



Analysis of Women's Role in Traditional Music of *Leku Sene* Dawan Community, TTU Regency: A Sociocultural Perspective

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Abstract

The traditional music of *Leku Sene* or known as Gong Timor Dawan is a heritage of the social and cultural life of the people of North Central Timor. This study examines the important role of women in the *Leku Sene* tradition, showing how they use music as a means of self-expression and social improvement in a patriarchal society. Semiotic analysis in *Leku Sene's* music and art shows that rhythm and melody are important elements in shaping cultural identity. The goal is to explore the sociocultural significance of the role of women in *Leku Sene's* music, with a Critical Discourse Analysis approach to analyze the relationship between women, music, and culture in the context of the Dawan community in TTU. Research shows that *Leku Sene* functions as a medium that connects and transmits beliefs so as to enrich the quality of life of the people of North Central Timor. The implications of this study on gender studies and community trust are significant. The results highlight the need to document and preserve *Leku Sene* music, as well as encourage women's participation in this musical tradition to strengthen the role of women. So that the development of education and training programs that emphasize women's empowerment through traditional music, as well as cooperation with the government, local communities, and educational institutions to preserve *Leku Sene* traditional music. This cultural heritage is certainly valuable and allows people to recognize and preserve local identities, customs, and traditions, ensuring their sustainability in a global context.

Keywords: *Women's Role; Leku Sene Music; Dawan Society; Sociocultural*

Introduction

Traditional music, as Welch et al. (2020) argue, holds a significant position in society, showcasing the rich cultural diversity that exists in different regions. Individual social and cultural aspects are reflected through traditional music, serving as a medium to articulate values, beliefs and life experiences (Rehfeldt et al., 2021). In North Central Timor District (TTU), East Nusa Tenggara, traditional music has been ingrained in the lives of the local population, playing various roles such as entertainment and an integral component of religious ceremonies, social events, and customary rituals (Devriezen Amasanan & Sumaryanto Florentinus, 2019).

One form of traditional music that stands out in the Dawan community is *Leku Sene* music, a unique art form in the cultural tradition of North Central Timor (Lauffenburger, (2020)). *Leku* means (Hit) and *Sene* means (Gong), so *Leku Sene* is Gong Hit. Timor Dawan Gong music is known as a form of performance art that combines music and dance. The music is played as an expression of local sentiments, cultural values and wisdom. Afi & Banamtuan, (2020) describe the traditional music of *Leku Sene* as outlining beautiful dance movements, traditional musical accompaniment, and distinctive calls that reflect the essence of the Dawan people known as *Atone Pah Meto*.

The integration of music and dance in *Leku Sene* has attracted the interest of traditional musicians and cultural enthusiasts. Elu, et al., (2018) describe *Leku Sene* as a harmonious amalgamation of expressive dance routines, dynamic musical elements, and gong performances rich in semiotic significance. This collaboration not only appeals to the senses but also conveys a profound cultural message (Patil et al., (2024)).

Leku Sene has enormous socio-cultural importance for the people of North Central Timor. It functions as an ensemble of gong (*Sene*), drum (*Ke'e*) and sleigh (*Bano*) popular in the Dawan region. This music is performed exclusively by Dawan women. The expression of culture and identity through *Leku Sene* signifies its reflection of socio-cultural values, beliefs and customs rooted in the local community. Giurchescu, (2001) emphasizes in his work the ability of traditional folk music to communicate moral lessons, uphold traditions and foster social cohesion.

The importance of *Leku Sene* traditional music based on its function is a form of empowerment and self-expression within the local community (Ahmad & Abu Talib, 2015). *Leku Sene* offers a platform for community expression, especially by women, allowing them to articulate themselves and advocate for equality in a cultural environment that is largely shaped by a male point of view or adheres to a patrilineal system (Caldwell & Leighton, 2016). Through the lively rhythms of music and dance routines, women find channels to convey their life encounters and address issues of gender and equality.

Women hold an important position in the legacy of *Leku Sene*. They are involved as performers and artists, actively participating in the creative process and communication of sentiments through art (Abiodun, 2019). Women take an important role in explaining the philosophical essence of *Leku Sene* music and presentation through symbolic dance sequences.

