

# Gorontalo's Local Wisdom Momandalo Tadulahu; An Ethnographic Study On The Parenting Challenges In Indonesia

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## *Abstract*

This paper aims to describe the upbringing of young women (tadulahu) in Gorontalo amidst modernization and gender equality challenges. The research uses a qualitative approach that relies on primary and secondary data. The study results show that the parenting style in Gorontalo has shifted quite a lot following the progress of the times. Another reason mentions the normative understanding of religion adopted so far. In the social context, this understanding is often used as the basis for men to legitimize their superior actions, including violence against women in social, political, economic, ritual, and domestic areas. The assumption is that women are creatures who do nothing. Furthermore, women are often labeled as subordinate and marginal. In contrast, the characteristics of modern women are those who appear in public spaces. Because at this time, tadulahu in Gorontalo continue to voice freedom of expression. They are starting from freedom of opinion, freedom to get an education, to freedom in getting a job. However, this freedom sometimes collides with local wisdom, culture, and tradition.

Keywords: Momandalo Tadulahu, Challenges, Parenting, Modernization.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Gorontalo women are also considered the pearl of the family. Ideally, to enter adulthood, usually symbolized by marriage, they first become a young woman (tadulahu). Gorontalo women are called tadulahu when

they are *madilulahu* or have their period. In addition, a woman in Gorontalo is also required to be the backbone of the kitchen, lead and become a household manager, and become her husband's companion in all situations. These indicators seem to show the ideal characteristics of a perfect woman in Gorontalo society. The process of making Gorontalo women the ideal woman is carried out during the parenting process from birth to the wedding procession.

The local wisdom of Gorontalo's child care prioritizes the care of women. This term can be interpreted in many ways, one of which is that Gorontalo women are highly respected for their position. The position of women in the tradition of the Gorontalo community is known as *tadulahu*. *Tadulahu* is derived from two words *tawu* and *dulahu*, which means going out during the day or people who can only go out during the day. So for the people of Gorontalo, women are called *tadulahu*, which means people who are only allowed to go out during the day. Even then, there is a condition that they must wear a *Beleuto*, a sarong that covers the whole body, and only the eyeballs are visible. For the people of Gorontalo, it is considered a disgrace for women to go out or wander around at night. For this reason, for the people of Gorontalo, the upbringing of women is an important priority.

Parenting in the Gorontalo community is also used as a forum for the inheritance of culture, traditions, customs, and religious values, in this case, Islam (Kau, 2019). The pattern of inheritance of the local cultural values of the Gorontalo community through traditions and customs is expected to form a character under local cultural values. There are several local wisdoms that must be prioritized in Gorontalo, namely *mo potawu lo tawu* (respect for others), *dahayi lipu odungga lo bala* (protect your hometown from danger), *dahayi batanga wawu podaha parentha lo Eyaa* (take care of yourself and carry out God's commands). In the traditional socio-religious action, the Gorontalo natives are suggested to carry out the concept of *batanga/nyawapo maya* (spirit/human body for service), *lipu peyi hulalo* (developing a region/village), and *agama potombulu* (religion as a way of life). The above concepts are motivation to carry out community activities (Tohopi, 2012).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This research is not based on empty assumptions and does not deny the results of previous studies. Several studies from these experts inspired the author. A review of the last research result is needed to support the research being carried out. In addition, it also serves to determine the researcher's position among previous studies and the distinctive value (differentiation) between this study and previous research. According to Anggariani (2017), there has been a shift in the role of women, especially in the domestic area. The causes of the change in the domestic role of

working women are economic factors, the rise of ready-to-eat food stalls, and the existence of childcare services. Meanwhile, the values of ethnic traditions and various ideologies that influence women's views and new institutions in the business world that handle domestic work are also studied and observed because they are related to domestic roles and strategies women use.

In the context of parenting, Hamzah (2000), the differences in parenting patterns between Javanese migrant and Mandar ethnicities, specifically in relation to the incidence of infant mortality and parenting challenges. The findings revealed that Javanese migrant children exhibited an attached parenting style, while the Mandar ethnic group followed a loose parenting concept. The study proposed that the closed-parenting style observed among Javanese is influenced by Javanese culture, while the open-parenting style among the Mandar is shaped by Mandar culture.

