

**THE HAMLET INTERPRETATION OF THE NGLIMANI TRADITION IN BIBIS:  
A NON-PARTICIPATORY ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY WITH A CULTURAL  
INTERPRETATION APPROACH**

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**Abstract** - *Javanese traditions are a rich and diverse cultural heritage passed down through generations, encompassing not only traditional ceremonies and rituals but also noble values, arts, and manners that shape the identity of Javanese society. The nglimani tradition is an important part of the Javanese cultural heritage. It is a five-month pregnancy ceremony that is performed when a mother is five months pregnant. One of the most prominent legacies of Javanese civilization is the nglimani tradition, a ceremony held when a mother enters her fifth month of pregnancy. This paper focuses on the practice of the aforementioned tradition in Bibis Hamlet, a small village located in Krambilawit Village, Saptosari District, Gunung Kidul Regency, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, starting from the background, procedures for implementing it, the meaning of the tradition, the influence of the tradition on the social and spiritual conditions of the community, and the community's efforts to maintain and harmonize the existence of this tradition. The nglimani ceremony is a moment for the people to ask for blessings from the Creator to ensure safety and smoothness during pregnancy and childbirth. The results show that the village government should maximize the development or expand information about the traditional ceremony and make it more visible or widely publicized to educate the community about the importance of preserving the nation's culture. Community involvement in traditional ceremonies is one of the most fundamental forms of cultural preservation.*

**Keywords:** *Nglimani Tradition, Javanese Rituals, Cultural Interpretation, Pregnancy Ceremony*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Javanese traditions are cultural riches that have been passed down from generation to generation by the Javanese people. This tradition not only includes various traditional ceremonies and rituals but also noble values, arts, and manners that shape the identity of Javanese society. As one of the largest ethnic groups in Indonesia, Java has a very diverse and unique cultural richness, thus attracting the interest of many researchers and tourists from various parts of the world. Javanese traditions are not just a collection of traditional rituals or ceremonies, but rather a system of values and outlook on life that has been embedded in the daily life of Javanese people. From birth to death, every stage of life is colored by various traditions that are full of meaning. This tradition not only regulates the procedures for carrying out a ceremony but also teaches noble values such as politeness, cooperation, and respect for ancestors. Through tradition, Javanese people learn to live in harmony with nature and fellow humans.

In the history of Javanese civilization, various traditions are full of philosophical meaning. One of them is the nglimani tradition, a ceremony carried out when a mother enters her fifth month of pregnancy. This ceremony is not just a mere ceremony but contains noble values related to life, family, and human relationships with the universe. Nglimani is a beautiful portrait of how Javanese people value every stage of life, especially sacred moments such as pregnancy. Bibis Hamlet, a village located on the slopes of Gunung Kidul, holds a wealth of cultural riches that have been passed down from generation to generation. One of the most prominent legacies is the nglimani tradition, a traditional ceremony carried out when a pregnant woman enters her fifth month of pregnancy. This tradition is not just a ritual, but a reflection of the life of farming communities who are very dependent on nature and have a close relationship with ancestral spirits. As an area dominated by karst hills and dry land, the people of Bibis Hamlet have developed a way of life that is adaptive to the environment. Their dependence on nature gave birth to various beliefs and rituals, including the nglimani tradition. This ceremony is a moment for them to ask for blessings from the Creator so that they can be given safety and smoothness in the process of pregnancy and childbirth.

The nglimani tradition is an interesting phenomenon in cultural anthropology studies. This ceremony presents a rich picture of the belief system, social values, and cultural practices of Javanese society. Through in-depth analysis of the nglimani tradition, we can gain a better understanding of the complexity of Javanese culture and how it continues to evolve. The nglimani tradition, as one of Java's cultural heritage, has a wealth of meaning and symbolism that is unique to each region. Bibis Hamlet, a small village located in Krambillimani Village, Saptosari District, Gunung Kidul Regency, Yogyakarta, has a unique and interesting version of the nglimani tradition to study. This article will dig deeper into the practice of the nglimani tradition in Bibis Hamlet, starting from the background, procedures for implementing it, the meaning of the tradition, the influence of the tradition on the social and spiritual conditions of the community, and the community's efforts to maintain and harmonize the existence of the nglimani tradition.

