



SANGKĒP:

Jurnal Kajian Sosial Keagamaan

DOI: 10.20414/sangkep.v2i2.

p-ISSN: [2654-6612](#) e-ISSN: [2656-0798](#)

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Jurnal Kajian Sosial Keagamaan

THE SEMBEQ SENGGETENG RITUAL PRACTICE AND ITS EFFECT ON THE DECLINE OF AN EARLY AGE MARRIAGE IN LOMBOK

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Keywords:

Sembeq senggeteng, ritual, symbol, meaning, early age marriage

Abstract

The Sembeq Senggeteng is a unique traditional rite practiced by the indigenous people of East Lombok, particularly in Lekor Village, with the purpose of binding young people's hearts and discouraging early marriage. This ritual has been passed down through generations and holds deep symbolic significance, reflected in the intricate offerings used during the ceremony. This article will discuss one of the Sasak tribe's rituals known as Sembeq Senggeteng, which serves to prevent early marriage by reciting incantations that weaken their desire to marry, and even make them uninterested in forming romantic relationships with the opposite sex. This study explores the ritual process, symbolic meanings of the offerings, and its impact on preventing early marriage. Using a qualitative method and phenomenological approach, the research highlights the cultural values embedded in each aspect of the ritual. The offerings in Sembeq Senggeteng symbolise different parts of the human body: betel leaves represent the skin, areca nut symbolises the heart, lime stands for bones, rice represents meat, and thread signifies veins. These symbolic elements reflect the spiritual and philosophical beliefs of the community. Findings indicate that the Sembeq Senggeteng ritual plays a crucial role in delaying early marriage, reinforcing community values, and fostering social responsibility among young people. Given its effectiveness, this tradition has the potential to be recognised and implemented as a cultural approach to reducing early marriage rates in Lombok. Government support and promotion of such local wisdom can strengthen cultural preservation and social development in the region.

Vol. 8, No. 1, 2025

 10.20414/sangkep.v2i2.

Submitted: April. 23th, 2024

Accepted: April. 18th, 2025



A. INTRODUCTION

Lombok is noted for its rich diversity of customs, traditions, and cultures. Marriage, traditional gatherings, death rites, medical ceremonies, and so on are examples of traditions that have been passed down in society in the form of colloquial language and culture (Naamy, 2023). Tradition is also defined as something that has been passed down through generations in the shape of symbols, principles, materials, items, and piracy by predecessors or ancestors (Hamdi et al., 2023; Wiasti, 2022). Certain rituals are also done by the community groups that carry it out as a hereditary tradition. There are also various rituals done by the community groups that carry it out as a hereditary tradition (Kapitány, et.al., 2020). Rituals based on this tradition frequently include aspects of magic and serve specific objectives in their execution, depending on the needs and beliefs of the individuals who perform the ritual. Ritual activities are typically restricted and cannot be performed carelessly (Lizzio, 2007).

The sembeq senggeteng ritual is related to rituals that have aspects of religious-magical beliefs that are still practiced by the local people of Lombok (Andayani et al., 2021; Fahrurrozi, 2015). The tradition of sembeq senggeteng is unwritten tradition but has been practiced in local communities for decades. Sembeq senggeteng is a Sasak community symbolic tradition with a significant meaning. Sembeq Senggeteng is more than just a mantra, lelakaq tembang, or Sasak tribal poems whose language is thought to hold supernatural and mystical implications; it also contains Allah's names. This implies that Allah is the source of all issues and desires. The sembeq senggeteng ritual is performed with the intention of "binding" someone feeling, so that they do not marry when they are child age or postpone marriage until they are adults.

Sembeq senggeteng rituals are performed not only by teenagers to postpone marriage, but also by parents who wish their children to succeed in school. The accomplishment in question is being able to continue education until college without first getting married. Because each is the duty of the parents, the Sasak tribe values are not allowed to marry while studying. They will be devastated if their children suddenly marry. As a result, individuals pursuing undergraduate education are linked with the sembeq senggeteng tradition to safeguard their children from

unproductive things such as romantic connections and the urge to marry at an early age. With this ritual, it is claimed that the person concerned would not be disturbed by the negative impact of the surrounding environment, allowing the education pursued to flow smoothly and according to the target. Furthermore, the goal of coupling *sembeq senggeteng* is for their offspring to be physically mature, psychologically, socially, and monetarily successful before entering into marriage, so that the wanted family can be realized when they marry.

