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Belis Ivory in the Lamaholot Tradition

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Abstract. This research method uses normative and empirical. At the normative level, namely using the existing literature and at the empirical level with data directly from the interviewees, including the webinar that was held on November 7, 2020. Belis is a very important element in the marriage customs of the people in NTT, especially in Lamaholot. The giving of belis by the prospective groom to the prospective bride isn't only for proposing but also a symbol of the unification of the family of the prospective groom and also the family of the prospective woman. Belis ivory elephant is belis that has the most important meaning. However, in giving the elephant ivory belis, social status greatly affects this. The higher the social status of women, the more elephant ivory belis given.

Keywords. belis, lamaholot

Introduction

Law is a set of rules that regulate the relationship between humans with one another in social life. The law consists of norms or rules, both written and unwritten so that certain criteria are needed in human attitudes, actions or behavior in order to achieve peace through harmony between order and peace, or between discipline and freedom.

Prior to the enactment of the RI Law on marriage, the provisions, procedures, and validity of a marriage for Indonesians were generally based on their respective religious and customary laws. According to customary law, marriage is a bond between a man and a woman to form a household which is carried out according to their customs and religion by involving the families of both parties, relatives and friends.[1]

In Indonesia, the marriage customs in each region have their own differences and characteristics. This also applies to the area of East Nusa Tenggara, especially the Lamaholot area. In the marriage custom in Lamaholot, the prospective groom gives belis to the prospective woman's family as the highest form of appreciation for the woman.[2]

“Belis” is a very important element in the marriage custom in Lamaholot. One of the belis that is considered to have the highest value is the elephant ivory belis. Although the people of the Lamaholot region don't raise elephants and their livelihoods are mostly farmers and fishermen, elephant tusks have been made into belis for hundreds of years.

But in the Lamaholot community, belis always pose a complicated problem. The discussion about giving elephant ivory belis by men to women is about how much elephant tusks should be given. Social status is also a measure in determining the number and size of tusks.

The essence of belis is to support the dignity of a woman in a patrilineal life and so that a woman's family has a place of honor in front of a man's family. For the Lamaholot community, the position of women is the position of a mother. In addition, belis is also a symbol of unification between male and female families, as well as a sign that a woman has officially moved to her husband's tribe.[3]

Therefore, the meaning of belis itself is very important for the Lamaholot community. Apart from being considered a status symbol, it's also considered very sacred. Because it's a tradition descended from ancestors hundreds of hundred years ago. What are the views of the Lamaholot community leaders on religious marriages?

Research Method

This research method uses normative and empirical. At the normative level, namely using the existing literature and at the empirical level with data directly from the interviewees, including the webinar that was held on November 7, 2020.[4]

Research Results and Discussion

In the Lamaholot community, this indigenous tribe is very unique, they really appreciate women. The lamaholot community also makes belis a condition in the tradition of marriage between a man and a woman. The uniqueness of this belis is very unique, different from society in general, this belis in the lamaholot community isn't only made of wealth, money, gold to become belis in marriage but uses elephant ivory stems for a wedding, this belis must be paid by the man to the bride who will marry him become a legal wife in the future.[5]

Belis in the marriage of the lamaholot community in the form of elephant tusks given by the prospective groom to the prospective bride's family is a form of extraordinary appreciation to the lamaholot woman. Lamaholot customary rules, if the man and his family have fulfilled, given or delivered the belis to the residence of the woman's parents, and the woman's family has given a reply from the belis in the form of silk cloth, lipa (sarong), kwatek (woven cloth), clothes, bracelets, necklaces and gold that are filled in the cupboard, then they have been declared legally valid as husband and wife, even though there hasn't been an Islamic marriage contract through a female guardian.[6]

