

“Megibung” In Tourism: Concept, Ethics And Comodification In Karangasem Regency, Bali Province

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Abstract

Food and culture are inseparable that food is able to represent the uniqueness of culture and the people. This study aimed to identify local food which is served with the concept of megibung by analyzing the concept, ethics, food processing, and serving method within the society and the commodification of megibung in enjoying traditional food as dish for tourists visiting Sangkan Gunung Village. This research used a qualitative approach. The data were obtained from the observation done in Sangkan Gunung Village, in depth-interview with the stakeholders and experts in the culinary field, personal documentation in pictures, and literature study. This study used saturated sampling technique. The data analysis technique was descriptive qualitative. This study concludes that commodification of megibung is an appropriate food serving method as an attractive attribute of Sangkan Gunung Village in providing a unique cultural experience for tourists. So that the opportunity to be creative for the community, especially Sangkan Gunung Village, is widely opened. This historical food serving concept must be preserved to be Balinese heritage. Making megibung to be one of tourism attraction and experience is well-thought decision. The visitors of the village could try the traditional food along with the food serving experience. A thorough explanation of the history makes people to be more interested and respect the culture. Consequently, Balinese culture, megibung, is not easy to be claimed by other parties as the local people empower and preserve the concept well.

Keywords: *Megibung, Commodification, Ethics, Traditional food.*

1. Introduction

Tourism is an industry that includes multi dimensions, therefore it requires facilities and infrastructure such as transportation and accommodation to provide the needs of tourists. Tourism activities can run if there is interaction from tourists with tourist objects that are supported by supporting facilities and infrastructure that exist in tourist objects (Parella, 2022; Sawitri, Eltivia, & Riwijanti, 2021; Suaduon, Syarif, & Nugraha, 2020; Vitrianto, Nuryanti, & Rahmi, 2021; Zakaria, 2021). Tourism can also be a tool to preserve native culture by elevating it as a tourist attraction, so that the role of community involvement is essential, not only as workers but also as tourism planners and managers (Prakoso, Pradipto, Roychansyah, & Nugraha, 2020). During traveling, tourists definitely demand comfort for the night, besides food and drink as their primary need. Thus, it becomes a necessity for a destination to provide a variety of products to meet the wants and needs of tourists (Jiménez-Beltrán, López-Guzmán, & González Santa Cruz, 2016) while enjoying a pleasant holiday experience at the destination. The existence or non-existence of different hotel elements (e.g., a spa, a restaurant, a central location etc.) will be

among the dynamics that most people will anticipate to stimulus hotel room prices (Bans-Akutey, 2022; Karunaratne & Silva, 2021; Yuliana, 2020).

The behavior of tourists in consuming food considers many things. It can be observed through; 1) Travel motives. Travel motives are influenced by factors such as a) culture, religion, (culture, background, religion), b) socio-demographic factors (socio-economic, demographic status), c) food personality traits, (food neophobia, tendency to variety seek), d) motivational and physiological factors (hunger, thirst, and satiety). Furthermore, 2) Gastronomic aspects that can be observed through the tourists' choice of served food. This condition is influenced by: a) sensory attributes (taste, aroma, texture, appearance), b) food content (ingredients, herbs, spices), c) preparation and cooking methods, d) type of food/cuisine (national, regional, local, traditional cuisine), e) food availability (availability, variety, alternatives), and 6) price, value and quality.

The next factor, 3) Destination environmental aspects where tourist consumption behavior is influenced by the following, namely: a) Gastronomic/identity images (gastronomic images of destinations), b) Marketing communications (internet), c) guidebooks, d) TV programs. While contextual factors namely, 4) Contextual factors include (time, place, interlocutors) involves the following things; a) Service (expected service quality), b) service scape (physical elements in the environment for consumption settings), c) season (season, temperature of destination area).

Based on the explanation above, there are lots to be considered by food and beverage service providers around destinations in serving dishes for tourist/visitors. The motivation of tourists to visit tourism destinations is to get new experiences as explained in the preliminary study. Thus, it is in line with Ritchie and Crouch's statement as cited Yazıcıoğlu, Yayla, and Solunoğlu (2019) that the competitiveness of destination attributes is very crucial and these attributes will not be decisive if there are no distinctive features. In addition, if the differences are not significant compared to other destinations, henceforth it will be dismissed.

