

Pire Teu in the Native Society of Dai Mau Enga Nanga Aewora Ende Regency

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This study aimed to understand the pire teu culture in the native society of dai mau enga nanga in Aewora, Ende Regency. The study was qualitative and data were collected through observation and in-depth interviews with snowball sampling to obtain appropriate informants. Pire teu (abstinence/taboo from rats) is one of the cultures in native society of mau enga nanga which becomes one of the rituals prior to the growing season and started with the jengi soko ceremony (burning green weeds) and pire teu. Pire teu is conducted in 3 consecutive days, the first day is called pire teu (abstinence from the whole body of rat), the second day is called pire ngii teu (abstinence from rat teeth), and the third day is called pire tai teu (abstinence from rat droppings). The customary sanctions imposed to those who violate the rules of the first day pire teu are adjusted to the religions and beliefs, for Catholics, the fine for the first day violation is two (2) pigs weighing two people who carried it (bei rua), while for Muslims, it is goats weighing two people who carried it (bei rua). The second and third penalties for the offender, who is catholic, is one pig weighing one person who carried it (sabei) and for a muslim one goat weighing one person who carried it (sabei). The bill of pire teu is not only about restraint, prohibition, and sanctions imposed by violators, but it also has religious-magical value and spirituality in maintaining close relationships between humans, their environment and Almighty God, and the fear of the community that they will get the damage if violating the rules, either failure in harvesting crops, crops damaged by rats, or even death.

Key words: *Pire Teu, drive the rats into the sea, protecting from the rat's attacks.*



Introduction

In the history of the life of human civilisation, it was known that the formation of a social group was due to the human instinct that always wanted to live together. Since being born, humans already tend to live in groups on the basis of biological and sociological instincts (Fabrega Jr, 2008). However, in subsequent developments, human life does not only require biological life, but sociologically humans have unlimited will and importance to fulfill their daily needs (Poston Jr et al., 1984). It is based on unlimited will and interest, to fulfill needs that cannot be done individually and thus should be done together, so that in the process to achieve its goals, people can work and think together and institutionalise among social customs and habits that have become the culture and civilisation of people in an area. A social system and a regular value system are formed in realising the will of human life which is institutionalised in social groups, including native groups.

A social group is a unity of two or more individuals who experience socio-physiological interaction among others. There are two basic reasons to motivate humans to live in groups: (1) A desire to unite with other humans around them (2) A desire to unite with the surrounding natural situation. The process of human life in both desires will not always be experienced with all the conveniences, instead it will be encounter difficulties and challenges. Humans must be able to use their senses and healthy feelings, in efforts to meet their physical and spiritual needs (Palla et al., 2007).

The structure of socio-cultural values and customary social institutions of society, that has been institutionalised in daily life and continued to grow and developed hundreds of years ago until now, gives important meaning in advancing the culture and civilisation of people in various social backgrounds, increasing prosperity and welfare of life (Nassir, 2020). Culture is all forms of social activity and civilisation, both related to patterns of life, social relations, housing, arts, agriculture and environmental management and sustainability (Kataeva et al., 2015).

One of the communities, social and cultural institutions in Ende, is dai mau enga nanga which becomes coast, rivers, estuaries, forests guards and the environment and has a significant role, and their existence is recognised and maintained by the community in maintaining interactive relationships between humans, ancestors, the natural environment and God Almighty as the primary cause (Ababor et al., 2019).

A system enables the existence of unity between units that are related to one another. The unity between parts generally has a specific purpose. In other words, the parts form a unity (system) to achieve certain goals or purposes. A theory by Parsons (1980), said that action includes four systems, namely; cultural systems, social systems, personality systems, and



organism systems (biological aspects of humans as a system). Parsons defines the four systems; First is the cultural system. In this system, the most appropriate unit of analysis is about "meaning" or "symbolic system". Some examples of symbolic systems are religious beliefs, language, values, and culture. At this level, Parsons focused his attention on shared values. The concept of socialisation, for example, has a relationship with this level of analysis. According to Parsons, socialisation occurs when the values shared by the community are internalised by members of that community. In this case, the members make the values of society their values. Socialisation has a very high integrative power in maintaining social control and community integrity.

