

Eik BetBet Ritual (Stepping the Land): A Tradition of Caring for Multiethnic Community Harmony in Central Halmahera Regency

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Abstract:- This research discusses how the people of Central Halmahera maintain the customary ritual tradition of welcoming guests called *Eik Betbet* or trampling the ground. The *Eik Betbet* ritual is an opening ceremony which is carried out by presenting ritual to honored guests who are visiting for the first time. The objectives of this study are (1), to find out the process of carrying out the *Eik Betbet* ritual in Central Halmahera Regency. (2) To find out what values are contained in the *Eik Betbet* ritual in Central Halmahera Regency.

This research used qualitative method. The research was conducted by Weda in Central Halmahera Regency, North Maluku Province. Data collection techniques in this research are observation, interview and documentation. The data that has been collected is analyzed with a qualitative approach. The validity of the data in this study was carried out through member checks where the participants were always confirmed with the results of the data analysis that had been carried out. At the time of the interview, the researcher had already conducted an analysis of the interviewee's answers. The results of this study found that the *Eik Betbet* traditional ritual is a form of implementing Islamic values in welcoming and respecting guests. The procedure for carrying out the *Eik Betbet* ceremony has never changed for centuries. The implementation of the *Eik Betbet* ceremony is only intended for officials or guests who are setting foot in Central Halmahera for the first time. The *Eik Betbet* custom in the tradition of the people of Central Halmahera contains several moral, socio-cultural and religious values that are adhered to by the people of the *Gam Range* (three countries), namely; *Veda*, *Patani* and *Maba*. These customs have been passed down from generation to generation and continue to grow even though the people who are members of a society have changed due to death and birth. Social values in the implementation of the *Eik Betbet* ritual are a form of a close sense of brotherhood among human beings.

Keywords:- *Eik Betbet* Rituals, Human, Social, And Religious Values.

I. INTRODUCTION

Traditional ceremonies are one of the traditional traditions carried out from generation to generation in an area and are still considered to have values that are quite relevant to the lives of its adherents. Apart from being a human effort

to be able to relate to the spirits of their ancestors, this is also a manifestation of the human ability to actively adapt to nature or the environment in a broad sense (Koentjaraningrat, 1980; Hasnia et al., 2022).

All regions in Indonesia, including Central Halmahera Regency, have traditional ceremonies which are their regional characteristics. In Central Halmahera there is a traditional ceremony that is quite interesting for tourists called *Eik Betbet*. *Eik Betbet* itself has two meanings, *Eik* means *stampede* and *Betbet* means *ground*, so *Eik Betbet* itself is a tradition of stepping on the ground.

The custom of *Eik Betbet* is usually done when welcoming guests who first set foot on the land of Central Halmahera. The purpose of the ritual is to make the water, soil, stones, wind and everything that is contained in the earth of Central Halmahera accept the presence of the guests as a bond of brotherhood that is manifested from the bottom of the heart. In addition, the water, soil, rocks, wind and everything in Central Halmahera Regency welcomes the presence of your guests as a strong bond of brotherhood with the motto of *Fagogoru* (love, respect, care for each other) (Bulletin, 2015).

The *Eik Betbet* ritual begins with reading blessings while sprinkling rice, after that the guest is asked to put his right foot into a container (a plate or tray) that has been filled with *fartago* grass (a type of grass that grows in the field). This is a symbol that the guest has set foot on the land of Central Halmahera and the guests were prayed for by the traditional elders and ancestors who witnessed it.

This ritual is performed by three women who bring offerings and one man who reads a prayer. The offerings used in this ritual consist of water, yellow rice, *fartago* grass. The *Eik Betbet* ritual is carried out by washing the feet of arriving guests. A handful of *Fartago* grass placed on a plate represents the earth and plants, a handful of water splashed at the guests' feet symbolizes water, rivers and the sea while the yellow, red and green rice balls is symbolized the various ethnic groups in Center Halmahera, hoping that they become friends for guests who come (Bulletin, 2016).

The *Eik Betbet* ritual is carried out as an expression of appreciation and respects as well as the openness of the people of Central Halmahera to guests, besides that it is also to pray that the guests will always receive protection while in this country until they return to their place. This ceremony is the culmination of the customs of the Tidore.

Sultanate (especially Central Halmahera). It is held as a form of respect for guests who come to Central Halmahera, especially respected guests such as officials, traditional elders, religious and community leaders. This tradition has high moral values because every guest who comes is treated kindly and honorably. Based on the description stated above, some of the main issues raised at this time are as follows.

II. THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE

Culture is a term that everyone knows. Especially for Indonesians who have various cultures. Culture is a pattern or way of life that continues to develop by a group of people and is passed on to the next generation (Sahib & Rahman, 2021; Saleh et al., 2021). Culture is a term related to the mind and human reason. Different groups may have different cultures (Andini et al., 2021).

A culture is passed on to the next generation by learning. The value of a culture is said to have an abstract form. This value is stored in people's minds which are used to solve general problems to big problems (Sugiyartati et al., 2020). Values from culture are then used as a way of life from the behavior of people in a group. The value contained in this mind is then difficult to describe or explain in detail (Sukmawaty et al., 2022; Tahir et al., 2021). However, when it is explained and then tried to do it directly, it will really understand the value of culture. Cultural values with characters like this make culture very strongly embedded in each individual. Culture can then last a very long time and still be passed on to the next generation (Zakaria et al., 2021).

➤ Research Objective

1) to show the process of carrying out the *Eik Betbet* ritual in Central Halmahera Regency and, 2) to reveal what values are contained in the *Eik Betbet* ritual in Central Halmahera Regency.

III. METHOD

This research used qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from observable people and behavior. So that the data collected is in the form of words or sentences or pictures. This data can be in the form of interview scripts, field notes, photos, videos, personal documents, memos or other official documents (Moleong, 2014).

This qualitative method was chosen by the researcher because the title that the researcher adopted is more directed at describing something so it is in accordance with the title of the researcher where in this study tries to describe, describe, and describe how the process of carrying out the *Eik Betbet* ritual in Central Halmahera Regency.

Data collection techniques can be divided into 3 types, those are observation, interviews, and documentation. 1) Observation is a technique or way of collecting data by making observations of ongoing activities. In this case the data that must be collected is about how the process of

carrying out the *Eik Betbet* ritual in Central Halmahera Regency is. Observations were made by researchers using field notes and observation sheets. 2) Interviews were conducted orally in face-to-face meetings individually. Before carrying out the interviews the researcher prepared an interview instrument in the form of a number of questions or statements to be submitted to the respondents. In this case the data that must be interviewed with the respondents is regarding how the process of carrying out the *Eik Betbet* ritual in Central Halmahera Regency is. 3) It is a data collection technique by collecting and analyzing written and electronic documents. This documentation technique is data collection by documenting the object of research and all that supports it as material or data that will later be used in research.

IV. RESULTS

1. Implementation of Bet-Bet Eik Rituals

Koentjaraningrat (2015) defines a ritual ceremony as a system of activities or a series of actions that are regulated by custom, or the laws that apply in ritual ceremonies have rules or procedures that have been determined by the community, or the group creating the ritual. The rites are carried out as a means of seeking salvation and concrete evidence of the beliefs held by groups or community members about the existence of the Almighty's power outside of humans. Rites have sacredness for that that carry them out and are carried out routinely either it is week, month or year (Koentjaraningrat, 2015).

The stomping ground ritual or *Eik Betbet* is a cultural heritage that still exists among the people of Central Halmahera Regency. This tradition is an acculturation of religious values that develop in the local community. Several areas in North Maluku have different names for the ceremony of welcoming guests or stepping on the ground based on the language of the local community as a form of appreciation for the guest of honor. Step on the ground in the Ternate language known as *joko kaha*, Tidore language *joko hale*, the *Sula islands baka yab hai* and the Wedic language are known as *Eik Betbet* (Soelarto, 1982).

The *Eik Betbet* ritual is one of the traditional ceremonies carried out at the reception of grand guests for someone who is setting foot in Central Halmahera for the first time. This ceremony is intended for state events, featuring one son (imam) who is in charge of reciting prayers and three daughters called "*jojaro*". (Hasan, 2001).

The three sons represent the *Gam Range* (three countries), namely; *Veda*, *Patani* and *Maba*. The material for the *Eik Betbet* ritual ceremony consists of: (a) a small plate containing a handful of soil means earth, hills and mountains, (b) a clump of grass called *fortage* meaning wilderness, (c) a bottle of water means lakes, lakes as well as rivers and seas, (d) potpourri contains the meaning of the fragrance of the character of the people of Central Halmahera, (e) rice (white, yellow, red, black), symbolizing the spirit of diversity in diversity of the people of Central Halmahera consisting of from various tribes. The fifth type of material for the ceremony has never changed over time, only the *Eik Betbet*

ritual ceremony which is carried out for state ceremonies or official events with a white cloth spread out. The white cloth symbolizes the natural purity of Central Halmahera (Bulletin, 2015).

