

# Racang Ngi'is Traditional Ritual as Culture Preservation of the Cila Community of Nagekeo District

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*Traditional Ritual, Racang Ngi'is, Steps, Meaning, Values*

## ABSTRACT

*Racang Ngi'is traditional ritual is one of the traditional rituals of the Cila community in Nagekeo Regency, which has been passed down from their ancestors and is still practiced today. The purpose of this traditional ritual is as a form of self-maturation for girls before starting a family. This study aims to explore the stages of implementation, meaning, and values of racang ngi'is traditional ritual. This study uses qualitative descriptive methods, namely collecting data and stating it in the form of words and images and arranging it in meaningful sentences. The researcher uses primary data sources (interviews and observations) and secondary data sources (literature studies, documentation). Technique of data analysis begins with direct observation, researcher experience, then conducting interviews with traditional leaders and community leaders (parents). Next, the researcher looks again relevant documentary evidence, separating, grouping, and verifying it according to needs. The results of the study show that this traditional ritual consists of three stages: preparation (nuji namat), implementation (racang ngi'is), and ending (bagi regha and caghe ware). The meaning of racang ngi'is traditional ritual is a form of respect for God and ancestors, a daughter's maturity according to tradition and worthy of starting a family, and a sign of parental obligation and responsibility towards her daughter. The values contained in racang ngi'is traditional ritual include religious, social, moral, and joyful values. Cila people need to understand the stages, meaning, and values so they can practice them in their daily lives sustainably and preserve racang ngi'is traditional ritual from generation to generation.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In globalization era today, the world continues to move rapidly toward change for the better. A similar trend occurs in culture, which undergoes change over time. Culture is a society's way of life, reflecting its identity, attitudes, ways of thinking, norms, behaviours, and rules. Culture is inseparable from the fabric of society, and is the heart of local life. Every society, whether rural or urban, has its own distinct culture. Forgetting one's local culture is tantamount to forgetting one's personal identity. Culture is inherent in a person from birth, passed down from generation to generation, a legacy from our ancestors. Culture is our legacy, passed down without a will. Initially, culture is our destiny, and only later do we bear it as our duty. We are recipients who not only internalize it but also suffer from it, not merely suffering from it, until we awaken to the awareness to help shape and transform it, Char and Kleden in (Sutrisno & Putranto, 2005)

Every culture has meaning and value that is highly beneficial to the local community. The values

contained within each culture serve as guidelines for human life. These cultural values encourage individuals to preserve and preserve them because they shape their identity. These cultural values are acquired from society and are fostered through a continuous process of habituation until they become an integral part of a shared life (Liliweri, 2002).

One of the cultural practice that remains preserved until today is the traditional ritual of *racang ngi'is*, practiced by the Cila community in Nagekeo Regency. According to (Koentjaningrat, 2002), a ritual is a system or summary in which all actions are structured and regulated by customs or laws that apply to the community, closely related to all events that typically occur in the community. The Cila community in Nagekeo Regency believes that becoming an adult in behaviors and attitudes requires a long process, from age to attitudes and ways of thinking. According to local culture and beliefs, a woman is considered an adult after undergoing the traditional ritual of *Racang Ngi'is*. Furthermore, this traditional ritual signifies a woman's maturation before marriage. In other words, a girl approaching adulthood can be proposed to or married if

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she has legally performed this traditional ritual. This opinion is supported by the statement by ((Nuwa et al., 2017) that the tooth-filing ceremony (*kiki ngi'i*) is performed as a form of public recognition that a girl is ready to be married to a man (traditional maturity).

This traditional ritual is performed annually during the dry season. Its implementation requires careful planning because it requires significant costs and involves the entire Cila community, known locally as "*nuji namat ulu ikong*," as well as the girl's extended family from outside the region. The *racang ngi'is* ritual is a transitional rite for a girl from adolescence to adulthood. This statement aligns with Koentjaraningrat's opinion in (Ernawati, 2012) that the tooth filing ceremony is a form of rite of passage. He divides it into three parts: separation, transition, and reintegration. This ritual is mandatory for the local community and has been passed down through generations. This traditional ritual is typically performed before a girl marries or starts a family.