The second system is the social system. This system received considerable attention in its description. The most basic unity in this system is role-based interaction. According to Talcott Parsons, a social system is an interaction between two or more individuals in a certain environment. However, this interaction is not limited only between individuals but also among groups, institutions, communities, and international organisations. An example of a social system is a university that has structures and parts that are related to one another. The social system is always directed towards equilibrium (Parsons, 1980).

The third system is the personality system. The most basic unity of this unit is an individual who becomes an actor. This system analyses needs, motives, and attitudes such as a motivation in obtaining satisfaction or advantages. The last system is the organism or biological system of a human being. The most basic unity of this unit in terms of the biological system is the physical appearance of the human being. Another thing that is included in this physical aspect is the physical environment where humans live.

The socio-cultural value systems that institutionalise in the dai mau enga nanga community have values of local wisdom in realising social order, maintaining an integrated and interactive relationship between community members, customary institutions, the environment, and God Almighty, to realise the welfare of people's lives (Chiesura and De Groot, 2003). The socio-cultural value system that has been rooted in Pire Teu and lasted for hundreds of years is well maintained, obeyed and respected by the people for generations. The community does not only care how much the fines from violating the rule, but also this value system has shaped the work culture of farmers regularly from the jengi sokok, nggua ura (traditional feast) to post-harvest and vice versa. Therefore, this study aimed to understand the culture of pire teu in the native dai mau enga nanga community in Aewora, Ende Regency.

Material and Methods

The present study is a qualitative study focused on Pire Teu (abstinence/taboo to rat). This

study was conducted in the native community of Dai Mau Enga Nanga Aewora, from March to May 2018. The design of the study was descriptive in which the data were collected through observations, namely by direct observations, to the study object and interviews through interview instrument and observations, which accommodated all possibilities of collecting required data by snowball sampling (Somekh and Lewin, 2005).

The subject of the study was all informants interviewed and those who could provide information regarding certain characteristics of the study objects namely social, cultural, and religious values of *pire teu* in its relation to social order realisation in driving rats to the sea so they cannot damage and eat the farming plants, namely Mosalaki (head of native society), public figures, village government, education and social members. The data were analysed descriptively (Maxwell, 1961).

Results and Discussions

Pire Teu (Driving Rats Out) in Dai Mau Enga Nanga Society

Pire teu is a socio-cultural activity of the native society of Dai Mau Enga Nanga (coast, rivers, estuaries, forests and pool guards) in Aewora Village, Ende Regency. Dai Mau Enga Nanga means the head of the native society who is mandated to control and guard coasts, estuaries, and maintain the prosperity of the community by utilising available natural resources. The head of the native community which is subsequently called *mosalaki*, had powerful power and authority to organise people in exploring and managing forests, fields, gardens, rice fields, and other activities such as housing and residential areas.

The *pire teu* is conducted through the following steps:

a. *Jengi soko* (burning green weeds)

Burning green weeds (*jengi soko*) was done in the farming area where weeds grow. The location used was Ira's rice field. Ira was the name of a man who owned the rice field and therefore it was called Ira's weed (*soko ira*). Ira was from Aedari, however the *jengi soko* ceremony was conducted in the native society of dai mau enga nanga area (the coast, river, and estuary guards). The green weed burning was done by two people namely Nggera Mari, a *mosalaki* (the head of the native community) of Dai Koba Aje (the forest guard) from Aedari community who burnt *soko ira* weeds (a name of a weed meadow); the one who held the fire and burnt weeds was Nggera Mari (*mosalaki dai koba aje*) which means a whole forest guard and followed Paso Pio as *mosalaki dai mau enga nanga Paso Pio* (the coast guard, and guard of rivers and estuaries). Tools used to burn weeds were coconut leaves (*wunu nio*) which were then burnt. The weed burning in the

farming area was made because the rats were mainly found in farming areas, living in the dike hole between rice fields and hiding between weeds. In order to avoid burning the whole weed meadow, highly soaring smoke is needed in this ceremony, so that rats run when exhaling the smoke and leave their holes or even died if they lost their homes.