Crouch's views as cited by Yazıcıoğlu et al. (2019) emphasizing that it is necessary to explore the potentials of cultural arts possessed by tourist destinations. Culinary is one of the cultural heritages where each region has its own culinary characteristics, both in terms of processing, taste, color and arrangement. Culinary products do not only display "special food" but can develop into a medium of interpretation that enrich tourists' insight. This insight is not only concerned with flavors or spices used in dishes, but also to expand knowledge about table manner, lifestyle, traditions, culture, history, and geographical elements that are represented through the serving and dishes taste.

Karangasem is a regency geographically located on the east side of Bali Island. This regency has diverse and unique tourism potential as an alternative destination to visit, the attractions include nature tourism, mountain (the highest mountain in Bali), beach tourism, marine tourism, art and cultural tourism, and spiritual tourism (the biggest temple in Bali, Besakih Temple).

Tourism objects play important role in line with the role of other supporting facilities. The essential supporting facilities for example transportation and culinary. Jiménez-Beltrán et al. (2016) believed that culinary is an important element that is beneficial for the development, sustainability, and consolidation of tourist destinations. Therefore, it is a great opportunity for the people of Sangkan Gunung Village to be able to introduce their traditional culinary delights to the visitors.

This study aims to identify local food with megibung serving, besides the concept, ethics, processing and serving in society, as well as the commodification of traditional culinary dishes as a dish for Sangkan Gunung Village visitors. This is in accordance with Yazıcıoğlu et al. (2019) who states that local dish helps tourists to learn the history of the food. Furthermore, it is explained that if food is combined with culture it will create a unique experience which is referred to Scenery Food. Beleze, Bahls, and Krause (2018), as cited in Marques da Cruz) explained that regional gastronomy as a form of soft power is able to improve product position in the global world. Thus, the opportunity of creativity is widely open for the community, especially Sangkan Gunung Village.

2. Literature review

Megibung is a traditional Balinese culinary tradition that has its own characteristics, both the serving style and the eating style/table manner. Nevertheless, Balinese culinary should be presented by considering the tourists habits/culture mix with the local culture/tradition since they are truly different sepecially in term of food processing culture. Tourism practitioner especially in culinary should develop innovation to meet this requirement as it's quite sensitive to serve dish to the tourist/visitors.

There is significant cultural gap between the visiting community and the host community, therefore it requires commodification to deal with this condition, both in processing and serving. Even though megibung is very unique and different with others, it still important to develop and provide extraordinary eating experience which is enyoable and for all visitors to fulfill their psychological needs (Akova, Cifci, Atsız, & Gezeroğlu, 2016; Juliyani, Noor, & Suharto, 2021; Kasmahidayat & Hasanuddin, 2022; Setiaji, Suharto, & Mazni, 2021).

Dealcidas, et al. (2018) in his study also stated that tourism in a social context is a social phenomenon, especially related to culture which involves various activities related to socio-economic and environmental impacts between visitors and host which is different from society. To sum up, it is very reasonable that Megibung needs to be modified in serving and in how to process for the purpose of matching the needs of tourists.

3. Methodology

This research took place in Sangkan Gunung Village. This village is located in Sidemen District and has a Pokdarwis established in 2017, which becomes the association for the community to develop their village. As a tourism destination, Sangkan Gunung Village will be able to increase the prosperity of the society through maximizing the nature, culture and art that they have, so then it can make their income better. This also encourages the community to work together in developing their village. Committed to preserving local culture especially megibung offered to tourists which becomes the object of this research.

Primary data and secondary data were used as the data sources in this study. Primary data are data that were collected directly from the source through interviews, questionnaires, observations toward stakeholders such as tourism actors, expert lecturers, leaders of traditional villages, village offices, village heads, and chiefs of traditional villages. While secondary data obtained through other people from notes, books, magazines, journals and internet related to the invasion of culinary products.