During the ceremony, the guest must take off the shoes and socks that they wear then their feet are placed on several blades of grass called fartago which grow on the land of Central Halmahera. The *Eik Bethet* ceremony is usually performed by three young women in pink or white traditional clothes and a son who is in charge of reciting the prayer.

As for the contents of the prayer between "We pray for Your presence, O God, may You increase his age, make his body healthy, broaden his mind and mind, instill his soul both physically and mentally so that he can run the government and uphold justice, invite to good and prevent evil, apply fair to both men and women and give the ability to calm this area into a safe, peaceful and prosperous country under the auspices of Your grace, O Lord." Previously they put flowers on the guest and asked them to sit on a chair. When seated, the guest opened his right shoe and sock then the guest stepped on the grass brought by one of the young women. After stepping on the ground, the guest's feet were washed and he puts his shoes back on (Anwar et al., 2020).



Fig 1. The rice for welcoming guests

Figure 1 shows that spreading rice at the feet of guests, it is also spread in the guest reception area after the procession of welcoming guests has been completed. In every series of *Eik* rituals *Bethet* prayer reciting in the form of sholawat to the Prophet Muhammad are always sung by the female elders who are in charge of welcoming the guests.



Fig 2. Mayang Pinang for welcoming guests

One of the female elders simultaneously rubs mayang areca nut and strands of Sayangasi or red adong leaves on all the guests' limbs, starting from wiping the right limbs followed by the left limbs, by reciting the Prophet's prayer.



Fig 3. Fartago grass for welcoming guests

The next stage is the guests will be led to open their footwear. After removing their footwear, guests are invited to set their feet on a white plate filled with fartago grass by placing their right foot first, then their left foot. The third stage, after finishing setting foot on a clump of grass, the female elder will clean the guest's feet by sprinkling water then wiping them.



Fig 4. Preparation for the *Eik Betbet* Ceremony

This ceremony lasts no more than five minutes. After stepping on the grass, the guest also got a scattering of colorful rice. The *Eik Betbet* ritual ceremony is specifically for guests who come to Central Halmahera for the first time. If you have visited before, you don't need to do the *Eik Betbet* ceremony again. The *Eik Betbet* ritual means the formation and implementation of custom in Central Halmahera Regency which has always been followed and obeyed by the community or their followers since ancient times. In this case, the people who inhabit the area of Central Halmahera Regency, and from generation to generation are still loyal to carrying out the customs of the Ternate sultanate which have been passed down by their ancestors since the Tidore sultanate was still active, even today most of the indigenous people of Central Halmahera Regency still recognize and the customs of the Tidore sultanate in its various social and cultural lives. It means that the *Eik Betbet* ritual is still being carried out by the people of Central Halmahera for generations until now, especially in cultural events (Anwar et al., 2020).

1. Stage of the Eik Betbet Ritual

a. Preparation phase

After hearing the news there will be the arrival of a guest of honor, various preparations are made in advance to support the event. The district head as the regional leader invited his subordinates and community leaders to discuss various preparations and readiness. In this deliberation a committee was formed to coordinate the implementation of the event. The village head is usually appointed as the person in charge of activities, assisted by youth, elders or local community leaders.

The place of implementation is carried out in an open building so that many people can attend and witness it. Furthermore, the committee presents the property, such as chairs, tents, loudspeakers and other equipment to support the implementation of the event. Female elders are assigned to prepare the instruments to be embedded in the *Eik Betbet* ritual, namely: a), white cloth, 1-2 meters long, b) areca nut or areca tree flower cobs c), a few leaves of Sayangasi or red carriage (*Cordyline fruticosa*) d), water that is placed in a

white bowl or medium-sized bottle, usually the water used is running water or clean well water e), a clump of fartago grass (*Eleusine indica* L.) which had been uprooted from the ground with soil residues adhering to it was deliberately not cleaned, f) a white plate that is used later to put fartago grass and, g) a handful of rice placed on a small plate. Ritual instruments such as red affection/adong leaves, mayang/areca cob, water, fartago grass and rice will be placed in a large round tray. Meanwhile, a white cloth will be laid out as a path for guests to pass through. Seating is also provided for guests who will carry out the stampede or *Eik Betbet* procession (Masinambawed, 1980).