Women's involvement is also seen in deciphering the semiotic components inherent in the rhythm, form and symbolic essence of the Timorese gong, known as *Leku Sene*. Innis, (2012) found that women have deep insights into the significance behind each rhythmic pattern and symbol exhibited in *Leku Sene* displays, playing a crucial role in transmitting these meanings to future generations (Alemu, 2018). Furthermore, *Leku Sene* has emerged as a platform for women to advocate for their aspirations to fight for gender equality in society. Through music and dance routines, women can raise topics such as justice, women's rights and equality in a cultural backdrop that is still largely governed by patriarchal norms (Caldwell & Leighton, 2016).

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to the expansion of understanding of Indonesia's rich culture and traditional practices (Rahmawati & Putranta, 2020). Exploration of local cultural heritage, such as oral traditions and traditional performing arts, provides valuable insights into the dynamics and complexity of Indonesian culture. Asfina & Ovilia, (2017) revealed that Indonesia's cultural wealth, which is a source of pride, needs to be watched out for in a globalized world. Because of the meaning and values contained in the traditional performing arts of *Leku Sene*, this research can enrich the treasure of knowledge about the cultural heritage of the Indonesian nation so that it is not diluted by post-modern bias.

Furthermore, this study also contributes to understanding how traditional arts can serve as a tool to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in local cultural contexts. Traditional performing

arts often reflect gender dynamics in a society, and can also be a medium for women to voice their aspirations. Thus, this study not only enriches academic insights, but also has practical implications in efforts to advance the gender equality agenda in society.

This research can serve as an important foundation for efforts to preserve and revitalize the cultural heritage of the Dawan people in North Central Timor District (TTU), particularly the traditional music tradition of *Leku Sene*. An in-depth understanding of the meaning and significance of the sociocultural aspects contained in traditional cultural practices such as *Leku Sene* can provide valuable insights to support the development of effective and holistic strategies in ensuring the preservation and sustainability of such cultural heritage.

The role and position of women in the *Leku Sene* tradition, as revealed in this study, shows how important a gender perspective is in cultural conservation efforts. Women not only actively participate in *Leku Sene* musical practices, but also play a key role as guardians, successors and developers of local cultural identity. Understanding the dynamics of gender relations in the context of traditional culture can help design conservation programs that are more inclusive and responsive to the needs and roles of women.

This research aims to investigate the sociocultural significance of *Leku Sene*, a traditional performing art form among the people of North Central Timor (TTU), with a particular focus on women's involvement in its musical practices. Della Porta et al. (2015) argue in their publication *The Art of Social Movement*, that analyzing the role of women in *Leku Sene* is based on the idea that traditional arts can reflect the social and cultural intricacies of a community. Thus women's participation in *Leku Sene* traditional music, as suggested by Sisco King, (2016) lies in its potential to offer valuable insights into gender roles in TTU society.

In addition, it explains how *Leku Sene* can serve as a platform for women to find their authentic identity and articulate their aspirations. Avrilla et al. (2023) suggest that traditional performing arts often create opportunities for marginalized groups, including women, to assert themselves and advocate for equality. Through an examination of the symbolism and meaning embedded in the dance movements and semiotic components of *Leku Sene* melodies, this study seeks to understand how women utilize *Leku Sene* as a medium to articulate their perspectives and advance gender parity.

The presence of women in traditional music practices is part of the social and cultural life of the people of North Central Timor in Indonesia. *Leku Sene* music is more than just entertainment, it is an integral part of daily life and traditional ceremonies (Grant, 2012). The people of North Central Timor not only see *Leku Sene* as an art form, but also as a reflection of their values, beliefs and social practices. This music not only reflects a rich and deep cultural identity, but also strengthens social bonds and maintains the sustainability of their cultural heritage.

Besides being a reflection of the values and beliefs of the community, *Leku Sene* is also a medium for the expression of individual and collective life experiences. This traditional music becomes a container for the stories and life experiences of the people of North Central Timor. Through case studies of the use of *Leku Sene* in various social contexts, it is possible to understand how important this music is in people's daily lives, and how it bridges intergenerational understanding and enriches their collective experience.

Based on the explanation of the main narrative described above, this research is examined in several problem formulations as follows; First, how the existence of traditional *Leku Sene* music plays a role in the social and cultural life of the people of North Central Timor District? Second how the expression of the life experience of the people of North Central Timor District through traditional *Leku Sene* music? Third how the role of women in actualizing themselves through *Leku Sene* music as a means of self-expression and self-empowerment efforts.