This statement is similar to the *racang ngi'is* ritual in the Cila community, which is supposed to be performed before a girl is proposed to and begins married life. Meanwhile, for boys, it is known as customary circumcision (*Nu'a Weki*) which is carried out in groups. However, if a girl has been proposed to and lives with her husband, she will be subject to mandatory customary sanctions. According to local beliefs, there are no written rules governing customary sanctions, but if a girl violates them, natural phenomena such as continuous rain or continuous heat will occur. The sanctions given are in the form of slaughtering a buffalo (*ca ulu kamba*) by the girl's family and providing food to the entire Cila community, especially the boy's parents. This statement is similar to what happened in Sawu, Nagekeo Regency, where customary sanctions are imposed in the form of *poke sega kaba* (cut a buffalo) to avoid disaster ((Mei Dakosta et al., 2017). The same thing happened in Rendu Ola village, Aesesa sub-district, where the *koa ngi'i* ceremony is a tradition that cannot be separated from community life. Violations will result in both supernatural and real consequences as part of the customary law that applies to the local community ((Djuma Djudha, 2022). After eating together, the woman's parents apologized for violating the rules that had been agreed upon and passed down from their ancestors.

The background to this research is the researcher's concern to preserve the traditional ritual of *racang ngi'is*, a legacy passed down from their ancestors. Furthermore, with the rapid development of technology, some Cila residents in Nagekeo Regency perform the *racang ngi'is* ritual only symbolically (*limut*). This is due to the increasingly rapid development of technology. While technological developments have a positive impact on changing mindsets and the community's economy, they also negatively impact society, especially girls. Girls are beginning to imitate foreign cultures, such as in their dress and speech patterns, and are spending their time solely on social

media platforms like Tiktok, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram, without fostering good relationships with their peers. One significant factor is the ease with which young women can establish relationships with the opposite sex, leading them to forget their traditional customs. Consequently, girls are demanding that their parents immediately perform the *racang ngi'is* ritual before starting a family ((Botu, 2024). Considering the importance of this traditional ritual, the researcher formulated the research problem as follows: first, what are the stages of implementation and the meaning of the *racang ngi'is* traditional ritual for the Cila community in Nagekeo district? Second, what values are contained in this *racang ngi'is* traditional ritual? Based on the formulation of the problem that occurred, the purpose of the research is to describe the stages of implementation and the meaning of the *racang ngi'is* traditional ritual of the Cila community in Nagekeo and to find out the values contained in the *racang ngi'is* traditional ritual.

## 2 RESEARCH METHOD

This type of research uses qualitative descriptive research, namely research on data collected and expressed in the form of words and images arranged in sentences from interviews between researchers and informants, as well as the results of direct observations. Qualitative research itself is a research method used to examine the conditions of natural objects (as opposed to experiments) where the researcher is the key instrument. In this study, the researcher used primary data sources and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained through direct interviews between researchers and informants and the results of observations during the traditional ritual of *racang ngi'is*. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained through written sources related to this research, such as journals and reference books. These data sources were used purposively and snowball. The data collection technique was carried out using triangulation (a combination of interviews, observations, and documentation), while data analysis was inductive, and the research results emphasized meaning rather than generalization ((Sugiyono, 2013). The data analysis technique began with direct observation, the researcher's experience, then conducted in-depth interviews with traditional leaders and community leaders (elders). Next, the researcher re-examines the relevant documentary evidence, separates or sorts, groups, and verifies it according to the required data.

## 3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 The *Racang Ngis* Traditional Ritual, Stages, and Meaning

According to the local language, the *racang ngi'is* ritual is derived from two regional words: *racang*, meaning "sharpen" or "cut," and *ngi'is*, meaning "tooth." Therefore, "*racang ngi'is*" refers to the process of

sharpening or filing teeth. This ritual is performed during the dry season (*kora lesu*). The *racang ngi'is* ritual is a crucial transitional period for girls from adolescence to adulthood. It is mandatory for all girls in the Cila community in Nagekeo Regency. The *racang ngi'is* ritual is intended for girls before they get married. Married girls still perform this ritual, but only as a symbolic act (*limut*), meaning there is no sign of "tandak" (*wa'u rame*). If a girl is married and has not performed this ritual, she faces the customary sanction of slaughtering a buffalo for a communal meal with the entire Cila community. According to local custom, this ritual applies not only to native Cila girls but also to girls born into marriages. A daughter who has undergone this traditional ceremony is declared legally legitimate and becomes a core member of the Cila community. In addition to this traditional ritual, the Cila community also inherits several other cultural traditions, including traditional circumcision (*nu'a weki*) for both married and single men, which is performed collectively, and the cutting of a baby's hair, known locally as *kikir ulu*.

