosperity through weaving activities (Warifoh cited in Gual 2021). The weaving entails the manual artistry of intertwining horizontal threads (referred to as warp threads) with vertically extended threads (known as weft threads) employing a non-mechanical weaving apparatus. Traditional woven textiles encapsulate profound and venerable symbolic meanings. Indeed, when handling and wearing these traditional woven fabrics, one can almost embark on a journey through a historical chronicle of the society responsible for their design. While woven textiles themselves are lifeless artifacts, they function as dynamic witnesses to a culture, capable of unveiling a facet of its cultural heritage (Tallo, 2003: 17). Indonesia boasts a multitude of weaving techniques and ornamental motifs in its artisanal craftsmanship, encompassing Tenun Songket, Tenun Ikat, Tenun Dobel Ikat, and Tenun Jumputan.

Primarily, women in NTT fulfill vital roles within traditional indigenous societies, primarily performing as homemakers and weavers within the domestic milieu. Their principal responsibilities encompass maternal responsibilities such as childbirth, breastfeeding, child rearing, household management, culinary activities, laundry, weaving, tending to livestock, and even engaging in agricultural and horticultural pursuits. In addition, it is noteworthy that women in NTT typically do not have financial control within their households and frequently encounter limited opportunities for involvement in decision-making processes during collective discourse. Nevertheless, notwithstanding these constraints, women establish their sense of identity and significance through the practice of weaving, an inherently irreplaceable endeavor that bears substantial cultural and sociocultural significance within the local community.

Artistic expressions manifested within the threads of woven fabrics are offered to husbands, children, and family members as emblematic tokens of reverence and affection. Woven textiles also serve as vehicles for introducing and commemorating familial bonds during customary and special events, with particular emphasis on the pivotal role of Tenun Ikat (Neke Nane). The intrinsic appeal of woven textiles within the Tanahlein village community derives from the fusion of religious and spiritual symbolism, interwoven with the artistry of motif composition a recognition of individual authorship. The spiritual resonance of these textiles is discerned in the harmonious synthesis of weaving, dyeing, and design techniques, driven by the beliefs and worldviews of the Tanahlein community. Consequently, the woven artifacts command profound respect, evoke deep affection, and remain enduring sources of pride, embodying the spiritual and cultural tenets that underlie their conception.

Nonetheless, Tenun Ikat (Neke Nane) is currently undergoing a period of transition. The religious messages conveyed through its motifs and the profound sense of a woman's identity embedded in a piece of woven fabric are gradually fading over time. The significance carried within an ancestral piece of woven fabric seems to be vanishing, with only a diminutive fraction of women retaining an understanding of the meaning behind Tenun Ikat (Neke Nane). Due to economic demands, the distinctive spiritual values have been influenced by modernization. Social and economic changes have shifted women's roles in the weaving process.

The women in the village have discontinued cotton cultivation, leading to the loss of skills in cotton management and the disappearance of traditional spinning equipment. The demand for weaving thread is now met with factory-produced threads, and the identical applies to dyeing agents, which are sourced from plant-based materials. With the shifting status of Tenun Ikat (Neke Tane) within the community, this change has also affected the role of women in society. In light of these considerations, questions arise regarding whether Tenun Ikat (Neke Tane) still represents the women's identity. It poses an intriguing subject for

researchers to further investigate the representation of women's identities within Tenun Ikat (Neke Tane) in Tanahlein village.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework utilized in this study encompasses relevant theories that are deemed applicable to the research subject, aiming to achieve the intended objectives. This study is analyzed utilizing the theory of capital, theory of culture and theory of cultural representation.

2.1 Theory of Capital

Bourdieu incorporated the concept of capital, drawn from the field of economics because it possesses attributes that effectively elucidate power dynamics (Bourdieu, 1995). These attributes encompass the following: firstly, capital accrues through investments; secondly, it can be inherited; thirdly, its benefits depend on the opportunities available for its deployment by its possessor. Capital serves as a social relationship, representing a social force exclusively operative within the particular context where it is generated and perpetuated. In practical terms, the value and efficacy of all forms of ownership linked to social classes are contingent upon the distinctive rules governing each particular context. It implies that within a given context, all dispositions and tangible assets (whether economic or cultural) acquire meaning and effectiveness.

