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Article Title

## **The Role of Women in Cultural Festivals and Preservation of Ancestral Traditions: A Case Study of Event Organizer**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This study examines and analyzes women's involvement in preserving ancestral traditions by organizing cultural festivals in Parepare City. The type of research used is descriptive qualitative. The technique for determining informants was purposive sampling, which was carried out deliberately based on the knowledge and activities of the community in cultural festivals. Data collection techniques used in this study consisted of observation and interviews. The data collected during the research was arranged systematically, analyzed descriptively qualitatively, and described narratively. The study results show that several ancestral traditions are still being preserved by Bugis children. For example, the Mallipa Festival, Salo Karajae, and Tappadalaoiki. In the context of cultural ceremonies, women play a very important role: from preparation to after the festival is held. This tradition is preserved by cultural activists, artists, and women active in the Event Organizer field. One of the efforts made by women in the Event Organizer field is to disseminate information about cultural festivals held at various spots or strategic locations in Parepare. Therefore, it is recommended for every Bugis woman to continue to preserve ancestral traditions by taking on roles as organizers, performers, and dancers at various cultural festivals in Parepare. In addition, parents are recommended to support their daughter's work in the Event Organizer field. Furthermore, it is hoped that the Parepare Municipal Government will continue to support the holding of cultural festivals so that they are always present to provide various colors in preserving regional arts in Parepare City.*

*Keywords: Ancestral Traditions; Cultural Festival; Event Organizer; Preservation; Woman.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Being in a fundamentalist society makes women accept and carry out their activities without asking why she has to obey (Ulandari, 2017). Especially if you have become a wife or even a mother, women will be more limited in expressing themselves. According to Beauvoir in Dita (2018), being a wife and mother are two feminine roles that limit her freedom, and these conditions cannot be separated from her femininity.

Women are at the center of attention because they are potential participants in the complex dynamics of local ethnic culture. On the other hand, decentralization policies encourage the strengthening of regional autonomy or local cultural values. For example, there is a 30% proportion of women's role in socio-political activities. However, the issue of local wisdom and women turned out to be a double-edged sword. In this case, when local wisdom still dominates, this condition will result in the oppression of women. Conversely, if culture is not a government tool, local wisdom liberates women.

Women play a very important role in tourism. Women are more important than men in tourism because of their high level of creativity (Nurhaeni et al., 2017). Women's participation in tourism activities is also beneficial culturally and socio-economically. In addition, women's participation also creates equality and justice in social life activities. For example, developing harmonious and cooperative relationships with men, realizing gender equality, and strengthening women's roles and independence.

Women play a major role as guardians of local culture and wisdom which benefit society through several processes. This role is manifested in the social actions of a woman in society. Role refers to a person's position in a particular group or social situation, which is influenced by a set of other people's expectations of the behavior a person should exhibit. So, the role is a general cultural pattern related to the status of the individual concerned.

The past, culture, ideology, and daily life practices more strongly influence the role and status of women today. This condition causes the participation of women to be very minimal in the life of society and the state (Darmayanti & Budarsa, 2021). The low representation of women in formal political institutions is also the reason behind various calls for women to be given more space to participate.

Apart from that, Bugis women also spoke about the role of women in maintaining various traditions and local wisdom. For example, the floating market tradition is a cultural asset and a tourist icon that forms Bugis' identity. Strong local wisdom values are integrated into cultural arts activities and as a cultural attraction. Therefore, Bugis women have an important role in preserving this tradition.

Bugis women as a homogeneous and diverse entity. It is as if women, as actors, subjects, or agents, have no vision. In this case, as a complex existence, women can also feel, think, reflect, create, and seek meaning in their lives (Pranowo, 2016). The difference in circumstances above raises different questions about the subjectivity, will, and strategies of the Bugis in living their lives. Remember, because all people in Bugis society cannot have the same worldview. In this case, everyone has their orientation based on their character to react to their cultural formations.