The purpose of the article is to comprehend the implementation process and symbolic meaning of the *sembeq senggenteng* sacred practice in the Lektor community of Janapria, Central Lombok. The reason for selecting Lektor village is not only because the *sembeq senggenteng* ritual tradition was born and flourished there, but also because the majority of the people still practice it in this millennium. Marriage is viewed as one of the recommendations contained in religious values as well as cultural values as the people of Lombok in general in the context of Lektor village. However, other issues that are more matrealistic in character, like as economic readiness, are marginalized. This thus necessitates the community, particularly every parent, devising a method to prevent their children from entering into marriages in which they are not financially or mentally prepared. Simultaneously, the people of Lektor village employ this indigenous wisdom as an alternative approach to prevent early marriage.

The ritual of *sembeq senggenteng* is extremely complex, with each step having a symbolic meaning and philosophical value. This symbolic meaning will be examined in this study. The ritual is carried out by parents and children who have consented to participate in order to prevent their children from marrying at an early age. Early marriage is a problem for the Sasak people in Lombok in general, and Lektor village in particular. As a result, the role of *sembeq senggenteng* in the community is critical. The ritual, in addition to preventing early marriage, also serves to curb harmful social behaviors that deviate from the community's established social norms. The ritual, in addition to preventing early marriage, also serves to curb harmful social behaviors that deviate from the community's established social norms. As a result, this article will also look at the social functions of *sembeq senggenteng* that the people of Lektor village have developed and believe in.

Few scholars have written on the sembeq senggenteng rite. Among the researchers who have written about this ritual is Adita Masrori ini (2020), who evaluated the process of executing the ritual when parents are concerned about the future of their children. Parents send their children to the belian to be fitted with sembeq senggeteng in exchange for offerings (apah andang). According to Aini, this tradition has fulfilled the definition of custom recognized by Islamic law (Aini, 2020). According to Sumerah (2019), the sembeq senggeteng rite is an endeavor to mature the age of child marriage. Afrina and Karyadi and Hamdi's (2021) essay on Belian Sasak in the Tegeteng ritual in Barabali village, Batukliang, Central Lombok shows similarities and differences with the sembeq senggenteng ritual. The Tegeteng ritual is more closed and has no opening tools except for the belian who has access to open the ties, making this ritual highly dangerous. Unlike the sembeq senggenteng ceremony, which can be opened by anybody after being prepared by the belian (Afrina & Karyadi, 2021). Saipul Hamdi et al. (2023) investigated the Nede ritual, which mixes traditional rituals with Islam. The meaning of the symbols contained in this intricate ritual process is akin to the sembeq senggenteng ritual. Exploring the meaning of the sembeq senggenteng rite is unique in these writings, especially given its function as an alternate remedy to the growth of early marriage.

B. METHODS

This research employed a qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach. The phenomenological technique is utilized to investigate the symbolic meaning of the sembeq senggeteng rite in Lekor village, Central Lombok. Phenomenology tries to reveal, examine, and comprehend people's experiences in a phenomenon, as well as its distinct and unique context to the degree of "belief" of the individual concerned. The phenomenological approach seeks to describe the meaning of life experiences shared by a group of people, as well as the meaning of specific concepts or phenomena, by delving into the structure of human consciousness (Neuman, 2011).