Economic capital and symbolic capital are, in fact, exchangeable (Bourdieu, 1995). The conversion of economic capital into symbolic capital can only occur continually with the involvement of the entire group (Bourdieu, 1995). This capital exchange is evident, for example, in gift exchanges. Gift exchanges and all other symbolic exertions such as feasts, ceremonies, visits, and marriages aim to transform self-interested relationships into reciprocal ones. The capital (Bourdieu, 1990) accumulated by a group, including the dynamics of social energy (such as physical strength for battles), economic capital (land and livestock), and symbolic capital (often associated as an adjunct to other forms of capital ownership), can take different forms. While subject to the law of equivalence and hence exchangeable, each form generates specific consequences.

2.2 Theory of Culture

Capital represents symbolic power in effectively signifying diverse aspects and gaining the trust of many. Cultural capital can be exchanged with other forms of capital. The quantity of cultural capital possessed can be leveraged to acquire capital beyond cultural capital. Owners of capital often have lower levels of economic capital compared to their cultural capital within the field of cultural production. The element of cultural production (Bourdieu, 1992) can be divided into restricted production and the large-scale production field. The restricted production field is associated with what is termed as high culture (Adiluhung), such as classical music and literature. In this sub-field, symbolic elements like prestige, dedication, aesthetics, and the like are at stake.

The large-scale production is commonly known as mass culture or popular culture (Bourdieu, 1998), encompassing realms such as television, radio, film production, and 'popular literature.' This sub-field is underpinned by industrial culture, where economic capital plays a dominant role. Cultural capital is shaped by family upbringing and educational experiences, and to some extent, it can operate independently of financial constraints. It can even compensate for monetary deficiencies as part of an individual's or group's strategy to attain power and status.

2.3 Theory of Cultural Representation

Stuart Hall's theory of representation elucidates a process in which meaning is generated through the utilization of language and exchanged among members of a cultural group. Representation serves as the bridge connecting the concepts within our minds with the use of language, enabling us to interpret real-world entities, individuals, events, and the imaginative realm of both actual and fictional objects, individuals, and events (Hall, 2003). Consequently, representation, in brief, is one of the means by which meaning is produced.

In this vein, representation doesn't manifest after it's completed or after an event has occurred. Instead, representation is the connection between mental concepts and language, enabling readers to reference the real world of an object, reality, or the imaginative world of fictional objects, people, or events. Therefore, representation is a process wherein members of a culture use language to generate meaning. Language, in this context, is defined broadly as any system employing signs, whether verbal or non-verbal. The understanding of representation carries an original or inherent meaning intrinsic to itself.

3. Research Method

The study employed a critical social science approach to deliver a relatively fresh theoretical perspective in observing, comprehending, and analyzing social realities. This paramount social science perspective has made a substantial contribution to the advancement of the field of social sciences. Qualitative research is employed to describe and analyze phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts of individuals or groups (Sugiyono, 2010: 102). The study employs two sources of data: primary data and secondary data. Primary data were collected through field observations and in-depth interviews with purposively selected informants, specifically women in the village of Tanahlein who are members of the Tenun Ikat groups, expert weaver mothers, and the head of the PKK (Family Welfare Movement) in Tanahlein, responsible for providing training to these Tenun Ikat groups.