On the other hand, Parepare is an area in South Sulawesi that the Bugis society inhabits. Parepare has enormous tourism potential. The Department of Tourism, Youth, and Sports of Parepare Municipal also often organizes various tourism activities or events (Junaid & Hanafi, 2016). For example, the Salo Karajae Festival and the Mallipa Festival in Parepare involve female actors. In addition, several cultural festivals in Parepare involve women as organizers, performers, and dancers. Furthermore, several women were also involved in accompanying regional dances: playing musical instruments, and carrying sacrifices.

Based on this fact, it can be said that the role of women is very important because their numbers are dominant in regional dance performances. Women who participate in regional dances do not have special requirements to participate as long as there is a desire and interest to participate. Apart from that, the community of Parepare also worked together to be involved in the success of the cultural festival activities. For example, some communities present various cultural objects and makeup of Bugis women to present to tourists.

Based on the description above, this study aims to examine and analyze women's involvement in preserving ancestral traditions through organizing cultural festivals in Parepare City.

## **METHOD**

The type of research used is descriptive qualitative. This research was conducted in Parepare Municipal. The informants in this study consisted of the Bugis community and the government apparatus of Parepare Municipal. The technique for determining informants was purposive sampling, which was carried out deliberately based on the knowledge and activities of the community in cultural festivals (Rizaly et al., 2021). Data collection techniques used in this study consisted of the following:

1. Observation, which is done by looking directly at the subject and object of research;
2. Interviews, which were conducted by way of general question and answer, then followed by in-depth question and answer, discussion, and confirmation, both individually and in groups; as well as
3. Document studies are carried out by selecting specially and focusing on literature, books, and articles discussing the cultural festival in Parepare City.

The results of observations and interviews were then documented to complement the above data collection techniques. The data collected during the research was arranged systematically, analyzed descriptively qualitatively, and described narratively (Murdaya et al., 2021).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **A. Cultural Festival in Parepare City**

#### **1. The Mallipa Bacukiki Festival**

As in society in general, men play an important role in Parepare City society, both socially and religiously (traditionally). Men play an important role as leaders: family, community, village, traditional leaders, the village head, and kuncen (Soedarmo & Suryana, 2019). In addition, men are also the leaders of life cycle rituals such as marriage, birth, death, and ancestor worship, including rice planting rituals. However, that does not mean that men control all aspects of community life in Parepare city. Women in Parepare City also have unique responsibilities and roles that men cannot fill. In other words, men and women in the Parepare community have important responsibilities and roles. Men are not dominant, and women are not considered submissive. The ritual structure has at least five important elements in the context of cultural ceremonies:

ritual performers; ritual processions; author's appearance; ritual purposes; the time and place of the ritual.

In the context of cultural ceremonies, the role of women is very visible at the Mallipa Bacukiki Festival. From the preparation to the post-organization of the festival, women play a very varied role.

## **2. Karajae Salo Festival**

All religions and beliefs in society have rituals related to agriculture that are carried out regularly or at any time, depending on needs ([Rosmiati et al., 2022](#)).

The three dominant roles of women in Parepare City in the performing arts of Parepare City are as performers, creators, and managers. As players, women play the roles of dancers/actors (pragina), musicians (jum gamble), and puppeteers. These three roles began to develop in the 1970s. As creators, women act as choreographers, composers, and fashion designers. The role as choreographer and composer began to appear in the mid-1980s. Their role as managers, which began to develop in the 1990s, includes managing dance studios and performing arts activities (especially for tourist offerings).

The dominance of the role and participation of women as actors strongly impacts the form and content of the performing arts they perform. This influence is since in the performing arts repertoire they play, although they are works created by men, artistic values, which are the artistic expressions of men and women, have been integrated. However, the participation of women has changed the appearance of the performing arts they present, which shows that now these arts no longer belong only to men.