This study lasted six months (January to June 2023) in Lekor village, Janapria, Central Lombok. The reason for picking this hamlet as a research venue is that the community is still rich in cultural values and traditions passed down from their forefathers, including the practice of the sembeq senggeteng ritual. The sembeq

senggenteng rite is still seen as a potent weapon against early marriage. The execution of this ritual is a complex process with multiple meanings derived from the symbols used. In this study, the informants are belian, religious leaders, those involved in the ritual's performance, and the village government. Participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation were employed to collect data.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Sembeq Senggeteng Ritual and Its Symbolic Meaning

Rituals, according to O'dea Thomas, are symbolic modifications of events that cannot be adequately communicated through other mediums (Wahid, 2022). Rituals reflect feelings in a logical rather than psychological manner, therefore rituals integrate attitudes into a powerful heightened self-awareness. When dealing with other sacred items, rituals demonstrate a defined system of behavior (O'Dea & Yinger, (1961). Meanwhile, Koentjaraningrat claims that ritual is a way for humanity to connect with the sacred; this is religion in action. Myths, as well as social and religious norms, are created and maintained by rituals. Rituals can be personal or group in nature. Prayers, dances, dramas, and utterances like "amen" are all examples (Koentjaraningrat, 1962).

The sembeq senggeteng rite performed in Lekor Village, Janapria, Central Lombok, is a long-standing custom in this village. This rite is a hereditary tradition that is continuously practiced and passed down to future generations, ensuring that the tradition carries on in the lives of the inhabitants of Lekor Village. This is done because this practice is thought to be beneficial to people's life, particularly for parents who want their children to be successful in completing their schooling and finding the perfect match (Trillò et al., 2022; Xygalatas et al., 2022).

The catchphrase is inextricably linked to sembeq senggeteng. The history of the creation of this ritual cannot be separated from the habits of ancestors in ancient times who frequently asked for guidance on solutions to life problems they faced by meditating in places considered sacred (maliq) such as tombs, caves, swamps, and mountains (Asif & Weenink, 2022; Kapitány et al., 2020). They got spells from otherworldly beings through their austerity. In ancient times, the

sembeq senggeteng ritual was performed to preserve the family lineage so that their offspring would not marry people who were mistaken and shirked, particularly from descendants who had selak knowledge. Selak originally is a human who transforms into a "ghost" and fly at night. Selak frequently wanders around hunting for people who are giving birth and draining the blood from the newborn. Because the science of selak is passed down to the child, and girls are more likely to become selak. This knowledge is difficult to eradicate and is thought to be passed down for up to seven generations. As a result, the science of sembeq senggeteng can fight off and control feelings for selak descendants who want to marry.

The sembeq senggeteng rite is one of the Sasak people's indigenous wisdoms. The sembeq senggeteng ritual is an unwritten tradition that is still widely practiced in the Lekor rural community. The origins of this rite are inextricably linked to the lives of Sasak people, both ordinary and intellectual, who continue to employ and believe in "mantras" to solve various difficulties in their daily lives. Sembeq senggeteng is information in the form of spells owned by particular people and passed down from generation to generation to those who have the right to inherit it since employing this mantra must be done under the conditions owned by the "belian" or mantra owner itself. Sumitri (64 years old) said, "this sembeq senggeteng mantra has been passed down from generation to generation as a legacy of our ancestors,. Our parents used to pass on good knowledge to us that is still applicable in today's world, and they are not arbitrary in their knowledge transfer. I have three siblings, however the child who receives the sembeq senggeteng mantra is the one who merits it the most and will be chosen based on their daily behavior (Interview with Sumitri on March 30, 2023).

Sembeq senggeteng is a Sasak symbolic custom that has a deep meaning for each need and step of the implementation process. Sembeq senggeteng is more than just a mantra; it is a collection of poetry (*lelakaq tembang*) written by the Sasak people, whose language is thought to hold supernatural meaning, and the reading of the sembeq senggeteng mantra contains the names of Allah. This implies that all concerns and demands are addressed to Allah, rather than to other beings. This indicates that every difficulty the community faces, even if it incorporates mantra elements, must be returned to God.

The residents of Lekor village view the sembeq senggeteng ritual as a weapon to bind the heart of a kid or someone, so that they do not marry at an early age. He or she will marry at an ideal age according to the family's intentions. Senggeteng is derived from the words geteng, which means bind, and senggeteng, which means binder, therefore sembeq senggeteng means binding spell. This is consistent with the remark of one source, Heriati (45 years old) stated because it is used to bind, so it is called sembeq senggeteng. If it has been coupled, the purpose is simple to make the kid has no desire to marry at the early age (Heriati, 2023).

