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## The existence of Rimpu Culture in Bima, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

The Bima people are known for their distinctive style of clothing, known as Rimpu culture. The Bima culture of Rimpu, which involves covering one's privates, especially for adult women, is an expression of religious ideals. This review attempts to explain West Nusa Tenggara's Bima district's Rimpu culture. Those who wear the traditional Bima sarong are known as Rimpu wearers. A set of clothes known as rimpu makes use of two sarongs. After civilization emerged and Islam extended over Bima, there was a significant inflow of Rimpu people living there. One of the cultural systems in the West Nusa Tenggara region is the Rimpu culture. Local and national cultural leaders, religious authorities, and government representatives must actively maintain the Rimpu culture within the Bima community.

### 1. Introduction

Indonesia is a vast nation characterized by diverse societal circumstances. The islands of Nusa Tenggara belong to this category. West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) is home to several indigenous tribes, including the Sasak, Samawa, and Mbojo tribes. The community exhibits unique characteristics resulting from a wide range of cultural riches and practices. The Mbojo tribe have a culture that is just as distinctive as that of the Sasak tribe, predominantly located on the island of Lombok, and the Sumbawa tribe, residing on the island of Sumbawa. Dana Mbojo epitomizes the core values and cultural heritage of the Bima Mbojo community. Nevertheless, these customs are increasingly challenging to find and are quickly vanishing. Hence, it is unsurprising that a significant proportion of children and adolescents in Bima are

unfamiliar with their own cultural heritage. Undoubtedly, this scenario is worrisome, given the significance of the traditions and culture that are transmitted from one generation to another.<sup>1,2</sup>

The Rimpu culture is a prominent facet of the Bima people's customs, which are currently in decline and may soon disappear. The Bima people are renowned for their unique attire, referred to as rimpu culture. The cultural influence of immigrants is progressively eroding the traditional religious and verbal practices of good manners in the Bima region. The Bima tribe's mantra, "Maja labo Dahu," meaning "shame and fear," unequivocally demonstrates their religious nature. They feel ashamed and fearful to adhere to religious restrictions. The Bima culture of Rimpu practices the act of concealing one's body, particularly among adult women, as a manifestation of

religious principles.<sup>3</sup> This review aims to elucidate the Rimpu culture of Bima district in West Nusa Tenggara.

### **Comprehending the cultural aspects of Rimpu**

The Bimanese have perpetuated their culture through intergenerational transmission, receiving it from their predecessors and preserving and safeguarding it till the present time. The term "Rimpu" in the Mbojo language, also known as the Bima language, is a combination of two syllables: "Ri" and "Mpu." In this context, "Mpu" signifies closure or conclusion, while "Ri" denotes the act of coming back or returning. Through the application of this linguistic strategy, one can infer that the Mbojo people attribute profound philosophical importance to the Rimpu culture, which entails closing all conceivable legal loopholes for behaviors that contradict Islamic law. Rimpu is a cultural element within the clothing aspect of Bima civilization (Dou Mbojo).<sup>4,5</sup>

The Bima people have coexisted with the "Rimpu" culture since its inception. The clothing code called "rimpu" is a unique expression of the principles found in locations with distinct Islamic characteristics, such as Islamic sultanates and kingdoms. The Rimpu culture is thought to provide protection for adult women in the Bima Regency against immoral acts and instill in them a strong sense of moral values. The habits and regulations of Islamic women, such as adhering to modest dress codes and wearing the hijab, align with the cultural practices of the Rimpu.<sup>6</sup>

### **Harnessing the Rimpu culture**

Individuals who don the customary Bima sarong are referred to as Rimpu wearers. The rimpu clothing collection employs a pair of ndo'o sarongs, consisting of two separate parts. Both coverings are positioned on the upper and lower parts. Women don the rimpu fashion, characterized by a certain kind of clothing, and men adorn themselves with a sarong called "katente" that is tied around their waist. The Bima people employ their unique cotton thread, referred to as Kafa Mpida, in the process of traditional weaving called muna to produce the Tembe Nggoli,

also known as songket sarong. Tembe Nggoli showcases a wide variety of excellent topics. On songket sarongs, one can see several designs such as the nggusu waru, which is an eight-pointed flower, the weri, which resembles a diamond cake with four points, the kakando, which represents bamboo shoots, the wunta cengke, which is the cengke flower, and the buga satako, which is a flower sprig.<sup>7</sup>

The preservation and safeguarding of Rimpu, which holds great significance as a symbol of pride and identity for the Bima people, necessitates the involvement of both the local government and community, including religious and youth leaders. Recently, the local community has begun to express disapproval towards the Rimpu culture. Historically, the Bima people felt embarrassed to venture outside their homes without making use of Rimpu. When a lady desires to depart from her residence and household for business purposes, she is required to don a rimpu. This requirement is applicable to all females who have reached the stage of sexual maturity. Noncompliance with this obligation is considered a transgression of both religion and customary law during that period. The introduction of different cultures, the process of industrialization, and the influence of international fashion pose a threat to the preservation of the Rimpu culture in West Nusa Tenggara. From the community's perspective, there is a notable deficiency in awareness regarding the cultivation of Rimpu dress, especially among women. Additionally, there is a dearth of education and parental involvement in this matter. In order to save the Rimpu culture for future generations, it is imperative that the government and local traditional authority intensify their efforts.<sup>8,9</sup>

### **The historical background of the Rimpu culture**

With the arrival of Islam in Bima during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Rimpu phenomenon became apparent to the local population. The Mbojo Muslim women of the sultanate period adorned themselves with the customary clothing called rimpu mbojo. Following the rise of civilization and the expansion of Islam in Bima, there was a notable influx of Rimpu people settling in the area. Arab tradesmen frequently

visited the island and introduced the Islamic faith to the people of Bima. Rimpu emerged as a prominent social and historical institution in Bima (Mbojo) during that era. Consequently, Mbojo men and women exhibited the capacity to coexist harmoniously and fortify their cultural heritage and educational practices at that period.<sup>8,9</sup>

The Bimanese people have traditionally worn rimpu as their typical clothing since ancient times. During that period in the Mbojo community, women utilized rimpu as a fabric to cover their intimate regions. The Bima (Dou Mbojo) civilization embraced Islam more rapidly than Hinduism due to the compatibility of its teachings with the Ncuhi's beliefs and doctrines, commonly referred to as the Makamba and Makimbi beliefs.