The presentation of the performing arts of Parepare City, played by women, has quite complex meanings from a cultural, social, and welfare point of view ([Salim & Som, 2018](#)). Its cultural meaning concerns the defense, revitalization, and development of local cultural traditions. Its social meaning is related to the increased sense of togetherness from the local community and the opening of space for artistic creativity to take place for women. The meaning of well-being concerns increased community prosperity, including the spiritual and material satisfaction they get from artistic activities.

## **3. Tappadaloiki Festival**

The event, packaged by combining modern and traditional elements, is part of a series for the 60th anniversary of the City of Parepare. Several events

will be held during the Tapadallaoki Parepare Festival, such as the Parepare Fair 2020, which will feature activities that combine traditional and modern culture. This innovation makes the Tappadalaoki Parepare Festival a unique and entertaining event. Competition festivals, starting from creative dances, gandrang bulo, traditional sports, and photography competitions.

#### **4. Lovely Habibi Ainun**

Several descriptions of the role of women in defending something of tradition must be appreciated. Those who are directly or indirectly involved in traditional activities in Indonesia (Junaid, 2019). Women also play an indirect role, like women provide guidance and understanding for children. Women provide support to their husbands, and the husband is directly involved in various traditional activities in the community. It shows that no matter how small the role of women is in public, they still contribute to it, whereas the process of preserving women's traditions is different. Local wisdom is local potential that needs to be maintained and managed properly and wisely. Learning about local wisdom as an effort to protect cultural values that have become habits or customs in community groups or regions. Maintaining cultural values so that local wisdom does not fade and functions to benefit the next generation.

#### **B. Event Organizer**

An event Organizer is an organizer of events or activities that consist of a series of systematic mechanisms and require perseverance, sincerity, and teamwork cohesiveness (Sukasari et al., 2018). In this case, the event's organization was packed with deadlines, targeting, scheduling, pressure, and teamwork solidity. The Event Organizer has the role of carrying out the organization of an event based on work guidelines and the concept of the event and managing it professionally.

The working pattern of Event Organizers in Indonesia has been around for a long time and started with traditional parties where the party committee began to divide their respective tasks to support the success of an event. Meanwhile, the term Event Organizer in Indonesia became popular around the 1990s and became even more popular in 1998 after the crisis era when so many workers left the companies where they worked for various reasons and started looking for other alternative sources of income, such as Event Organizers.

Event organizer services in Indonesia, especially in big cities, are needed by individuals, agencies, or companies. Currently, everyone wants something practical and fast, for example, when holding an event. Suppose every person, agency, or

company, when running an event and want the results they expect; they also don't want to mess around with various concepts so complicated that they require them to run the event smoothly. In that case, they will hire an event services organizer as a solution.

Event Organizers are currently engaged in several fields, such as music performances, product exhibitions (cars, computers, handicrafts), product launches, and wedding parties. The practice of Event Organizers in Indonesia has existed since the 1990s, along with the widespread distribution of committee tasks at traditional parties to support the success of an event. This division of tasks is also found in funerals and other traditional parties.

Since the development of holding exhibition-like events or expos by companies to introduce their products, many companies have started to have special divisions to handle corporate events. However, since the economic crisis occurred from late 1990 to early 2000, this division only carried out its functions at certain times, so the company began to close the division. Since then, cooperation with Event Organizers from outside the company began to hold corporate events.

### **C. The Role of Women in Event Organizers**

Women must be at the forefront who can maintain Indonesia's cultural heritage (Suhada, 2021). Don't let the elements and culture of other countries in the era of globalization influence its authenticity. Children, as determinants of the nation's future, must also be instilled with love for Indonesian cultural heritage from an early age. Women and children must be protected and involved in the development, including preserving Indonesian culture. One of these involvements is that women are event organizers in cultural festivals.

Working as an Event Organizer is, of course, not just a matter of time and opinion which makes people who work as Event Organizers feel pressured or even stressed. The surrounding environment is also a factor in the presence of this pressure. For example, many parents pressure them because they do not approve of their children working as Event organizers.

