

Women And Fields In The Salako Dayaknese Tribe

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Abstract: *The Salako Dayaknese, a sub-tribe of the Dayak people in the Sajingan area of Sambas Regency, West Kalimantan, maintain a distinctive farming tradition that is crucial for both their survival and family economy. While many in the community have adapted to modern agricultural methods, some families continue to uphold the hereditary farming practices passed down through generations. Central to their agricultural customs is the tradition of Rukun Padi, a rice planting ceremony that involves a series of rituals and taboos to ensure the successful growth of the crops. A unique and significant aspect of this tradition is the role of women, who are entrusted with the responsibility of planting the first seeds, a task granted to them by the Tuha Adat (customary head) and Tuha Binua (head of binua). This research highlights the pivotal role women play in the preservation of Rukun Padi, demonstrating how their involvement transcends traditional gender roles. The findings underscore the cultural and spiritual importance of their contributions to this agricultural practice, which not only sustains the community's economy but also serves as a vital aspect of cultural preservation. The significance of women's roles in Rukun Padi is thus a critical element in maintaining the Salako Dayaknese heritage.*

Keywords: *Traditions, Dayaknese, Fields*

Abstrak: *Salako Suku suku Dayak di daerah Sajingan Kabupaten Sambas, Kalimantan Barat, mempertahankan tradisi pertanian khas yang sangat penting untuk kelangsungan hidup dan ekonomi keluarga mereka. Sementara banyak di masyarakat telah beradaptasi dengan metode pertanian modern, beberapa keluarga terus menjunjung tinggi praktik pertanian turun-temurun yang diturunkan dari generasi ke generasi. Inti dari adat pertanian mereka adalah tradisi Rukun Padi, upacara penanaman padi yang melibatkan serangkaian ritual dan tabu untuk memastikan keberhasilan pertumbuhan tanaman. Aspek unik dan signifikan dari tradisi ini adalah peran perempuan, yang dipercayakan dengan tanggung jawab menanam benih pertama, tugas yang diberikan kepada mereka oleh Tuha Adat (kepala adat) dan Tuha Binua (kepala binua). Penelitian ini menyoroti peran penting yang dimainkan perempuan dalam pelestarian Rukun Padi, menunjukkan bagaimana keterlibatan mereka melampaui peran gender tradisional. Temuan ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya budaya dan spiritual dari kontribusi mereka terhadap praktik pertanian ini, yang tidak hanya menopang ekonomi masyarakat tetapi juga berfungsi sebagai aspek penting dari pelestarian budaya. Pentingnya peran perempuan dalam Rukun Padi dengan demikian merupakan elemen penting dalam mempertahankan warisan Salako Dayaknese*

Kata Kunci: *Tradisi, Suku Dayak, Tradisi Pertanian*

1. Introduction

Women in general are known for their gentle nature, beautiful face, long hair, menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding. The word woman according to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) is known as a woman, which is the opposite word of a man. In the etymological view, the term woman has a meaning in Sanskrit, namely, what men want. The meaning of the term in Sanskrit positions women who do not have power and a strong role.

The development of theories about gender also states that women are experiencing rapid renewal and development, for example in the field of education today many women are experiencing the development of educational levels that are equal to men and even higher than men. An example of women's integrity in community institutions is in Papua, where there is a coordinator leader of the Amungme Human Rights Institute, named Yosepha Alomang. Regent of Landak, West Kalimantan, Dr. Caroline Margareth Natasya who served as regent of Landak for the term of 2017-2022 (Oxtora, 2021).

Dayaknese people place the environment as an inseparable part of their whole life (Budianto, 2022) Environmental orientation in daily life is also involved in farming activities. There are values that contain cultural elements in farming activities such as mutual cooperation, togetherness, art, rituals, and so on. The role of women in socio-cultural life in community life has a considerable role, especially the emergence of the feminism transformation movement which aims to raise the status of women equal to men. The role of women in the Dayaknese tribe is generally not only farming but can also prepare equipment in traditional ceremonies, such as cooking, making offerings, and making tumpi, and so on. The role of women in the Dayak tribe can also function as dancers in certain events or rituals.