According to mosalaki puu (the head of native community) Frans Edo Paso, during the weed burning, smoke is puffed in the air (nu ke nai dagheta wawo) and because the weeds are still green, the smoke soared highly and drove rats out of the rice field areas and were burnt. This also became a symbol that in addition to living in the dike hole between rice fields, the rats also lived in the green weeds (Interview on 19th of November 2018).

- b. When jengi soko ira (burning grass weeds) was completed, then the second step was carried out: a pai sia (an announcement), and delivery was done at night around 19:00 local time (mbewu). Ola kobe pai sia (an announcement) was made by the customary spokesperson; the contents of the announcement to the community were as follows:
- 1) Starting wesia du leja telu (the ceremony would be started tomorrow for three days; mae nu api leka sao (no smoke in everyone's houses), which means it is forbidden to cook food and drinks at home and or start a fire at home from 05.00 to 18.00 local time.
 - 2) Iwangala deo wunu eo meta (it is forbidden to touch green leaves).
 - 3) Mae poka kaju (do not cut down trees and hold grass and leaves, green wood)
 - 4) Mae paru (prohibited from running) in the village. Running can only be done on the beach or the coast.
 - 5) Iawangala seru ria (prohibited from speaking loudly, shouting); people were allowed to speak but the voice must not be loud. This is intended so that rats do not hear human sounds; if rats hear, rats will run and hide, making it difficult to catch and eradicate them.
 - 6) Mae nai puu kaju (do not climb trees) in any form.
 - 7) Mae nai nio (prohibited from climbing tree and taking the fruit)
 - 8) Mae mbana laka uma (prohibited from entering gardens and fields)
 - 9) Mae mbana laka oto (prohibited from entering forests)

According to Bernard Poto (member of mosalaki), during the pire teu which lasted for three consecutive days, the community had to prepare supplies intended for three days, because at that time all activities of gardening and entering the forest were prohibited, as well as activities in the home unless it was approaching night; if someone committed an offense, customary sanctions would be imposed under the provisions in the territory of the association of dai mau enga nanga community (interview on 18 November 2018).

After pai sia (the public announcement) was done, then, in the next day at 04.50, the whole community led by mosalaki (customary head) conducted rago teu (evicting mice) into the sea, with the local traditional language "Rago Teu ... Ooolau ... o..lau ... o..lau..do ... lau ai mesi di (which means get rid of the rats which have reached there, have reached the beach and the sea). When chasing mice out, not only by screaming, but by using machetes, spears and midribs of wooden sticks hitting on pillows, mats, walls, houses, bathrooms and toilets, by constantly shouting rago teu ... do lau ae mesi (chase the mouse to the sea).

- c. In the view of dai mau enga nanga people (coast, river and pond estuary guards) that the rodents come from the sea, so they must be driven out to sea so that they do not come ashore, damage and eat community plants, damage household furniture and eat clothes, mattresses, pillows and so on; this was confirmed by one of the traditional leaders of Rutu Dedu Edo, that the beating of objects was a symbol of rats usually hiding under sleeping areas, in rooms, and places where they were hidden in the house. Rats also damaged pillows, mattresses and ate clothes, and indeed this happens if the restrictions and prohibitions on customary law are not obeyed by the community (Interview on 20 November 2018).
- d. At the fourth stage after the early hours of the day people drove the mice into the sea, and from that moment on pire teu (mouse abstinence) occurred on the first day, where the entire population could only do activities on the beach, cooking, eating and drinking on the beach, bathing and swimming by the sea. During that time, it was also forbidden for the community to cook food and do any activities at home until 18:00 when they could return to their homes and carry out their activities as before. On the first day, it is called pire teu (abstinence of mice as a whole body of rats).
- e. On the fifth stage which is the second day of pire teu (abstinence of rats), it is called pire ngii teu (abstinence of rat teeth). Pire ngii teu or so-called rat teeth because rats have very strong teeth to eat plants and also furniture and supplies for people's lives. At this stage the activities of the community also remain the same, which can only be done on the beach, eating, drinking, cooking and all food supplies for a day brought along to the beach until 18.00 local time. The communities were not permitted to work during the night, so they only carried out activities on the beach, including bathing in the sea and playing alongside the sea.
- f. Furthermore, the sixth stage or the third day of Pire Teu which in traditional language is called pire tai teu (abstinence from rat droppings). On the third day the community activities also remained the same, starting at 5:30 in the morning; all the people had to be