Women, as event organizers, play more roles as public relations officers and promotions to find vendors to work with them. On the other hand, many unexpected things can happen during the event. This situation forces people in the Event Organizer field to always be vigilant in responding to every possibility that could hinder the success of an event. Maintaining good cohesiveness and coordination in a team is also very necessary. Good coordination will create an effective work pattern in carrying out professional work. Communication intensity is also necessary for maintaining the rhythm of teamwork.

The city of Parepare has many events every year, but not all are about culture. Even in its implementation, all aspects of the community participate in enlivening it. It happened because the festival is a people's party that anyone can enjoy, such as the 16 sub-sectors in the creative industry, namely application and game development, architecture, product design, fashion, interior design, visual communication design, performing arts, film, animation and video, photography, crafts, culinary arts, music, publishing, advertising, fine arts, and television and radio. The celebration was also carried out following the development of the times which are in great demand by visitors and tourists so that the aim of promoting tourism and culture can be seen as well as possible.

In addition to communication patterns between divisions, the Event Organizer for the Salo Karajae festival and the Tappadalaoki Festival coordinates with stakeholders and event sponsors. In this case, women are needed in building this communication. The role of women in design and creativity can also be seen in attractive designs and posts on social media. These posts can influence repeat visits and increase visitor interest in the company and its products.

#### **D. The Role of Women in Preserving Traditions as Support for Tourism**

Preserving traditional cultural festivals in the city of Parepare is not easy, bearing in mind that the public interest or children among teenagers greatly influences the development of popular culture in all its forms (Asaad & Rahman, 2021). Apart from the relatively few art institutions, of course, many changes need to be made by cultural activists, bearing in mind that not all people are interested in preserving traditions through cultural festivals. This condition does not mean that efforts to preserve culture will also stop or move away from people's lives. But, with the cultivators' strong will, determination, and belief, this cultural festival survived in rather difficult conditions.

Several attempts have been made by cultural activists, artists, and women active in the Event Organizer field to preserve various types of local culture in the City of Parepare. In this case, they try to understand and get used to doing activities that can preserve artistic culture, including:

1. Carry out coaching processes for the younger generation regularly
2. Holding a cultural festival as an annual event to increase tourism visits and part of maintaining ancestral traditions
3. Providing traditional cultural training in the form of music and dances, which are applied through art galleries.
4. Utilizing existing knowledge and technology by providing information to the public/general public about various regional cultures in Parepare City



through internet access points. This method was carried out the reason that the existence of cultural festivals could continue to be carried out as an annual event for the City of Parepare and seeks to study, document, and publish various natural, artistic, historical, social, and cultural assets of the Bugis community through information technology in online media, so that all the potential owned by Bugis land can be recognized, understood and acknowledged by other countries outside South Sulawesi.

Other efforts made by women who work as Event Organizers in Parepare City can also be seen from its members' efforts in expanding the information regarding the Parepare cultural festival. In this case, holding the 'Tappadalaoki' Festival and Salo Karajae at various strategic spots or locations in Parepare.

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that several ancestral traditions are still being preserved by Bugis children. For example, the Mallipa Festival, Salo Karajae, and Tappadalaoki. In the context of cultural ceremonies, women play a very important role: from preparation to after the festival is held. This tradition is preserved by cultural activists, artists, and women active in the Event Organizer field. One of the efforts made by women in the Event Organizer field is to disseminate information about cultural festivals held at various spots or strategic locations in Parepare. Based on these conclusions, it is recommended that every Bugis woman continue to preserve her ancestral traditions by taking on roles as organizers, performers, and dancers at various cultural festivals in Parepare. In addition, parents are recommended to support their daughter's work in the Event Organizer field. Furthermore, it is hoped that the Government Parepare will continue to support holding cultural festivals so that they are always present to provide various colors in preserving regional arts in Parepare City.

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