Based on Baki (2005), in a Bugis family, there is a desire to make their children ideal children, such as being topanrita (a religious scholar), toacca (a general scholar), tosugi (a rich person), towarani (a brave person), and pangalung nappaddarek (a farmer). Meanwhile, the pattern of parenting in the Bugis Rappang family is pursued through three patterns, namely; 1) pattern of resoppa temmangingngi, namalomo naletei pamase dewata (nurturing without feeling weary will get the grace of Allah SWT), 2) the pattern of melo manre dekna melo mareso, the hope of parents that one day their children can provide material things and tranquility in their old age, and 3) the pattern of wija lawo mubakko, wija batu tellekko, parenting children sincerely according to their abilities.

## **METHOD**

The local wisdom momandalo tadulahu was chosen for three considerations as the subject of this discussion. The research uses a qualitative approach that relies on primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from field studies to observe the mapping of research aspects directly. The data needed consists of data about the challenges in child care in Gorontalo.

This research involves two parties in data collection; (a) informants who come from intellectual circles; (b) a group of parents. Both parties were engaged in examining the challenges of parenting in Gorontalo. In addition, figures who can evaluate the accuracy/validity of the research are also involved. The research process lasted two months, starting with a desk review, field observations, and interviews. Before the field research, various secondary materials, including online news, were collected.

Data analysis was carried out in two forms. First, data processing follows the stages of Milles and Huberman (2012), these stages start

from reducing observation and interview data, displaying data in the form of a summary and synopsis based on the themes of field findings, and data verification for the conclusion process. Second, the analysis used follows an interpretation technique starting from restatement of the data found both from observations and interviews, followed by description to find patterns or trends from the data, ending with “interpretation” to reveal the meaning of the data that has been collected.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Tadulahu in the Maelstrom of Materialism, Individualism, and Hedonism**

The conditions and position of tadulahu today have undergone a considerable shift following the rhythm of modernization. Tadulahu used to be confined to the house, but now tadulahu’s perception of the openness of information and technology has changed. The women’s or gender movement in various worlds has impacted changing views and attitudes towards women. The women’s action could be said to have succeeded in opening up gender inequality and injustice in the world and resulted in protests by women if they were mistreated or oppressed.

The times seem to be accelerating. The economic order and lifestyle have entirely changed into highly sophisticated technology, bringing other challenges for tadulahu.

Individualism, materialism, and hedonism are patterns of life that tend to dominate in modern life, and the mongodulahu (plural form of tadulahu) find it difficult to avoid them. On the other hand, the roots of spirituality are uprooted from the stage of life, caused by a global lifestyle that is all served by sophisticated technology devices but full of fierce competition in life (Heryati & Abdul, 2014). The lifestyle of individualism (freedom to do as you wish), materialism (more concerned with material things), and hedonism (pleasure and enjoyment) have emerged. The condition reflects that the quality of modern tadulahu may be good intellectually but morally and spiritually wrong.

Individualism is a philosophy that has a moral, political or social view that emphasizes human independence, such as responsible interests and self-determination (Chen et al., 2015). One form of influence of mass culture is the birth of individualistic behavior or attitudes in society, where people have been trapped in a mindset of prioritizing personal desires and not caring about the interests of others.

In particular, the big obstacle in momandalo tadulahu is characterized by individualism. Modern women, including in Gorontalo, represent individuals who are insensitive to their surroundings or ignorant of what is happening around them. Meanwhile, Modernization

has formed women who are only concerned with worldly problems, without paying attention to the hereafter and are individual.

Along with the times, women's roles are increasingly diverse, and in the end have the opportunity to develop themselves outside the home, not just as housewife, it is typical for *tadulahu* to be busy with activities outside the home and forget their destiny as a woman.

Then another obstacle in *momandalo tadulahu* today is the spread of materialism ideology. This ideology is based on the idea that material, property, or wealth is a measure of whether a person is noble or not. So in a society full of materialism, each member will compete to collect as much wealth as possible, whether it is legal, illegal, or a grey area.

The moral concept of hedonism is to equate goodness with pleasure. Hedonism is one of the manifestations of a culture that always tries to avoid difficulties and seek and produce conveniences, where the offer is the satisfaction of desires and lusts. From how we dress, it is effortless to find sexy and half-naked clothes in our daily activities, call it entertainment places and shopping facilities such as malls. The sad thing is that this phenomenon exists in university life. University life, the producer of intellectuals and academics, should neutralize these negative influences. It has turned around as if it wants to legalize the culture of hedonism among the younger generation. The university has become a stage for fashion and fashion shows that express an ill-mannered style by some women. It is as if they have lost their personality as a nation with noble values and manners.

The researcher interviewed several parents in the Gorontalo Regency area regarding the obstacles faced by parents in *momandalo tadulahu*. The first question the researcher asks is whether you have any problems educating your daughters.

