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The Persistence of *Apparallu* Tradition (Female Circumcision) in the Erelembang Village Community

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to provide an explanation of the *apparallu* tradition (Female Circumcision) within the community of Erelembang Village, Tombolo Pao District, Gowa Regency. The research methodology employed is qualitative research. The data were collected by field research, specifically through interviews and observations. The employed methodologies encompass historical analysis, sociological study of religion, and anthropological investigation. The findings indicated that the *apparallu* tradition has been widely recognised by the community and has evolved into a significant aspect of Islamic cultural heritage. The process of implementation comprises four distinct stages: firstly, the extended family engages in deliberation to ascertain the appropriate timing for circumcision; secondly, the community is invited to attend the *apparallu* ceremony; thirdly, the necessary equipment and materials are prepared. The final phase is the execution of the *apparallu* tradition. The *Apparallu* celebration encompasses both social and religious elements. The *apparallu* tradition can be viewed from two perspectives: one that supports the tradition and is more inclined to accept modifications in the symbolic circumcision procedure. Furthermore, people who oppose it tend to reject it because there is no explicit justification for female circumcision.

Keywords: *Apparallu* tradition, heritage, Islam culture.

Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini untuk memberikan penjelasan mengenai tradisi Apparallu (Sunat pada Wanita) pada masyarakat Desa Erelembang Kecamatan Tombolo Pao Kabupaten Gowa. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah penelitian kualitatif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui penelitian lapangan, khususnya melalui wawancara dan observasi. Metode yang digunakan meliputi analisis sejarah, kajian sosiologi agama, dan antropologi. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa tradisi Apparallu telah dikenal luas oleh masyarakat dan telah berkembang menjadi aspek penting warisan budaya Islam. Proses pelaksanaannya terdiri dari empat tahap yang berbeda: pertama, keluarga besar melakukan musyawarah untuk menentukan waktu yang tepat untuk sunat; kedua, masyarakat diundang untuk menghadiri upacara Apparallu; ketiga, menyiapkan peralatan dan bahan yang diperlukan. Tahap terakhir adalah pelaksanaan tradisi Apparallu. Perayaan Apparallu mencakup unsur sosial dan keagamaan. Tradisi Apparallu dapat dilihat dari dua sudut pandang: satu sudut pandang yang mendukung tradisi tersebut dan lebih cenderung menerima modifikasi tata cara sunat simbolis. Lebih jauh lagi, masyarakat yang menentangnya cenderung menolak karena tidak ada alasan yang jelas mengenai sunat perempuan.

Kata Kunci: Tradisi Apparallu, Warisan Budaya, Kebudayaan Islam.

A. INTRODUCTION

South Sulawesi is home to four ethnic groups: the Bugis, the Makassar, the Toraja and the Mandarese. With the ethnic majority of Bugis and Makassar, these two groups are a unity that is difficult to separate, because in essence it is a cultural unity known as Bugis-Makassar culture (Rasyida, 2014). Bugis-Makassar culture cannot be separated from their belief in mythological beliefs with divine aspects, belief in the nature of nature, which is manifested in ritual activities that are religio-magical (Nirwana, 2013).

Every region, regardless of the type of culture, is built by cultural elements including elements of religion or belief because these elements show the universal and comprehensive nature of each culture. The traditions that color the style of society are not easily changed even after the arrival of Islam as the religion it adheres to. Many community cultures after the arrival of Islam, there were updates and adjustments between the existing culture and Islamic culture. The renewed culture that has survived until now is considered to contain elements of Islamic culture in it (Sunanto, 2012).

Before the arrival of Islam, there were four elements of custom (pangngadakkang) influenced by the Bugis-Makassar community, namely the elements of Ada' (customs), Rapang (parables, likenesses, community habits), Wari (social layering or genealogy) and Bicara (court). After Islam was accepted by the

local community, pangngadakkang added an element of Sara' (Islamic shari'a) to complement and perfect the local cultural elements. (Ahmad M. Sewang, 2005).