The Salako Dayaknese tribe is divided into two parts, namely Salako Badamea Gajekng and Salako Garatukng Sakowokng. The Salako people themselves have a culture that is generally not much different from other Dayaknese people. However, the Salako people have something different from other Dayak sub-tribes. In Santaban Village, Sajingan Besar District, Sambas Regency, there is a unique farming system, where women have a degree that is trusted by ancestors for generations to open fields and plant seeds into the fields for the first time. The Salako people who recognize the cultivation system from generation to generation from the previous generation until now the cultivation system is still ongoing. In the early economic system, the Salako people did not recognize money as it is today, they depended on the chain of life from natural resources in the forest and at the beginning of each forest management people started with a traditional ceremony which they believed was a tribute to the ancestors.

The role of women in the field of farming is not only involved in the agricultural sector such as farm work, like rice fields, but also includes the plantation sector such as rubber and palm oil. In particular, the role of women in farming and agricultural activities includes the process of planting, caring for, and harvesting. Women have a role to maintain and care for what

has been passed down from generation to generation by their ancestors, ranging from traditional environmental knowledge, resources, and so on.

2. Research Result

2.1. Dayakense Tribe Farming

For the Dayaknese people, farming is a crucial activity that significantly sustains the economic well-being of their families. Traditionally, the Dayak agricultural system was nomadic, with communities moving from one area to another in search of fertile land. However, over time, many have chosen to settle in permanent locations and establish fields near their residences. This shift reflects broader social and economic changes within the community. Farming, as a traditional agricultural practice, is an integral part of the cultural identity of the Dayak people, particularly in Kalimantan, where it remains deeply embedded in their way of life (Simon, 2017). The Dayak farming system is not merely a matter of planting seeds and harvesting crops; it is imbued with spiritual significance, reflecting the community's profound connection to the land and their ancestral beliefs. This spiritual dimension is woven into the fabric of their agricultural practices, guiding both the method and meaning of their farming activities.

2.2 Dayaknese Tribe Farming System

The Salako Dayaknese are a subgroup of the Dayak people who settled along the coastal regions of West Kalimantan. Due to their location, they are often referred to as the "Beach Dayaks." The initial settlement of the Salako people began with their ancestors occupying the Salako area, from which they gradually dispersed to various other regions of West Kalimantan, including Singkawang, Pemangkat, Sambas, Jawai, Paloh, and Sajingan. It is documented that the Salako people in these areas have long engaged in interactions with other Salako communities from regions such as Kalumpe, Gado, Gajekng, Pakano, and Sawak (Takdir, 2015). This intermingling of communities has led to the formation of six distinct sub-groups, each characterized by its own dialects and shaped by local customary practices, which further reflect the unique identities of these groups.

Table 1
Outlines the sub-groups of the Salako Dayak people based on these dialectical and cultural distinctions.

Salako Dayaknese Sub-Group	Distribution of district areas	Typical Dialect
Salako Manyuke	Landak	(ba) ape/mpape
Salako Behe-Darit	Landak	(ba) angin
Salako Gado'	Bengkayang Landak	(ba) ahe-jare
Salako Mempawah-Sangah	Landak Pontianak Kubu Raya	(ba) ahe-janya
Salako Singkawang	Kota Singkawang Sambas Bengkayang	(ba) dameq-jare
Salako Sawak-Gajenkng	Bengkayang Landak	(ba) dameq-jare

Resource: (Takdir, 2017)

In the Salako Dayaknese farming system, the roles of men and women are clearly defined, with each gender contributing in distinct ways. For the Salako people, farming is not merely a means of subsistence but a way of life, a fundamental aspect of their survival. This is reflected in their farming practices, which are not only about planting crops but also involve specific rules and taboos governing the farming process. These guidelines dictate what can and cannot be done during agricultural activities, ensuring the continuation of cultural and spiritual values within the farming tradition.