at the beach until 18.00 local time and people were prohibited from doing activities that violate the tradition of dai mau enga nanga (coast guard, river and pond estuary).

- g. On the seventh stage, the third day at 18.00 local time, the pire teu (abstinence of rats) was over and people returned to their home for doing activities as usual till the next day without any prohibition.
- h. Eighth stage. After completing pire teu (abstinence from rats), the next customary activity was mosalaki - returning to the mountain of the main traditional village to perform a traditional party ritual (nggua ura) in Detukeli Gheta Leka rubu sebu fau ua, sao ria tenda bewa, abe ata ria bewa (there are big houses, they are big people) doing traditional rituals before the agricultural season of planting corn, paddy fields, crops, beans, tubers and so on, which was followed by the traditional rituals of the nggua ura in the dai mau enga nanga community (coast guard, river guard and river).
- i. Other abstinences during the pire teu (abstinence from rats) was that all residents were strictly prohibited from combing the hair of both men and women starting at 4.30 in the morning until 6:00 pm local time. In addition to driving pire teu (abstinence of rats) for three consecutive days - according to the people, it is also strictly forbidden to hold all the green leaves and start a fire which causes smoke to soar.

According to Mosalaki Frans Edo Paso, pire teu has enormous magical power, because if any community members violate the existing customary provisions, then all plants are eaten by rat pests; keo teu roso (corn eaten by mice), even to keo dupa teu roso (maize even starting from young corn or very old corn which is also eaten by mice). Furthermore, the clothes worn by women, men, and children are also eaten by rats, as well as mattresses and pillows (Interview date, November 15, 2018).

Furthermore according to Gaspar Manga (Mosalaki member), pire teu has very high social cultural values and has magical power for the people of Dai Mau Enga Nanga. The culture that has existed for hundreds of years and is highly obeyed by the community because indeed if there is a violation, then damage will occur, for instance, harvested and stored agricultural products in the barn are eaten and damaged by rats. The rats damage crops when farmers just started planting, which just grow up to flower and corn or rice in the fields, and are eaten by rats. The number of rats can be hundreds and thousands. It is like an epidemic and is very mysterious because it is indeed difficult for us to detect, but when it comes to gardens and fields, the plants are already damaged, so pire teu is the most important part of the customary process in order to enter the planting season, which must be respected and obeyed by all people who inhabit the area of dai mau enga nanga, so the community could produce an



abundant harvest of agricultural produce and realise maximum welfare (interview 21 November 2018).

Based on the aforementioned description, it shows that *pire teu* has enormous magical power, so that if ceremonial procedures are carried out incorrectly and many violations are committed by the community, then a famine occurs due to agricultural products being eaten and damaged by rats before harvest time. These are reasons why people in the area of *dai dai mau enga nanga* alliance hold this annual ritual until the implementation of the *pire tue* ceremony.

Customary Sanctions (Poi Gajo)

Sociologically, each ethnic group in an area has a customary law which is still very strongly held by the community and one of the social communities is *Dai Mau Enga Nanga*. *Dai Mau Enga Nanga*, which means *mosalaki* the customary head of the coast guard, river and estuary along with all the natural resources in the form of a wood forest which becomes its authority. *Mosalaki* has a considerable amount of power even though today there has been a transition from traditional to modern times, but in reality the people in this region still hold to traditions and customs to maintain social harmony between humans, the natural surroundings and God Almighty and Most High (*Two Nggae Leka Bewa Bewa*). This is because in a culture that contained social values and norms, they are a driving factor for humans to behave and achieve certain satisfaction in everyday life (Roos et al., 2015). Values and norms are always related to each other, although both can be distinguished. Values can be defined as a measure of the attitudes and feelings of a person or group associated with good and bad, right or wrong or dislike of an object, both material and non-material.