In the form of culture, there are many ways in the process of implementation such as birth, marriage and death which are carried out in the form of ceremonies. For the people of Makassar, one of the traditions that is still practiced is female circumcision.

Historically, female circumcision was performed long before the ancient Egyptian civilization. The practice of circumcision was first performed by Prophet Ibrahim at the age of eighty. As for female circumcision, according to the historical records of Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad al-Khazami al-Talmasani (789 H) in his book entitled "Takhrijal-Dilalath al-Sammiyyah", it is stated that female circumcision was first performed by Sitti. One narration revealed that it began when Siti Sarah (Ibrahim's wife), allowed Ibrahim to marry Siti Hajar and became pregnant. This made Sarah jealous. Ibrahim suggested that Sarah perforate both ears and circumcise Siti Hajar's genitals. The act is believed to be a form of ritual purification of the soul.

Female circumcision is a phenomenon that has existed in Indonesian society for centuries. Basically, the practice of female circumcision or commonly called Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is to cut off the entire clitoris and labia minora. In general, female circumcision is based on community traditions passed down from generation to generation. WHO has classified into 4 types of female circumcision, starting with slicing or scraping part or all of the clitoris, cutting up to part or all of the labia minora to the worst stage of narrowing the vagina and scraping or burning the clitoris and surrounding tissue (Rahman, 2009).

Related to this, the Director General of Public Health of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia issued Circular Letter Number HK 00.07.1.31047a dated April 20, 2006 concerning the Prohibition of Medicalization of Female Circumcision for health workers which resulted in most baby girls no longer being circumcised. Furthermore, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) responded to the ban by issuing Fatwa Decree No.9 A in 2008. According to the MUI fatwah, female circumcision is makrumah (ennobling) and the prohibition of female circumcision is considered contrary to the syiar of Islam (Sahar, 2016).

Two years after the MUI fatwah was issued, the Ministry of Health issued Minister of Health Regulation (Permenkes) No. 1636/Menkes/Per/XI/2010 on Female Circumcision. This Permenkes details the steps that must be taken so that the practice of female circumcision is carried out in order to protect women, carried out in accordance with religious guidance, service standards, and professional standards to ensure safety and security (Kemenkes, 2011).

Strong cultural legitimacy, supported by the decision of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), means that female circumcision is still maintained in some regions. *Apparallu* ceremony is a tradition that is prescribed for Muslims, especially in Tombolo Pao Sub-district. For the Makassar tribe, a child is not yet Islamic if he has not been circumcised by holding a traditional ceremony.

The preceding pertinent document is an article named "Female Circumcision in Banjar Society". The findings indicated that female circumcision involves the act of abrading the clitoris. The objective is to cleanse the infant and initiate her into the Islamic faith, while also ensuring the preservation of reproductive capabilities (Nurdiyana, 2013). The journal article titled "Female Circumcision between Tradition

and Shari'ah" explores the practice of female circumcision from the perspectives of both culture and religion. Female circumcision is a practice that is influenced by both local culture and religious teachings. Practically, not all women are required to undergo circumcision; it can be performed on women who have a strong sexual drive. Circumcision is anticipated to yield advantages for women and serve as a mark of distinction. Nevertheless, if a procedure fails to yield advantages and instead causes harm to the female reproductive organs, it should be avoided (Suraiya, 2019).

An academic paper titled "Female Circumcision: Historical, Medical, and Islamic Law Perspectives". Female circumcision is a customary practice that is widely observed by the majority of people in Indonesia. Female circumcision, although not mandated by Shari'ah, is a cultural practice that has been transmitted down successive generations within Muslim communities (Suraiya, 2019).

Previous studies have touched upon the topic of female circumcision and its significance, but none have specifically investigated the methods, theories, research locations, and the title of the author's research, which is the *Apparallu* Tradition in Erelembang Village, Tombolo Pao District, Gowa Regency.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs qualitative methodology and employs data collected through field research. Researchers conducted direct field observations and interviews to gain personal insight into the *Apparallu* traditional series. The research methodology employed encompasses the historical approach, sociology of religion, and anthropology. This approach enables academics to better understand the cultural characteristics of a community.