The approach administered in collecting respondents as a data source is Saturated Sampling/Census method. In this case, determining respondents including community members who are experts and involving tourism stakeholders in Sangkan Gunung Village (traditional village leader, head of environment and head of village) in Sangkan Gunung Village.

The method used to collect data, in answering the problem, is as follows: 1) Field Observation Method, conducting field visits to observe the culinary potential in Sangkan Gunung Village, 2) Conducted interviews with the Pokdarwis Amerta Giri members of Sangkan Gunung Village as a respondent, to obtain information related to the number of visits and the menu provided as well as how the menu is presented in Sangkan Gunung Village, 3) documentation, taking photos of local dish and its serving in Sangkan Gunung Village, 4) Literature study, taking various theories and material from various books, journals as references and sources from the internet, 5) List of questions in the form of a check list (Interview), a list of questions prepared to be submitted to the Community Headquarters and members of the Amerta Giri Pokdarwis and the Community who know about the discussed topic.

4. Results and discussion

The results of collected information from both respondents and from the preliminary study concluded that local culinary is one of the potentials that has important role in the development of tourism in Sangkan Gunung Village. Food is one of the components of tourism products (Yazıcıoğlu et al., 2019) in this research which will examine several local menus owned by Sangkan Gunung Village, and the serving of traditional food Megibung as a product that has the potential and unique for dining experience especially for village visitors.

Megibung is a ritual table manner in ancient times which was usually included in religious ceremonies and traditional ceremonies in Bali. Currently, Megibung only exists in Karangasem Regency particularly in Sangkan Gunung Village, Sidemen district.

The history of mengibung

Gastronomy or culinary is the development of history and culture through empowering the art of gastronomy as the local wisdom of the community. Simply, it is defined as everything related to the enjoyment of eating and other drinks, in other words, gastronomy is also the study of the relationship between culture and food, studies the various components of culture with food as its center (culinary art). Cultural and gastronomic relations are formed because of gastronomy is a product of cultivation in agricultural activities so that it gives the color, aroma, and taste of a food which can be investigated the nature where the raw ingredients were produced.

The process of eating in humans is often associated with socio-cultural aspects. The socio-cultural aspect of eating is the function of food in a society that develops according to environmental conditions, religion, customs, habits, and education of the community. Anthropologists view eating habits as a complex of cooking activities, a matter of likes and dislikes, folk wisdom, beliefs, taboos, and superstitions related to the production, food preparation and consumption, as an important cultural category.

Sangkan Gunung Village has a tradition of eating which is often called Megibung. The history and the origins of megibung originates when the king of Karangasem attacked Lombok in the leadership of I Gusti Anglurah Ketut Karangasem, who served as Commander of the War. During meal breaks, he made eating rules called "Megibung" (eating together). The creation of the "magibung" eating tradition is a moment of pride for the people in the village. The Megibung tradition is still available in Lombok and Karangasem presently. Time flies, it is increasingly understood that this tradition contains unique demogratis values. Therefore this "magibung" has never been forgotten in the traditional activities in Karangasem and Lombok.

Ethics and The Concept of Mengibung

In "megibung" tradition, 1 large portion of rice is placed on top of Dulang (a base made of wood which is covered with woven palm leaves). Large bowls for placing side dishes in the form of Sate, Lawar, various varieties, vegetables and others are also prepared. Another large pot is also provided which is covered with banana leaves as a place to prepare rice in case someone needs extra rice.

The Megibung eating ritual is carried out by many groups where 1 group consists of 8 people sitting cross-legged. Each group is led by a leader, someone who is in charge of the protocol of eating ethics/rules with some stages along with how to eat the served side dishes over the rice.

Each group consisting of 8 (eight) people which is called 1 "sela". Generally, megibung can consist of several "Sela", even dozens of "Sela" commanded by a "Pepara" in each "Sela", someone who is entrusted as the protocol and responsible to pour the side dishes over the rice gradually. The first pouring is Lawar, star fruit leaves vegetables and a number of Sate Pusut. The next step of pouring is consisted of meat, Sate Asem and Lawar Gobang.

