

# THE TRADITIONAL MUSIC OF GULA GENDING IN THE CREATIVITY OF SASAK ARTISTS

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## **Abstrak**

The existence of the traditional music Sasak has not been widely known among the Indonesia people. When if, there might be only known in *gendang beleq* which is now recognized as one of the UNESCO'S Intangible cultural heritage. Besides *gendang beleq*, there are still many instruments and other of the traditional music ensembles that are increasingly modernist. One of the *gula gending* instrument which is currently maintained by a group of people in Lekoq Village, Cakranegara, Mataram. This instrument, which is the classified has a hang drum, is an original instrument that was born in from the creativity Sasak artis. Therefore *gula gending* will be classified as an art which has the identity of sasak culture. As a Sasak people's cultural copyright, there is an interesting phenomenon to be studied, namely with regard to the development of its function where this instrument is not only used as mean of trading by the fiber sweetened sugar traders but also used as a media for the development of traditional music artistic creativity among the Sasak artists. In the general, the aims of study this phenomenon is provide the information related to the existence and development a *gula gending* art. Through the presentation of the results of this study it is expected that the wider of the community can be recognize the *gula gending* music as one of the various traditional music part of the archipelago cultural treasure.

**Keywords:** traditional music, gula gending, creativity, Sasak.

## A. Preliminary

The modernization and the influence of globalization caused the people begin to abandon the traditional values to reach the level of modernist life. As a result, the consequently various forms of the traditional culture began to be abandoned by the society because as an effort to achieve the modern status can be said to exist in the order, structure and the traditional values in total which must be replaced by a set of the structures and the modern values (Suwarsono and Alvin Y So, 2000:23). So, in the era of globalization, the situation of the integration of various elements of the world culture into a single world-scale system, the values of tradition began to be ignored because they were considered only consumed by specifically for certain groups of people, namely the people as an owners and users (Piliang in Yudarta: 2016:303).

The phenomenon described above occurred in Lombok that showing the modernization and the effects of globalization caused the position of the traditional arts to become slumped, moreover coupled with the existence of the religious fatwa which forbids the various forms of the art, this condition further worsened the situation so that many of them experienced the scarcity and even became extinct. As stated by Idrus (1976), when the local people still believe in the *waktu telu*, the art thrives and many devotees. But, after they let go of their ideology and knew about Islamic shari'a, the art suffered a setback and lost the interest. This caused by fatwas while the religious Pictures/ Tuan Guru who said that the art is forbidden in Islam (in Yaningsih, 1991/ 1992: 32). This condition of course made it very unfortunate because the art which is the result of the creativity of society in the field of culture is increasingly alarming. Art as one of the elements of cultures are play an important role in supporting the cultural of Sasak community and becomes a determining of the identity of Sasak culture.

The importance of the existence of art in people's lives is less to understood and lived out by most of Sasak people. There are still many people who think that art is just a he-

donic activity whose purpose is to have fun, therefore there are some of them forbid the art in their lives. This condition causes the existence of the arts increasingly to be marginalized in the society. Lack of the understanding and appreciation of the existence of the art, also affects the people understanding of their cultural identity. There are still many people who think that some forms of art are currently still in the midst of the Sasak community are Balinese arts. Whereas, if we looks at the form, characteristics and content of cultural values in it, the differences are very clear with the Balinese cultural identity. If we referring to the notion of identity in a cultural context (Yudarta, 2016: 10), that cultural identity is a breakdown of the characteristics of a culture that is owned by a group of people who are known to be boundaries when it compared with the cultural characteristics of others. From this understanding it is very clear that the Sasak cultural identity can be observed in the form, characteristics and values of the Sasak cultural tradition.

Some types of Sasak art have the forms and characteristics as well as values that are very distinctive and different forms of the traditional art in the other region. One of them is *gula gending* art which is an art with a very strong cultural identity. This art is a traditional music art where the musical instrument is the creation of the Sasak artists, especially artists in the Kembang Kerang village, East Lombok district. This instrument was created as an individual instrument that can be played by a music player. From Kembang Kerang village the next it is developing to all region in Lombok, it even spread outside the Lombok region it brought by artists to the overseas region. Lalu Satrun said that if one day you find people play the *gula gending* while peddling their fiber sugar candy can be ascertained that the artists or trader that comes from Kembang Kerang village, the district of Aikmel, East Lombok.