Secondary data were gained from various pertinent literary sources to complement and enhance the analytical discussion, encompassing aspects related to the significance and role of Tenun Ikat for women in Tanahlein, as well as the interplay between Tenun Ikat and the representation of women's identities in the village of Tanahlein. Analysis of the research data employed inductive analysis for its easier to describe. However, at this phase, the research outcomes can be determined by concluding representation of women's identities within Tenun Ikat (Neke Tane) in Tanahlein village

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 The Function and Meaning of Neke Tane

a. The Digniti (Nare Wau)

Neke tane is synonymous with women. In the village of Tanahlein, the skill of weaving is employed to determine the status of women. Any woman proficient in weaving is regarded as having a higher status and is considered ready for marriage, deemed suitable for courtship by men. Conversely, women who lack weaving skills are perceived as not yet prepared for marriage.

b. Dowry (Weli Ele)

During the courtship process, men are willing to provide the requested dowry (Belis) if the woman is skilled in weaving. However, this tradition has been gradually fading over the years due to the influence of

globalization and the fact that newer generations place more emphasis on the outcomes of processes rather than valuing the processes themselves.

c. Protector Overseas (Towe)

Tenun Ikat is also believed to imbue a sense of strength in one's actions. It is evident in the practice of a mother giving a piece of woven fabric to her child who is about to embark on a journey. Woven fabric can also serve as a source of pride for an individual or a family.

d. Gift (Soro)

It is evident when someone or a family hosts guests who will stay overnight. The host's responsibility is to provide a woven blanket or their own woven craft as a body cover when sleeping or feeling cold. This practice is a source of pride for the host.

e. The Heir of Nake Tene (Gene)

Weaving is a craft or handiwork primarily practiced by women and passed down hereditary. This occupation conveys women's contribution to their parents, husbands, children, and families, aiming to assist in fulfilling family requirements while simultaneously showcasing the artistic flair inherent in the wife or daughter. Onlookers may perceive weaving as a light task since it is often carried out during leisure time. However, weaving is, in fact, a challenging and time-consuming occupation, spanning months or even years. It is said that some weavings take approximately 10 (ten) years to complete and are only worn during special ceremonies.

4.2 Neke Tane is a Representation of *Women's* Identity

a. Achieving a Sense of Fulfillment (Joy, Happiness, and Pride)

Women weavers from the four hamlets of Tanahlein Village share a common passion and dedication to weaving, which motivates them to consider it a mandatory activity. In their eyes, weaving is not just a woman's duty but also a source of pride and personal satisfaction. Weaving instills a sense of responsibility in the women of Tanahlein Village because they view themselves as custodians of tradition, contributing to the community by producing woven that reflect the cultural identity of Tanahlein and symbolize the village's culture. Producing a piece of woven fabric called Kewate (traditional cloth) conveys immense joy and pride to the women of Tanahlein. In the interview they said,

Saya puas dengan hasil tenun saya karena menggambarkan jati diri budaya saya, budaya kita sendiri. Jadi, saya merasa bangga bahwa saya tahu cara menenun. (Indonesian: MT, usia 43).

I am content with the results of my weaving because it portrays the essence of our cultural heritage, our very own culture. Therefore, I feel a sense of pride in my ability to weave (English: MT, 43 years old).

Saya sangat bangga. Mereka bertanya, teman saya dan semuanya, bagaimana Anda tahu? Tanpa ada yang mengajarinu cara untuk menenun. Mereka menghargai saya. Anda tidak memiliki ibu, ayah, tetapi tahu cara menenun. (Indonesia: MH, usia 53).

I am immensely proud. My friends and everyone asked me how I knew. No one taught me how to weave. They appreciate me. I don't have parents, but I know how to weave. (English: MH, 53 years old)

The interview results above illustrate that the women of Tanahlein share a sense of satisfaction, where the fulfillment associated with producing a piece of woven fabric goes beyond personal contentment. It's not just about the knowledge and skill of traditional weaving, but weaving expertise is also influenced by genetics or inherited heritage. In addition, due to technological advancements, the women of Tanahlein Village have efficiently introduced and promoted their creations, gaining recognition not just within the local community but also on an international scale. Weavers derive immense pride and happiness from witnessing their creations being utilized or worn by others. The following are diverse expressions of joy, pride, and contentment shared by the interviewees when they know their work is valued:

Saya merasa sangat senang jika orang akan memakai produk tenun saya. Dan tidak hanya bahagia, saya akan tetap bangga atas apa yang telah saya lakukan. Ketika saya pergi ke pesta pernikahan, saya melihat orang-orang mengenakan hasil karya saya. Jadi ada rasa kagum dan bangga. Saya merasa puas! (Indonesia: LW, usia 70)

I experience profound joy when individuals choose to utilize my woven products. Moreover, my happiness is coupled with enduring pride in my accomplishments. As I attend wedding celebrations, observing people adorned in my creations fills me with a sense of awe and pride. I find genuine satisfaction in these moments! (English: LW, 70 years old)

Ketika saya melihat ada sepasang pengantin yang mengenakan pakian adat di acara pernikahan mereka saya merasa senang dan kadang saya terharu! (Indonesia: SW, usia 47)

Observing a newlywed couple don traditional attire for their wedding fills me with happiness, and at times, I am deeply touched! (English: SW, 47 years old)

As family economic demands have increased, numerous weavers have decided to sell their traditional woven products. This decision has inspired them to pass down the art of weaving to the younger generation, assuring the preservation of this craft and the livelihood of the weaving community. Numerous weavers, in particular, have documented their profound satisfaction and pride in witnessing their children embrace weaving and carrying on the tradition. The emotions of joy, happiness, and pride stemming from these activities are closely tied to the deep-seated passion for weaving held by these women.

The women weavers of Tanahlein accept validation of their social roles as weavers from other community members who wear and purchase their woven products. This validation promotes their status within the community and their identity. Furthermore, it elevates the social role of Tanahlein's female weavers to that of "custodians of tradition," preserving the Neke Tane creations and traditional culture among their ethnic group, further fortifying Neke Tane's role as a shaper of their cultural identity.

b. A Shift in Meaning

In communal life, humans agree upon various rules, norms, and languages, and ultimately, they establish signs and symbols as a shared identity. Tenun Ikat holds profound meaning for the Tanahlein villagers, and the Tenun Ikat's Symbols serve as indicators of one's social status, which is highly influential and inseparable from life. It makes Tenun Ikat a crucial segment in the life of Tanahlein Village's community. Four factors influencing the shifting meaning of Tenun Ikat are social status, education, economic factors, and external cultural influences.

1) Social Status

In the bygone days of Tanalein Village, the symbols woven into Tenun Ikat carried the significance that proficient Tanahlein women skilled in weaving and household chores were highly esteemed and regarded as

valuable individuals ready for marriage, often accompanied by a substantial dowry. This perspective aligns with Linton's concept, as elucidated in Kuntowijoyo (2005), where social status encompasses a pack of rights and responsibilities within a society. Those with elevated social standing are positioned higher within the societal hierarchy than individuals with lower social status.

2) Education

The increasing number of Tanahlein residents receiving formal education has led to a lack of time or opportunities for them to engage in weaving. Moreover, there is a prevalent sentiment that the learning and practice of weaving are primarily undertaken by mothers or young girls residing in the village. Consequently, Tenun Ikat and its embedded symbols are now mostly regarded as forms of artistic expression for enhancing aesthetics. This perspective aligns with the views of Donald and Langeveld (as cited in Koentjaraningrat, 2009: 153-154), who consider education as a process or activity aimed at modifying human behavior. Behavior here refers to the responses or actions of an individual and what they do.

3) Economic

Economics is one of the social sciences that studies human activities related to production, distribution, and exchange. The current products of Tenun Ikat have undergone significant changes due to the incorporation of symbols or motifs from other regions into Tanahlein's weaving, which, in turn, affects the color of the threads. The disregard for the underlying meanings of the symbols used in this fusion has led to the fading of the symbolic significance that was once preserved by the ancestors. This practice is driven by consumer demand and the need to expand market reach due to economic pressures.