Various violations that can be subject to sanctions (*poi gajo*), are:

- a. Prohibited from entering forest, garden, fields, and farms for three days of *pire teu*.
- b. Prohibited from holding any green leaf, cutting down trees, climbing trees of any kind.
- c. No cooking at home from 05.30 to 18.00 local time because because when cooked, the smoke will smoke, meaning the smoke is strictly prohibited.
- d. Prohibited from shouting out loud in the village, at home, running around in the village, singing, whistling, or playing musical instruments.

Therefore, for three consecutive days, the community only carried out their activities on the beach, eating and drinking on the beach, under trees or tents. For supplies, the community must prepare them for a period of three days, while cooking the food was done at 03.00 to 5.30 in the morning because after that time the community has flocked to the beach.

The forms of customary sanctions (*poi gajo*) for those who commit violations of the *pire teu* are as follows:

1. Committing the first day violation : the first day is called *pire teu* which means abstinence from a whole rat; the customary sanction for those who violate is fined with livestock under their religious beliefs, if the offender is a Catholic, then the fine is a pig with the weight of two people who bear it (*bei rua*), if the offender is Muslim, then the fine given is two goats with the weight of two people who bear it.

Customary sanctions are very severe for violators of the first day of *pire teu* which is closely related to the suffering and loss suffered by the community because the plantation crops and rice fields are damaged and eaten by rats. Such severe sanctions are also due to the fact that the first day has enormous magical power because rats will utilise all of their body's potential to damage plants and household furniture as well as clothes that are stored in drawers, cabinets and in the clothesline, bed sheets and pillows, a kind of pest that is very frightening to the community, and therefore *pire teu* on the first day, there should be no violations in the *dai mau enga nanga* community, including residents from other areas who are in the location, must comply with all the rules and socio-cultural value systems that apply.

According to Berdinus Mbelu, the first day of *pire teu* must be complied with by all native peoples of *dai mau enga nanga*, so that they do not violate applicable regulations. Because the first day is called *pire teu* which in the socio-cultural community is highly respected and obeyed because a violation will harm the interests of the whole community such as rats will damage plants and clothes and household furniture. For this reason, the customary sanctions that are given must be more than double the sanctions if the community violates the second day of the *pire* or what is called *pire ngii teu* (abstinence of the rat teeth). In general, the community realises that even though there are now many means of pesticides, it is different from eradicating rats in other places, because rats here are pests that are very frightening and endangering the community. So far the violators will meet the fines or penalties if they violate and continue to pay according to the applicable provisions and decisions. However, it must be emphasised that violations do not occur every year, but two or three years later, because the people here really realise how important the culture of *pire teu* is, so that the rituals for the preservation of *pire teu* continue to be carried out well (interview on 19 November 2018).

2. Committing the second day violation: The second day is called *pire ngii teu* (abstinence from rat teeth). The study results showed that if there were citizens who violated *pire teu* on the second day or what was called *pire ngii teu*; then the sanction given was one pig weighing two adults who carried it, whereas for Muslims who were subject to sanctions in the form of a goat weighing two people who carried it.

Based on an interview with Lius Mangu, he emphasised that the very severe sanctions or fines were intended so that each individual in the customary association would avoid

committing them and indeed up to now the first day of pire teu is sometimes violated, except on the second day and the third day; but it doesn't happen every year, but it also sometimes happens. People consider, especially those outside the customary community, that the sanctions are very heavy, but we need to clarify that the severe sanctions are imposed in order to demonstrate orderliness and obedience, because if there is a violation, especially on the first, second and third days, there will be famine due to rat pests attacking the whole plant; so it is not a matter of the severity of the direct punishment received but the consequences that will be received later. These kind of sanctions have existed for hundreds of years and the people comply with them well and happily (interview date, December 1, 2018).