Picture 1. The map of Lombok area and Kembang Kerang village, the district of Aikmel, East Lombok\*

In Lombok *gula gending* art also developed in the Mataram. A group of people that living in Lekoq village, North-Cakra, Mataram, most of them are people who come from the Kembang Kerang village that wandered selling the peddled their sugar candy around the Mataram city and even some that reached the Senggigi area. There are dozens of the people who travel every day to schools, markets or other places of crowd selling their wares. While peddling that their fiber sugar candy, while played the music, their playing the *pesasakan* music through the *tangkaq* or musical instruments that become a place for that fiber sugar candy. From the strains of the tones, it played by percussively by that instrument they are call the customer to buy their fiber sugar candy. As a general phenomenon that occurs related with the existence and sustainability of the traditional Sasak music, now the existence of *gula gending* music in Lombok besides it being used as a supporting tool by traders to lure buyers, it also used as media of creativities in the Sasak artists. The development of this musical instrument as a media of creativity is carried by the artists that have a high spirit of creativity and the large experience in the traditional music.

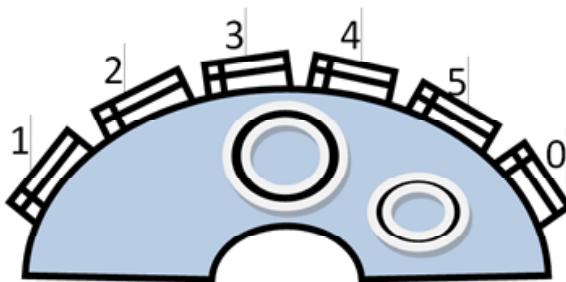
## B. The Existence Music of Gula Gending

The art of *gula gending* estimated to appear in the 1960s in Kembang Kerang village, the district of Aikmel, East Lombok. Talk about the existence of an art, certainly very related to existence, functions and the benefits for the people's lives. Related of this study, before we are leading to the problem of that existence, it is very important to know about the *gule gending* art from the form aspect and it characteristic.

### a. The Shape Instrument of Gula Gending

The instrument of *gula gending* can be categorized as a single instrument played by individually. The musical instrument that classified in *idiophone class* that played with the percussive technique that is by hit the surface of the instrument which contains with the tone boxes using that played using the fingers or palms. The instrument of *gula gending* or often to called *tangkaq*. Observed from the material, *gula gending* is classified in the metal phone music instrument that whole of that instruments made of aluminum material or stainless. The shape of this instrument is semi-circle and there is some parts of those instruments are.

1. *Tangkaq* have a diameter 50-55 centimeters.
2. The hole of *tangkaq* have 2 holes with each diameters are 12-15 centimeters that functions as a place of that fiber sugar candy and the paper for the place of that sugar.
3. The numbered tone boxes are 6 with five pentatonic tones and 1 box as a place for cleaning cloth. As for the arrangement of the tones are : *ding, dung, dong, deng, dang*, which are the tone 1 and tone 2 played by left hand while tone 3, 4, 5 played by the right hand (view the image 1)
4. The place of sling rope hangers



Picture 2. *Tangkaq*

### **b. Characteristic of the Traditional Music of Gula Gending**

In general the existence of the traditional Sasak music has some similarities with the traditional Javanese music and Balinese music. One of them is the same as adhering to the pentatonic scales system, namely the tone leader which consists of 5 sets of tones (Banoe, 2003: 330). Pentatonic scales are usually found in the several of the traditional music in several countries in the world. The pentatonic scales contained in traditional Sasak music have similarities to the scales system that we found in the Java and Bali, their names are pelog and selendro scales. There are several of Sasak music ensembles that use the pentatonic scales system, among others: *gendang beleq*, *tawaq-tawaq*, *klentang*, *barong tengkok*, *rebana gending*, *tambur*, *gong*, *suling* and *gula gending*.

Although it belongs to the pentatonic scales system, specifically pelog and selendro scales in Sasak music have the different tone characteristics from the pentatonic system in Java and Bali. The pentatonic tones played are not appropriate as they are generally played in Java and Bali. In the Sasak music, both the vocal and instrumental there are tilted tones that are always played and this is one of the characteristics and identities of the traditional Sasak music that distinguishes it with the traditional music of the other region. I Komang Kantun, one of an artist that most popular in the Sasak artists are identify these scales with terms "laras pesasakan".

The characteristic of the traditional music of *gula gending*, besides in the system of scales used also located in the technique of play it. The instrument of *gula gending* played with the percussive techniques used by fingers directly to play the tone boxes which in the outside of *tangkaq*. These percussive techniques are same with the played techniques in the *hang drum* instrument. These techniques are classified as unique because it is rarely found in the traditional musical instrument techniques in Indonesia. As music that individualistic, the instrument of *gula gending* can be played by sitting, standing and walking. This is one of the uniqueness of *gula gending* music, compared to similar instruments that only be played by sitting with its uniqueness, music of *gula gending* has a high chance to function in a variety of social and cultural activities, especially that related with the traditional processions such as *sunatan*, *nyongkolan* and other types of processions.