## **2. METHOD**

Non-participatory ethnography is a method in anthropology that allows researchers to study a culture without being directly involved in the daily lives of the people being studied. The Culture Interpretation Theory approach in non-participatory ethnography emphasizes understanding cultural meaning from an insider (emic) perspective. Researchers attempt to interpret the symbols, actions, and cultural values that exist in that society. Steps for the NonParticipatory Ethnographic Method using the Culture Interpretation Theory Approach. The first is selecting the object of study, the researcher chooses a particular group or community that he wants to research based on research interests and data availability. Here the researcher chose the ngilami tradition of the Bibis Hamlet community. Second, regarding data collection such as observations, researchers conducted direct observations of the social interactions of the Dusun Bibis community, interviews, researchers conducted interviews with key informants who were considered to have in-depth knowledge of the culture being studied, such as mothers with children under two years of age and traditional leaders.

## **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **A. Background and History of Nglimani Tradition**

The Nglimani tradition is one of the rituals carried out by the people of Bibis Hamlet, Krambilawit Village, Saptosari District, Gunung Kidul. This tradition has deep historical roots, reflecting the cultural, social, and religious values of the local community. Nglimani is one of the Javanese traditional ceremonies performed when a mother is five months pregnant. The word "Nglimani" comes from "lima", which means the number five. The ceremony is similar to the ngupatan ceremony, which protects the mother and baby from threats of "tolak bala". Nglimani ceremonies are less well known in some regions, but are better known in Javanese society.

Nglimani tradition is a hereditary ritual that has been performed for many years by the people of Bibis Hamlet, a village located in Krambilawit, Gunung Kidul. This ritual aims to honor pregnant women who have entered their fifth month. However, this tradition is not just a mere ceremony, but also has a very deep cultural, social, and religious meaning. In its implementation, the Nglimani tradition reflects the customs and spiritual values typical of this hereditary Javanese culture. Therefore, this celebration has become a very meaningful moment for the local community and an inseparable part of their identity. The high regard for pregnant women in this tradition also reflects the high respect and affection for the life that is growing in the womb. All aspects of value and meaning contained in the Nglimani tradition make it an invaluable part of the cultural wealth of the people of Bibis Hamlet (Rahmani, Mulyani, 2021).

The Nglimani tradition is believed to be a form of respect for ancestors and a means of asking for blessings and safety. In a historical context, this tradition emerged as a response to the spiritual needs of the community, which linked daily life with religious values. The origin of the word "Nglimani" comes from the Javanese word meaning "five," referring to the gestational age that is the focus of the ceremony. This tradition has been around for a long time and is an integral part of the Javanese life cycle. Historically,

Nglimani served as a form of supplication for the safety of the mother and the baby-to-be, as well as an attempt to keep them away from any danger or misfortune, often referred to as “tolak bala”. This tradition has deep roots in community beliefs, where the health of both mother and baby is considered very important. The ceremony is held at night and is attended by various parties, including the dukun, relatives, and closest neighbors. This shows how important social support is in the pregnancy process, where many social roles play an active role in providing protection and prayers for the mother-to-be and baby (Sayem, Repeh, Tumilah: 2024).

The reason why the time 5 months of pregnancy or nglimani is taken there are several reasons including because of the development of the fetus at 5 months of pregnancy, the fetus is large enough and active, so this ceremony aims to invoke safety for both the child and the mother, besides that the tradition and custom of nglimani is part of the traditions and customs of Javanese society that have been preserved through generation after generation. The ceremony is attended by family, relatives, and shamans, all of whom play an important role in the procession of the ceremony. The Nglimani tradition serves not only as a spiritual ritual but also as a means to strengthen social ties in the community.

The ceremony reflects local wisdom that teaches the importance of solidarity and support between people in the face of major life changes, such as pregnancy and birth. As such, Nglimani symbolizes hope and protection for both mother and baby and reflects the values upheld by the local community. The tradition remains relevant today, although some aspects may have changed with the times. Overall, the Nglimani tradition is a reflection of a rich and complex culture, where history, society, and spirituality interact to create meaning in the lives of Javanese people.

