

Behaviour and Mentality of Inong Balee in the Military Operations Area (Dom) 1989-1998

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This research aims to explain Inong Balee's behaviour during the Military Operations Area (DOM)'s enactment in Aceh in 1989-1998. Psychosocial and anthropological approaches are used to explain aspects of behaviour and mentality combined with historical methods including heuristic, source criticism, interpretation, and drawing conclusions. Based on research, Inong Balee's decision to join the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) was influenced by the psychology individuals relate to as experiences of violence and the encouragement of GAM troops. Military training, ideological education, as well as historical narratives of Aceh's glory provided to Inong Balee legitimized options for helping GAM. The mindset from ideology into action reflects Inong Balee's mentality.

Key words: *Behaviour, Mentality, Inong Balee, Military Operations Area (DOM).*

Introduction

Inong Balee's existence during the Military Operations Area (DOM), was seen to be limited to the joint actions and roles of GAM (Çelik, 2008).

Psycho-social studies regarding their influence in the conflict have not been conducted. In fact, this is where changes in behaviour and mentality emerge that made Inong Balee act during GAM as if they were in the 17th to the early 20th century, represented by Keumalahayati, Cut Nyak Dien, and Cut Meutia. Although Keumalahayati is still debated to be between fiction and fact (Çelik, 2008: 10 & 2014: 273), it is still personified as the 'first Inong Balee'. The appearance of Cut Nyak Dien and Cut Mutia adds to the list of 'women warriors of Aceh' who are predicated as Inong Balee. The history of reconstructing the three with the predicate incorporates the vision of a noble, beautiful, successful, and elite warrior woman with the position of a widow of noble background fated to die a martyr's death.

Çelik (2008) examines the shift in meaning of Inong Balee from the past to the present. In the past Inong Balee was the widow of the 'successor to the struggle of her husband' who died in the war against the invaders (Portuguese and Dutch), then during GAM (1976-2005) conditions were different. Inong Balee are not only war widows, but also married women and girls who are members of GAM who have joined the central government and ABRI. Resistance is not only through weapons (modern and traditional), but also energy and thought that accumulates through public kitchens, nurses, logistics, propaganda, and intelligence.

The shift in meaning of Inong Balee is influenced by changes in behaviour and mentality during times of conflict. This condition is seen when the status of the DOM with the military code Jaring Merah was enforced throughout 1989-1998 (Chaidar, 1999; Pane, 2001; and Haris, 1999). At that time, armed violence between GAM and Indonesia Armed Forces (ABRI) groups became increasingly heated. Since 1990, Acehese women seemed to have positioned themselves as not merely objects of conflict or instruments of terror, but also actively involved as subjects of events (Siapno, 2002: 25; Nuryanti, 2011: 12).

The emergence of the 'woman combatant', marks a new direction for the meaning of Inong Balee. They are not only 'special women' who are widows, but also married women as well as girls aged 17 and 19 who are part of GAM forces. During the period of GAM, the existence of Inong Balee was more evident, although there was later confirmation later regarding them. The predicate 'grand woman' faded because the central government and ABRI saw Inong Balee as a GAM women's army. Therefore, they were also branded rebels and became targets of violence. Thus, this study discusses the forms of behaviour of Inong Balee during the DOM period between 1989-1998.

Research Methods

Surviving in conflict situations, involves changing behaviour and mentality. Mutual behaviour influences and is influenced by the environment. In addition, it is a manifestation of attitude as a form of willingness to act or react to objects (Klandermans, 2005: 103). This behaviour does not arise by itself, but is stimulated by psychological actions that lead to physical action.

Regarding mentality in history, humans are influenced by their subconscious (Kuntowijoyo, 1999: 113). Their actions are generally not controlled, because they are positioned by feelings, values and views that influence life, which can be linked to resilience or a one's mental attitude to survive in a conflict.

Resilience is also referred to by Wolin & Wolin (1993) as coping skills when faced with life challenges or the capacity of individuals to stay healthy (wellness) and continue to improve

themselves (self-repair). In addition, according to Banaag (1997: 18), resilience is a process of interaction between individual factors and the environment. These factors function to resist self-destruction and to construct positivity, while environmental factors serve to protect individuals and overcome individual life challenges.

Resilience is influenced by both internal and external factors. Grotberg (1995: 6) divides resilience into three forms : first, I HAVE, is an aspect of outside help and resources that increases resilience. These sources are: (1) encouragement from people close by (2) the existence of environmental structures and rules, (3) role models, people who can show what individuals must do, and (4) relationships with close people. Second: I AM is a strength that comes from within the individual, such as pride in one's self (self-esteem), feelings of being loved, attractive attitude, hope, faith and trust, independence and responsibility.