In general, the Salako people assign men the role of leaders in the farming system, holding responsibility for the land and the planting of seeds. Meanwhile, women are tasked with caring for the crops, including activities such as watering, weeding, and fertilizing. However, within the Salako community, the farming system also involves certain taboos, particularly for the head of the family, who is responsible for overseeing the farming process known as rukun padi.

The rukun padi system is unique in its division of labor between men and women. Men typically perform tasks such as ngawah (clearing the land), ngarentes (preparing the fields), nabakng tutuhan (setting boundaries), and nunu (harvesting). Women, on the other hand, are involved in tasks such as nuga (planting rice), ngarumput (weeding), and bahanyi (harvesting the rice). The term rukun padi refers to a system of cultivation passed down through generations, rooted in the traditions of their ancestors, known as Nek Baruakng Kulupm. Central to this practice is the belief in sanek rice, a local variety considered to be the first rice seed, passed down by Nek Baruakng Kulupm.

According to local legend, sanek rice was introduced to humans by Nek Baruakng Kulupm, who is believed to have descended from the divine entity Jubata before the existence of rice was known to humankind. The story is recounted as follows:

“Nek Baruakng Kulupm, according to the stories of our elders, was said to have come down to the world, playing *gasing* (a traditional game), carrying rice that had been given to him by *Undang* (Jubata). After playing *gasing*, Nek Baruakng Kulupm rested and shared a meal with humans. It was at that moment that humans first encountered the rice brought by Nek Baruakng Kulupm. He then instructed them to clear the land and promised to give them the rice they had shared, known as *padi sanek*.” (interview with Mr. Sanjoyo, Agustus 2022)

To this day, the *rukun padi* system of planting *padi sanek* continues to be practiced by several family heads in the Sasak region of Sajingan Besar. These practitioners believe that the *padi sanek* they cultivate is blessed by *Jubata* (God). For the Salako people who observe the *rukun padi*, it is essential to follow a prescribed sequence of farming processes, all conducted in the traditional manner passed down through generations. Families intending to pass on the *rukun padi* practice to their descendants are designated as “*niti rukun*,” signifying their commitment to maintaining and perpetuating this sacred agricultural tradition. This passing down of knowledge and ritual is seen as both a cultural responsibility and a spiritual act, ensuring that the agricultural practices remain deeply connected to their ancestral roots and divine blessings.

2.3 Taking Place In Rukun Padi

2.3.1 Traditional Ritual Preparation Rukun Padi

Salako people who perform the *rukun padi* must carry out a series of farming processes in the traditi The Salako people who perform the *rukun padi* must adhere to a series of farming processes carried out in accordance with traditional practices. Families wishing to pass down the *rukun padi* to their children are designated as “*niti rukun*.” During the preparatory phase, the Salako people follow the guidance of the *pangarah uma*, the spiritual leader overseeing the process. Before embarking on the farming activities, they conduct a deliberation aimed at reaching a mutual agreement, known as *pakat baya*

The *pakat baya* is a communal agreement that ensures everyone involved in the *rukun padi* contributes to the farming process. Each participant is required to contribute one *canting* (a traditional measure) of rice and a sum of money. The collected rice is then divided into portions: some is ground into rice flour, while a portion is cooked for the ritual. The money collected during this process is used to purchase animal offerings for the ritual. This elaborate ritual underscores the spiritual and communal significance of the *rukun padi*, marking the beginning of the agricultural cycle with a deep connection to tradition, spirituality, and mutual cooperation within the Salako community.

2.3.2 Pabuisan Paburukngan

Pabuisan is a sacred site used by the Salako Dayak people for performing rituals to honor their ancestral spirits and offer prayers to Jubata (God). Typically located near residential areas, the *Pabuisan* serves as a focal point for spiritual activities. The ritual begins early in the morning, with the participants constructing a *niti maraga uma* (a pathway built for the passage of Jubata during the ritual). Following this, a designated leader, known as the *panyangahatn*, conducts the ritual prayer. The *panyangahatn* listens for the call of the *keto* bird, which is believed to provide answers to their prayers. The bird's call is interpreted as an omen for the upcoming agricultural activities: if the *keto* bird's call comes from the front, it is considered a favorable sign, indicating that the forthcoming cultivation will proceed well. Conversely, if the bird's call comes from behind, it is viewed as an omen of misfortune, signaling that the cultivation may face challenges or bad luck. This belief highlights the deep connection between the Salako people's agricultural practices and their spiritual beliefs, where nature and ritual intertwine to guide their farming endeavors. *Ngawah*.