C. FINDINGS AND RESULT

The Origins of the *Apparallu* (Female Circumcision) Tradition in the Village

As previously explained, circumcision is a principle coming from Islam, pertaining to the execution of a customary ritual known as *apparallu*, which has been inherited from ancestors and has evolved into a cultural emblem for the inhabitants of Erelembang Village. The term "*apparallu*" originates from the Konjo language and it signifies something that is essential or required. *Apparallu* refers to the practice of female circumcision.

The exact origin of the *apparallu* tradition remains uncertain. According to Puang Sasa:

“Anne rikuaangngia apparallu tena ngissengi sikuranna na nagaukan tau toaia, iatonnne mae amminahang mamatoa apa nagaukan tau toayya riolo, mingka komo’ komonne karna antamami islanga jari ri Allataala jatoo anggera pole kahajikang, mingka ella ri pa’ lanyakki budayana tau toayya ”¹.

Meaning:

" *Apparallu* has no exact record of when it was first practiced by our parents. We just follow the traditions that have been carried out by previous generations. The point is, in everything, we only ask Allah Swt for goodness without forgetting the cultural values that have been passed down by our parents."

The interview results indicate that the *apparallu* tradition originated from the teachings of Islam, which have been assimilated with local customs and are strongly adhered to by the community, particularly in regard to girls. The dissemination of Islam in several regions, including Erelembang Village, led to a significant number of individuals adopting the Islamic faith. This facilitated the assimilation of the indigenous culture with Islamic principles, as seen by the presence of the *apparallu* tradition.

The practice of female circumcision varies across different regions. Nevertheless, it is widely recognised as a symbolic representation of upholding traditions and fulfilling religious duties. The distinction in the motif of female circumcision resides in the procedure which involves the complete excision of the clitoris and the removal of the labia minora. In Erelembang Village, circumcision is performed without clitoral excision. Instead, female circumcision is performed by substituting the affected area with turmeric. In Erelembang Village, there is a belief held by certain individuals that female circumcision is mandatory. They view it as a means of personal purification and as a way to introduce Islamic practices to young girls. However, it is important to note that this practice does not involve the cutting of female genitalia.

The Process and Symbolic Meaning of the *Apparallu* Tradition in Erelembang Village, Tombolo Pao District, Gowa Regency

The *apparallu* tradition procession is carried out for one day and is carried out on girls aged 4-9 years (before puberty). The *apparallu* tradition in the Erelembang Village community is carried out in various processes and stages such as the deliberation stage, the akkio stage (inviting the community), the preparation stage and the implementation stage. Several offerings also complement the ritual process of the *apparallu* tradition. These offerings are mandatory requirements that must be met by families who will carry out the tradition because they have symbolic meanings that are believed by previous parents. The stages of the *apparallu* tradition are as follows:

1. Stage of Deliberation

Prior to the *apparallu* ceremony, families gather in an extended family forum known as 'Bija Pammanakang'. In this meeting, they discuss and talk about the process of implementing the *apparallu* traditional ceremony. As expressed by Harmawati:

*"Riengnamato anne ngaseng konre sipaggopoang ka narieng asseng paggaunkang haji', ka lombo tommy tau lolonna toa naparallu mi kapang ri Parallu "*3

Meaning:

"We gathered because there is a purpose to be carried out, our daughter has grown up maybe it is time to be circumcised".

At this meeting, various aspects related to the *Apparallu* ceremony are discussed, including the stages, the consumption needed, and the equipment that needs to be prepared. Each family member has their own tasks that will be carried out during the ceremony. In the deliberation, the determination of the day that is considered good for carrying out the event is also considered.