Third: I CAN, is a person's social and interpersonal competence such as: (1) regulating various feelings and stimuli to recognize feelings, emotional expressions in words and behaviour, (2) looking for various feelings and concerns in trustworthy relationships, (3) communication skills to express thoughts and feelings, (4) managing the temperament of one's self and others, and (5) the ability to solve problems.

Psychosocial and anthropological approaches are used to explain the behaviour of Inong Balee during the DOM period. Mutual behaviour influences and is influenced by the environment. Furthermore, it is also a manifestation of attitude, which is a willingness to act or react to that object (Bandura, 1977: 105). Transformation from dissatisfaction to action is a complex process. Various factors interact in it and produce participation. Social participants such as movement organisations influence targeted individuals (Klandermans, 2005: 103).

Changes in mentality take the form of mental activity, ways of thinking, and feeling. According to Abdullah (2015: 25), people's mentality as a research target is influenced by the following factors: ecology, anatomy, physiology, pathology, and psychology. This is intended by looking at the natural environment of the people studied, the way the community organises itself, its social structure, so that it influences society's development, how the structure functions, social problems and efforts to overcome the problem and finally the fact that whether social problems are resolved, avoided or even postponed depends on the psychology of the community.

Results and Discussion

Inong Balee Recruitment

The implementation of DOM status is a central government strategy to deal with the increasing turmoil and chaos in Aceh. This condition worsened after the return of around 800

GAM members who received military education in Libya. They developed increasingly forward verbal resistance against the central government. Since then, a series of military operations have been carried out involving special army forces (Kopassus). They were initially carried out by Kodam I / Iskandar Muda, then they were handled by Kodam I / Bukit Barisan.

The operation took place in several phases, from Jaring Merah Operation I to VIII. Troops in Aceh continued to increase and in July 1990, 6,000 additional troops were sent to Aceh. They came from various units, including two battalions from Kopassus. During DOM, at least 7 military operations were held in Aceh, in addition to Jaring Merah Operation and Operation Siwa as Joint Intelligence Unit operations. The total military operation was carried out with the code Jaring Merah which took place from July 1990 to March 1999.

Since July 1990, acts of violence between GAM and ABRI groups have increased. A series of arrests, torture, rape and sadistic killings influenced the conflict. Usman (2010: 29) calls DOM an effort to destroy the culture and people of Aceh. This condition illustrates Jakarta's militaristic response to Aceh. Terror becomes a standard tactic. Those suspected to sympathise with GAM were arrested, tortured and executed without trial. Bodies were left in public places (Ricklefs, 2008; Afadlal, et al., 2008).

Between 1990 and 1993 was the worst period span in Aceh. Thousands of civilians were killed with unknown graves. In fact, around 3000 Acehnese women were widowed because their husbands were missing or killed, for instance, in the Pidie area, which became known as the Village of Widows (Chaedar, 1998: 11). This situation prompted some Acehnese women to join GAM forces. This drive was internal, in the form of personal and external experience due to environmental influences. Internal encouragement arose as a fight against anxiety, fear, even the experience of violence that befell one's self, husband, children or family members. External factors stemmed from the socio-cultural situation and the influence of GAM groups who campaigned for resistance towards the central government.

1990 saw the beginning of the recruitment of Acehnese women into GAM groups which increased in 1999 (Reid (ed.), 2006: 228). Those intended as female soldiers were later nicknamed Inong Balee, which was given by GAM Commander, Tengku Abdullah Syafei. Inong Balee as a GAM women's army was officially stated by GAM Spokesperson Sofyan Dawood on the anniversary of GAM in 2000.

Inong Balee's recruitment was done by strict and voluntary selection with parental consent. There was a sense of pride in parents, when their child became an Inong Balee. GAM leaders in the Batee Iliak Region, for example, admitted that many parents expressed joy if their daughter was accepted as a member.

Inong Balee was given military training and knowledge about religion, international and humanitarian law as well as intelligence education. Military training for two to three months was provided not only to forge Inong Balee physically, but also related to intelligence abilities and readiness to go into the jungle and live in the mountains. Physical exercise was done as an initial test to become a member of Inong Balee. They were required to walk, run and use weapons. During training, they were also trained to carry bags with heavy weights and compete with weapons in hand. In addition, the Inong Balee were also trained to use AK-47s, M-16s, grenades, and pistols accompanied by jumping on fire and plunging into water. The exercise was carried out for nine hours per day and was centred in the village of Jiem Jiem (Pidie District) (Celik, 2014: 300).