According to the head of the adat Siah (60 years old), sembeq senggeteng is a weapon for our children to be diligent in school and help our relatives who are in trouble because of their children's behavior. The idea is that if parents want their children to be partnered with sembeq senggeteng, it signifies that the parents are in trouble because their children are difficult to control and refuse to listen to what their parents say. Which parents aren't bothered by their children's inappropriate behavior? (Siah, 2023).

The community does not instantly carry out the process of implementing the sembeq senggeteng ceremony, but there are prerequisites and stages that must be met. These criteria and stages have a deep meaning and are carried out in accordance with the guidelines for carrying out the sembeq senggeteng ceremony devised by their forefathers. This suggests that today's society just repeats what earlier predecessors created and carried out.

Parents who want their children to be fitted with the sembeq senggeteng ritual must first go to belian or healer to discuss if their children can be fitted with the ritual or not, as well as what must be done and prepared in this ritual process. After the child agrees and is declared eligible, the parents must make offerings (*apah andang*) as an absolute necessity if the belian want to connect sembeq senggeteng to their child. Before being fitted with sembeq senggeteng, the youngster will be bathed with flower water using a white cloth throughout the implementation phase. The belian will then undertake the mantra recitation process (*bejambeq*), after which the belian will attach the sembeq senggeteng by circling the child's head with sembeq (*jampi*) from right to left.

Picture. 1. Offerings or *Apah Andang*

(Personal document, March 2023)

Rice, betel leaves, areca nut, lime, thread, metal, white cloth, and flowers are among the elements used in the offerings. Each item that must be present in the offerings and has a meaning, such as rice is replacing meat, betel leaves are replacing skin, areca nut is replacing the heart in order to make our hearts are straight like areca nut trees, lime is replacing bones, thread is replacing veins. When betel leaves, areca nut, and lime are blended together they will form a scarlet liquid that looks like blood, and that blood becomes human flesh, skin, and bones. The white cloth represents purity, and the flowers are meant to give the child being coupled a positive aura. If no offerings are provided, belian will not pair sembeq senggeteng (Sumitri, 2023).

The process of implementing the sembeq senggeteng ritual is as follows: first, parents go to the belian's house to discuss whether their kid is eligible to be paired with sembeq senggeteng, what offerings must be brought, and the day of the sembeq senggeteng ritual will be implemented. Second, bring the kid to the belian's house. When a kid is deemed eligible, his or her parents will provide offerings. Third, bathing the kid with floral water and a white cloth is thought to remove unfavorable auras from the body. Fourth, bejambeq is the chanting of mantras, followed by the belian circumnavigating the head of the kid coupled with sembeq senggeteng rite from right to left.

Symbolic Meanings of Sembeq Senggeteng Ritual Offering Tools and Materials

The Meaning of Offering Component in the Sembeq Senggeteng Ritual, As previously stated, the sembeq senggeteng rite must include offerings. The ingredients in these offerings are highly diverse and have symbolic meaning and implications. The following describes the symbolic connotations of the elements in the offerings, namely, Betel leaves, areca nut, and lime

The initial symbols in the offerings in the sembeq senggeteng ritual, or in other Sasak traditional ceremonies in general, are betel leaves, areca nut, and lime. The emblem of betel leaf represents human skin, areca nut represents the heart, and lime represents bones. The Sasak people have a history of bringing betel leaves and areca nut emblems in offerings because betel leaves and areca nut are plants with many characteristics that cannot be separated when combined. When betel leaves, areca nut, and lime are combined, they generate a red tint that resembles blood. Blood flows and unites in the human body, symbolizing life. The unification of blood in the body results in the unity of the human self with the creator. This implies that the Sasak people have hopes and prayers to be one with the creator.

Picture 2. *Betel leaves, areca nut, and lime*



(Personal document, April 2023)

Rice is one of the components used in the *sembeq senggeteng* ritual offerings. Rice is perceived as a meat substitute. Rice is connected with sustenance for fundamental human requirements. When the Sasak people's basic necessities are addressed, their lives will prosper. Because rice is a symbol of prosperity, the Sasak people believe that it should be presented as an offering at the *sembeq senggeteng* ritual and other Sasak traditional rites. The presence of rice can ensure that the community's life in this world is more affluent and happy.