This statement reflects Abu Hamid's views in his book "The Traditions of the Makassar Bugis," where he links the concepts of bad days and good days to animist beliefs. Hamid equates these concepts with the belief in the unity of human beings with the laws of nature, which is widespread among many Bugis communities. This approach reflects an understanding that animist beliefs, which involve a belief in spirits or a spiritual presence in nature, can influence people's views on time and luck. There is a belief that certain events may occur better or worse on certain days based on the relationship between humans and the spiritual world. It is important to note that interpretations of concepts such as good days and bad days may vary among individuals and communities, and may be influenced by the local cultural context and beliefs. (Hamid, 1994).

As stated by Puang Sasa:

"The best time to hold this event is Thursday and Monday. It does not mean that other days are not good, but this is just the belief of the Makassarese people, which has become a requirement in determining the day in the *apparallu* tradition. "4

This statement reflects the adaptation of the *apparallu* tradition to changing times and community development. The determination of a good day to carry out the tradition now follows the school holiday schedule. This change reflects the dynamics of a society undergoing transformation in maintaining cultural traditions while understanding practical needs and current circumstances. Adjusting the schedule of the tradition with school holidays can facilitate the participation of children and families in the *apparallu* ceremony. This adaptation reflects a response to changing times and community needs, while still maintaining the authenticity and meaning of cultural traditions such as *apparallu*.

2. Stage of *Akkio* (inviting the community)

Once the time for *Apparallu* is set, those who will carry out the tradition assign two or more women, depending on the size of the area, to visit each house in the community. In the past, people who performed *akkio* usually wore *appalikang* (batik sarong) and *lipa' sabbe* (silk sarong). Over time, the trend of dress changed, and now they no longer wear those, but only modest clothes.

Usually, the *akkio* is conducted three days before the day of the event. During the invitation, the sentence that is expressed contains an invitation or notification to the community regarding the implementation of *Apparallu*. For example, it could read:

*"Ritallua na suro Apparallu anakna i Fulan nakukio anakku"*⁵.

Meaning:

“About three days from now there will be a circumcision ceremony for Fulan's family and we invite you to attend”.

Akkio can be conducted not just door-to-door but also announced at the mosque. Uninformed individuals typically acquire information through random interactions in public spaces such as streets or gardens.

3. Stage of Preparation

The things that are prepared as a complement to the ceremony:

- a. *Manu rua rupa* (two kinds of chicken) in *Apparallu* tradition. Two types of chicken, namely *Manu Lotong* (black chicken) and *Manu Pute* (white chicken), each male and female, are used as a symbolization of human relationships that live in mutual need and complement each other, similar to the concept of a married couple who marry until they have offspring. The chicken in this context also has a symbolic meaning as an animal that persistently seeks a source of life. This concept is applied to give meaning to children who undergo circumcision, so that they can have the traits of hard work, responsibility, and compassion for their families and children in the future. Over time, the *Apparallu* tradition has become sufficient to provide one chicken as pappasoro (thanks) to the sanro or shaman involved, without considering the specific category of chicken.
- b. *Songkolo' patangrupa* (four kinds of glutinous rice), *songkolo'* is Makassarese for sticky rice, while *patangrupa* is glutinous rice served on a plate. The types of *songkolo* are *songkolo' parepulu' lotong* (black sticky rice) and *songkolo' pare pulu pute* (white sticky rice), *songkolo' pare pulu eja* (red sticky rice), *kaddo' minnya'* (yellow sticky rice). All four have their own meaning as symbols of human origin, such as black symbolizing the earth element, white symbolizing the water element, red symbolizing the fire element and yellow symbolizing the wind element.
- c. *Kapasa* (cotton), cotton is used during circumcision.
- d. *Bajao* (egg), is a food that must be present in every cultural or religious ritual where eggs that are oval or round have the meaning of family unity.
- e. *Unti* (banana), bananas are served, namely *unti te'ne (ambon banana)* as a symbol that symbolizes the sweetness, welfare and happiness of life, and the child is expected to be a humble person.
- f. *Baje'*, is a combination of cooked glutinous rice and brown sugar and grated coconut, symbolic meaning that goodness always comes in everyday life.
- g. *Umba-umba*, symbolic meaning to bring good things.
- h. *Kaluku na golla eja* (coconut and sugar), has a symbolic meaning so that all the sweetness in sugar and savory taste in coconut symbolizes peace in children in living life. The child is expected to be useful like the philosophy of coconut, because coconut has many benefits.
- i. *Berasa koasa'* (white rice), rice is a staple in daily life that symbolizes abundant sustenance. The child is also expected to be able to practice the philosophical meaning of rice, the more filled the more bowed down so that

the child is not arrogant, always has a simple heart and soul in stepping in this life.