3. Committing the third day violation: The third day is called pire tai teu (abstinence from rat droppings)

The third day, ofpire teu, is also called pire tai teu (rat droppings); rats, in addition to destroying crops and agricultural products by using their teeth and whole bodies, are also spread their feces. Rat droppings can damage agricultural products as well as cause outbreaks of disease that spread through crops. Therefore, the magical power possessed by the pire teu on the first, second and third day are the same, so that the people of dai mau enga nanga have to obey all the customs and regulations that apply in this customary area.

Sanctions for those who violate pire teu on the third day are a pig weighing two people who carried it for those who are Catholics, while people who violate with Islamic beliefs are fined with a goat weighing two people who carried it.

According to Frans Edo Paso (customary leader), if one commits an offense but cannot be monitored by the customary leader, sanctions cannot be granted, but the penalty received from the violation remains; rats will eat corn crops, paddy fields and crops, as well as the locals' clothing, so this pire teu demands honesty in carrying on the established tradition of community life to create a livelihood with abundant agricultural produce from the ravages of the destruction of forest rats and house mice. Therefore compliance and adherence to the pre teu is an essential part of a community farm life cycle in the country. If one does not want to pay the penalties, he/she will be warned each year and in the third phase of the strike; the sanction given is disrespectful and enforceable, and one can be expelled from their hometown; anyone living in the area must adhere to the customary law of dai mau enga nanga community (interview November 17, 2018).

From that incident, it can be ascertained that even though the violations were carried out clandestinely, it would be revealed by the presence of rat pests eating plants. For this reason, the pire teu must be carried out properly and correctly according to applicable regulations and

community compliance to obey every step of the way from Jengi Soko (burning raw grass weeds) to pire teu on the first, second and third day until completion.

The magical power of pire teu is also caused by prayers offered (traditional rituals); the relationship between humans who are still alive with the spirits of their ancestors, the relationship between humans and nature and their natural resource environment and the relationship between humans and God Almighty. This sacralisation causes prayers to be granted, asking for protection from the spirits of the ancestors of the founders of the customary community, so that the violators, even though what they have done was not known by others, will be overwritten and mice will also eat people's clothes, damage and bite pillows and mattresses.

Therefore, what is concerned by the people is the very severe sanctions in the form of livestock, but the disaster received in the form of agricultural land and plantations did not bring results but disaster, illness, unhealthy living and even death. So the substantial meaning of pire teu and sanctions imposed for violators is in the context of the realisation of social order between the people of dai mau enga nanga, nature and the surrounding environment that must be maintained for the sustainability and survival of the community in realising food sufficiency and improving the welfare of the people.

Conclusion

This research concludes that pire teu (abstinence from rats) which is part of the culture of native people of dai mau enga nanga, is one of the rituals before the planting season that begins with the ceremony of jengi soko (burning green grass weeds) and pire teu. Pire teu is held for three (3) consecutive days, the first day is called pire teu (abstinence from whole body of the rat), the second day is called pire ngii teu (abstinence from rat teeth) and the third day of pire teu is called tai teu (abstinence from rat droppings).

Customary sanctions given to offenders of the first day of pire teu are adjusted to the religion and belief, for those who are Catholic, the first day is fined two (2) pigs weighing two people carrying them (bei rua), while Muslims are fined 2 goats (deer) weighing two people carrying them (bei rua). The second and third day fines for violators, who are Catholics with one pig weighing one person carrying it (sabei) and for Muslims one goat weighing one person carrying it (sabei). Pire teu is not just a taboo and prohibition, as well as sanctions given and received by violators, but has magical values, religious values and spirituality to maintain a close relationship between humans, the natural surroundings and God Almighty and the fear of the public of dai mau enga nanga that will be unfortunate if they violate the traditions.



Conflict of Interest

None



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