## **B. Factors Influencing the Nglimani Tradition**

The nglimani tradition, a five-month pregnancy ceremony in Javanese culture, plays an important role in the lives of Javanese people, especially in terms of pregnancy and religious acceptance. The ceremony not only functions as a religious ritual but also shows the social structure, cultural values, and religious beliefs that develop in Javanese society. This practice is shaped by various social, cultural, and religious aspects. The purpose of this study is to explain the variables that influence the practice of nglimani and the meanings contained in it. a. Social Factors:

Javanese society is known for its hierarchical social structure and strong kinship system. Nglimani serves as a moment to strengthen family ties, introduce the baby-to-be to family members, and strengthen social relations within the existing community in Bibis Hamlet such as Arisan per-RT or Jamiyah Yasin Tahlil. The ceremony is also a symbolic form of family involvement in the pregnancy process and preparation for the birth. The Nglimani tradition is an important ceremony in Javanese culture related to pregnancy, functioning as an expression of gratitude to God and as a symbol of social solidarity. The implementation of this ceremony also reflects the commitment of the community to maintaining customs as a form of gratitude and trust.

b. Cultural Factors:

The nglimani ceremony reflects the noble values of Javanese culture such as 'gotong royong', kinship, and respect for life. These values are manifested in various aspects of the ceremony, including in the way the community participates and contributes. In the Nglimani tradition of the Bibis Hamlet community, there are several meanings in the implementation techniques such as the existence of tumpeng as a form of Gratitude. Nglimani is a tradition that is passed down orally from generation to generation, making it an integral part of Javanese cultural heritage. Knowledge of this ceremony is passed down through stories and practices that continue to be maintained and passed on. The nglimani ceremony is laden with symbolism, including dishes and rituals that symbolize fertility, prosperity, and safety. These symbols have deep meaning and play an important role in completing the meaning of the ceremony. c. Religious Factors:

Although nglimani is a tradition that dates back to before the introduction of Islam to Indonesia, Islam has had a significant influence on the ceremony. Prayers and recitation of holy verses become an important part of the nglimani, integrating the spiritual aspects of Islam into traditional practices. Residents of Bibis Hamlet in holding this Nglimani event usually use the reading of holy verses such as Surah Yasin, Surah Yusuf, and other letters according to the wishes of those who have the celebration. The nglimani tradition is also influenced by local beliefs such as animism and dynamism, which emphasize the importance of asking for safety and rejecting bad luck. These beliefs are integrated in the form of prayers performed during the ceremony.

This Nglimani tradition is a manifestation of Javanese spirituality, realized through prayers and wishes for the safety of the baby-to-be and its mother. This spiritual aspect provides an additional dimension to the ceremony, linking social and cultural practices with religious beliefs. The nglimani tradition is a clear example of how social, cultural, and religious factors can intertwine and shape a ritual practice in Javanese society. The ceremony is not just a religious ritual, but also a social and cultural phenomenon that reflects the values and beliefs that exist in the community. An understanding of nglimani provides a deeper insight into the social and religious dynamics that shape the lives of Javanese people (Andriana: 2012).

### **C. The Implementation Process of Nglimani Tradition**

In Bibis Hamlet, Krambilsawit, Saptosari, Gunung Kidul, the Nglimani tradition is one of the important cultural rituals for pregnant women and the local community. This tradition involves a series of ceremonies and activities that are believed to have magical and spiritual powers to protect pregnant women and their fetuses and ensure a smooth delivery. The implementation of Nglimani begins with careful preparation, involving family members, traditional leaders, and villagers. This process is intended to ensure that all elements of the ritual run according to the prevailing cultural and spiritual norms. These preparations include the collection of ritual materials, such as special foodstuffs, ceremonial equipment, and prayers to be offered.

The Nglimani ceremony itself is carried out in various stages. In the initial stage, the pregnant woman and her family will travel to the ceremony location, usually in an area that is considered sacred or has special spiritual significance. Arriving at the location,

the event begins with the delivery of prayers and praises led by traditional leaders or experienced shamans (Su'adi: 2012). These prayers are offered to ask for the safety and health of the mother and fetus. Next, there is a ritual of cutting and serving food such as jaddah tempe, chicken rice, and other snacks that have special symbolism. The food served in this ceremony is not only a dish but also a symbol of hope and prayer for a smooth delivery. Each food has a certain meaning, such as tumpeng rice which symbolizes safety and prosperity. Overall, the implementation of the Nglimani tradition in Bibis Hamlet, Krambilsawit, Saptosari, Gunung Kidul, is a manifestation of deep cultural beliefs and values and shows how local traditions can play an important role in the social and spiritual life of the community.