As a parent, here's Taponi's answer "Saya rasa setiap orang tua akan mengalami kendala dalam mendidik anak, begitu juga dengan saya, apalagi saat ini anak saya ada yang SD, MTsN dan SMA jadi banyak tantangan yang harus saya hadapi. Salah satunya adalah lingkungan bermain anak saya yang tidak dapat saya kontrol." -I think every parent will experience obstacles in educating their children, as well as me, especially now that my children are in elementary school, MTsN and SMA so there are many challenges that I have to face. One of them is my child's environment which I can't control.

Mrs. Cicin also added that in educating children today, of course, there are many obstacles, "kendala utama yang saat ini saya rasakan adalah kemajuan teknologi yang tidak dikontrol" -the main obstacle that I currently feel is technological progress that is not controlled. Another informant Mr. Yani stated "Kendala yang saya rasakan saat ini dalam mendidik anak adalah pergaulan atau pengaruh teman-temannya, walaupun di Gorontalo terjadi berbagai macam pengaruh akan

menghampiri anak dan sebagai orang tua tentunya kita tidak mampu untuk mengontrolnya secara penuh” -The obstacle I feel at this time in educating my children is the influence of their friends, although in Gorontalo there are various kinds of influences that will come to children and as parents of course we are not able to fully control it. As stated by Patoni (2004), friends play a crucial role in shaping a child's social norms and values. They can introduce new perspectives, ideas, and beliefs that may or may not align with the values taught at home.

Technological developments, in this case, are communication tools owned by girls, such as Android phones that can access the internet without limits. It raises a problem because there is no supervision of girls who use these android phones. It is also an obstacle for parents because children are contaminated by the influence of technology that is misused.

According to Cii Somo: “Saat ini saya mengawasi penggunaan Handphone anak kami, karena android sangat berbahaya untuk perkembangan anak dan ini menjadi kendala ketika kita berupaya mendidik anak perempuan.” -I am currently supervising the use of our children's cellphones, because android is very dangerous for children's development and this becomes an obstacle when we try to educate girls.

A relationship crisis involves parents and children, mainly due to the unwisdom of parents in applying parenting styles to their children. Obstacles that can be seen from the results of the interviews above include the incompatibility of the relationship between children and parents resulting in friction that leads to disharmony in the relationship because the children has grown up and becomes difficult to manage. To prevent conflict in the relationship between parents and children, as parents, we must know the best way to bring the child to the future by taking the best path.

The role means the action taken by someone in an event. The role includes three things: (a) The role contains the norms associated with a person's position or place in society. The role, in this sense, is a series of rules guiding a person's social life. (b) The role is a concept of what individuals can do in society as an organization. (c) The role can also be said as individual behavior that is important for the social structure of society.

The education function above closely relates to the problem of parental responsibility as educators at home. The role of parents in educating children must really be in carrying out their duties and responsibilities so that the child will later become a child who is devoted to both parents and can become a good citizen because the family is the first environment for children's character as they are nurtured, taught various aspects, and provided with education on ethics and culture (Hariyani, 2017). Therefore, parents as educators at home (informal),

and teachers as educators in schools (formal) is very important, because the family is the first environment for children.

After presenting the finding results of observations, interviews, and documenting a number of field facts related to the focus of parents' efforts in improving children's education in Gorontalo, the following section is a discussion of the sequence of research questions.

### **Tadulahu in Gender Equality Issues**

The theological view that has been held so far is that the hierarchical power of men over women is a divine decision that cannot be changed. At the level of social reality, this view is often used as the basis for men to legitimize their superior actions, including violence against women, in social, political, economic, ritual, and domestic areas. The assumption is that women are weak and helpless creatures. Furthermore, women are often labeled as subordinate and marginal.

Such an assumption causes psychological suffering to tadulahu. The legitimacy will only impede girls' freedom, so what happens next is a rebellion to fight male domination in the public sphere.

Looking back at the history of Gorontalo women, we can see the early women of Gorontalo, as stated by Amin (2016), from Princess/King Tolanghula 1330, the first female ruler, to Princess/King Tintingio 1650, the forty-second female ruler, has colored the dynamics of Gorontalo's past, where men and women have the same capacity in the public sphere. With full of heroism, they (women) are not only spectators of the black and white history of the Gorontalo kingdom. The strong desire to build a just and civilized Gorontalo civilization without discrimination was the main issue raised by the female kings of the past.