The researcher divided the topic into two sub-topics: the stages, stages, and significance of the *racang ngi'is* ritual, and the cultural values embodied in the *racang ngi'is* ritual for the Cila community of Nagekeo Regency. From the results of interviews with sources consisting of traditional figures (Mr. Lambertus), community figures (Mr. Blasius), (Mr. Nikolaus), and family members (Mrs. Modesta and Mrs. Oliva), the researcher describes the following: the process of carrying out the traditional ritual of *racang ngi'is* goes through three stages, namely first, the initial or preparation stage (*nuji namat*), second, the implementation stage (*racang ngi'is*), and third, the final stage (*bagi regha* and *caqhe ware*).

### 3.2 Preparation or Planning Stage (*Nuji Namat* or *Tiwo Mbolok*)

In this stage, the first thing a daughter does is invite her siblings to gather at home in the evening. Afterward, a meal is offered to God and the ancestors (*mori, empo nuci*) with the phrase, "*Ne'e ghau mori kraeng ne'e mi empo nuci, ina wien ghami teing ghang mi nu nu bhecur nekas, ghami n'gke tondang ghami paing not p'le mi ta nela mi ngalang not moli teing salang ghami n'gke racang ngi'is empo mi.*" The purpose is to express gratitude and thanks to God and the ancestors, ask for permission, and convey the plan for the traditional *racang ngi'is* ritual. The ritual offerings consist of food and drinks such as rice (*woja*), meat, especially chicken liver (*ati manuk*), betel nut (*wunu wene*), white moka (*tuak bhakok*), tobacco (*mbako*), and candles for prayer. This ritual is carried out in the kitchen, which is a special place for the girl's family for their ancestors, called *ulu nduk* or *ndusa* as the peak, and several points in the house called *bhicu* as the belief that the ancestors are present there. According to local beliefs, the place where offerings are given to ancestors should not be

used as a place for children to play, or to store any items, but rather a special place to pay respect to the ancestors. After this process, all the immediate family sits together around the *ndusa* and eats together. During the meal together, sneezing, coughing, and farting are prohibited or taboo in this traditional ritual. If violated, negative things will occur such as illness and the traditional *racang ngi'is* ritual will not run well and smoothly (Mr. Lambertus, Mr. Nikolaus, and Mr. Blasius).

Next, after eating, the nuclear family consisting of the daughter's parents and the father's siblings (*kae are ema*) sits together to create a concept for the traditional *racang ngi'is* ritual, determine the time it will be held and agree on the family from outside the area who will attend, as well as the activities carried out leading up to the traditional ritual. After there is an agreement from the nuclear family, the daughter's parents invite all the fathers, mothers and young men and women in the village of Cila to inform and discuss the concept of the traditional *racang ngi'is* ritual called (*nuji namat*). At that time, the daughter who will be sharpening her teeth is told by her parents to maintain her health to avoid illness and danger. Two days before the traditional ritual, the fathers and young men in the village build a simple hut (*sekan loe*) next to the house as a place to cut or sharpen teeth and a stage in front of the house as a place to receive guests consisting of all the people in the village of Cila (*ulu ikong*) and the extended family who are present. Meanwhile, some women and girls cleaned rice (*bhas woja*), some looked for wood (*kawe ghaju*), and borrowed kitchen utensils (*mangkok bhuang*) to help ease the burden on the girl's family. In addition, traditional advice entrusted by the family to sharpen teeth prepared tools and materials such as whetstones (*watu racang* or *watu cipi*), betel fruit (*wunu mengi*), coconut shells (*leke*), and cleaned damar sticks that functioned as biting during the traditional *racang ngi'is* ritual (Mr. Lambertus, Mr. Nikolaus, and Mr. Blasius).