Picture 3. Rice



(Personal document, May 2023)

Thread, There is a white thread in the shape of a circle in the offerings. The thread in this gift is a substitute for the veins in the human body. The inclusion of a loop-shaped thread in the *sembeq senggeteng* ritual indicates a readiness to knit the connection of brotherhood with the concept of keeping and binding each other.

Picture 4. Thread



(Personal document, May 2023)

Ancient Chinese Coins, The Sasak people believe that ancient Chinese coins (Chinese kepeng) contain strong and complete mineral components such as iron, copper, and a type of natural unity. The Sasak people think that the old Chinese coins used in offerings are powerful and durable since they are made of mining commodities such as copper. In addition, old coins represent bravery. Ancient coins are a form of hope to the creator, asking for strength and fortitude to confront all of life's hardships, disasters, and problems.

Picture 5. ancient Chinese coins



(Personal document, April 2023)

hite cloth and flowers, In offerings, white cloth represents the purity and cleanliness of the human soul. The sembeq senggeteng rite teaches people that in order to live in the world, they must have a pure and clean heart. Because whatever is done in this life will be in accordance with the intended expectations when the heart and spirit are pure and clean. The flower symbol represents perfume and a positive vibe in human life.

The Meaning of Time in the Sembeq Senggeteng Ritual Implementation, The community's sembeq senggeteng rite in Lekor village, Janapria, Central Lombok, has a specific time and day. This practice is typically carried out on Fridays and Mondays. Friday and Monday are chosen as particular days for this ritual because the Muslim community believes that Friday is the king of all days, and Friday is regarded a holy day "malik" in Sasak. While Monday is the Prophet Muhammad's birthday, which corresponds to the month of maulid, the ceremony of celebrating Muhammad's birthday is also considered a holy day by the Muslim community.

One of the informants, Hami (70 years old) stated that previous ancestors frequently carried out supernatural world-related activities on Monday, namely the Prophet Muhammad's birthday, such as bathing dagger (keris), bathing patients for (senggeger), the science of captivating women's hearts so that they are liked, and sentegeng, invulnerable (Hami, 2023). The days and months are same, however the time is between the maghrib and isha prayers. Because the children are weak at that time, their aura fades, and sembeq senggeteng works faster and more effectively to restore the positive aura (Indar & Banun, 2023).

The meaning of bathing in this Ritual with flower water and white cloth, Before applying the sembeq senggeteng, the kid or person is bathed in floral water with a white cloth. The elements in the offerings must also be blended as an absolute requirement in this ceremony. The bathing process in this ritual is viewed by the people of Lekor village as a cleaning of negative auras in the child's body. Bathing is done to purify the child's body of bad auras. After everything is clean, a sembeq senggeteng is attached to keep a nice and positive aura bound in the child's body so that the child may focus on his primary goal, which is to complete his schooling. When the goal is met, the senggeteng tie is reopened, allowing the child to marry. If it is not opened, it will have an effect on the child's status as a solitary individual for the rest of his or her life (Hamdi, 2023).

Children who were previously misbehaving become more attentive, diligent, and focused on learning after being exposed to sembeq senggeteng. As a result, not only do the parents benefit socially from the results of this ritual, but so does the community, because the child can actively participate to the future growth of the community (Indar & Banun, 2023). Furthermore, the neighborhood feels protected, since it is no longer preoccupied with juvenile delinquency issues as a result of the installation of this sembeq senggeteng. The community also avoids judicial disputes, including underage marriages in their hamlet, which are blatantly illegal. Parents and those who aid in child marriage shall be arrested and imprisoned. As a result, the sembeq senggeteng ceremony can indirectly control and reduce child marriage (Banun, 2023).