Each group follows the procedure for eating in "Megibung" in a very orderly manner. Meat, rice and other side dishes are taken from the top of the dulang must be "packed"

before eating. The leftover food that enters the mouth, or remains from the packed, should not be scattered. If there are leftovers, they will be thrown onto a small piece of banana leaf provided under or beside the cross-legged area. Drinks are provided in Jugs/caratan made of clay. Jugs are provided 2 pieces in each "sela". The water in the jug is drunk alternately, without kissing the mouth on the muzzle of the jug. This way of drinking is called "nyeret".

Another ritual rule that must be obeyed by the entire Sela group is members simultaneously complete their portions on their own and may not precede each other. A "Pepera", in each "sela" under the leader permission, the eating ritual can be ended simultaneously.

Philosophical Value of Megibung

The philosophical value of "Megibung", as stated by I Gusti Anglurah Ktut Karangasem, the general, is the value of togetherness and having the same position in the color chess when facing "Bhoga" (dish), even though the participants are from various color chess (Brahmin, Ksatria, Waisye, and Sudra). The existence with the motto of standing the same height and sitting the same low embodies gratitude for Hyang Widhi's grace, so that there is no difference in that moment. That is the "Bisama" (message) which is still a role model in preserving the tradition in Karangasem and Lombok.

Another meaning of Mengibung is as a strategy in making attendance of participants who are selected war soldiers under the leadership of Sang Sena Pati (general), as well as teaching about the meaning of discipline in facing war and submission to the command of the leader. In terms of attendance, during Megibung it will be easy to find out which troops have been reduced, because of death or are still being treated.

Along with the development of the times, Megibung is not only conducted in ceremonies but have shifted into a lifestyle trend specially thanksgiving event or family gatherings. Throughout the development of Megibung, it is not only carried out in Karangasem and other regencies, but several restaurants have also started offering a way to eat megibung for costumers, for example Le Maredien Hotel, Jimbaran Bali. This tradition is served for visitors at Bamboo Chic restaurant by considering the right moment such as the month of Ramadan with the modifications of menu and the serving.

Sangkan Gunung Village, in developing its tourism which is managed by Pokdarwis Amerta Giri presents Mengibung as an attractive offer. Megibung itself is one of the village attributes that stimulates tourists to come and enjoy local dish. This impacts on the increasing selling value of locally produced ingredients and can improve the economy of the community while at the same time ecan explore the community creativity in supporting village development.

The serving of Megibung has been modified and adapted to the culture of tourists both in processing, serving and presentation procedures supported by highly considering the hygiene and sanitation to ensure that the food served is in accordance with health standards. Here are the commodifications:

A. Megibung Menu

The Megibung menu consists of several menus arranged as one. In one gibungan package consisting of approximately 1.2 kg of rice in one place and the side dishes are placed in another container. This portion is called one sele, in one group sele can be eaten by 6 people.

B. Ingredients Selection

In selecting the ingredients for the menu, the community used local ingredients in Sangkan Gunung Village, such as: star fruit leaves, jackfruit, coconut, meat (pork, swan) and the seasonings of sate asem, sate lilit, sate kablet, and sate basang can be from 15-20 pieces of spices and herbs.

C. Process/Processing

Seasoning ingredient.

1. fried onions
2. Sere tabya (shrimp paste and chili)
3. Pelalah (garlic, aromatic galangal, shrimp paste, chili, salt, grilled coconut)
4. Base Rajang/chopping spices consists of a) galangal 20%, b) ginger 10%, c) d) aromatic galangal, 5%, e) onion, 15%, f) garlic 15%, g) chili 25%, h) turmeric 5%, i) shrimp paste, salt, j) lemongrass, k) bay leaves and 2 others spices 5%. So that the total is 100%.

From the above ingredients, the menus such can be:

1. White lawar, filled with coconut, meat, innards, raw peanuts, raw onions, basil, + spices + coconut milk
2. Red or pink lawar, filled with reddened coconut, the ingredients are the same as white lawar
3. Jackfruit lawar, starfruit, ares (banana tree), the ingredients are the same but without onions and peanuts.
4. Anyang lawar filled with reddened coconut, meat, skin, pelalah seasoning, sere tabya, and a little chopped seasoning.

