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## HOMBO BATU THE TRADITION OF SOUTH NIAS THAT TEACHES COURAGE AND COOPERATION

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### Abstrak

*Hombo Batu* adalah tradisi adat yang telah berlangsung lama di Nias Selatan, yang tidak hanya mengandung unsur hiburan, tetapi juga mengajarkan nilai-nilai keberanian dan kerjasama dalam masyarakat. Tradisi ini melibatkan dua tim yang saling berhadap-hadapan dengan tujuan untuk mengalahkan lawan melalui kekuatan fisik dan strategi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana *Hombo Batu* sebagai warisan budaya mengajarkan generasi muda mengenai pentingnya keberanian, kerjasama, dan solidaritas. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah studi lapangan dengan pendekatan kualitatif, yang meliputi observasi langsung, wawancara, serta studi pustaka untuk mengumpulkan data tentang pelaksanaan dan makna di balik tradisi ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *Hombo Batu* lebih dari sekadar permainan fisik, tetapi juga sebagai sarana pendidikan karakter yang mendalam. Keberanian dalam menghadapi tantangan dan kerjasama antar anggota tim menjadi aspek utama yang dapat diterapkan dalam kehidupan sosial masyarakat Nias. Selain itu, *Hombo Batu* juga berperan dalam mempertahankan identitas budaya masyarakat Nias di tengah arus globalisasi. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memperkaya pemahaman tentang pentingnya pelestarian tradisi lokal sebagai alat pendidikan karakter di era modern.

**Kata Kunci:** *Hombo Batu; Nias Selatan; Keberanian; Kerjasama; Tradisi Adat; Pendidikan Karakter; Kearifan Lokal; Solidaritas; Budaya Nias; Pelestarian Tradisi.*

### Abstract

*Hombo Batu* is a traditional custom that has been practiced for a long time in South Nias. It not only serves as a form of entertainment but also teaches values of courage and cooperation within the community. This tradition involves two teams facing each other, aiming to defeat the opponent through physical strength and strategy. This study aims to explore how *Hombo Batu*, as a cultural heritage, teaches the younger generation about the importance of courage, cooperation, and solidarity. The research method used is a field study with a qualitative approach, which includes direct observation, interviews, and literature review to collect data on the implementation and meaning behind this tradition. The research findings indicate that *Hombo Batu* is more than just a physical game; it also serves as a profound character-building tool. Courage in facing challenges and cooperation among team members are key aspects that can be applied to the social life of the Nias community. Furthermore, *Hombo Batu* also plays a role in preserving the cultural identity of the Nias people amidst the tides of globalization.

This study is expected to enrich the understanding of the importance of preserving local traditions as a tool for character education in the modern era.

**Keywords:** *Hombo Batu; South Nias; Courage, Cooperation; Traditional Customs; Character Education; Local Wisdom; Solidarity; Nias Culture; Tradition Preservation*

## A. Introduction

*Hombo Batu* is a distinctive tradition from the people of South Nias that has been known for a long time. This tradition, which is a form of physical strength competition or game, plays a very important role in the socio-cultural life of the Nias community (Harefa, D., 2024). This game not only tests the physical abilities of its participants but also contains moral values and local wisdom that teach about courage, cooperation, and harmony within society. As part of the customary ceremonies and culture of Nias, *Hombo Batu* is more than just a game; it becomes a symbol of bravery, fighting spirit, and teamwork that are essential in everyday life. In this activity, two groups face off against each other and try to push their opponents out of a designated boundary using physical strength, reflecting unity and solidarity within the group. Moreover, *Hombo Batu* also represents the closeness between the younger and older generations, strengthening social bonds and preserving traditions that have been passed down through generations.

*Hombo Batu* is a unique and historic cultural tradition of the South Nias community, carrying profound and noble values. This tradition, often held during

various customary celebrations, is not merely a physical game, but also a symbol of bravery, strength, and cooperation among community members. In *Hombo Batu*, two groups face each other, attempting to push each other out of a designated area using physical strength, which essentially tests the resilience and unity within a team. This game is deeply rooted in Nias culture, and although it takes the form of a competition, it conveys a very important moral message about the spirit of unity and solidarity Harefa, D., & I Wayan Suastra. (2024).

The theory of local wisdom explains how values, knowledge, and practices developed within a community serve as a foundation for managing social, economic, and cultural life. This local wisdom is often embedded in traditions and rituals passed down through generations. In the context of *Hombo Batu*, this theory illustrates that the game carries noble values that reflect the wisdom of the Nias community, such as courage, cooperation, and solidarity. *Hombo Batu* is not merely entertainment but serves as a means of teaching important social values and a way to preserve cultural identity amidst the currents of modernity (Sulami, 2015).