Meaning of Bejambeq, Bejambeq is the technique of belian reciting mantras during ritual practice to a child or someone who want to be associated with sembeq senggeteng. Belian will begin by chewing betel leaves and other components known as "mamaq" in the Sasak culture. Some of the components in the offerings, such as betel leaves, areca nut, and lime, are chewed at the same time during mamaq. The combination of these components is known as "lekoq lekes" in Sasak. The belian then executes the bejambeq step before attaching sembeq senggeteng. In this ritual, the belian rounds the child's head with a mantra from right to left, symbolizing binding and locking. The youngster is untied in the other way, from left to right.

The researcher use George Herbert Mead's symbolic interactionism theory to comprehend the symbolic implications of the offering materials in the preceding ritual. Human activities, according to Mead, are dependent not just on stimulus-response, but also on the meaning assigned to these actions. Mead finds something that bridges the process between stimulus and response, specifically the thinking process in which humans attempt to give meaning to the stimulus before considering various actions to be performed. According to Mead, thinking is a process in which individuals engage with themselves using meaningful symbols. Individuals choose which of the existing stimuli to respond to through the process of interaction with oneself. Individuals do not directly respond to the stimulus, but rather select and chose which stimulus to respond to (Wirawan, 2012).

Herbert Blumer later refined Mead's core concept of symbolic interactionism theory into four key assumptions in symbolic interactionism theory,

including, first, that humans act toward something based on the meaning that the item has for them. Second, the meaning is the consequence of the process of human social interaction, and third, the meaning is transformed and managed by each individual in his connection with the signs he encounters (Blumer, 2012). Based on the concept of this theory, it can be evaluated that the activities of the Lekor village community in the sembeq senggeteng ritual are not actions that are carried out just like that, but rather try to develop a plan first by thinking about numerous things before carrying out the ritual. For example, before traveling to belian, the family discussed their plans, and upon meeting with belian, there was much debate about the criteria that must be followed in order to carry out the ritual of installing sembeq senggeteng.

The symbolism of the tools and phases in the process of performing the sembeq senggeteng ritual are essentially the result of the community's own construction based on the community's beliefs and faith in the presence of a supernatural force that can affect their lives. Individuals in the Lekor village community add significance to these symbols through a process of communication or social interaction during the performance of the sembeq senggeteng ritual. The community takes numerous potential activities in preparing everything linked to the implementation of the sembeq senggeteng ritual based on the meaning assigned to these symbols.

The significance of this ritual activity is consistent with Mead and Blumer's concept of symbolic interactionism, in which humans act toward something based on the meaning that the object holds for them. That meaning is also the outcome of social interaction in society. These meanings are adjusted and handled by each individual in their interaction with the signs they encounter. Because a tradition usually has a tight association with supernatural phenomena, some of the symbols contained in it, both in the form of tools and materials employed, are interpreted by the community by associating them with these supernatural things.

The tegeteng ritual, which is similar to sembeq senggeteng, likewise attempts to bind someone so that they do not marry unless they are untied. Although the goal is the same, the technique and approach are different; the sembeq senggeteng rite is more open to the kid or person to be paired and requires their permission first. Sembeq senggeteng is normally initiated and executed by the

family and the belian, although the tegeteng rite can be conducted by anybody, including neighbors, relatives, or girlfriends, without their awareness. Getengan can be withdrawn if the parents who did it after permitting their children to marry, and if the getengan is performed by others, such as girlfriends, the getengan is typically removed because they already have a new girlfriend. The tegeteng ceremony is a well guarded secret that only the individual involved should be aware of. Meanwhile, in the sembeq senggeteng ceremony, the installation process must be permitted by the individual concerned because he would be personally involved in the implementation process. To avoid unintended consequences, such as the person who paired the sembeq senggeteng dying first, the belian provides the opening sembeq straight when it is coupled. This is done if the belian becomes ill or dies; it has no effect on the patient of this ritual. Because the opening has been prepared in advance and delivered to the parents, it can be opened immediately once the objective has been met. As a result, the employment of sembeq senggeteng will not pose any complications because the binding spell and the opener are performed concurrently.

The Social Function of *Sembeq Senggeteng* Rite

In general, the sembeq senggeteng ceremony serves a societal function by assisting families in achieving their intended goals, particularly in realizing the dreams of their children. This practice benefits not only the family, but the community as a whole, because it can positively influence children's behavior. Children who were formerly wild and immoral become more disciplined and decent. The following are some of the social functions of sembeq senggeteng.