Research Methods

This research uses the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach to explore the relationship between women, music and culture in the social environment of the Dawan community in North Central Timor District (TTU). As explained by Fairclough, (1995) regarding the CDA method, on how to analyze the elements of processes, events, and other social and cultural structures that shape. This qualitative approach provides in-depth insight into the role of women in the context of traditional music and local culture, using methods that are not only descriptive but also analytical and interpretative.

The data in this study was collected through various methods, including literature review, document analysis, and archival research. Literature study and document analysis involved collecting data from documentary sources such as notes, letters, photographs, and documents as well as audio-visual data relevant to the research, including interview recordings and content from platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and other social media platforms (Abdulmajid, 2021). The use of mixed data collection methods enables the exploration of various discursive practices and the socio-cultural contexts in which such texts are produced, disseminated and consumed.

This approach provides a comprehensive view of the dynamics that influence and are influenced by the production and dissemination of data in a research context. Although this research is non-research and does not involve humans directly, ethical considerations are still important (Nii Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023). This research ensured that all data sources used were obtained and used in an ethical manner.

Discussion and Results

1. The Role of *Leku Sene* Traditional Music in the Social and Cultural Life of the People of North Central Timor

This approach provides a comprehensive view of the dynamics that influence and are influenced by the production and dissemination of data in a research context. Although this research is non-research and does not involve humans directly, ethical considerations are still important (Nii Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023). This research ensured that all data sources used were obtained and used in an ethical manner.

Leku Sene music plays an important role in maintaining customs and promoting social cohesion within the community, as seen by its inclusion in various traditional festivals, including weddings, anniversaries and religious rituals (Siregar et al., 2023). The music is an integral part of the cultural traditions and spiritual inclinations of the community, more than just adding festivity to celebrations and ceremonies. Every element of *Leku Sene*, including the choreography and rhythms, has rich symbolic meanings that uphold the customs and beliefs of the community. The values and beliefs embedded in the culture of North Central Timor are conveyed and reinforced through the musical expressions and movements of *Leku Sene*, making it an important tool for fostering social cohesion among community members and informal education for young people (Karmela & Yanto, 2021). This shows how *Leku Sene* functions as a tool for cultural preservation and the development of a shared identity, more than just creative expression.

Semiotic analysis of music by *Leku Sene* reveals the complexity of symbolic meanings present in each component, offering deep insight into the cultural and spiritual richness of the population in North Central Timor. According to Setiyani & Tasrif, (2023), the incorporation of melody, rhythm and dance movements in *Leku Sene* is not only an artistic aspect but also protects mythological heritage, folklore and ethical doctrines recognized by the community. A semiotic approach can be seen that each element in *Leku Sene* music functions as a sign that conveys deep symbolic significance.

Understanding the symbolism of *Leku Sene* music, it can be said that *Leku Sene* music acts as a platform to convey spiritual and ethical messages to the community. *Leku Sene* music is not just a form of entertainment, but an important fragment of the cultural and spiritual essence of the people in North Central Timor. Infused with meaningful melodic patterns, smudge charms, pulsating rhythms and captivating dance sequences, *Leku Sene* music has evolved into a powerful medium to reinforce communal beliefs and customs. Thus, *Leku Sene* not only enhances aesthetic appeal but also nurtures and preserves the cultural and spiritual heritage of the people in North Central Timor, transcending the performing arts of *Leku Sene* to serve as a reflection of the traditions and beliefs of the Dawan people (Setiyani & Tasrif, 2023).

The presence of *Leku Sene* music in the communities of North Central Timor has played an important role in upholding conservation and building a sense of cultural identity. Through its unique rhythms and evocative tones, *Leku Sene* serves as a medium that tells an extensive narrative of cultural expeditions and the historical background of the indigenous people. In every musical note, this musical form not only revitalizes ancient customs but also fosters areas of communal cooperation across different age groups.

The importance of this music is especially noticeable during indigenous rituals, where *Leku Sene* takes an indispensable position in preserving the traditions of different cultures. As the melodic accompaniment echoes through the ambience, the ancient ceremonies take on fresh intricacies that enhance their significance and relevance to contemporary society. According to Lin, (2020), traditional music is not solely for entertainment purposes. As such, *Leku Sene* music encapsulates profound spiritual and cultural elements, reminiscent of the strong foundations that uphold collective cultural identity.