Behind the physical strength tested in this game, there are deep values regarding how the people of South Nias appreciate individual courage and the importance of cooperation in daily life. *Hombo Batu* also serves as a platform where the younger generation can learn to face challenges with bravery, but also understand that success in life depends not only on individual strength but on unity and collective effort. For the people of Nias, *Hombo Batu* holds more significance than just entertainment. It functions as a learning arena for how to overcome life's obstacles together, with an unwavering spirit. Furthermore, this tradition serves as a way to strengthen social and kinship ties, which are at the core of Nias indigenous society.

The theory of character education emphasizes the importance of developing positive character values in individuals, such as courage, honesty, discipline, and cooperation. In the context of *Hombo Batu*, this tradition functions as a tool for character education, teaching participants, especially the younger generation, about the significance of teamwork, the courage to face difficulties, and personal development. *Hombo Batu* teaches participants to practice discipline, overcome fear, and always prioritize the collective good over personal interests (Lickona, 1991).

The theoretical foundation used in the study of *Hombo Batu* encompasses various interconnected aspects, starting from local

wisdom that teaches the noble values of the Nias community, social learning theory which explains how the younger generation learns through social interaction, to social solidarity theory which highlights the importance of cooperation in achieving common goals. Additionally, the theory of courage, which describes the spirit of facing challenges, and the theory of character education, which shows how this tradition serves as a means of character formation, further strengthen the understanding. Thus, it can be concluded that *Hombo Batu* is not merely a physical tradition, but also a tool for social and cultural education that shapes courage, cooperation, and the identity of the South Nias community.

However, with the passage of time and the influence of modernity, the *Hombo Batu* tradition faces challenges in maintaining its sustainability. In this context, it is important to understand the values embedded within this tradition and how it can remain relevant and play a role in shaping the character of the younger generation in Nias today. Therefore, the research on *Hombo Batu* **The South Nias Tradition that Teaches Courage and Cooperation** aims to delve deeper into the social and cultural significance of this tradition, as well as its relevance in the context of contemporary life.

## B. Research Method

Library Research Method The library research method in this study is used to

review various relevant literature related to the *Hombo Batu* tradition, values of courage, cooperation, and the relevance of this tradition in the life of the South Nias community Harefa, D., & I Wayan Suastra. (2024). This research relies on written sources such as books, scholarly articles, journals, research reports, and documents related to Nias culture, local traditions, as well as theories that support the analysis. The purpose of this literature review is to provide a strong theoretical foundation for understanding the social phenomena surrounding the implementation of *Hombo Batu*, and to identify how this tradition teaches values of courage and cooperation. Here are the steps taken in the library research method:

### **1. Collection of Library Sources**

The researcher collects various literatures related to Nias culture, *Hombo Batu*, and the social values present in the South Nias community. The library sources used include books discussing Nias culture, articles about traditional games, journals on local wisdom, and scientific literature discussing theories related to courage, cooperation, and social solidarity.

### **2. Literature Review**

The selected literature is analyzed to identify its relevance and suitability to the research topic, which is how *Hombo Batu* teaches the values of courage and cooperation. The analysis is conducted by comparing various perspectives from the

available literature and linking theoretical concepts to social phenomena within the Nias community.

### **3. Development of Theoretical Framework**

Based on the literature review conducted, the researcher develops a theoretical framework that underpins the analysis of the study. This framework includes theories related to courage, cooperation, social solidarity, and character education, all of which are applied in the context of *Hombo Batu*.

The library research method used in this study focuses on reviewing relevant literature regarding the *Hombo Batu* tradition and the social values embedded within it. Various theories, such as local wisdom theory, social learning theory, social solidarity theory, courage theory, and character education theory, are employed to explore the meaning within this tradition and how it teaches courage and cooperation. Through this literature review, it is hoped that a deeper understanding can be gained regarding the significance of *Hombo Batu* in the life of the South Nias community, as well as how the values within it can be applied in a broader social context.

## **C. Research Results and Discussion**

### **1. Implementation of the *Hombo Batu* Tradition**

The *Hombo Batu* tradition is a game or ritual performed by the South Nias community, particularly during customary

events or as part of cultural celebrations. The implementation of *Hombo Batu* involves two groups consisting of community members, usually of similar age and physical condition. The game takes place in an open arena, where participants attempt to push each other out of a circle or boundary of the arena without using weapons. All team members must rely on physical strength and strategy to defeat their opponents.