4) Foreign Culture (Modernization)

The rapid flow of information and telecommunications has led to a trend that points toward the diminishing of cultural preservation values. One of the factors influencing the shifting meanings of Neke Tane in Tanahlein Village is external culture. The interacting process with people from other regions, both conventionally and online, inadvertently affects lifestyle and fashion. For example, the people of Tanahlein Village, when in need of Kewate (a traditional woven fabric) for customary ceremonies, weddings, and other cultural requirements, tend to order or purchase it rather than weaving it themselves.

c. Women and Tanahlein Culture

The facts indicate that all women desire justice and equality of roles with men in all life proportions. Women believe in their potential for growth and development. However, opportunities to develop their creativity and intelligence are hindered by cultural barriers constructed by society. The subordination and emancipation of women are essential topics discussed among intellectuals.

One of the factors contributing to violence and social injustice against women is the patriarchal cultural system. Men are regarded as first-class citizens, while women are considered second-class. This perspective is deeply ingrained in myriad aspects of human life. In Tanahlein society, it emerges that the dignity and status of men are prioritized over women in daily life. It is rooted in the patriarchal cultural beliefs held by the community. As a result, women's roles and positions in the public sphere are restricted across various areas of life, indirectly stifling and undermining their abilities.

In this vein, men are still seen as the regulators and holders of power. This phenomenon has resulted in unfair consequences for women in Tanahlein because they are perceived as less fortunate and their existence

is constantly debated when compared to men. Cultural values that were once seen as sources of order are now regarded as causes of disorder, namely gender discrimination in the roles and positions experienced by Lamaholot women. The depiction of women's low roles and positions in various aspects of life in Tanahlein Village is a consequence of the patriarchal culture existence, which is considered and accepted as a natural order of values.

d. Women and Neke Tane

In the 1950s, the inhabitants of Tanahlein Village considered weaving not just as part of their traditional attire but also as a means of sustaining their livelihoods. Women would gather, collaborating in chores such as knitting cotton into threads, spinning the threads, and ultimately weaving them into fabric. A woman's suitability for marriage was assessed originally based on the quality of her weaving. A finer weave was indicative of a more esteemed woman. The woven products served as a testament to the weaver's meticulousness, patience, and artistic sensibilities, underscoring the profound significance of weaving within the community.

The existence of women plays a vital role in the community. Women are responsible for managing and providing food and clothing for their husbands and children. Their significance and role within the family and society are well-defined. Women's roles are further enriched by the presence of Neke Tane as a tool for creating beautiful works of art. These artistic designs, woven into sheets of fabric, are presented as symbols of respect and affection to their husbands, children, and families. The woven products also serve as a means of introduction and a bond that strengthens familial ties.

e. Women in Tanahlein in Wedding Ceremony

"Heaven lies beneath a mother's feet." This classic expression simultaneously displays the exalted status of a mother, who is, in essence, a woman. Regardless of the treatment women receive in their lives, this expression places women in a special light. In Lamaholot culture, this expression becomes a reality in daily life and social stratification, where women are considered central to society and highly valued. Therefore, even though society doesn't assess a woman's worth materially, they still seek a material equivalent in the form of Mahar (dowry). Dowry is also seen as the primary requirement for validating a woman's transition to her husband's tribe.

For the people of Tanahlein, the value of a woman in terms of dowry is concretely manifested in the form of the value and quantity of elephant ivory, which is difficult to get. Elephant ivory became prominent during the early spice trade, including the trade-in fragrant sandalwood. Generally, the size and quantity of ivory depend on a girl's social status, the type of marriage arrangement, and the negotiation abilities of the groom's family with the bride's family. Furthermore, a woman's education is sometimes also considered a factor in determining the dowry.

f. Traditional Marriage System in Tanahlein Village

In the Tanahlein village, there are several marriage systems. The first one is Gete Behe or Pana Gete (conventional engagement). In this type of marriage, the process initiates with an official proposal from the groom's family to the bride's family, following the customary traditions of the bride's family. The second is Bote Kebarek, which is carried out without telling the girl involved. The approval process only involves the families of the groom and the girl and takes place on the street when the girl is leaving her home. The girl's leaving is informed in advance by her parents to the groom's family. It allows the groom's family to intercept the girl and forcibly take her to the groom's family's home. This process is usually accompanied by the sounds of gongs and drums. This type of marriage is rare nowadays.