Comprehensively, *Leku Sene's* traditional music also reveals the complexity of symbolism embedded in each musical note and choreographic sequence. Each musical note and dance movement is a legacy of cultural principles that have withstood the test of time. This musical form serves as a focal point for individuals to articulate their identity and life encounters. *Leku Sene* therefore functions not only as an auditory representation of cultural heritage but also as a dynamic vessel of expression that continues to evolve and delve into the deep essence of everyday existence.

Leku Sene music stands as a precious heritage that not only pleases the sense of hearing but also resonates with the spirit. Its melodic patterns are an invaluable cultural heritage that is interwoven with interpretation, connecting past, present and future. As one of the most sincere reflections of North Central Timor's cultural opulence, *Leku Sene* is an important milestone that unites individuals in admiration and affection for the traditions that nurture their cultural heritage.

In the contemporary era of modernization and globalization, traditional *Leku Sene* music faces important challenges. Popular culture and modern music, coupled with transformations in individual ways of life, have had a clear effect on the survival and spread of *Leku Sene* music, especially among the youth. Various studies have shown a pattern of declining enthusiasm and recognition for this traditional music, especially among the younger population who show a greater inclination towards contemporary music genres. This could potentially jeopardize efforts aimed at preserving and upholding the musical heritage of *Leku Sene*, which requires more methodical and sustained efforts.

In order to maintain the endurance of *Leku Sene* music within the community of North Central Timor, a holistic approach is essential. An important step involves increasing the community's recognition and understanding, especially the youth, of the cultural principles encapsulated in this traditional music. This goal can be achieved through outreach initiatives, seminars and other communal endeavors that enlighten individuals on the importance of maintaining local cultural heritage. In addition, the education and training of *Leku Sene* music in formal and informal education curricula emerged as another strategic initiative. Qiao, (2023) says that by introducing students to traditional music from an early age, it is expected to increase their awareness of regional cultural diversity and arouse their curiosity in learning

and preserving such traditional music. In addition, relevant government and institutional support is essential to encourage the preservation and advancement of *Leku Sene* music. This includes the provision of financial resources, the formulation of policies that support the conservation of cultural heritage, as well as the establishment of entities or associations specifically mandated to uphold and advance this traditional music.



Fig.1. Leku Sene Music Integrated in Elementary School Education
(Source: <https://www.auralarchipelago.com/auralarchipelago/lekusene>)

2. Expression of Life Experience through Leku Sene Music

The *Leku Sene* music of the people of North Central Timor is a performing art that includes music and dance. This performance art form is not only entertaining, but also reflects the life experiences of the local community. Various aspects of life, including life struggles, love, loss and hope, are depicted in *Leku Sene* music (Fallo, 2018: 37). Music mediates individuals within the community and can express personal experiences within a broader framework. Li et al. (2023) revealed that *Leku Sene's* traditional musical expressions provide experiences and enhance social bonds within the community. When played in different social settings such as weddings or funeral ceremonies, this music plays an important role in conveying relevant values and experiences. For example, during a wedding ceremony, *Leku Sene* music can depict a couple's love and commitment, whereas in a funeral ceremony, it can express loss and respect for the deceased.

The close relationship between *Leku Sene* music and the social and cultural context of the people of North Central Timor is seen in ritual ceremonies. The music is an important part of traditional rituals, fostering bonds between families and community members. Each melody, and movement in a *Leku Sene* performance carries meanings and symbols that can be interpreted by the local community. By understanding these meanings, individuals can explore their identity and maintain community ties. In addition, *Leku Sene* music serves as a tool to preserve and promote the cultural values of the people of North Central Timor. The music and the charm of the dance, depicts the struggles of life, love and hope that reflect the community's philosophy of life and local wisdom. By understanding and appreciating *Leku Sene* music, the younger generation can inherit and internalize the cultural values of their ancestors.