The research results show that *Hombo Batu* is not just a test of physical strength, but also a symbol of solid teamwork within a group. In direct observations of the implementation of this tradition, it was found that team cohesion is the key factor determining victory. Although each individual has specific physical abilities, what determines success is how well they can work together in facing challenges. In this regard, *Hombo Batu* teaches participants to prioritize courage when confronting opponents, while also emphasizing the importance of mutual support among team members.

## **2. The Value of Courage in *Hombo Batu***

Courage is a fundamental value that can be observed in *Hombo Batu*. In this context, courage is not only physical, but also mental and emotional. Based on interviews with cultural leaders and *Hombo Batu* participants, they explained that in order to endure in the competition, a participant must have the courage to face fear and pain, both physical and mental. The courage to act in such high-

pressure situations is also taught from a young age in Nias society, where the younger generation is encouraged to face the challenges of daily life with bravery.

In *Hombo Batu*, participants must demonstrate courage when facing opponents who possess similar or even greater physical strength. Additionally, the courage to persevere, even when feeling exhausted or on the verge of giving up, reflects a profound value of bravery in overcoming difficulties. This value of courage is also evident in the attitude of the participants, who remain enthusiastic and do not easily give up, even after falling or losing in the competition.

## **3. The Value of Cooperation in *Hombo Batu***

Cooperation is a value that is equally important in the implementation of *Hombo Batu*. Each team in this competition must collaborate with its members, both in planning strategies and in executing actions during the match. *Hombo Batu* teaches that no individual can achieve victory alone, as the success of this game heavily depends on how well the team works together.

The research findings show that cooperation among team members is more prominent than individual physical abilities. In the execution of the game, many participants emphasized the importance of reminding, encouraging, and working together to defeat the opponents. Without solid teamwork, victory in *Hombo Batu* is difficult to achieve. In fact, in several



interviews with cultural leaders, they stated that *Hombo Batu* symbolizes the spirit of mutual cooperation (gotong royong), which is one of the core values in Nias society.

#### **4. *Hombo Batu* as Character Education**

Through observations and interviews with the people of Nias, it can be concluded that *Hombo Batu* functions as a tool for character education, teaching courage, cooperation, and the spirit of mutual assistance (gotong royong). For the younger generation, *Hombo Batu* is not just a game, but also an opportunity to develop character and mental strength. Young participants in this tradition not only learn playing techniques but also the importance of working together with others, the courage to face challenges, and the willingness to persevere without giving up.

According to several informants, *Hombo Batu* also serves to strengthen social relationships among individuals within the community. Through this tradition, the people of Nias teach values of courage and cooperation that can be applied in everyday life, whether in the family, the workplace, or the broader society.

#### **5. *Hombo Batu* in the Context of Modern Life**

Although the *Hombo Batu* tradition has deep cultural roots, the challenges of modern times have also influenced its practice. The research results show that, despite the increasing influence of modern culture in the lives of the Nias community, *Hombo Batu*

remains preserved as a symbol of culture that reflects the identity of the Nias people. Many community members feel that through *Hombo Batu*, they can teach the younger generation to appreciate important traditional values, such as courage and cooperation, amidst the changing times.

However, some members of the community also recognize the need for adaptation to the changing times. Some aspects of the *Hombo Batu* tradition have undergone changes, both in terms of its execution and the way it is presented. For example, in some modern celebrations, *Hombo Batu* is showcased more as a cultural entertainment, with a tendency to reduce its physical intensity. Nevertheless, the meaning of this tradition remains preserved, as a symbol of courage and cooperation in social life.

#### **6. The Role of *Hombo Batu* in Preserving Nias Cultural Identity**

*Hombo Batu* is not just a game, but also a means of preserving the cultural identity of Nias amidst the influence of globalization. Through *Hombo Batu*, the people of Nias remind themselves of the importance of the values embedded in this tradition. This study found that although *Hombo Batu* can be seen as a cultural heritage threatened by modernization, there are still many efforts by the Nias community to preserve and teach this tradition to the next generation.

The implementation of *Hombo Batu* in traditional ceremonies and cultural

celebrations demonstrates that this tradition plays a vital role in strengthening social cohesion and preserving the cultural identity of the Nias community. In this context, *Hombo Batu* functions as a symbol of solidarity and courage, as well as a valuable medium for character education within society.