Belis is included in the gift category, although according to the adat rules of lamaholot, belis is an absolute requirement for a man to fulfill if he wants to marry a lamaholot woman. As for grants in Islamic law, the law is sunnah. The process of proposing to a girl among the Lamaholot tribe, East Flore district, East Nusa Tenggara, is unique. Although the people of this area don't keep elephants and their livelihoods are mostly farmers and fishermen, elephant tusks have been Belis since hundreds of years ago. In Lamaholot society, belis always cause complicated problems. The most difficult discussion between the family of the woman and the man is about how much elephant tusk the man should give as a belis for the prospective wife.[7]

Social status becomes a measure of determining the number and size of tusks. The prospective wife comes from a family with a high social status, the number of tusks is much more and longer. If the girl comes from a modest family, the number and size of the tusks can be compromised.[8] The number of tusks to woo a woman ranges between 1 and 7 sticks. The number of seven sticks usually applies among nobles or prominent people. Ordinary people generally Three sticks. The price of elephant ivory varies, from Rp. 13 million to Rp. 100

million per stem depending on it's size. The essence of belis is to support the dignity of a woman in Patrilineal life, and so that a woman's family has a place of honor in front of a man's family. For the Lamaholot community, the position of women is the position of a mother.[9]

In addition, belis is also a symbol of unifying male and female families, as well as a sign that a woman has officially moved to her husband's tribe. Therefore, Lamaholot women in the eyes of men always get protection in their social interactions. Any negative labeling carried out against Lamaholot women can be subject to customary fines for the perpetrators. The form of the fine can be in the form of ivory, traditional weaving gloves or others. The fines vary according to the type of violation and the request of the woman's family. The elephant tusk appeared when Portuguese troops came to try to colonize the archipelago. When they came to exploit the island of Flores, in their boats there were many elephant tusks which were very foreign according to Flores residents, because there really were no elephant animals. Gradually, when a man wants to propose to a woman, elephant tusks also become something sacred to be given to the family of the woman he desires as something sacred that must be given to a woman's family as a substitute because the man will marry a daughter who has been raised from childhood by someone else. His parents will change tribes and the responsibility of the parents to his prospective husband after marriage later.

Elephant ivory is also considered as a protector of honor for *kebarek lamaholot* so it's not easy for men to play with it. Elephant ivory is seen as an important element in lamaholot marriages because it has noble values and as a unifying symbol for men and women. Elephant ivory is not only as a binder of marital relations between husband and wife, or between male families, but the entire community of lamaholot in a region. The marriage has a sacred value that is widespread, holy, and dignified which is more socialist. Elephant tusks are a symbol of the highest respect for a girl who is about to marry. Appreciation for the trust, honesty, sincerity, friendliness possessed by the lamaholot women. Also helping to raise the degree of our parents and in-laws in front of customs and the wider community. Raising the degree of our tribe, both to the tribe of women's families, as well as other tribes who also apply the lamaholot custom. Ignoring this provision will also have the opposite effect. Our parents, in-laws and tribes will be looked down upon by the wider community and in the presence of customs, therefore, the burden will be felt if a man who marries a lamaholot woman hasn't fulfilled this customary obligation.[10]

Elephant ivory is considered an appropriate symbol because it is a special object that isn't owned by many others and is very difficult to obtain. Elephant tusks are considered as *marwah kebarek lamaholot (lamaholot women)* who are highly respected and privileged. Elephant ivory is also considered as a protector of honor for *kebarek lamaholot* so it's not easy for men to play with it. Elephant ivory is seen as an important element in lamaholot marriages because it has noble values and is a symbol of unifying men and women.

Conclusion

Belis is a very important element in the marriage customs of the people in NTT, especially in Lamaholot. The giving of belis by the prospective groom to the prospective bride isn't only for proposing but also a symbol of the unification of the family of the prospective groom and also the family of the prospective woman. Belis ivory elephant is belis that has the most important meaning. However, in giving the elephant ivory belis, social status greatly affects this. The higher the social status of women, the more elephant ivory belis given.

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