Serving

How to eat

One sele consists of 6 people and one person is in charge of being a 'Pepara,' the person in charge of arranging food. The side dishes are placed in the middle of the rice that will be eaten together. These dishes can be added if a side dish has run out. The etiquette for eating the Megibung dish is that the first one served is mixed lawar, which consists of white, red, leaf lawar, lawar komoh, the bitter taste is predominant.

One informant stated that the bitter taste comes first, so that the tongue gets used to being preceded by a bitter taste in a delicious dish. This is done bearing in mind that if the good taste is eaten first, it is possible that other foods will be simply ignored. In the megibung tradition, the eating is simultaneously ended and no one is allowed to precede it. If the whole group has finished eating, then they can get up together. Togetherness shows a sense of tolerance which ethically shows a solid and compact relationship.

The second stage is by tightening the sate sticks with the others and then pulling them so that the food served does not touch the hands of pepare, lampiong, pesan lawar. Each participant will be provided with salt and chilies which are laid with leaves, this is done to satisfy the appetite of eaters. If there is food that falls or is scattered, it should not fall on top of the rice. In front of the participants, leaves will be placed to protect them if food falls or scattered. The rule that important is when the participants are finished eating, they may not leave the gibung if the ritual has not finished yet. In fact, seating is also regulated which must be considered,

In addition to showing togetherness, there are procedures that must be considered when magibung. In general, this ordinance is more about teaching ethics, aesthetics, and logic. For example, the sitting position must be cross-legged, cross-legged in an oblique position. Usually tilted to the right. Logically, it would be very difficult to eat if everyone sat facing each other. Remember, in ancient times in one sideline there could be up to 8 people. Now it has changed to 5-8 people. With that tilted position, the hand attitude can be good, even sitting is more comfortable.

Likewise, the seating position is also regulated. For example, those who are the oldest, elders or figures, sit on the north or east side. "By looking at the sitting position, the residents already know that they are figures or elders," continued the Chairperson of the Paruman Walaka PHDI Karangasem, whom usually becomes pepara, pouring side dishes.

In ancient times, magibung was carried out under command and was not carried out conditionally and the participants sat directly. They have to wait for a signal first, and wait for orders to carry out megibung activities. When all the sela are ready as well as the society, then the megibung can be started.

In same term, the order of eating the served side dishes is also regulated. The sela usually eat lawar made from star fruit leaves with a bitter taste. Several sources cited

through literature studies states that eating lawar made from starfruit leaves contains a philosophy of eating, namely getting sick first, having fun later. "the delicious part is eaten later"

Megibung Comodification

Tourists who come with their culture and dietary habits that are different from the destination require that the culinary served at the destination should pay attention to guest habits as well as hygiene and sanitation. The served megibung menu should have been commodified both from the serving and eating procedures which is in line with the eating habit carried out by tourists:

1. The making and presenting process

In the making process there are some ingredients that are not included such as raw blood and the use of chilies can be minimized or replaced with large chilies. Some of the vegetable ingredients can be adjusted such as beans, moringa, and pumkins. In term of plating, every food are layered with leaves, besides extra leaves are provided as a substitute for each plate for each guest who will enjoy Megibung like the photo below:

2. Eating procedure/table manner

The eating procedure for tourist is quite different. Each gibungan will be eaten for 4 people and one person as a pepare. They will be directed by the tour guide, while telling the history of megibung,

5. Conclusion

Megibung is a ritual of eating (table manners) in ancient times which was usually included in religious ceremonies and traditional ceremonies in Bali. Currently, Megibung only exists in Karangasem Regency, particularly in Sangkan Gunung Village, Sidemen District.

By studying its philosophical meaning that the ritual of megibung conducted by Senapati aimed to establish togetherness and equality among members of the soldiers from various chess colors led by a protocol called Peparé. Another meaning is to control over the presence of the participants, in the context of that era is to control the soldiers existence.

Along with the rapid tourism development, in order to provide attractive attributes for Sangkan Gunung Village to provide a unique cultural experience for visitors, Megibung has become the orientation of stakeholders to develop, but with the commodification of both the ingredients and the

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