Leku Sene has the potential to educate a wider audience about the culture of North Central Timor. The music serves as a bridge across cultural gaps, promoting communication and understanding between the people of North Central Timor and neighboring groups. *Leku Sene* performances highlight the cultural diversity of the region while highlighting the distinctiveness and identity of the people of North Central Timor on a regional and international scale. Comprehensive research on *Leku Sene* music can also provide new perspectives on the social and cultural dynamics of the people living in North Central Timor. Belief systems, social structures and patterns of community engagement can be revealed by examining lyrics, musical arrangements and performance situations. Good et al. (2021) reveal that from sociology to cultural studies, from anthropology to ethnomusicology, multidisciplinary research into the music of *Leku*

Sene can yield new perspectives and a better understanding of the complex lives of the people of North Central Timor. In this context, appreciating the significance of traditional music means investigating its social, cultural and economic connotations, as well as reacting to its aesthetic and entertainment value.

With an interdisciplinary approach, researchers can explore the various dimensions of *Leku Sene* music, from its unique musical aspects to the cultural meanings hidden in each melody and dance movement. Anthropologists can examine how the music reflects the social structure and cultural norms of North Central Timorese society (Jacob, 2021). While ethnomusicology can explore the cultural roots and evolution of this traditional music over time. Not only that, sociological analysis can reveal how *Leku Sene* music influences social interaction and the formation of collective identity within the community. Cultural studies will explore the values, beliefs and social practices reflected in the lyrics and melodies of this music, opening the door to a deeper understanding of the worldview and mindset of the people of North Central Timor.

More than just a cultural phenomenon, *Leku Sene* music also has important economic implications, especially in the context of cultural tourism. By understanding the role of this traditional music in attracting tourists and promoting local cultural heritage, research can help develop sustainable economic development strategies for local communities. (Yulita et al., 2021) Through this interdisciplinary approach, *Leku Sene* music is not only understood as a beautiful art form, but also as a window that reveals the cultural richness, social complexity and economic potential in the context of the people of North Central Timor.

Moreover, research on *Leku Sene* music has the potential to support the regeneration and preservation of cultural heritage. (D'Agostino, 2020) (D'Agostino, 2020) Younger generations can be educated about *Leku Sene* music and understand and appreciate the rich cultural heritage of their ancestors with the help of adequate documentation and scientific publications. These efforts have the potential to encourage proactive involvement from the community in the conservation and advancement of indigenous performing arts.

Studying *Leku Sene* music in a global context has the ability to shed light on social dynamics and cultural diversity in Southeast Asia. (Nicolas, 2019). This research will not only reveal the deep cultural roots of the Dawan region, but also pave the way for a deeper understanding of the interaction between regional culture and ever-changing outside influences. Moreover, studying the music of *Leku Sene* will allow us to have more in-depth discussions on related social and cultural topics, including gender equality, cultural sustainability and local identity (van Breen et al., 2017). Through investigating the ways in which this traditional music reflects the cultural values and life experiences of the community, we can learn more about the social changes and collective identities taking place in the area. As a result, this research will not only advance our understanding of music and culture, but also open up new avenues for understanding the intricacies and dynamics of human existence in various cultural situations.

For the people of North Central Timor is the music of *Leku Sene*. This music provides a means for people to express themselves and strengthens social ties within the community by using pentatonic tones to describe life events. Furthermore, *Leku Sene* music contributes to the preservation of cultural values and raises awareness of the uniqueness of the people of North Central Timor among outsiders. A thorough analysis of *Leku Sene* music can not only help preserve cultural heritage, but can also significantly advance the social and cultural sciences.

3.The Role of Women's in the Leku Sene Music Tradition as a Means of Self-Expression and Empowerment

The *Leku Sene* tradition's view of women emphasizes their enormous commitment to preserving and passing on a priceless cultural heritage (Sergeant & Himonides, 2014). The *Leku Sene* tradition, an important component of local cultural life, has endured for generations, illustrating the depth and

durability of the cultural heritage. Throughout its history of involvement, women have not only participated as artists and performers in the performance, but they have also been instrumental in preserving the methods, rules and meanings that are part of this tradition.

Not only as inheritors, women also act as dedicated teachers, transmitting their cultural knowledge to the younger generation (Jambunanda et al., 2022). Thus, women's role is not only limited to ensuring the continuity of the *Leku Sene* lifestyle from one generation to the next, but also ensuring that the religious teachings and values embedded in this tradition will continue to shape the lives of future generations and the changing dynamics of the wider society. So the role of women is not only to ensure the survival of *Leku Sene* from one generation to the next, but also to ensure that the values and cultural messages contained in this tradition remain alive and relevant in the changing dynamics of society.