After completing the traditional rituals at the *Pabuisan paburukngan*, the participants proceed to their respective lands. During this time, they also establish a benchmark at the location of the land they intend to cultivate. This practice ensures that the designated area for farming is clearly marked, reflecting both a spiritual and practical approach to land management. By setting these markers, the Salako people affirm their connection to the land, while also preparing it for the upcoming agricultural activities in line with the traditions and rituals they have observed.

2.3.2 *Ngarantas*

Ngarantas refers to the land-clearing process carried out by the Salako Dayak people, marking a crucial step in their agricultural cycle. Typically performed approximately a week after the *ngawah* (land preparation) phase, *ngarantas* involves clearing the designated area for cultivation. This task is generally a collaborative effort, with both men and women working together. The division of labor in *ngarantas* reflects the communal nature of Salako agricultural practices, where both genders contribute to ensuring the land is ready for planting. Women, in particular, play a vital role in clearing the land, demonstrating their integral involvement in agricultural activities and reinforcing the collective responsibility within the community. This phase is not only practical in preparing the land but also carries cultural significance, as it is done in harmony with the spiritual rituals that guide the Salako people's farming practices.

2.3.3 *Nabakng*

Nabakng refers to the logging process undertaken by men within the Salako Dayak community. Before beginning this task, a ritual known as the *munuh manok dua eko'* is performed. This ritual serves as a ceremonial notification to the ancestors, informing them of the upcoming logging activities on the land. The act of conducting the *munuh manok dua eko'*

ritual is not only a spiritual practice but also an integral part of the logging process, symbolizing respect for the ancestral spirits and ensuring their blessings and guidance. This ritual underscores the Salako people's deep cultural and spiritual connection to the land and their ancestors, with every stage of the agricultural process embedded in tradition and ritual.

2.3.4 *Ngarangke Raba'*

Ngarangke Raba' is a waiting phase in the Salako Dayak agricultural cycle that occurs after the land clearing process. During this period, the community observes the regrowth of the stumps that have been cut down. It is believed that if these stumps sprout new shoots, the land is considered to be in good condition for cultivation. This practice highlights the Salako people's deep connection to nature, as they rely on the natural signs of the land's vitality to determine whether it is ready for the next stage of agricultural activities. The regrowth of the stumps is viewed as a positive omen, signaling that the land will yield a successful harvest.

2.3.5 *Ngararakngi*

Ngararakngi is a crucial practice aimed at preventing forest fires that may result from land clearing. During this phase, the Salako Dayak people create small ditches around the perimeter of the field. These ditches act as barriers, helping to contain any potential fires and protect the surrounding environment. The practice of *ngararakngi* reflects the community's deep awareness of environmental sustainability and their responsibility to safeguard the land. By implementing this preventive measure, the Salako people ensure that their agricultural practices do not disrupt the ecosystem, demonstrating a harmonious balance between cultivation and environmental stewardship.

2.3.6 *Nunu Uma*

Nunu Uma refers to the field burning activity in the Salako Dayak farming system, where a workgroup consisting of relatives or family members comes together to carry out the task. This process marks a significant stage in the agricultural cycle, and its execution differs between those who follow the traditional rice farming ritual, known as *rukun padi*, and those who do not. Once farmers who do not follow the *rukun padi* have completed planting their seeds, those who practice the rice ritual engage in a special ceremony led by the field owner. The purpose of this ritual is to seek blessings from their ancestors for the newly planted rice, ensuring its growth and abundance.

