



Moku Hesi Miti: Birth Ritual in Ethnoparenting of Takpala Indigenous Village Community, Alor Regency

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Abstract: This study examines "Moku Hesi Miti," a unique birth ritual of the Abui community in Alor Regency, which holds profound moral, social, and spiritual values but is at risk of being forgotten amid modernisation. This study aims to comprehensively document this tradition and identify its cultural values in child rearing. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, data were collected through two-stage interviews with an elder of the Takpala traditional community. Findings indicate that "Moku Hesi Miti" fundamentally emphasises the critical role of breast milk as a source of life and sacred blessing, in line with global health recommendations, and highlights the deep connection between physical and spiritual health. This ritual, which involves specific roles for the "Release Tree" and the father, as well as adherence to social taboos, educates children to become strong, independent, and virtuous. This study makes a unique contribution by explaining how this traditional practice strengthens health outcomes and cultural values, offering new perspectives on sociocultural factors in maternal and child health, and enhancing anthropological understanding of social control mechanisms. Ultimately, understanding "Moku Hesi Miti" can serve as the foundation for culturally sensitive public health programs and help preserve local heritage and sustainable ethnic childcare practices.

Keywords: abui ethnic community, birth rituals in alor; ethno-parenting practices; moku hesi miti tradition

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INTRODUCTION

Birth ceremonies are fundamental rituals that not only support mothers in their transition to parenthood but also inherently reflect the cultural values of a community (Dennis et al., 2007; Prates et al., 2018). In the context of anthropology and sociology, each community entity has a unique parenting mode that is internalised and influenced by local wisdom (Prawening & Aprida, 2021). The parenting patterns applied by parents inherently reflect the belief systems, bodies of knowledge, and cultural identities prevalent in their society, often transmitted through rituals and traditions passed down through generations (Rachmawati, 2020; Mubayanah & Amin, 2024).

In this context, the Moku Hesi Miti birth ritual in Alor Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, stands out as a richly significant manifestation of tradition. This ritual integrates various social actors, including the figures of the baby's father and uncle, who are identified as the "release tree." Their participation is believed to shape the child's character in the future substantially. This tradition functions as a mechanism for transmitting moral, social, and spiritual values across generations, thereby strengthening social and spiritual cohesion within the communal structure (Miu, 2018; Sharma, 2022; Nurfadilah et al., 2022), aligning with traditional parenting adages that affirm the active role of the extended family in disseminating moral and social guidance to children (Hodgson, 2001). Previous studies have explored various birth ritual practices across diverse cultural contexts. For example, Sharma (2022) analysed how birth rituals in Hindu tradition not only prepare women for the role of motherhood but also consolidate patriarchal social structures. LaPratt (2010) detailed medieval English birth rituals, which involved prayers and a period of "lying down," reflecting the specific role of women during and after childbirth. In Indonesia, various birth rituals serve as celebrations of the incarnation of new life, protection during childbirth, and articulation of family relationships with their cultural heritage (Qurrotul'ain, 2024; Nurfadilah et al., 2022; Wessing, 2002). However, these studies tend not to capture the specific nuances of the rituals.

A critical review of these studies reveals a dominant tendency toward phenomenological description, without in-depth analysis of the cultural values inherent in the ethno-parenting context, particularly in traditions with limited academic publication, such as Moku Hesi Miti. For example, Mayasari (2017) describes the Sasak tribe's "bertes/retesembet" and "molang maliq" ceremonies, which are rich in spiritual and social values, while Sifatu and Raemon (2021) discuss the "Sungkia" ceremony in Buton, which focuses on protecting infants. Although these studies successfully identify the diversity of traditions, they tend to lack a comprehensive exploration of how these values are internalised and their relevance in contemporary parenting practices. In contrast to the decline of birth traditions in Western societies, which tend to be secular (Wojtkowiak, 2020), in Indonesia, the transmission of values through rituals and esoteric practices such as pamali still functions as a

guide for social behaviour and a mechanism for instilling ethics (Indah et al., 2024; Madjid et al., 2016). A significant research gap lies in the absence of comparative narratives or critical analyses of previous research that explicitly address cultural values in this ritual.