The existence of Rimpu is inseparable with the Sultan Nuruddin empire's endeavors to utilize sarong. In the 13th century, woven cloth, a well-established commodity, gained significant worldwide popularity as a trading product. Bimanese people engaged in trade by exporting woven cloth, which was produced from the many cotton plants, to distant regions such as China. Subsequently, if a woman desires to depart from her residence and kin for a non-essential purpose, she is obliged to don a Rimpu. It is mandatory for all women who have reached the age of puberty and are currently in violation of religious laws and customs.<sup>10</sup>

The tight correlation between Rimpu and the expansion of Islam was clearly apparent at that time. Historical records indicate that women from the Bimanese culture during that time regarded the exposure of their private parts as disgraceful. Intentionally or unintentionally, every man casts a quick look at his own nakedness. Despite the fact that she is merely displaying her calves, the man is obligated to marry her. Historically, women, feeling ashamed, promptly sought marriage. They perceive it as a form of harassment, which they consider to be a shameful act specifically targeting women. Differences in the usage of Rimpu exist between married folks and unmarried girls. It offers a nuanced elucidation of the social standing of women throughout that time period, particularly from the perspective of men. If a male

desires to immediately have a family, he can utilize the sarong worn by the woman to ascertain her current location.<sup>1-4</sup>

### **The classification and applications of Rimpu**

There are two types of Rimpu and its applications: rimpu mpida/cili and rimpu colo. Rimpu Mpida, also known as Rimpu Cili, is a traditional attire that securely covers the entire body with a sarong, extending from the toes to the head, leaving only the eyes and hands exposed. It can also refer to a headdress that includes a veil. Hence, determining the true identity of the perpetrator behind the rimpu is exceedingly challenging. Adolescent females exclusively wear the Rimpu.<sup>5,6</sup>

Women can wear the rimpu colo as a versatile headscarf to cover the entire face while still allowing visibility, or as a regular hijab functioning as a veil. Ladies who are married typically don the Rimpu accessory. Rimpu Colo closely resembles today's hijab. The distinction lies in the fact that the rimpu provides complete coverage for all areas of the body, particularly the Rimpu Mpida, which is equivalent to a full-body veil. However, there are individuals who continue to wear the hijab, which solely covers the head while leaving the arms exposed. Hence, maintaining Rimpu as a custom is highly commendable.

### **The influence of Rimpu culture on contemporary society**

The Rimpu culture, also known as the Mbojo culture, holds significant historical value and has had a profound impact on the spread of Islam in Mbojo. This influence propelled Mbojo to the pinnacle of Islamic prominence, earning it the reputation as the second Veranda of Mecca, following Aceh (the Eastern Veranda of Mecca). An analysis of the practical applications, advantages, and limitations of Rimpu culture allows for the observation of the values inherent in Rimpu clothing. In security aspect, Rimpu clothing provides protection against solar radiation, serving as insulation during cold and rainy weather. Additionally, Rimpu clothing deters men from harassing women, safeguarding them against

defamation and actions that contravene religious and cultural norms. Rimpu attire protects women from male intervention.<sup>7</sup>

Wearing Rimpu garments can induce a sense of tranquility and instill a strong sense of religious duty in women. Bima women's inherent modesty and reserved nature, which prevent them from engaging in banned activities such as gossip and backbiting due to the embarrassment caused by their attire, contribute to this. Within society, Rimpu-wearing women are regarded as individuals who prioritize religion, possess admirable ethics, and demonstrate a heightened awareness of social issues. They serve as role models for society due to their exemplary conduct. According to the Mbojo people, these women are considered virtuous, honorable, and conscientious, actively avoiding any actions that contravene religious teachings. In addition, Rimpu has the ability to enhance the beauty and elegance of apparel while adhering to the specific styles prescribed by Islam for Muslim women's attire.<sup>8</sup>

The Rimpu culture is a cultural system that exists in the West Nusa Tenggara region. A cultural system refers to an intangible manifestation of culture. A cultural system refers to the collective ideas and concepts that govern the behavior and beliefs of individuals living in a society. These ideas are interdependent and interconnected, forming a cohesive system. The cultural system serves as a regulatory and stabilizing force for human activities and behavior, acting as the ultimate authority in guiding human conduct. The acquisition of knowledge within this cultural framework occurs through either acculturation or institutionalization. During the process of institutionalization, individuals acquire and adjust their thoughts and attitudes to conform to the practices, norms, and regulations prevalent in their culture. Culture serves as a regulatory mechanism that enables humans to comprehend appropriate behavior and establish their demeanor in interpersonal interactions. The cultural shift is expected to enhance the cultivation of positive values and preserve the existing moral standards in society. The government, religious authorities, and cultural leaders in West Nusa Tenggara should prioritize the

preservation of Rimpu culture in the Bima community.<sup>7-10</sup>

## 2. Conclusion

The Rimpu culture is a prominent cultural system in the West Nusa Tenggara region. Regional and national governments, religious authorities, and local cultural luminaries should actively execute the crucial objective of preserving Rimpu culture within the Bima community.

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