This history may escape the attention of many people today. The vital role of the Gorontalo tadulahu movement has succeeded in carrying out its role in the community. The author believes that this will amaze other historians, that Gorontalo quantitatively has more female kings than other regions.

Indeed, we admit that the performances of the Queens of Gorontalo have been impressive. According to Amin (2016), this important step will make women come back with new hopes without losing their passion, cultural identity, and religious identity and creating a new history that becomes a role model for the next generations.

The views of the informants above make us aware that the role and culture of tadulahu in Gorontalo are not only limited to the area of the kitchen (cooking), wells (washing), and mattresses (serving husbands). Nor is it limited to five fingers expected to serve the husband fully. The thumb of a woman must fully serve her husband. The wife's index finger must obey all the husband's orders. A woman's middle finger must favor her husband no matter the circumstances. The wife's

ring finger must always be sweet, and the woman's little finger must be careful, thorough, diligent, and skilled in serving her husband.

It cannot be denied that the tadulahu movement of the 20th century, which great women pioneered, has declared itself a woman who can fight against the confines of colonialism. At that time, tadulahu Gorontalo could manifest herself as an agent of change who kept moving to find meaning for a better change in the military, economic, political, social, and religious fields.

In the 20th century, there was a new movement phenomenon carried out by women. The women's movement at that time was concentrated in the social, military, economic, political, and religious dimensions. The new format became a priority of the action because many women were disappointed with the movement's progress in Gorontalo. Through the organization they founded, without being limited by the barriers of individual interests and egoism, they were able to break down the door of rigidity that had manifested in them without being overshadowed by the greatness of their husband. Perhaps this phase can be called the second awakening phase of the Gorontalo women.

The phase of women's revival of the 20th century, because their movement really shows significant participation. Do not stop there. Gorontalo's independence cannot be separated from their active involvement. After independence, they continued to move to improve, responding to the condition of their nation through an organizational system along with the atmosphere of Indonesia/Gorontalo in the early days of independence to Parliamentary Democracy. It was marked by the struggle between political parties and each other for power. At the same time, women saw themselves more as The Future Man, meaning as elite candidates who would fill government bureaucratic posts to be built. Along with giving space in the political system for women activists.

Indeed, whether we realize it or not, it seems that the legacy of the New Order is still embedded with interest in taming awareness (demystification) among women. It is not surprising that in many localities, there are almost no progressive female figures which fill the spaces of public enlightenment and movements that have the effect of fundamental change in society. What often happens is that it enlarges the "crowded culture" that shallows awareness. Their insight is very dry, ornamental, or simply joining the crowd and complementing the rituals of the upper classes. Feasts and contests of superficial meaning are widespread everywhere. Often such activities are felt as "made up" and cover-up efforts to strengthen women's fate. On another scale, if it is not managed well, it seems that women at the local level are only driven according to the patterns of PKK and Dharma Wanita.

The arguments above are pretty reasonable, and we see that our public spaces today are almost crowded with activities that have poor



vision but spend a large budget. Even though out there, women have made quite a drastic leap. It's time for us to repeat the success of women in the past. The echo of today's women should be louder so that it can be heard everywhere. If it is necessary to break down the feudalistic view that places women as secondary humans after men, it begins to shift and change.

These shifts and changes can be seen in similar conditions in obtaining opportunities in all fields. However, it must be admitted that not all ancient views are negative; at least ethical values, gentleness, and harmony are positive values, as depicted in the feudalistic picture. It is no longer the time for a wife to just wait for her husband's return to just welcome and untie his shoelaces, or take off his tie as a symbol of loyalty. And it's not the time anymore, the wife must always sit quietly accompanying her husband while eating the food served on the table.

Turning to the current context, *tadulahu* appear more independent even though they often face dilemmatic conditions and situations, between following the flow of modernization with all its dynamics or remaining a woman with a touch of tradition and tenderness. This condition is "still respecting culture but a universal lifestyle." That is, amid the phenomenon of shifting roles, women are still undergoing a process of changing their figures. The question is how to create a modern and quality female figure without losing her identity (personality) amid the strong currents of globalization and cultural transformation.

*Tadulahu* is now required to prove himself through independence, dynamism, creativity, initiative and professionalism in every role he is involved in without ignoring his personality and 'female instincts' who are full of attention and affection and have dignity. Indeed, many examples of women today are full of achievements. Almost all areas of life have expressed it in the form of toughness and variety of success. But on the other hand, it is miserable that the ideals of the struggle to elevate the status of injured women are still rampant in cases of domestic violence (KDRT), sexual harassment, and so on.