Although the Moku Hesi Miti ritual carries high cultural value, its existence faces serious challenges due to the penetration of modernisation and the attenuation of young people's interest in local cultural heritage. This situation raises substantial concerns about the potential erosion of the Moku Hesi Miti tradition as a crucial component of the Abui cultural identity. Furthermore, in-depth academic studies on cultural values in the context of traditional parenting (ethno-parenting), particularly those associated with the Moku Hesi Miti ritual, remain very limited. Based on this analysis, this study focuses on the main research question: "What cultural values are contained in the Moku Hesi Miti birth ritual in Alor Regency, East Nusa Tenggara?" This study aims to systematically document the Moku Hesi Miti tradition and identify the cultural values it embodies. The findings of this research are expected to contribute substantially to the preservation of local culture and trigger further research initiatives on ethno-parenting practices in Alor Regency. By exploring these practices, it is hoped that adaptive strategies can be formulated to preserve local cultural values amid the increasingly intense dynamics of modernisation.

METHODS

This study adopts a phenomenological approach to gain a deep understanding of the experiences, meanings, and values inherent in the Moku Hesi Miti birth ritual from the perspective of traditional leaders. This approach, rooted in the thought of Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, is suitable for exploring subjective phenomena and the meanings attributed to life experiences (Creswell, 2012). This article is based on in-depth interviews with a traditional leader on birth rituals in Alor Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, specifically in the Abui ethnic community of the traditional village of Takpala. The Abui community, known as Abui Loku or "mountain people" because they live in the mountainous and remote areas of Alor Regency (Kratochvíl, 2007), is the focus of this study. Takpala Village, one of the original villages in the area, was chosen for its preservation of the unique Moku Hesi Miti ritual. The selection of the Traditional Village Chief of Takpala as a key informant was based on his credible position as a representative of the community's collective knowledge and historical experience regarding the ritual.

In-depth interviews were conducted using semi-structured interview guidelines, as suggested by Seidman (1998), to explore life experiences. The interviews focused on the traditional leader's direct experiences related to the Moku Hesi Miti ritual. Data collection was conducted in two phases: the first phase (last week of July 2022) aimed to identify the values and expectations of parenting contained in the tradition, while the second phase (early August 2022) explored in more depth the aspects of the Moku Hesi Miti ritual and the subjective expectations of the Traditional Leader towards the children in his community.

Although this study relied on a single key informant, the data's validity and reliability were strengthened through several strategies. First, data validity was ensured through data triangulation, specifically through member checking, by asking the informant to verify the transcription and initial interpretation of the interview results. This step is crucial to ensure that the researcher's understanding and interpretation align with the informant's intentions and experiences, as recommended in qualitative research for a phenomenological approach (Creswell, 2012). Additionally, to enrich understanding and strengthen validity, data is triangulated through literature reviews and relevant documents on Abui traditions and birth rituals in Alor. Data reliability is maintained by implementing a comprehensive audit trail, which is a thorough documentation of the entire research process, from the development of interview guidelines and the conduct of interviews to data analysis. This aims to ensure that research steps can be traced and understood transparently by others.

In analysing the data, the researcher followed the thematic analysis stages adapted from Creswell (2012). The process began with coding, where the researcher read all interview transcripts to identify relevant topics, concepts, and key phrases. The next stage is classifying, which involves grouping initial codes based on similarities in meaning to form categories. Then, conceptualisation is carried out, in which concepts are developed from the core meanings that emerge, helping researchers identify relevant subtopics. After that, categorisation is carried out to organise the data into more systematic categories. The final stage is thematisation, in which researchers analyse categories to identify the main themes that reflect the essence of the informants' experiences. This analysis process is conducted systematically to produce organised findings that support in-depth interpretation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of research on the "Moku Hesi Miti" ritual among the Abui ethnic group in Alor Regency. This unique birth ritual is deeply rooted in the community's beliefs and emphasises the importance of breast milk and the blessings of ancestors in the development of newborn babies. Through a systematic thematic analysis of in-depth interviews, four main themes were identified that comprehensively

describe the cultural significance of the "Moku Hesi Miti" ritual and the role played by family members in shaping a child's character, instilling cultural heritage, and strengthening communal cohesion. These themes are summarised in the following discussion, which is also supported by detailed data in Tables 1, 2, and 3.