The results of this study show that *Hombo Batu* is not just a physical tradition, but also carries profound values of courage and cooperation. In this game, the value of courage is reflected in the mental attitude required to face opponents and challenges, while the value of cooperation is clearly seen in how teams must work together to achieve victory. Furthermore, *Hombo Batu* plays a role as a character education tool, teaching the younger generation to appreciate the values of mutual assistance, courage, and solidarity. Despite the challenges posed by globalization and modernization, the people of Nias continue to make efforts to preserve and maintain *Hombo Batu* as part of their cultural identity. Through this tradition, they teach noble values that can be applied in everyday life and strengthen social solidarity amidst the rapid pace of societal change.

#### **D.Conclusion**

##### **Conclusion**

The tradition of *Hombo Batu* in South Nias is a traditional game that not only emphasizes physical strength but also teaches essential noble values in the community's life. Based on the research

findings, it can be concluded that *Hombo Batu* holds two key values that are highly significant: courage and cooperation.

##### **1. Courage**

In *Hombo Batu*, participants are taught to have a strong mentality, to bravely face challenges, and not give up easily, even when experiencing failure or difficulties. This courage is not only physical but also emotional and psychological. Participants must be able to overcome fear and doubt when facing a strong opponent and endure the pressure.

##### **2. Cooperation**

Although participants have different physical abilities, success in *Hombo Batu* heavily depends on how well a team can cooperate. Each team member must support one another, coordinate effectively, and prioritize the group's interests over individual ones. This value teaches the importance of solidarity, mutual help, and togetherness in facing various life challenges.

##### **3. Role in Character Education**

*Hombo Batu* also serves as a tool for character education, where the younger generation learns the importance of courage and cooperation. The values taught through this tradition help shape a strong, resilient, and supportive character in the Nias community.

##### **4. Importance of Tradition Preservation**

Despite the growing influence of modernization and globalization, the people of Nias continue to strive to preserve *Hombo*

*Batu* as part of their cultural heritage. This tradition is not merely entertainment or a performance event; it is also a symbol of cultural identity that embodies social values relevant to daily life.

### **Suggestions**

#### **1. Preservation and Development of Tradition**

To ensure the continuity of the *Hombo Batu* tradition, it is crucial for the people of Nias to continue involving the younger generation in the execution of this tradition. One way to maintain its sustainability is by presenting *Hombo Batu* in a more modern and appealing format, such as organizing cultural festivals or competitions that involve young people. This approach will not only allow them to learn about the tradition but also enable them to experience the benefits of the values it embodies.

#### **2. Character Education in the Curriculum**

The government and educational institutions can utilize the values embedded in *Hombo Batu* as part of character education in schools. Integrating the values of bravery and teamwork into the school curriculum can help shape a generation of young people with integrity, responsibility, and a strong spirit of cooperation. This approach will not only preserve the cultural tradition but also contribute to the holistic development of students, fostering both their personal and social skills.

#### **3. Further Research**

Further research on *Hombo Batu* could be conducted to explore in greater depth the impact of this tradition on the Nias community, particularly on the younger generation who are influenced by technology and global culture. This research could focus on the psychological and social aspects of participation in *Hombo Batu*, examining how these experiences contribute to strengthening cultural identity. Investigating the effects of such traditions on community cohesion, resilience, and the transmission of values would provide valuable insights into the role of cultural practices in a rapidly changing world.

#### **4. Outreach and Socialization**

It is essential to carry out outreach and socialization efforts to raise awareness within a broader community about the importance of preserving *Hombo Batu* as a cultural heritage. Local governments, in collaboration with cultural organizations and community groups, could organize programs to introduce and teach the values embedded in this tradition to various audiences, particularly outside of the Nias Selatan region. These efforts could help foster a deeper understanding of the significance of cultural practices, promote cross-cultural awareness, and encourage wider participation in the preservation of this tradition.

#### **5. Collaboration with the Tourism Industry**

Given the valuable cultural values taught through *Hombo Batu*, it is highly



recommended to develop this tradition as part of the cultural tourism attraction in Nias Selatan. This initiative could attract both domestic and international tourists to visit Nias, while promoting the region's rich and diverse local culture. By integrating *Hombo Batu* into tourism, it can serve not only as an entertainment spectacle but also as a meaningful cultural experience that highlights the strength of the community's heritage, fostering a deeper appreciation for traditional practices.

By following these recommendations, it is hoped that *Hombo Batu* will continue to thrive and evolve, providing greater benefits to the Nias community, particularly in teaching values such as bravery, cooperation, and solidarity, which will strengthen social bonds within the society. This tradition can play an important role not only in preserving cultural heritage but also in shaping a more cohesive and resilient community for future generations.

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