#### **D. The Meaning Behind the Nglimani Tradition**

In general, the Ngapati tradition in Javanese society is part of a series of pregnancy rituals performed to pray for the safety of the expectant mother and the unborn child (Huda & Fauziyyah, 2019). This tradition is usually conducted when the pregnancy reaches four months. The Ngapati ritual is often associated with a thanksgiving ceremony intended to ward off various dangers or disturbances (tolak bala) that might threaten the mother and baby. In this tradition, Javanese people believe that when the pregnancy reaches four months, the soul is breathed into the fetus, making it crucial to ask for God's protection. The ritual also involves prayers, recitations of verses from the Qur'an, and offerings as symbols of requests for safety (Mu'amaliah, 2021).

Every human action, such as rituals, slametan (communal prayers), and other practices, always carries specific purposes and meanings. Similarly, the Nglimani tradition, still widely practiced by the people of Bibis, embodies these same values. Essentially, both Ngapati and Nglimani share the same essence, as they both symbolize gratitude and prayers for the safety and protection of the mother and unborn child throughout the pregnancy and until childbirth. The primary difference between the two traditions lies only in the timing of their observance.

Nglimani is performed when the mother's pregnancy reaches five months. The timing of the ritual is not arbitrary; it is usually held on the weton (the Javanese birthdate) of the mother, a significant day in the Javanese calendar. In Javanese belief, weton holds symbolic meaning and spiritual strength. The choice of this time is believed to influence the success of the ritual and the future well-being of the child. Additionally, this period is seen as part of the mother's tirakat (spiritual endurance), representing the many sacrifices and efforts she makes before the child is born.

In its procession, after the kenduren (a communal meal), there is a recitation of prayers in the Javanese language, led by a local religious figure known as the Kaum. These prayers are called "Andiraras Prayers," which aim to seek safety and protection from God. Typically, the people of Bibis perform this tradition without the recitation of the Qur'an. However, for those who incorporate the Qur'an into the ceremony, Surah Yasin is most commonly chosen over other chapters. According to Mbah Jumaidi (a local religious leader), Surah Yasin holds extraordinary virtues, symbolizing hope, safety, and

protection, ensuring that both the mother and unborn child are guarded from evil spirits and misfortune.

One of the unique aspects of the Nglimani tradition in Bibis is the food offerings, particularly Tumpeng Among (jadah/ketan, served with side dishes like sego liwet and mong other items). These offerings are rich with philosophical meaning. The cone shape of the tumpeng represents the parents' hopes and aspirations for their child to achieve greatness and success in the future. Meanwhile, the sticky rice symbolizes the hope that the child will grow up to be a flexible and sociable person, able to get along with everyone regardless of their background.

### **E. Influence of the Nglimani Tradition on the Social Condition of the Dusun Bibis Community**

The Nglimani tradition is a crucial pregnancy ceremony in the Dusun Bibis community, especially for seeking safety for both the child and the mother. This ceremony is held when the pregnancy reaches five months and is attended by the mother, the midwife, elders, relatives, close neighbors, and family. The Bibis community has a strong belief that the Nglimani tradition can provide safety for both the child and the mother. This ceremony is considered a way to ward off harm and seek protection, making it essential for maintaining balance and harmony within the family. This belief is reflected in the specific ceremonial offerings, such as tumpeng, jaddah, and others, which are chosen based on the spiritual and cultural values of the Bibis community. The implementation of the Nglimani tradition significantly impacts the social interaction of the Bibis community. This ceremony facilitates close social interactions among community members, especially within family and community circles. Through this ceremony, the Bibis community can strengthen social solidarity and maintain harmonious relationships between family and community members. Additionally, this ceremony allows the community to share and express sympathy and empathy toward one another, thereby reinforcing stronger social bonds.

The Nglimani tradition is a valuable part of the cultural heritage of the Dusun Bibis community. This ceremony has become a cornerstone of the existence of traditions and culture in the Dusun Bibis community, as it has been practiced for generations and is considered a part of their cultural identity. In this context, the Nglimani tradition is not only a pregnancy ceremony but also a symbol of harmony and safety within the community. On a spiritual level, the Nglimani tradition also has a significant impact. This ceremony is believed to protect individuals from evil spirits and provide safety for both the child and the mother. Thus, this tradition strengthens the Bibis community's belief in spiritual powers and the spiritual values associated with this ceremony. Furthermore, this ceremony provides an opportunity for the community to offer prayers and seek protection from deities, thereby strengthening the spiritual connection between humans and supernatural forces. Overall, the Nglimani tradition is not just an ordinary pregnancy ceremony but also a symbol of social harmony, community solidarity, and spiritual strength in the Bibis community. It plays an important role in maintaining balance and

harmony in society and strengthening their cultural and spiritual identity (Suliyati, 2017).