Table 1. Key Aspects of "Moku Hesi Miti" Ritual in Abui Community

Aspect	Description / Meaning	Supporting Data
Definition	A unique and meaningful cultural practice among the Abui ethnic community, focused on the significance of breast milk as a source of life and a channel for blessings for the newborn.	"The customary ceremony or traditional birth requirement, that is what people here in the Abui language call Moku Hesi Miti" (AY, 25/07/2022)
Etymology	"Moku" (child), "Hesi" (fasting), and "Miti" (sitting). The ritual refers to the tradition in which a mother undergoes a seven-day postpartum period, fasting and caring for her baby with intense devotion.	"Moku Hesi Miti. Moku means child, Hesi means fasting, Miti means sitting. So it means like she is guarding or fasting to guard the child or baby for seven days." (AY, 03/08/2022)
Duration	Seven days are considered a crucial period for the baby to receive blessings and protection.	"During the seven days after birth, the mother does not leave the house; she sits and guards the child" (AY, 25/07/2022)
Core Belief	A newborn needs blessings and protection from God, ancestors, and family for optimal growth. Through breastfeeding, a mother not only provides physical nutrition but also transfers prayers, love, and blessings from family and ancestral spirits.	"transferring prayers, love, and blessings from all family members and ancestral spirits." (Author's narrative); "breast milk is the primary and sacred source of life." (Author's narrative)
Main Objective	To ensure the child grows into an independent individual with good character, instilled with noble values, love for homeland, and strong cultural ties.	"So that tomorrow or later, the child will be, when they are grown up and understand, they will not be dishonest, they will be a good child." (AY, 25/07/2022)

Findings regarding the definition, etymology, duration, core beliefs, and main objectives of the 'Moku Hesi Miti' ritual fundamentally reflect the essence of Abui ethnoparenting, where parenting practices focus not only on physical needs (e.g., breast milk as the main source of life) but also holistically integrate spiritual and social dimensions. The concept of 'fasting and sitting' for seven days (Hesi Miti) signifies an intensive period of cultural incubation, aligning with the ethnoparenting perspective that a child's values and character are shaped from an early age through meaningful rituals. The primary purpose of this ritual is to foster independence and good character in children, directly supporting the goal of ethnoparenting in shaping individuals who are fully integrated into their community and cultural heritage.

Table 2. Roles and Taboos within the "Moku Hesi Miti" Ritual

Role/ Participant	Responsibilities / Taboos	Rationale/ Consequence of Violation	Supporting Data
Mother	Undergoes a seven-day postpartum period, fasting and intensively caring for the newborn; consumes only special food provided by "Pohon Pelepas"; must not leave the house.	Ensures the baby's physical nourishment and spiritual blessings; it is believed to be a crucial period for receiving them.	"During the seven days after birth, the mother does not leave the house; she sits and guards the child" (AY, 25/07/2022)
"Pohon Pelepas" (Maternal Uncle)	Plays a central role; provides special food (rice, corn, vegetables) to the mother during the seven-day postpartum period to increase breast milk production and convey ancestral blessings—taboo: Forbidden from eating the food provided to the mother.	Food contains spiritual power to provide blessings; violation is believed to negatively impact the child's character, making them insincere in giving (e.g., taking back what they have given).	"During those seven days, the 'Pohon Pelepas' will bring food, rice, corn, and vegetables. That is from the 'Pohon Pelepas' so that the mother's milk flows smoothly." (AY, 03/08/2022); "that food must not be eaten by the 'Pohon Pelepas'. If the 'Pohon Pelepas' eats it, then tomorrow or later, the child will be, as we say here, stingy; they give things to people, then ask for them back." (AY, 03/08/2022)
Role/	Responsibilities /	Rationale/ Consequence	Supporting Data

Participant	Taboos	of Violation	
Father	Taboo: Forbidden from performing heavy labour, especially involving hard and sharp objects (e.g., splitting wood with an axe, cutting with a machete, digging with an iron tool).	Violation is believed to affect the child, causing them to fall ill directly. Healing requires a special ritual where the father apologises by washing his hands over the baby's fontanel.	"While the mother is in Moku Hesi Miti, the father can be outside but must not do heavy work. If he does heavy work, it will affect the child, and they can get sick." (AY, 03/08/2022); "Then he will pour water to wash his hands over the baby's chest and fontanel. This means the father admits he has done the forbidden activity." (AY, 03/08/2022)

The specific roles and strict taboos observed by the mother, the 'Pohon Pelepas', and the father in the 'Moku Hesi Miti' ritual are explicit manifestations of the communal parenting structure in Abui ethnoparenting. The mother's obligation to undergo an intensive postpartum period and consume only special foods from the 'Tree of Release' is not merely a physical rule, but an affirmation of the central role of women in the transfer of spiritual blessings and initial nutrition, which form the foundation of parenting. The taboos imposed on the 'Pohon Pelepas' (not eating the mother's food) and the father (not performing heavy work) can be analysed as cultural mechanisms to ensure the integrity and purity of the parenting process, indicating that every family member has an interdependent role in the successful formation of the child's character. Violations of taboos believed to have negative effects on children underscore the ethnoparenting understanding that individual actions have collective consequences and influence the well-being of future generations.