### 3.3 Implementation Stage (*Racang Ngis*)

The *racang ngi'is* ritual is held over two days during the dry season, at a time agreed upon by the Cila community (*ulu ikong*). The ritual is divided into two important parts: the first, welcoming the entire extended family, bringing traditional equipment (*tama bhau weta nara, tidhu ramo*), and the second, performing the *racang ngi'is*. Before the *Tama bhau* ceremony, a girl who will be performing the *racang ngi'is* bathes and shampoos her hair (*dhamo* and *popo ulu*), and also wears traditional clothes (*pake pela*), and waits in her room for guests and extended family. The girl is not permitted to speak or speak unless accompanied by her mother. In the *tama bhau* process, there is a person entrusted by the family to record all the traditional equipment brought by the parents, siblings, and older siblings (*ine ema, weta nara, ka'e are*). For the *tama bhau* the extended family brings traditional equipment

according to the customary status of the daughter's family. For the sister (*weta*) they bring cows, horses (*jarang*), buffalo (*kamba*), goats and sheep (*ruca lebu*), moke and arak (*tuak ta'al*), coconut-chicken (*nio manuk*), betel nut (*wunu-wene*), coffee, sugar (*kopi gola*), beer and sprite. For the brother (*nara*) they bring Nagekeo traditional clothing (*bhambhu-dhowit*), mats and pillows (*nepe-lune*), rice (*dhea woja*), cakes, pork (*wawi*), and cigarettes (*mbako*).

After all the invited families gathered together, the event continued with giving God and ancestors (*tei ghang Mori, empo nuci*). The phrase reads "Ghami tei tuka sor bhokak mi nuci tepo teo kelot, k'moli sekang rumah, wisu colot, nio kos tala wulang, sapo likang, n'ngke mi kempeng keling bhangga meno ne' e ghami rumah o'o n'ngke ghami w'ki dhi'a ngasang mang, cai ulu dheu ghajang musi wan". The purpose of this event is to ask for help to be present together and work together during this traditional ritual and to ask for blessings from God and ancestors to guard, protect the daughter who wants to sharpen her teeth, fulfill all needs without shortage, avoid danger so that what is planned can be carried out well, smoothly, and safely. The ritual offerings are the same as those in the preparation stage, including food and drink such as rice (*woja*), meat, especially chicken liver (*ati manuk*), betel nut (*wunu wene*), white wine (*tuak bhakok*), tobacco (*mbako*), and candles for prayer. The next event is a meal shared by all the extended family present.

After the meal, a traditional dance is held (*rame adat*). This event is attended by guests from the extended family and parents from neighboring villages who come to enliven the ritual. In this ritual, the daughters (*anak wina*) dance five times around a bonfire, accompanied by their accompanying family. The process begins with singing a song and reciting a traditional poem (tea taking), each stanza consisting of two lines. The first stanza suggests the second stanza based on sound or other similarities, as the girls circle the bonfire in front of their homes, holding hands. As usual, this ritual is eagerly awaited by the parents, who respond to the traditional poems with captivating poems. The poems tell stories of their daily lives, filled with joy and sorrow. The poems are humorous stories that make the audience laugh along and create a joyful atmosphere. One of the men in the family will present betel nuts to all the dancers. The girl will wear traditional clothing given to her by her uncle and will cover her mouth with a belt. The girl is always supervised by a family member during this ritual.

The second stage is the implementation of the *racang ngi'is*. This stage begins with the event of dressing the daughter in traditional clothing (*pake pela*) and makeup (*pake pela*) by the mother's relatives. This is followed by a traditional meal as part of the meal outside the house (*ghang wa'u*). The next event is leaving the house (*wa'u rumah*) which consists of the daughter (*anak wina*), a traditional figure for sharpening teeth, and family representatives and the mother who accompanies her during bathing and shampooing hair