In addition to engaging in religious rituals, *Leku Sene* provides opportunities for individuals to express themselves and achieve empowerment. Through music and performance, women not only express themselves through their roles, but also convey their ideals and daily experiences. Research findings also show that women's participation in social settings does not automatically increase awareness of gender issues, nor does it actively strengthen their status and position in the social structure of society. (Rumahlatu, 2019). This tradition gives women the opportunity to participate in public life, express their feelings, and receive recognition for their contributions, thus creating a significant social impact by encouraging more thoughtful social interactions.

The central role of women in *Leku Sene* traditional music also highlights subtle shifts in wider gender dynamics. Through active participation in this tradition, women can demonstrate that they have a powerful and influential position in a religious context rooted in tradition. Women's participation also galvanized the spirit of equality and women's empowerment in various aspects of life, accommodating changes in perceptions with gender roles in society at large. Sergeant & Himonides (2014) explain that gender gives voice to women for their potential and contributions in the fields of science and religion. Their role opens the door for the advancement of women's awareness and ability to fight for their rights in society that are often violated by patriarchal norms.

Apart from its influence on social and gender dynamics, women's rights in *Leku Sene* are also very important in the daily activities of the community. This traditional art is a key pillar in keeping cultural heritage alive and relevant amidst the ever-moving currents of transformation in society. By safeguarding and passing on the values and meanings stored in this history. This not only ensures a religious society, but also provides a springboard for innovation and adaptation in line with modern times, so that *Leku Sene* continues to be a living part of the identity of the people of North Central Timor (Fakin Bajec, 2016).

Women are not only the custodians and successors of cultural heritage, but also agents of change whose role is to strengthen their self-expression and empowerment (Kunnuji, 2023). Women's active participation in this practice has important social implications in influencing gender norms and bringing about more subtle changes in society. Not only are they practitioners of the tradition; they also uphold the importance of observing and passing on the values found in this generation to the next. In addition, women in this tradition also act as catalysts for more radical social change. Women champion self-empowerment and gender equality in their involvement in cultural practices (Bhatta Joshi, 2023).

Appreciation of women's contribution and participation in traditional religious practices in *Leku Sene* music is strongly emphasized in this study. In addition to women's role in playing *Leku Sene* music in the Dawan community, women also have valuable contributions in preserving and advancing religious traditions and education. Bussolo et al. (2024) also provide a foundation for researchers and educators to understand the need to foster and support women's participation in school practices as part of a larger effort to address gender inequality and social change.



Fig.2. The expression of a child hitting Leku Sene
(Source: <https://www.auralarchipelago.com/auralarchipelago/tag/gongs>)

Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on the findings from the discussion chapter of the research on how women function in *Leku Sene* music. The first area of concern in the existence of *Leku Sene* music is discussed in the discussion chapter of this research, which highlights the significance of this music in social and cultural life. The social and cultural life of the people of North Central Timor is heavily influenced by *Leku Sene* music. For the Dawan people, this music has significant historical, spiritual and identity aspects in addition to being a form of entertainment. Through its rhythmic rhythms, *Leku Sene* music strengthens the sense of solidarity and togetherness among the community, as well as being a medium to convey the beauty of *Leku Sene* music stories for generations. It thus serves as a link between individuals and organizations among the people of North Central Timor through participation in a number of traditional rituals, religious rituals, and other important events.

Secondly, that the Dawan people in North Central Timor's representation of their experiences through *Leku Sene* music is an important component of their identity and culture. In addition to providing entertainment, *Leku Sene* music also serves as a means to preserve the history, morals, and stories embedded in the daily lives of the Dawan people. The younger generation can learn about and understand the history of their culture through this music, helping to preserve it in the midst of increasing globalization.

Third, the importance of women's contribution to the preservation of cultural heritage and art is demonstrated by the role of women in the *Leku Sene* music tradition as a form of empowerment and self-expression. Women preserve musical traditions, but they also act as agents, using genuine musical expression to strengthen their cultural identity. Women can feel more secure and have the freedom to express themselves through active engagement in traditional music practices, which will empower them in social and cultural areas.

This research confirms the need for a preservation strategy that involves collaboration between the government, local communities and academic institutions in an effort to effectively promote traditional music. The traditional music of *Leku Sene* is also integrated into cultural preservation programs in North Central Timor through education and local cultural institutions, thus becoming an essential step to maintain the identity and cultural heritage of the community.

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