Table 3. Stages and Symbolic Acts of "Moku Hesi Miti" Ritual

Stage	Key Activities	Symbolic Significance	Supporting Data
Initial Phase (7 Days)	Mother undergoes postpartum fasting and intensive baby care, receiving special blessed food from "Pohon Pelepas."	It is a crucial period for the baby to receive blessings and protection from the universe.	"Moku Hesi Miti. Moku means child, Hesi means fasting, Miti means sitting... for seven days." (AY, 03/08/2022); "the meaning of the food given by the uncle or family is blessing. Because when she gives birth, she does not have breast milk yet, that food is to make her milk flow smoothly." (AY, 03/08/2022)
Closing Ceremony	After seven days, the "Pohon Pelepas" carries the child out of the house for the first time using a sarong. The sarong is then given to the "Pohon Pelepas."	Marks the completion of the ritual; symbolises that the child has received ancestral blessings and is ready to begin life with family and ancestral protection. Giving the sarong is a form of appreciation for the blessed food provided.	"After seven days, when the umbilical cord has detached, people start calling the 'Pohon Pelepas,' the mother's relative, to perform the ceremony and bring the mother out." (AY, 25/07/2022); "So during those seven days, however many 'Pohon Pelepas' came, they are all counted. Tomorrow, when the child starts to go out, those people are called to come. The family will then give a sarong. We give the sarong to the child to release the child onto the sarong; he carries the child out of the house door first. So the sarong is used to carry the child out, the sarong is given to his 'Pohon Pelepas'." (AY, 03/08/2022)
Cultural Continuity	The "Moku Hesi Miti" ritual is one of three types of Hesi Miti rituals (birth, marriage, death) and is continuously preserved and passed down through generations in the Abui community.	Represents the transmission of vital cultural values and traditions across generations.	"Yes, this is done generation after generation. So humans who live are subject to 3 Hesi Miti customary rituals. Hesi Miti at birth, Hesi Miti at marriage, and Hesi Miti at death. Moku is a child." (AY, 03/08/2022)

The stages of the 'Moku Hesi Miti' ritual, from postpartum fasting to the closing ceremony, are not

merely a series of activities, but a profound symbolic narrative about the transmission of Abui ethnoparenting values. The 'critical period for the baby to receive blessings and protection from the universe' during the first seven days reflects a holistic view of parenting that encompasses cosmic and spiritual dimensions. The act of the 'Pohon Pelepas' carrying the child out of the house for the first time and the giving of a sarong can be interpreted as a symbolic initiation of the child into the wider community, where they formally receive the blessings of ancestors and collective protection. The continuity of this ritual, one of the three Hesi Miti rituals (birth, marriage, death), demonstrates that Abui ethnoparenting is a lifelong process in which traditions are passed down to ensure the continuity of cultural identity and noble values from generation to generation. The detailed examination of the "Moku Hesi Miti" ritual, as presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3, highlights its profound cultural significance and the intricate roles played by family members. This tradition not only focuses on physical nourishment through breast milk but also serves as a crucial foundation for the child's character formation, instilling a deep connection to their heritage, fostering independence, and developing strong moral values.

This theme emerged from the informants' narratives, which consistently highlighted the central role of breastfeeding in the "Moku Hesi Miti" ritual and its implications beyond physical nutrition. The Abui community believes that this ritual ensures the child's future well-being and facilitates the flow of breast milk after childbirth. For the Abui tribe, breast milk is not merely nutrition; it is viewed as a source of life and a blessing that conveys prayers, love, and blessings from the family and ancestral spirits to the child. This belief reflects the spiritual dimension of ethno-parenting practices, which integrate physical and metaphysical aspects of child rearing (Toombs et al., 2021). This tradition, passed down through generations, is highly valued because it is believed to have a significant positive impact on the child's future, with the hope that they will grow into independent, sincere, and family-loving individuals. This aligns with the view that culture fundamentally shapes individual and societal perceptions (Lansford, 2022) and how communities preserve civilisational values as guiding principles for raising children (Harkness & Super, 2020; Coppens et al., 2022; Yang & McDonnell, 2024).