The subsequent type of marriage is Plae or elopement, which derives from the disapproval of a romantic relationship by the parents or family members of either the bride or when the bride's family opposes the relationship. In such scenarios, both partners mutually decide to flee to a different location. Alternatively, if the bride's family rejects the relationship, the bride may opt to leave her parental home and reside with the groom's family to facilitate further marriage arrangements. The fourth category of marriage is Meja Lei Bola, which happens when the woman becomes pregnant before completing the formal marriage proceedings. Nevertheless, the engagement ceremony is still conducted, and the groom's family is obligated to provide an additional dowry or bridal compensation as a penalty for the out-of-wedlock pregnancy.

The fifth category, known as Liwo/Nawo Blaki, takes place within the context of an ongoing marriage process. In this scenario, male family members relocate and reside in the bride's family home because the marriage ceremony is conducted before the completion of customary procedures. During this period, both the groom and the bride cohabit with the bride's family until all customary procedures, including the payment of dowry, are successfully concluded.

The sixth type of marriage, known as Liwo Weki/Dekip Kenube, involves the groom moving to reside in the bride's household. This arrangement exerts pressure on the bride's parents to consent to their daughter's marriage with the groom. Additionally, there is the practice of Kawin Beneng, characterized by offering a daughter for marriage through active efforts to introduce her to potential suitors in other villages, aiming to secure an appropriate dowry for the bride's family. Kawin Bukang represents a form of levirate marriage, where it is assumed that the wife, after marriage, becomes the property of her husband's clan or tribe. Consequently, if her husband passes away, she can be married to her late husband's biological brother or a man from the same tribe as her husband. Conversely, if she marries a man from a different tribe than her husband's, her husband's tribe is entitled to receive the dowry or bride price from the marriage.

Wua Gelu Malu marriages, on the other hand, involve a reciprocal union between two tribes. This type of marriage is carried out to maintain the dowry within the same tribe. Besides, this model is highly economical because the customary dowry presentation ceremony is omitted, eliminating the need for expenses associated with traditional ceremonies typically held during the dowry exchange. Lastly, there is the Kawin Bluwo, a type of marriage where a married man takes another woman as his wife. It is typically done out of necessity, such as when the woman is already pregnant, to establish the paternity of the child she is carrying.

g. Marginalization of *Women's* Rights

The marriage models prevalent in Tanahlein society, as described above, have resulted in the marginalization of women's rights. It can be observed in marriage models such as Bote Kebarek, Liwo Weking/Dekip Kenube, Kawin Beneng, and Kawin Bluwo, all of which disregard women's rights to choose and determine their life partners. Nevertheless, women consistently find themselves in a disadvantaged position within this system. Rejection is not always an option since these practices are deeply rooted in traditional customs passed down through generations. Refusal carries consequences, including the disgrace it brings upon parents and all the family members.

h. The Nature of Dowry and Its Consequences

As elucidated earlier, the concept of dowry (Mahar) holds a pivotal role in bolstering the status of women within a patrilineal society while also securing an honorable position for the woman's family within the groom's lineage. In the context of Tanahlein Village, a woman's societal role predominantly centers on her role as a mother. Furthermore, the dowry's roles are as a symbol of familial cohesion, simultaneously signifying the formal transition of a woman into her husband's tribal or clan affiliation. Consequently, women in Tanahlein enjoy a safeguarded status within their social interactions, with the societal imposition of

customary penalties, including items such as ivory or traditional woven sarongs, serving as deterrents against any derogatory actions or labeling directed at Tanahleln women.