Following the ritual, there are specific taboos that must be observed by those who have performed the *rukun padi*. For the first seven days after planting, participants in the rice ritual are prohibited from consuming certain foods, such as ferns, bamboo shoots, and tubers. These restrictions are believed to protect the sanctity of the rice and to ensure that the crop grows healthy and strong. The observance of these taboos reflects the Salako Dayak people's spiritual

connection to the land and their ancestors, emphasizing the role of rituals in maintaining balance and harmony between nature, culture, and agriculture.

2.4 Salako Dayaknese Women In Gender Perspective

Every individual possesses a unique understanding of gender equality and justice, despite sharing similar backgrounds. Gender, as a cultural construct, pertains to human characteristics that differentiate men from women. The division of roles between males and females often leads to gender imbalance. Consequently, gender is a concept that serves as a parameter, defining the roles of men and women, influenced by societal culture. It is essential to note that gender should not be used as a basis for discrimination, given its biological foundations (Nurjannah, 2022).

In contrast, the role of women in the Salako Dayak tribe is highly valued, although gender equality is not a central concern. Women play a crucial role in the agricultural processes, particularly in the cultivation of rice. Those entrusted with the sacred duty of planting the first rice seeds are typically women, who are entrusted by Tuha Adat (the customary head) and Tuha Binua (the head of the binua) to plant and nurture the sanek rice until harvest time. This responsibility is accompanied by various taboos that must be adhered to throughout the planting and harvesting phases. In Sasak Hamlet, Sajingan Besar, researchers identified two informants, both mothers aged 48, who continue to uphold the tradition of rukun padi (rice rituals). One of the informants, the wife of a former village head, still practices the traditional farming methods passed down by her ancestors. She believes it is her duty to plant the sanek rice, which is regarded as a sacred heritage from her ancestor, Nek Baruakng Kulupm.

In conclusion, the role of women in the rukun padi sanek activities of the Salako people is notably more prominent than that of men, reflecting a deep cultural reverence for women's contributions to agriculture, particularly in the rice cultivation process. Women are entrusted with significant responsibilities, such as planting and nurturing the rice seeds, which are considered sacred. This emphasis on women's roles is accompanied by a series of taboos and prohibitions that hold great cultural significance and must be strictly adhered to during the planting and pre-harvest stages of the rice ritual.

These customs are not merely traditional practices but are believed to have a direct impact on the success and prosperity of the harvest. For instance, families participating in the rukun padi are prohibited from washing their hair before departing for the fields. This ritualistic abstention is believed to preserve the sacredness and purity of the agricultural process. Additionally, it is considered taboo to express sadness while planting or tending to the rice, as such negative emotions are thought to adversely affect the growth and vitality of the crops. The belief is that the emotional state of the cultivators can directly influence the outcome of the

harvest. Furthermore, the killing of animals within the vicinity of the fields or forest during the rice ceremony is strictly forbidden. This prohibition reflects the deep connection between the Salako people and their environment, emphasizing respect for life and the natural world as integral to the agricultural process. These cultural practices and taboos underscore the profound spiritual and social importance of the rukun padi, highlighting the intertwined relationship between tradition, gender, and the land.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, the concept of "woman," as defined by the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), refers to an individual who is the opposite of a man. However, the development of gender theories has highlighted that women, in particular, have been undergoing significant renewal and progress, especially in fields like education. Today, many women have reached educational levels on par with or even surpassing those of men, reflecting broader societal changes. Despite these advancements in gender equality, the role of women in traditional societies, such as the Salako Dayak tribe, remains highly respected, albeit without a specific focus on gender equality. In the Salako Dayak community, women hold vital roles in agricultural practices, particularly in the sacred rice rituals. They are entrusted with the important task of planting the first seeds, a responsibility granted by the Tuha Adat (customary head) and Tuha Binua (head of binua). These women are not only entrusted with the cultivation of the sanek rice but are also expected to care for the crop until the harvest period arrives. This responsibility highlights the deep cultural reverence for women's roles, even in a context where gender equality may not be the primary concern. Therefore, while the societal roles of women are evolving globally, in certain traditional settings, they continue to be upheld with respect and cultural significance, demonstrating the enduring importance of gendered practices in shaping community life.

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