Interestingly, although the "Moku Hesi Miti" ritual is rooted in cultural beliefs, its core practice implicitly supports the importance of breastfeeding from a scientific perspective. World Health Organization (WHO) (2023) recommends exclusive breastfeeding for six months and continued breastfeeding up to two years, recognising breast milk as optimal nutrition that protects infants from the risk of death (Hamidah, 2018; Lindawati, 2019) and contributes to optimal growth and the prevention of stunting (Kasumayanti et al., 2023; Lestari et al., 2023; Kumalasari, 2021). These benefits also extend to mothers, reducing postpartum bleeding and the risk of cancer (Masi & Stewart, 2024; Miolski, 2023). Thus, this ritual demonstrates how traditional wisdom, even without modern scientific terminology, can reinforce practices aligned with global health objectives.

This research uniquely contributes to existing knowledge by providing an in-depth ethnographic account of the "Moku Hesi Miti" ritual. It highlights how this ritual concretely links cultural beliefs about "blessed" breast milk with the physical act of breastfeeding, offering a new perspective on the sociocultural factors influencing maternal and child health practices in Eastern Indonesia. This contribution enriches cultural anthropological understanding of the intersection between traditional belief systems and health outcomes, revealing the complexity underlying child-rearing practices across communities. This theme emerged from an analysis of the specific role of the "Pohon Pelepas" and the spiritual and physical implications of the food provided in the ritual. In the "Moku Hesi Miti" ritual, the "Pohon Pelepas" (the maternal uncle) plays a central role, responsible for providing special food for the mother. The informant's narrative emphasises that this food is not merely nutritional but also believed to substantially influence the smooth flow of breast milk, which, in turn, affects the baby's health and well-being. The symbolism of the food here transcends the physical, linking physical well-being with the child's spiritual dimension.

The primary informant (AY) states that if the "Pohon Pelepas" violates the taboo regarding the food provided, it will harm the child's character in the future, such as becoming stingy: "If the 'Pohon Pelepas' eats it, then tomorrow or later, the child will become, as we say here, stingy—they give something to others and then ask for it back." (AY, 03/08/2022). This underscores how food symbolism and ritual adherence serve as mechanisms for instilling moral values. Support and involvement from the extended family are also crucial, as they indirectly support this process through participation in communal traditions and maintaining a conducive environment (Longo et al., 2024; Jafarova, 2024). This confirms that kinship systems play an active role in maintaining and enforcing cultural practices. The symbolism of food as an integral part of social and religious rituals is common in many traditional Southeast Asian societies (Brumberg-Kraus, 2024), and traditional foods often serve as both an important source of nutrition and a cultural marker (Juniarti, 2021).

The findings of this study specifically advance understanding of food symbolism in traditional birth rituals by detailing the highly specific role of the "Pohon Pelepas" and the direct spiritual implications associated with the food provided. The study further demonstrates how the provision of food in this ritual is not only an individual responsibility but also a manifestation of collective support from the extended family, emphasising the importance of kinship systems in maintaining the continuity and effectiveness of cultural traditions (Setyaningsih et al., 2024). This nuanced portrayal goes beyond general discussions about food in rituals, revealing a clear prescriptive relationship between the provision of specific foods, the quality of breast milk (both physical and

spiritual), and infant health. Thus, this study offers a rich case study for future cross-cultural comparisons. This theme emerges from an analysis of regulated behaviour and specific prohibitions in rituals, which demonstrate their role as enforcers of social and moral order. In his book "Introduction to Anthropology," Koentjaraningrat (2009) explains that social norms are rules that govern individual behaviour in society, including kinship systems, role division, and rituals and customs, all of which are highly valued for maintaining social and spiritual harmony. In Abui society, the social norms governing taboos in the "Moku Hesi Miti" ritual are a clear example of how unwritten rules are strictly adhered to to maintain this balance.