Educational function, According to the people of Lekor village, the objective of parents matching their children with sembeq senggeteng is to ensure that their children's education is not disrupted by their desire to marry in the middle of their schooling. To prepare for this, sembeq senggeteng is paired so that the youngster can focus and concentrate on the process of obtaining a college education. This ceremony can also improve children's passion for schoolwork because the negative aura has been removed (Soliatun & Heriati, 2023).

Preventing Early Age Marriage, The sembeq senggeteng rite also has a societal function in reducing the number of child marriages. The frequency of child

marriages is increasing in Lombok, particularly in Central Lombok. Religious and cultural considerations are invoked to justify child marriage. Marriage is regarded as one of the recommendations contained in religious beliefs as well as cultural values shared by the people of Lombok in general in the context of Lekor village. However, other worldly issues such as economic readiness and so on are set aside. Because of financial difficulties, many families divorce. This issue then necessitates the community, particularly every parent, devising a way to protect their children from entering marriages in which they are not financially or mentally prepared. Simultaneously, the people of Lekor village use the traditional wisdom of sembeq senggeteng as an alternate approach to prevent child marriage. This ritual has been shown to prevent their children from marrying at a young age and from completing their schooling (Sakir and Soliatun, 2023).

The application of the Sembeq Senggeteng rite in the community of Lekor Village as an effort to prevent marriage at an immature age has shown to be highly beneficial. According to research, the application of this practice in the form of ceremonies has been effective to avoid marriage, particularly for couples who are still studying. As a result, many children want to be coupled with this ceremony (Heriati & Indar, 2023).

According to data from the Religious Affairs Office of Janapria sub-district, the number of child weddings in Lekor village in 2023 was zero. This means that no one in Lekor village married before reaching the age of maturity or adulthood, as defined by the applicable legal regulations. As a point of comparison, numerous communities in the Janapria sub-district continue to have incidents of underage marriage.

Avoid Promiscuity, This sembeq senggeteng ritual can also be used to restrict the sexuality of youngsters. Promiscuity, particularly having sexual intercourse with other individuals before marriage, can be avoided by children. The child will grow more obedient and will pay attention to what his or her parents say. This rite also instills in children the value of moral ideals, ethics, and religious teachings that forbid having sex before marriage.

Although this ritual provides various social functions that have beneficial values for the people who perform it, there are also social dysfunctions that have a negative impact on the community, both the people who perform the ritual and

other parties who feel the impact directly or indirectly. First, among these negative effects are those that impede both men's and women's socialization processes. In practice, *sembeq senggeteng* is one of the elements that inhibits socialization with the opposite sex. A youngster that is partnered with *sembeq senggeteng* has difficulty establishing sexual relationships and romance with the other sex.

In fact, it is quite rare for women to be contacted by the opposing sex, and as a result of this routine, women tend to confine themselves and avoid interacting with the opposite sex. Rani (30) said that after being paired with *sembeq senggeteng*, she noticed a significant shift in her ability to be more obedient and simply stay at home. She has no plans to approach males, let alone marry, despite having earlier promised to marry her partner following the national test at Haigh School. Heriati (45) described a shift in attitude in her daughter, who used to be frequently visited by her boyfriend and kept phoning each other every night before being partnered with *sembeq senggeteng*.

Second, it slows down the introduction stage with the opposite sex. Everyone is required to interact with one another regardless of gender. Furthermore, associating with people of the opposite sex gives us insight into how other people think and can help us negotiate issues in other areas of our lives, such as job, family, and love relationships. This allows us to better understand situations and can aid in the resolution of difficulties that may be upsetting us.

Third, there are delays in self-discovery. Knowing who you are is critical, particularly during adolescence when we are urged to interact with others. Furthermore, recognizing one's identity serves as a springboard for an individual's best development. So, self-discovery is the key to the self-development process. This applies not only to professional achievement, but also to other aspects of life such as family, social, and spiritual well-being.