Based on interviews with a member of Inong Balee, the training at Jiem Jiem felt special because it was led directly by Abdullah Syafi'i, GAM Military Commander. There were around 700 men and women from all over Aceh who participated. For instance, 13 women participated in training from Aceh Rayeuk (Beritagar.id, 2 May 2017). In addition to military training, Inong Balee is also equipped with knowledge about ideology. Knowledge transfer is carried out through intensive meetings or lectures in the villages (gampong) which are conducted at 9 AM until 2 AM. This lecture was given by men and women who were believed to be teachers (mualim). The lecture contains a description of the material, verses of the Koran, and prayer. The main material in the lecture is divided into three parts, the purpose of war and guerrilla strategy, ideology, and narrative of the triumph of Aceh's history and resistance in the past (Celik, 2014: 300).

One of the charismatic lecturers is Abdullah Syafi'i, GAM Military Commander. He stressed that GAM's aim was not to fight the Indonesian army, but to demand Aceh's rights. This understanding is inherent in the thoughts and feelings of Inong Balee. As A [?] said, "Indonesian soldiers are brothers, not enemies" (Beritagar.id, 2 May 2017). Thus, the actual confirmation of Inong Balee during GAM, was strongly influenced by conflict. The reactive attitude of central government destroyed the image of Inong Balee by implementing military and political strategies based on violence.

From Ideology to Action

Military knowledge and ideology became a tool for Inong Balee to help GAM troops. Not only did they play the role of the military in weapons, but also other areas such as public kitchens, nurses, logistics, and others. They served separately in 17 GAM territories. Each region was led by the Regional Commander. In general, in each GAM region there are five Inong Balee people. In Linge (Central Aceh), Inong Balee manages logistics and at the same

time acts as an intelligence (pateung) that provides information to GAM troops. They participate in creating military strategies while at the same time carrying ammunition.

Inong Balee in Meureuhom Daja (West Aceh) participated intensively in military operations and carried out ideological propaganda with GAM forces. They took part in the Aceh National Army (TNA) and joined the guerrilla within the forests and mountains. Undercover strategies are also frequently implemented. M, for example, had disguised himself as a palm oil worker and taught children to read the Koran (Beritagar.id, 2 May 2017).

Inong Balee in Pase (East Aceh) joined the traditional resistance strategy by guerrilla and lived with GAM troops in the mountains. The Pase region is categorized as the 'Red Region', because here the level of armed violence is very high. Inong Balee troops in the Pase region are also more numerous than in others. They even use 'Malahayati Darah Juang' as the name of troops, just like Inong Balee's troops in Pidie.

During GAM, Inong Balee described the courage to break the "naming tradition", as a widowed woman whose husband died because of war. Inong Balee's troops also consisted of girls aged 17 and 19, and married women who participated in the guerrilla. Psychologically, military training and ideological education influence the formation of Inong Balee's mentality, both as individuals and groups who are aware of conflict. Inong Balee is a picture of a woman who not only accepts the situation, but also fights for her defence. They believe that "Our arm is our soul" and also make the spiritual pledge "I promise to God to sacrifice my possessions and my life for the nation because there is a single and just God".

For the central government and ABRI, Inong Balee during GAM's period was no longer considered a 'grand woman', including Keumalahayati, Cut Nyak Dien, and Cut Mutia. Their involvement in GAM has become negative. Some media were also provoking by writing headlines with titles such as "Inong Balee: Revenge of the Two-Child Widow"; "An Inong Balee visited the SATTIS-73 Trumon Post"; "Laskar Inong Takes Death"; and "Inong Balee, GAM Women's Army" (Nugroho & Murtiningsih, 2008: 300).

With the title GAM women's army, Inong Balee was also personified as a 'warrior' by foreign media (Çelik, 2018). They were described as women with camouflage uniforms, fierce faces, black hoods attached to the head, and long-barrelled weapons in the hands. For example, one photo released by the Indonesian Ministry of Defence, shows a group of Inong Balee holding long-barrelled weapons. Next to them stands Abdullah Syafei'i wearing a camouflage uniform and a beret. He and an Inong Balee stretch the GAM flag. This picture ultimately shows the political opposition to central government.



Conclusion

The change in behaviour and mentality of Inong Balee during the DOM period marked the form of resistance of Acehese women against conflict. Their choice to join GAM was influenced by internal and external factors. The experience of violence and dissatisfaction and the encouragement of GAM groups made them capable of going from ideology to action. They not only played a military role in the use of weapons, but also propaganda and intelligence. Although Inong Balee is affirmed due to military and political factors, their presence shows the existence of Acehese women in history.



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