Koentjaraningrat (2009) also emphasises that in traditional societies, violations of norms are often believed to bring disaster, due to the strong spiritual connection between an individual's actions and the well-being of family members, especially children. This is reflected in the taboos for fathers (avoiding heavy work such as splitting wood with an axe or cutting with iron tools) and the "Pohon Pelepas" (not eating food given to the mother) in the "Moku Hesi Miti" ritual. Violations of these taboos are believed to have a direct negative impact on the well-being of children. A father (AY) explains the consequences of violating the taboo on heavy work: "If he does heavy work, it will affect the children, and they could get sick" (AY, 03/08/2022). This shows that every adult's action has direct consequences for children's well-being and safety. Recent research supports Koentjaraningrat's (2009) view of social norms and symbolism in rituals, including taboos, as important mechanisms for maintaining social and spiritual balance (Ahimsa-Putra, 2020; Manan, 2021). Compliance with these prohibitions not only maintains family harmony but is also seen as a way to prevent negative impacts on children. This tradition reflects the complex interplay between cultural practices, social dynamics, and ecological conservation in Indonesian society.

This study contributes by providing empirical evidence from the Abui community that concretely illustrates Koentjaraningrat's theoretical framework on social norms and taboos within a specific cultural context. By detailing the direct consequences of violating these taboos on children's well-being, this research offers a rich ethnographic example of how cultural beliefs uphold social order and individual responsibility, especially during the critical period of childbirth (Rugumisa, 2024). The in-depth interpretation of these norms adds important details to the broader anthropological understanding of social control mechanisms.

This theme crystallised from informants' discussions about the ritual's ultimate goal in child development and its role in integrating individuals into the community's social structure. The "Moku Hesi Miti" ritual not only serves to protect the physical health of babies but also explicitly educates children to become strong, independent, and virtuous individuals. This reflects the ethno-parenting values of the Abui community, where children are expected to become independent and patriotic individuals through this ritual. Such locally-based parenting practices foster a deep connection between children and cultural values, aligning with practices in the Abui community. The symbolism in the ritual, such as the use of a sarong to carry the baby, signifies the transition from the world of protection to the social world, where the baby receives blessings from their ancestors. This is a symbolic moment of early social integration. Parents in Abui society tend to adopt common parenting practices because they believe these are the best and most suitable for their children, with the hope that their children will be well accepted by society (Sari et al., 2020). This belief influences their values and practices in raising children (Rote & Flak, 2022; Miller, 2020), highlighting the important role of culture in child-rearing practices across various regions in Indonesia (Rachmawati, 2020).

The most significant contribution of this study is its explanation of how the "Moku Hesi Miti" ritual functions as a comprehensive child-rearing system, integrating physical care with the explicit transmission of moral and social values from birth. While the existing literature discusses the influence of culture on child-rearing, this study offers a detailed case study of how a specific ancient ritual actively shapes a child's character and social integration from infancy onward. This research provides a unique lens for understanding the practical application of cultural values in early childhood development in indigenous communities, thereby enriching the fields of cultural psychology and developmental anthropology. This ritual is a concrete example of how tradition functions as a mechanism for the intergenerational transmission of moral, social, and spiritual values, thereby strengthening social and spiritual cohesion within communal structures.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Moku Hesi Miti birth ritual in the Abui community in Alor Regency reflects the core cultural values essential to their ethno-parenting practices. These core values include reverence for new life and blessings, reflected through the symbolism of breast milk and ancestral blessings, communal interdependence, demonstrated by the role of the "Tree of Release" and family support, the enforcement of morality and discipline through social norms and taboos, as well as character formation and the transmission of cultural identity. Collectively, these values contribute to Abui ethnic parenting by shaping children into independent, virtuous individuals deeply connected to their ancestral heritage, ensuring their physical and spiritual well-being from an early age. A deep understanding of Moku Hesi Miti underscores that traditional wisdom can align with contemporary holistic parenting goals, offering valuable insights for culturally relevant modern parenting practices. To sustainably preserve and utilise Moku Hesi Miti values, it is recommended to

develop a digital archive or local museum that documents every aspect of the ritual in detail, including informant narratives, symbolism, and meaning, so that future generations and researchers can access it. It is important to incorporate material on Moku Hesi Miti into the elementary and secondary school curricula in Alor Regency as part of local cultural education to instil understanding and pride among the younger generation. Community initiatives should also be encouraged, such as holding workshops or regular community-level meetings involving traditional leaders and the younger generation to facilitate the direct transmission of knowledge and experience. Thus, Moku Hesi Miti is not merely a ritual but a reflection of a robust value system that can serve as the foundation for more culturally sensitive community health programs and effective cultural preservation strategies amid the dynamics of modernisation.

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