entrusted by the family. After leaving the house (*wa'u rumah*) the daughter must pass by a pig (*langge wawi*) brought by the Om (mother's relatives) who has been kept in front of the house door. This event is symbolized by sprinkling rice five times on the daughter, known as "*reca kuras*". The father of the daughter uses a traditional sentence which in the Cila language is called "*Pasi Taing*". The *pasi taing* sentence reads "*Ne'e dhea woja, ca sua telu pat bhua lima aku tana sua sua, nga'ung telu telu ghau urat wawi yo tonto tok lobho wa repit tana, ghau urat wawi, peka lucing natas, pesu nggau p' ka bhulung, rumah nggau p'ka medhong, tembo lepan, bhunga bhoa nekay, ghau not n'ngke aku mbeong*". The purpose of breaking the pig with the traditional sentence (*pasi taing*) is to get good or bad guidance for the girl from God and the ancestors through the pig's heart that has been broken. After that, the girl is swung by her father five times on the pig that they put in front of the house. When they count five times, the girl will break the pig and together with family representatives, traditional leaders and accompanying mothers go to the hut next to the house that has been prepared 2 days before the event begins. At that time, the pig was immediately killed and then cooked for the traditional meal (*ghang tuken*), (Mr. Lambertus, Mr. Nikolaus, and Mr. Blasius).

A special traditional figure from the family who had been in the simple hut first. The teacher (*ine ema*) brought a bottle of moke, betel nut stored in a betel nut holder (*k'pe wuga*), and a pillow mat (*n'pe lune*). Next, the girl slept on her back wearing traditional Nagekeo clothing wrapped in a woven mat and pillow. Many adults, especially fathers and mothers, witnessed the traditional *racang ngi'is* ritual, except for the teenage girls who had not undergone this process due to the potential for future trauma. After that, the traditional figure entrusted with sharpening the girl's teeth used a whetstone (*watu cipi*), a type of sharpening or sharpening tool made of stone. When the girl opened her mouth, the teacher sharpened her teeth (canines) with a prepared resin holder until the teeth were even. The parents gave the girl a lot of advice to endure the pain. This advice can be expressed in phrases such as, "*anak wina ngate apan lasa lawa caketak ko in moli racang, ghau ere molas ne'e ina nu'a, ghau pecang ere anak loe waling*." This phrase is interpreted as meaning that the girl can endure the pain; after it's over, she will look beautiful and more mature, no longer like a child. With the completion of the *racang ngi'is* ritual, the girl is declared legally legally an adult (Mama Modesta, Mama Oliva).

Observations revealed that some girls' mouths were injured due to the mistake of the traditional leader who cut her teeth, while others did not bite firmly enough to hold the resin that held the teeth. After the *racang ngi'is* ritual, the girls chewed betel (*ghang wunu*) to relieve the pain and injury. The next step was for the girls, along with their accompanying mothers and traditional leaders, to return to the prepared room for a communal meal (*ghang wau*) featuring slaughtered pork. For these

girls, food is made specially by (mashing) it because they cannot chew it well yet.

### 3.4 Final Stage (For Regha and Caghe Ware)

The final stage of the *racang ngi'is* ritual is a communal meal, consisting of two parts: first, a communal meal (*bagi regha*) and second, a family farewell (*caghe ware*) to the entire extended family (*weta nara, ine ema, ka'e are*) and the all-villages' community (*ulu ikong*). The daughter's family and the community in Cila village prepare a meal consisting of traditional rice (*woja*) and pork (*kuing wawi*), as well as beef (*kuing sapi*). Once the food is ready, the daughter's father offers food (*woja, kuing, tuak, mbako, wunu, w'ne*) to God and the ancestors (*mori, empo nuci*) before the rest of the family. This feeding is an expression of gratitude for the presence of God and the ancestors, whom the local community believes in, and their cooperation in making this traditional ritual a success.

Next, a communal meal, which in the local language is called (*bagi regha woja kuing wawi* or *kuing sapi*), is held depending on the family status of all members of the extended family present. Before the communal meal, the officer entrusted with distributing the food asks the entire extended family again with the phrase "*Ite ca dhadhik cee rumah tenda, pabhung taung ko m'nggate singis ghang nginung woja kuing?*" This phrase means that all of us here have received rice and meat or not? When all families have answered "yes," then they may eat the food that has been provided. If they do not finish eating, each person looks for their family to collect the food and take it home to their respective residences.