From a social point of view, the current female figure has not been fully proven to achieve the goals expected by its predecessors, considering that some women today tend to stay away from cultural rules and norms. They are full of transgressions and starkly contrast to eastern personalities/customs. For example, visitors to karaoke, bars, cafes, and either legal or illegal brothels are dominated by the presence of women. Even a room insulated with iron bars is getting more crowded with women because of cases of theft, murder, feuds, or corruption. The euphoria of an instant lifestyle and modernity seems a challenge in itself and difficult to conquer. The economic crash and abuse of authority are alleged to be the most significant contributors to various digressions. If that's the case, how do we try to actualize the female figure by Princess

Tolanghula's personality and dreams, or at least are we willing and able to bring Ina Datau's successors to the point of zero digression?

### **Tadulahu and Freedom of Expression**

The patriarchal system of the Gorontalo community has created phrases that are often heard today and are considered to imply the inferiority of tadulahu. Expressions such as tabuwa must be motota motabu (women must be able to cook), tabuwa must be motota mongaato (women should be able to clean the house), and so on. Another is saying that women only take care of the kitchen, women only depend on their husbands, confirming that tadulahu seem to occupy the lower structures. The strength of this concept in Gorontalo culture has resulted in treatments that are considered to limit the tadulahu's space for movement, such as the concept of seclusion, which prohibits women from being free.

While the characteristics of modern women are those who appear in public spaces, this freedom sometimes collides with local wisdom, culture, and tradition. They are starting from freedom of opinion, freedom to get an education, to freedom in getting a job. Kasim Tomelo as, a Gorontalo community leader gave an example, in fact the noble culture of Gorontalo as a girl is called tadulahu, which means that women only go out of the house during the day. But in modern times it is seen as a constraint and hinders the development of girls, so the term women leaving the house during the day continues to be eroded. Because at this time, Gorontalo tadulahu continues to voice freedom of expression.

In the past, women's path were not accommodated. For example, when a family has a son and a daughter, the priority is definitely the son, even though for example the daughter has a higher ability (Anggariani, 2017). But now it's not like that anymore. The current condition, where women are free to express themselves, allows women to take essential steps in development. It includes formal education. However, several forms of tadulahu freedom of expression are considered excessive. Not a few of them have free sex, premarital pregnancy, abortion, and the rampant circulation of pornography

Such symptoms seem to be influenced by sexual exploitation in the advancement of communication technology. Displays or shows of nudity in easily accessible media make them assume that sex is something and that having sex is a part of the freedom for everyone anywhere and anytime.

Tadulahu's social life is triggered by increasingly sophisticated technology, cultural exchanges, times changing, and an increasingly global economy. Pergaulan bebas (free socializing -lit. meaning) in any part of the world is bound to happen, not least in Gorontalo; even from the past, free-of-rules social interactions has always existed, although now it seems to be getting worse and worrying. Hairak Biga, a religious

figure in Limboto, pergaulan bebas that occurs among young people, especially girls, is dating, free sex, drugs, and others.

Based on interviews with several parents of children in Gorontalo, their answers are almost the same. It relates to the technology issue that is difficult for parents to control. Children who use Android phones can access the internet without their parent's supervision, causing them to tend to be individualistic, materialistic, and hedonic. In addition, parents also admit that the social environment of their children is also an obstacle in educating their children. Thus the parents of children in Gorontalo have tried but have not been adequate in overcoming the challenges they encounter in educating their children. It is due to technological developments that are difficult to control by the parents of children so that children sometimes escape parental control (Purwanto, 2000). In addition, the social factor of children is also one of the obstacles that cause parents to be constrained in educating their children in Gorontalo.

### **CONCLUSION**

The conditions and position of tadulahu today have undergone a considerable shift following the rhythm of modernization. Tadulahu was confined to the house, but now their view has changed towards the openness of information and technology. The theological view that has been held so far is that the hierarchical power of men over women is a divine decision that cannot be changed. At the level of social reality, this view is often used as the basis for men to legitimize their superior actions, including violence against women, in social, political, economic, ritual, and domestic areas. The assumption is that women are weak and helpless creatures.

Furthermore, women are often labeled as subordinate and marginal. In contrast, the characteristics of modern women are those who appear in public spaces. Because at this time in Gorontalo tadulahu continue to voice freedom of expression. Starting from freedom of opinion, freedom to get education, to freedom in getting a job. However, this freedom sometimes collides with local wisdom, culture, and tradition.

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