#### **F. Influence of the Nglimani Tradition on the Spiritual Condition of the Dusun Bibis Community**

Nglimani is a means for individuals and the community to draw closer to God. Through prayer, meditation, and pilgrimage, participants deepen their spiritual sense and increase their awareness of God's presence in their lives. One important aspect of Nglimani is the respect for ancestors. This reflects spiritual values that teach respect and devotion to the forefathers, who are believed to continue to have a positive influence on their descendants' lives. Many practices in Nglimani focus on spiritual purification. Through specific rituals, the community cleanses itself of sins and attains purity, which is expected to bring blessings and protection into their lives. This tradition also plays a role in shaping moral and ethical values within the community. Teachings about goodness, honesty, and obedience to God are often conveyed through stories or messages shared during the rituals (Ibu Sayem, Ibu Tumilah, Ibu Repeh 2024).

The Nglimani tradition has a significant influence on the social and spiritual conditions of the Dusun Bibis community. On the one hand, this tradition strengthens social cohesion, preserves cultural identity, and contributes economically. On the other hand, Nglimani deepens spirituality, shapes moral values, and provides a means for honoring ancestors and spiritual purification. Through the combination of social and spiritual aspects, Nglimani helps to build a stronger, more united society rooted in the religious and cultural values they have inherited.

#### **G. Preserving the Nglimani Tradition can be achieved through the following ways:**

- a. The Village Government should maximize the development or expand information about the Nglimani Traditional Ceremony and make it more visible or widely publicized to educate the community about the importance of preserving the nation's culture. Learning about local culture, including its history, meanings, and values, is a crucial step in preservation. After learning, it is also important to share this knowledge with others, whether through education, social media, or community activities, so that more people are interested and motivated to participate in preserving the culture.
- b. Instilling the values of cultural preservation that should be conveyed to the younger generation. Culture is an identity that distinguishes one nation from another. By recognizing the importance of culture as a national identity, people will be more motivated to maintain and preserve it. This effort can be carried out through formal and informal education, lectures, discussions, and cultural activities that involve various layers of society.
- c. The village government and the community should work together to manage and collaborate when events like the Nglimani ceremony are held. Community involvement in traditional ceremonies is one of the most fundamental forms of cultural preservation. Active participation by the community goes beyond merely attending the event; it also involves engaging in various aspects, from preparation to execution.

When the community actively participates, they will feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for preserving the culture. Continuous participation ensures that the tradition remains unbroken and preserved across generations.

- d. Conducting special workshops or seminars for the community or tourists on how to be responsible tourists and the importance of tourism, especially in preserving the Nglimani Traditional Ceremony. The Village Government can organize seminars or public discussions involving cultural figures, academics, and the general public to discuss the importance of preserving the Nglimani Traditional Ceremony. These activities can be held regularly, with the results being published through local and digital media so that more people can understand and appreciate this tradition (Sari Dian Permata, 2018).

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The nglimani tradition is a five-month pregnancy ceremony in Javanese culture, filled with social, cultural, and religious significance. It strengthens family ties, introduces the baby-to-be to family members, and builds social relations. Nglimani reflects noble Javanese values such as 'gotong royong', kinship, and respect for life. Islam has influenced the nglimani ceremony, with prayers and holy verses becoming important elements. Local beliefs, like animism and dynamism, also play a role, emphasizing the rejection of bad luck and safety. The ceremony in Bibis Hamlet, Krambilsawit, Saptosari, Gunung Kidul, begins with prayers for the mother and fetus' safety. Food, like jaddah tempe and chicken rice, is ritually cut and served, symbolizing special meanings.

Nglimani significantly impacts social interaction within the Bibis community. It strengthens social solidarity, maintains harmonious relationships, and allows community members to share sympathy and empathy. Nglimani is a manifestation of Javanese spirituality, linking social and cultural practices with religious beliefs. The ceremony is an example of how social, cultural, and religious factors can intertwine in Javanese society. Preserving the nglimani tradition can be achieved through learning about local culture, instilling values of cultural preservation, community involvement, and conducting workshops or seminars for the community or tourists. Regular seminars or public discussions can be held, involving cultural figures, academics, and the general public, to emphasize the importance of preserving the nglimani traditional ceremony.

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