Second, *caghe ware*. After eating together, all the families returned to their seats and listened to the presentation from the nuclear family. The father of the daughter expressed his gratitude to all the families (*ine ema, weta nara, kae are*) and the families from the Cila village (*ulu ikong*) who were willing to attend this traditional ritual and had helped with their time, energy, and traditional equipment to make this ritual a success. He also expressed his apologies to all the families who had attended if there were things that did not meet the expectations of the extended family and said that in the future if there are celebrations or traditional rituals for other families, please do not forget to invite them as part of one extended family. This statement is expressed in the following sentence "*Ne'e mi riwu cadhadhik ta mai ce'e patagaku nu take care of winang's children, ina moti mbolok cama-cama, ite lawa ghang nginung cama-cama, noeng ta bhecur, noeng ta manga lera bharang, I nggate tei apay, I lawa paing sorry ne'e thank you la Oyo event is a success thanks to wa'i limeng mi ine ema, ka'e are, weta nara. Mi ta mai ne'e bhaku lime, wacang suan bharang event mi neang ghewo papa tondang n'gke ite papa ngalang cama-cama*". The next event, saying goodbye to the nuclear family while the nuclear family gave traditional equipment according to the

status in the family (Mr. Lambertus, Mrs. Oliva, and Mama Modesta).

### 3.5 The Meaning of the *Racang Ngis* Traditional Ritual for the Cila Community

From interviews, Mr. Lambertus (69), a traditional leader, interpreted the *racang ngi'is* ritual as a form of respect for ancestral heritage that must be preserved, protected, and respected. He also explained that it serves as a process of maturing for girls according to traditional customs. He added that girls who have completed the *racang ngi'is* ritual are permitted to start families. Similarly, Mama Modesta (60) interpreted the *racang ngi'is* ritual as a tribute to ancestors who have existed since ancient times. She added that the *racang ngi'is* ritual is considered sacred, meaning it is carried out through thorough preparation. It is believed that adolescent girls are mature according to traditional customs and are capable of self-control and responsibility in leading a married life.

In addition, Mrs. Oliva (35 years old) interpreted the *racang ngi'is* ritual as a form of respect to God and the ancestors who created humans. She also added that the traditional *racang ngi'is* ritual is interpreted as a form of responsibility and obligation from parents to daughters who have been inherited from their ancestors from generation to generation. If they have performed this ritual, then they are legally legal according to tradition in the eyes of the Cila community and can start a household. Mr. Blasius (49 years old) and Mr. Nikolaus (48 years old) interpreted the traditional *racang ngi'is* ritual as a cultural heritage that needs to be maintained and preserved sustainably, and also the daughter has matured according to tradition and is ready to be proposed to. From all these statements, it can be seen in the observation that the family involves God and ancestors in the preparation, implementation and final stages as a form of respect by giving traditional food to God and ancestors. Furthermore, observations confirmed the statement that a girl has reached adulthood according to traditional customs, as stated in the sentence, "*anak wina ngate apan lasa lawa caketak ko in moli racang, ghau ere molas ne'e ina nu'a, ghau pecang ere anak loe waling*."

Based on the opinions of several interviewed sources, the researcher concluded that the *racang ngi'is* ritual is interpreted as a manifestation of the Cila community's respect for ancestral heritage that must be preserved, maintained, and developed sustainably. Furthermore, girls who have completed this ritual are legally legitimate and ready to settle down. Conversely, there are consequences for those who do not participate in the tooth-filing ritual, including prolonged dry seasons or heavy rains, and the girls' lives after marriage are unhappy and full of problems.

### 3.6 The Values of the *Racang Ngi'is* Traditional Ritual for the Cila Community

From interviews with informants, the primary value of the *racang ngi'is* traditional ritual is religious. Religious values are related to the One Almighty God, who is absolute, and ancestors, so that humans pray and give thanks to God and their ancestors for everything. Mr. Lambertus explained that this traditional ritual can run smoothly and successfully thanks to the intervention of God and their ancestors. Families offer food to God and their ancestors as a form of the highest respect for God, the Creator, and their ancestors during the initial preparation, implementation, and conclusion, using Cila traditional language expressions, as outlined in the implementation stages section. From observations, researchers observed that each stage of the activity always begins with the presentation of food or offerings to God and their ancestors, which is done together in the kitchen, specifically in the place of honor (*ndusa*), using traditional utensils and using Cila regional language expressions.