The Effect of the *Sembeq Senggeteng* Rite in Preventing Early Age Marriage

As previously said, *sembeq senggeteng* is a potent instrument held by the inhabitants of Lekor village in an endeavor to discourage early marriage. It involves collaboration between numerous aspects, including social, traditional, and religious factors. *Sembeq senggeteng* can be defined as a tradition and culture that

incorporates inherited information, doctrines, habits, and customs, as well as the manner in which they are transmitted.

According to the various community understandings of sembeq senggeteng described by researchers above, some people continue to practice this tradition because it is considered good and does not conflict with religion, particularly Islamic religious values, which are the religion of the majority of people in this village. Although it is recommended in Islam to marry when you are financially and psychologically capable, which many perceive as marrying at a young age, the community is beginning to recognize the harm produced.

The issue is that not everyone believes in this culture and tradition, which includes the sembeq senggeteng rite. A small portion of the Lekor village community does not believe in this ceremony since they do not believe in mystical and unscientific practices. However, this does not mean that the tradition that has become precious to the people of Lombok has died; there are still some Lombok residents who believe wholeheartedly in the practice of sembeq senggeteng as a weapon capable of overcoming the problem of child marriage. The community is becoming aware of the damage done.

The sembeq senggeteng tradition is also highly relevant to the NTB government program related to the issue of maturing the age of marriage as one of the main development concerns and one of the measures of the performance of the NTB province Medium-Term Development Plan. The issue of early marriage in the NTB region is one of the NTB Provincial Government's assignments. Because of the high percentage of early marriage, this issue frequently draws national attention to NTB (Januarti et al. 2020). According to data from the NTB Province's National Population and Family Planning Agency, the rate of child marriage has reached 70%. Early marriage is connected with the people of Lombok (Khaerani, 2019).

The application of the sembeq senggeteng rite in the community in Lekor Village as an effort to prevent marriage at this age is highly effective. According to the results of observation, the adoption of this ritual has been able to avoid marriage, particularly for couples who are still studying. The data on child marriage

in Lektor Village, which has continued to fall in the last three years, demonstrates the ritual's substantial influence. In 2021, there were 6 child marriage cases in Lektor Village, consisting of 4 women and 2 men, and 4 persons in 2022, consisting of 3 women and 1 man. Meanwhile, the number of child marriages in Lektor Village was zero throughout 2023.

D. CONCLUSION

The sembeq senggeteng ritual is not only sophisticated in its execution, but also in the symbolic meanings contained in the offerings that must be prepared by the family. Families who wish their family members coupled with sembeq seggeteng must prepare offerings for this event. Mantras must be used in this ceremony to bind the patient's heart so that they are not enticed to romance and married before their age is ripe. Belian also gives the family an opening spell to sever the link if they wish their children to marry. This ceremony must be conducted on Mondays and Fridays, two days considered sacred by the Muslim community, especially Muslu Sasak. On one of these two days, you must accomplish anything relating to the mystical, supernatural, or ascetic world.

Among the benefits of this sembeq senggeten rite are the enhancement of children's education, the prevention of promiscuity in youngsters, the prevention of child marriage, and the strengthening of children's character. What is intriguing in the contemporary context is that this ceremony can be used by the NTB provincial administration to reduce the rate of early marriage, which is still very high in NTB. In Lektor village, Janapria, the number of child weddings in 2023 is zero, thus we ask the government to use this local wisdom to be used in various places to limit the number of early marriages that endanger the Sasak community.

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Other source:

Interview with local people:

1. Interview with Heriati on April 8, 2023.
2. Interview with Siah on April 1, 2023
3. Interview with Sumitri on March 30, 2023.
4. Interview with Hami on April 10, 2023.
5. Interviews with Indar and Banun on April March 29, 2023.
6. Interview with Hamdi on April 18, 2023.
7. Interview Indar and Banun on April 14, 2023.
8. Interview with Banun on March 29, 2023.
9. Interview with Wirawan on April 27, 2012.
10. Interview with Soliatun and Heriati on April 11, 2023.
11. Interview Sakir and Amak Soliatun on April 18, 2023.
12. Interview with Heriati and Indar on April 11, 2023.