Back to discussion about the existence of *gula gending* music in the community, that this art until now has the main function its economic function. The *gula gending* instrument is the main media to support livelihood of the community especially the traders of fibers sugar candy that stay at the Lekoq village region, North-Cakra. The daily lives of fiber sugar candy traders are still dependent on *tangkaq* which is used as a place to store their wares. Through the *tangkaq*, several songs are played to attract the public attention.

In the development of the creativity of Sasak artists, many of them began to look at the traditional music instruments or ensembles to be used as creative media. In the era of 1990-2000 a lot of creativity is done in the gendang beleq ensembles, in this decade the artists began to look at the other instruments such as *klentang*, *gula gending*, *rebana gending* and some other of musical instruments. To appointed the several of these instruments to become a media of the creativity that was useful in the effort to maintain its existence in the midst of a modernist society.

### c. The Creativity in the Developing Music of *Gula Gending*

Efforts in the development to the music traditional Sasak in the recent years has already begun by the Sasak artists. From some event which is held like Archipelago Dance Parade, Archipelago Music Parade, the Festival of National Student Art Competition, the Cultural Month of Lombok Sumbawa, as well as various activities carried out by the Mataram Cultural Park, it has shown an increase in the development of the traditional music of Sasak.

The development of the creativity to the *gula gending* music what has been done in the past few years by an artist is Ida Wayan Astha. One method of development carried out by an artist is by add some instruments and compared it so that formed an ensemble that make the *gula gending* music be more varieties and attractive.

By combined some of the instruments that support presentation of *gula gending* music, if observed in terms of musicality, the difference is clear if compared to the presentation of *gula gending* by individually. As done by Ida Wayan Astha in the 2012 when lifting the *gula gending* music as an innovation music works there are several instruments that are combined to support the presentation of *gula gending* music, such as: *penting/mandolin, jidur, gendang, rebana, suling* and be equipped by vocalist (view Picture 3).



**Pengembangan Musik Tradisional *Gula Gending***

Picture 3. The Development of Gula Gending Music in Event

Redevelopment carried out in 2016 relating to the presentation of the results of Competitive Research Grant, where at that time the author as the winner of the Great Research Collaborated with the composer Ida Wayan Astha to created development collaboration music of *gula gending*. Slightly different with the development that carried out in 2012, the development that carried out 2016 in addition to adding several instruments as previously done, also added the *sembir bambu* instruments which is one of the traditional Sasak music (view Picture 4).



Picture 4. Sembir Bambu Instrument

Take the *sembir bambu* instruments to collaborated with *gula gending* music remember the existence of the *sembir bambu* instrument whose that existence is shrinking in the society. Both of these instruments have the flexible properties where the tone or sound can be adjusted to the style of artists. The flexibility of the tone or sound possessed by these instruments make it easier to develop, so between *gula gending* and *sembir bambu* have the harmonious tone.



Picture 5  
The development music of *gula gending* in context  
of Competitive Research Grant in 2016.

Creativity and development towards the *gula gending* music what was done in 2016 was also done by including vocal and dance elements. The inclusion of these two elements of performing arts makes the development in creativity of *gula gending* music that produces a performance art that is interesting and communicative.

### C. Conclusion

From the explanation above it can be concluded that, the music of *gula gending* is one of the traditional music that was originally born from the creativity in cultural of Sasak community, especially from the community of Kembang Kerang village, the region of Aikmel, East Lombok. In the midst of the decline in the existence of traditional music in the Sasak community life that increasingly modernist, the music of *gula gending* still survive and exist as a means to support the fiber sugar candy traders who are the urbanisms from Kembang Kerang village who settled in Lekoq village, the region of North Cakra, Cakranegara Mataram.

In addition to being a supporting facility for the traders of fiber sugar candy, the instrument of *gula gending* also made a development of media creativity of Sasak artists. The

development of creativity is done by combining the several instruments to support the presentation the music of *gula gending*. The result of the incorporating of several types of the instruments resulted in a new ensemble that made the presentation and performance of *gula gending* to be more interesting and attractive. The incorporation of several instruments also had a significant impact on the development of musical aspect of *gula gending*. The melodies which are usually presented by flat becomes more dynamic and rhythmic after being supported by several instruments such as *gendang*, *rincik*, *gong*, *mandolin* and some other of musical instruments.

The result of the Sasak artists creativity able to maintain and promote the existence of the *gula gending* art in the middle of community, also managed to lift of some instruments that had been rarely played like *sembir bambu* and *mandolin*. The next issue is the extent to which the role of the government appreciates the creativity of artists, so the *gula gending* art can be one of performing arts that really exist and become one of the Sasak cultural identity.

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