- j. *Anrong Kunyi'* (large turmeric), turmeric has a variety of benefits, apart from being a food ingredient, the content contained in turmeric as an antiseptic, antioxidant and antibacterial that can cure fungal infections. The philosophy of turmeric is that the child is expected to be useful in his life.
- k. *Kattere* (razor) or small knife, has a function as a medium used by the sanro to scratch the flesh or just rubbed on the girl's genitals when circumcised. The razor or small knife itself has a symbolic meaning so that the circumcised child has a sharp heart and mind.
- l. *Lipa' na talakko* (sarong and mukenah), the sarong and mukenah used in the *Apparallu* ceremony function as a cover for the aurat.⁶

The equipment at the circumcision is a hope of parents to the circumcised child in life to always feel safe, comfortable and the child can become a useful human being.

4. The Implementation of *Apparallu*

The *apparallu* tradition starts in the morning. The implementation of this tradition is usually carried out at 09.00 am until night. The philosophical meaning is that the child's aspirations in life are likened to the sun moving upwards until it gets the best position. In this procession, people who have come to fulfill the invitation also participate. They help each other prepare dishes and cakes and bring gifts such as rice and passolo or money. The following are the stages of the *apparallu* tradition:

- a. The process of implementing the *Apparallu* tradition is carried out by a woman called *Sanro* or *shaman*. The procession begins with the provision of rice placed in a basket along with a coconut that has been unbuckled and brown sugar. All the necessary paraphernalia are also prepared, including razor blades or small knives, bananas, thinly sliced turmeric, cotton, live chickens, songkolo, umba-umba, baje', bajao (eggs), and a seven-course meal placed on a wide tray. All these preparations are meticulously done as an integral part of the *Apparallu* ritual. All these steps and preparations give a sacred and profound feel to the implementation of the tradition, as described by Dg. Baya:

"The meaning of seven kinds of food in one tray is to avoid problems, hopefully all dangers will always be kept away, and all are contained in our bodies, just like when praying there are seven limbs that are tight, namely the knees, feet, hands, head and must face the qibla".⁷

The comparison with prayer and the seven limbs that are tight in the prayer position provides a religious and spiritual dimension. This analogy creates an understanding that the preparation and implementation of the *Apparallu* tradition is not just a physical ritual, but also has a spiritual dimension and a relationship with God.

- b. After the equipment is ready, the girl who will be circumcised or *apparallu* is guided by the sanro to take a bath, after which she takes ablution water

and dresses in Muslim clothing and then puts on mukenah and sarong. This stage reflects inner purification and an effort to eliminate everything that is considered bad before engaging in the khitan tradition.

- c. Then, the child is escorted into the room to perform the apparallu ritual. The child sits on a special mattress and pillow that has been prepared. The *sanro* assigned to carry out the ritual reads the intention and prayer then reads surah al-Fatihah: 1-6 followed by the circumcised child. After reading al-Fatihah, the *sanro* performs Islamization by leading the circumcised girl to say two sentences of shahada until it is considered perfect:

Translation:

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
 أَتُحِبُّ اللَّهَ أَتُحِبُّ مُحَمَّدًا أَتُحِبُّ الْإِسْلَامَ
 أَتُحِبُّ الْيَوْمَ أَتُحِبُّ الْبَلَدَ
 أَتُحِبُّ الْوَالِدَيْنِ أَتُحِبُّ الْوَلَدَيْنِ
 أَتُحِبُّ الْمَوْلَةَ أَتُحِبُّ الْمَوْلَةَ

“I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.”.