Nonetheless, the dowry system has evolved into a root cause of violence against women. It occurs when dowry demands escalate to an excessively high level that surpasses the financial capabilities of the groom and his family. Additionally, exorbitant dowries can impose significant psychological burdens on men, making it challenging for them to marry women from higher social strata. Consequently, many women may remain unmarried. Moreover, the dowry system has led to husbands neglecting their wives and children, placing a strain on the family's finances. Therefore, while the dowry tradition holds noble values and serves as a form of respect for a woman's dignity and honor, it is crucial to maintain it with simplification.

In this regard, after the groom provides the dowry, the bride reciprocates by providing gifts to the groom to take home. The value of these gifts should ideally be at least equal to the amount of the dowry. This way, both parties share an equitable burden in the marriage process. Therefore, it is essential to establish an agreement that involves customary elders and employs an informal approach within the community.

Furthermore, the marriage process becomes excessively protracted due to customary practices, primarily the issue of the dowry (Mahar). Even before the actual wedding, there is the Koda Kiring, a customary meeting involving both the extended families of the bride and groom, not just the biological parents as is common in Java and more developed regions in the country. Typically, Koda Kiring can last through the night, for several days, until an agreement is reached. It naturally incurs substantial expenses. Therefore, it is imperative for the community and authorities within the community, such as customary elders, landowners, tribal leaders, and others, to engage in deep deliberations regarding the essence of the dowry. It can help dispel negative assumptions about the dowry burden, ultimately benefiting Lamaholot women.

5. Conclusion

The traditional weaving practiced in Tanahleln Village holds its charm in the profound religious and spiritual connotations it carries, seamlessly interwoven with the artistry displayed in the meticulous design of unique motifs. Nevertheless, the evolving social and economic landscape has brought about a transformation in the roles of women within the weaving process. Presently, women in the village have ceased the cultivation of cotton, leading to the erosion of cotton-handling skills and the abandonment of traditional spinning apparatus. They now rely on commercially produced threads and natural plant-based dyes. Similarly, a segment of women who were once proficient weavers has since discontinued their weaving activities.

In the Tanahleln village today, only a small number of girls still intend to learn and engage in weaving despite various impediments. Significant changes have also taken place, where women's social role in contemporary society is on the decline. This is evidenced by the diminishing social functions of women's woven creations. For instance, their role in paying the bridal price (Belis), expressing gratitude, or fulfilling customary fines that once necessitated the gifting of specific woven items with particular meanings has been replaced with money or other valuable items. As the status of weaving within society shifts, it also impacts the position of women within the community.

The research findings lead to the conclusion that four central themes describe how female weavers in Tanahleln Village establish strong connections with weaving, contributing to the formation of their identity and cultural heritage. These themes encompass the preservation of weaving traditions through the acquisition and exchange of knowledge, the attainment of social support from their families and the community, the continuation of weaving traditions by creating textiles that symbolize the ethnicity and culture of Tanahleln Village and finally, the fulfillment experienced through their weaving endeavors.

The women weavers in Tanahleln Village take great care to ensure the preservation and continuity of their weaving traditions, thus enabling the next generation of women to contribute to the Tanahleln community through weaving. They take immense pride in displaying their authentic identity when they don their traditional attire. The success of these female weavers in designing and upholding Tenun Ikat is essential for

gaining social support and recognition from various members of the Tanahlein Village community. Consequently, these female weavers radiate an exceptional sense of happiness and pride rooted in their ability to make meaningful contributions to their community and cultural heritage through their weaving endeavors.

Moreover, the attainment of women weavers in solidifying their status as traditional weavers within the cultural framework of Tanahlein Village is rooted in the meanings they construct through social interactions within their community. Given that one's self-identity is regarded as an "accumulative outcome of socialization," the women of Tanahlein Village have effectively constructed a cultural identity as 'weavers,' even as the nature of their weaving practice evolves across various textile forms.

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