Second, there is social value. The *racang ngi'is* traditional ritual, as a legacy from our ancestors, has been practiced year after year. The Cila people believe and trust that they descend from a common ancestor, thus fostering mutual respect and cooperation in daily life. Furthermore, this traditional ritual strengthens family ties and maintains social relationships, thus influencing positive behavior among members. Mr. Blasius explained that during the arrival of the extended family (*tabha bhau*), the families bring traditional equipment appropriate to their family status, aiming to ease the burden on the family. The gathering ceremony (*limpo tiwok*) is, on the one hand, an opportunity for the family to gather, but on the other hand, it also serves as an opportunity to help the family organizing the event. This is evident in the traditional items and equipment brought by the family and invited guests when the event begins (Botu, 2024). Furthermore, it serves to support and celebrate with the family of the daughter holding the ceremony. They also spend time meeting with family and sharing stories during the tooth-filing ritual. Furthermore, the communal meal (*ghang adat*) provides an opportunity for all families to strengthen family ties and togetherness. The same thing was also seen when researcher conducted direct observations which one there were traditional equipment brought out at night and eating together as a form of fostering togetherness and family.

Third, Moral Values. The traditional ritual of *racang ngi'is* is a moral norm for the Cila people. Ethics and morals are always upheld in this community to foster family relationships and kinship. The moral value embodied in this traditional ritual is that parents educate their daughters to love and appreciate their culture, which has been passed down through generations and must be preserved for future generations. Interviews with Mama Modesta, Bapak Nikolaus, and Ibu Oliva revealed that these moral values are evident during the

gathering (*nuji namat*), where the entire extended family, including children and parents, listen to the statements and suggestions of traditional or community leaders who are speaking. Furthermore, when the extended family arrives, the family hosting the event serves drinks and food, and when the family bids farewell, the daughter's family presents traditional utensils according to family status as a form of respect and appreciation for the family who has attended and celebrated the ritual together.

Fourth, the value of joy and enjoyment. Observations revealed the evening dance (*rame adat*) by all the parents. A joyful atmosphere emerges as they exchange rhymes while dancing and laughing happily. They celebrate this moment or event only during formal traditional rituals like this one. Furthermore, when families arrive, they greet each other and hug each other, because even though they live far apart, this traditional ritual allows them to meet.

## 4 CONCLUSION

Culture is a way of life. Culture plays a crucial role in society because without it, humans would lose their identity, attitudes, ways of thinking, norms, behavior, and order. One cultural practice still considered important by the Cila people is the traditional ritual of *racang ngi'is*. This ritual is a mandatory ritual in Nagekeo Regency, particularly among the Cila people, and has been passed down through generations by their ancestors. According to Cila beliefs, this traditional ritual consists of three stages: the initial or preparatory stage (*nuji namat*), the implementation stage (*racang ngi'is*), and the final stage (for *regha* and *caghe ware*). The meaning of the traditional ritual of *racang ngi'is* is, first, a form of respect for God and ancestors; second, a sign to the community that the daughter has reached maturity according to custom and is worthy of being proposed to by a man as his future wife; and third, a symbol of the parents' obligations and responsibilities towards their daughters before they start a family.

Meanwhile, the values contained in the traditional ritual of *racang ngi'is* are religious values as the first order in this ritual. The local community believes that the traditional ritual of *racang ngi'is* can run smoothly and safely through the blessing and intervention of God the creator and ancestors. Second, the social value that this traditional ritual can run thanks to the help of the extended family who help with traditional equipment, energy, and time. Third, the moral value that in this ritual there is mutual respect between one family member with another, and fourth, the value of joy is seen when dancing together (*rame adat*) as a way to strengthen family ties and togetherness. All parties (parents, community leaders, traditional leaders, women's leaders, children and teenagers are expected to understand the stages, meanings, and values and practice them in everyday life in a sustainable manner. With this suggestion, it is hoped that it can encourage the Cila community to continue to preserve the

traditional ritual of *racang ngi'is* from generation to generation and not let it become extinct or fade. In addition, so that the Cila community does not lose its

conscience and personality in the era of rapid technological development.

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