After the conversion, the child bends both knees and the *sanro* immediately carries out the *apparallu* procession using a razor or knife and then rubbing it on the child's genitals. Then thinly sliced turmeric is rubbed on the child's genitals. The turmeric was given to the child's mother to store it properly. The philosophical meaning is that it is hoped that all good things will always be attached to children and bad things will always be kept away.

- a. After that, the child is carried out of the room and then helped to climb to the a'liri (house pillar). As explained by Puang Baya::

“Children are assisted in climbing to enhance their prosperity”.¹¹

After that, the children pray together, led directly by the Imam. Relatives give children gifts in the form of money, clothes and so on. This is intended so that children feel happy after carrying out the apparallu tradition.

As a thank you to *Sanro*, the family also prepares *pappasoro* such as live free-range chicken, rice, brown sugar, coconut. *Pappasoro* is the final activity in this tradition.

The impact on the implementation of the *apparallu* tradition is:

First, the *apparallu* tradition has an impact on social strata such as the economy. The results of the research found that these traditional ceremonies were only carried out among people who had a good economic level.

Second, a child's Islam is not perfect if this tradition is not implemented.

Values in the Apparallu tradition

1. Social values

The people of Erelembang Village have good relationships in social life. There is quite intensive interaction in the process of carrying out traditional ceremonies for the smooth running of the event so that friendship can be established. The Islamic religion strengthens ties of friendship which is highly recommended by Allah SWT.

As explained in QS Al-Hujurat/49:10 regarding strengthening ties of friendship or establishing and maintaining *Ukhuwa Islamiyah* is as follows:

Meaning: وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَوَلَّوْا وَآخَرُكُمْ
 وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَوَلَّوْا وَآخَرُكُمْ
 وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَوَلَّوْا وَآخَرُكُمْ

“Indeed, believers are brothers, therefore make peace between your two brothers (who are at odds) and fear Allah so that you may receive mercy” (Q SAJ Hujurat: 49:10).

Apart from that, helping each other is a working characteristic of social unity. This nature of work is a necessity in a simple social life. A proverb says that light is the same as being carried, heavy is the same as being carried, as a continuation of the attitude of pain as pain, pleasure as pleasure (Gazalba, 1978).

Mutual cooperation at the circumcision ceremony is very clearly visible from the beginning of the event until the end of the ceremony, namely collecting firewood, making house decorations from woven bamboo, preparing food and every stage of the ceremony that requires cooperation. Mutual cooperation does not only take the form of labor but can also take the form of money and basic food provided by family members.

2. Religious values

Even though the *apparallu* tradition is an Islamic teaching, the people of Erelembang Village still preserve and respect the values of their ancestral beliefs. This reflects the desire to maintain cultural heritage and traditional beliefs. The religious value is clearly visible in the implementation of the ceremony, such as children wearing Muslim clothing, reciting basmalah, al-Fatihah, and reciting the two sentences of the shahada. This reflects an effort to harmonize local traditions with Islamic teachings in religious aspects. In this way, the people of Erelembang Village create harmony between their ancestral heritage and Islamic teachings, showing the adaptation and integration carried out to create a unique cultural identity.

Community Response to the Apparallu Tradition in Erelembang Village, Kuncio Pao District, Gowa Regency

Islam allows several human customs that do not conflict with Islamic law and adab. Therefore, Rasulullah Saw did not erase all the customs and culture of Arab society that existed before the arrival of Islam. However, Rasulullah Saw. prohibiting cultures that contain elements of shirk and cultures that conflict with Islamic customs (Mastanning, 2015).

Even though the majority of the people of Erelembang Village are Muslim, they still carry out the traditions of their ancestors. This reflects how the community combines Islamic identity with their cultural heritage. Thus, the people of Erelembang Village seem to follow an approach that is in line with Islamic principles in maintaining their traditions, as long as they do not conflict with religious teachings. Based on the results of interviews with several people in Erelembang Village, there are different opinions:

First, those who agree with the Apparallu tradition, such as traditional communities who still respect their ancestral heritage by supporting this tradition. As the response or response from Puang Sasa:

“This *Apparallu* tradition really needs to be implemented according to the meaning of the word Apparallu which means necessary. Because, it is very

difficult to remove by the reasons of pamali if it is not implemented. Nowadays, not many people do it because many of the shamans they trust have become senile. Therefore, people don't really understand the meaning of this tradition and just follow what they have to do".¹³

Apart from that, the village government does not prohibit the practice of female circumcision according to the *Apparallu* tradition. As responded by Mr. M. Tahir:

"The government itself does not prohibit the *Apparallu* tradition as long as it does not conflict with customs and religion. We must respect their traditions, because ancestral traditions are difficult to erase and abandon. Even though it's just joining in without knowing the reason for carrying out the *Apparallu* tradition, there are many positive impacts that can be obtained through this event, namely building friendship".¹³

Based on the results of the interview, it can be concluded that the *apparallu* tradition is still carried out so as not to forget ancestral traditions on the grounds that it is a form of respect for a woman. The community's efforts to maintain this tradition, namely holding the event, are also considered as a form of gratitude, the community believes that carrying out this tradition can increase blessings. Every celebration is held because it connects friendship.

Second, the public's response to the *apparallu* tradition is the intellectual community from academic circles, where the majority of academics follow or join the Muhammadiyah organization. As is known, Muhammadiyah is one of the oldest and largest Islamic social organizations in Indonesia. Muhammadiyah uses Tarjih as a guideline for determining laws in Muhammadiyah. As H. Zainuddin responded:

"As far as I know, circumcision is only required for boys. As the definition of circumcision is cutting the *khuluf* or removing part of the *hasyafah* or tip of the genitals in men. This understanding is the reason that there is no recommendation for women to cut their genitals. However, this does not necessarily erase or eliminate these traditions because culture is the result of thoughts, feelings and actions that produce a culture. The practice of female circumcision or the *apparallu* tradition itself has no legal basis in the Qur'an which requires women to be circumcised differently from men, there are legal provisions that require circumcision, *Muhammadiyah* itself prohibits TB behavior (*Takhayyul, Bid'ah, Khurafat*)".¹⁵

H. Zainuddin, who speaks against the *Apparallu* tradition, gives a contrasting perspective, particularly from the academic community, which is predominantly associated with the Muhammadiyah organisation. The counter community response originated from intellectual circles, predominantly comprised of Muhammadiyah members. This demonstrates the impact of religious organisations in moulding perspectives and attitudes towards the *Apparallu* tradition. Tarjih, in Muhammadiyah,

serves as a guiding principle for the establishment of legislation. This statement indicates that the academic's perspectives are grounded in the organization's adopted interpretation of Islamic law. The academic community often adopts a negative stance towards the Apparallu tradition. This comment may indicate their prudence in assimilating and evaluating each religion and cultural custom.

The variations in perspectives indicate the wide range of beliefs and customs within society concerning the comprehension of religion and tradition. Meanwhile, certain individuals perceive the Apparallu tradition as a means of safeguarding and maintaining their cultural heritage. This statement highlights the intricate and multifaceted nature of overseeing cultural heritage and religious beliefs within local communities.

This perspective exemplifies the diversity present in Indonesian society, where different religious and cultural interpretations can peacefully coexist. The presence of diverse perspectives also mirrors the intricacy of delineating religious and cultural customs, particularly when academics and religious institutions are involved.

D. CONCLUSION

Female circumcision, also known as female genital mutilation, is a traditional practice that originated during the time of the Prophet Abraham. Female circumcision is a practice rooted in Islam, although traditional ceremonies predate the arrival of Islam and have been passed down from ancestors, shaping the cultural identity of the inhabitants of Erelembang Village. The presence of this customary practice in Islamic law lacks a robust basis as there is no explicit mention of it in the Koran. Similarly, the current hadith narrations do not demonstrate its authenticity. Nevertheless, in conventional customs, *apparallu* is regarded as a cultural aspect that should be conserved. Furthermore, there are some who assert that female circumcision is obligatory, which contributes to its continued existence.

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