b. *Eik Betbet* Ritual Procession

When the time for the event arrived, the regional head and the community flocked to the venue. Two female elders who are in charge of welcoming guests in the *Eik Betbet* ritual bring ritual support materials that have been prepared, complete with the typical North Maluku dress, *Kimun Gia*. This traditional dress consists of a *kebaya* at the top, made of white satin fabric, at the bottom wearing a *songket* cloth or batik cloth wrapped around it. Whereas the Imam of the mosque is as the leader of the ritual wears *taqwa* clothes or white *koko* clothes, namely a Muslim dress for men usually worn in performing worship and religious events (Soelarto, 1982).

After the guest group arrives in the Weda sub-district area, around a distance of 1 kilometer from the venue of the event, they will be greeted with the *cakalele* dance, a war dance in honor. Then the guests will be escorted to the venue for the event. The mosque priest as the ritual leader will direct guests to be served the *Eik Betbet* ritual, usually only 1 to 2 people are chosen to represent the group in carrying out the ritual. Guests will walk through the white cloth that is spread out, and then they are asked to sit down to start the *Eik Betbet* procession stamping on the ground.

The first stage, one of the female elders simultaneously rubs betel nut and strands of *Sayangasi* or red *adong* leaves on all the guests' limbs, starting from wiping the right limbs followed by the left limbs, by reciting the Prophet's prayer.

The second stage is the guests will be led to take off their footwear. After that the guests are welcome to set their feet on a white plate containing a clump of *fartago* grass or bones by putting their right foot first, then their left foot. The third stage, after finishing setting foot on a clump of grass, the female elder will clean the guests' feet by sprinkling water and then wiping them until the water is evenly distributed.

The last procession is spreading rice to the guests starting from spreading the top of the head to the other limbs, while spreading the rice followed by reciting *sholawat* to the Prophet. After finishing this stage, the priest will recite a prayer which is containing advice so that guests and the public are protected from all kinds of harm. After that, it indicates that the entire series of *Eik Betbet* ritual ceremonies has been completed. Guests will be invited to take a place for the next event. For guests who will stay overnight after the event, a place is prepared to rest (Bulletin, 2016).

c. The Meaning and Value of the *Eik Bet Bet* Ritual

The *Eik Betbet* ritual is a form of respect for guests who come to Central Halmahera, especially state or royal leaders. This cultural mirror shows that the traditional ceremony of stepping on the ground (*Eik Betbet*) is a form of reflection of the religiosity of the people of Central Halmahera, because in Islam respecting guests is a noble deed. This seems to be in line with the conception of religion from a sociological perspective, namely a value system that contains a number of conceptions regarding the construction of reality which plays a major role in explaining normative and social order structures as well as understanding and interpreting the world around it, while the *Eik Betbet* ritual tradition is an expression of creativity, work and a human initiative (in the people of Central Halmahera) which contains values and messages of religiosity, philosophical insights and local wisdom. Religion and culture both provide insights and perspectives in addressing life so that it is in accordance with the will of God and humanity (Kluckhohn, 1994; Andini et al., 2022).

The customs or rituals of *Eik Betbet* have several values that were agreed upon and applied in the people of Central Halmahera in the past until now. Moreover, it is still being carried out both by the indigenous people and by the community in general in the Central Halmahera region, which has been very respectful of all forms of implementation of their customs for generations.

The following will explain the philosophical meaning and social values of the *Betbet eik* ritual as follows:

1) White cloth

White cloth is used in the first stage in preparing for the ritual, the cloth is spread out 1 to 2 meters long which the guest will pass through to the seat to begin the ritual process. The meaning of the white cloth symbolizes purity and holiness. This is a form of openness in welcoming guests as part of the people of Central Halmahera Regency. While the social value is that the majority of the Vedic community is Muslim, in religious rituals the color white is the dominant color used in its implementation, which depicts the religious side as a sacred aspect within oneself. The use of white in rituals is associated with sincerity and freedom from evil things that will befall guests or the local community (Bulletin, 2015).

2) *Mayang Pinang*

Mayang pinang or *mayang* areca nut is a wrapped flower bud on areca palm. *Mayang pinang* is used in the first stage of the ritual, namely when the guest has sat down to carry out the ritual, the female elder will rub *mayang* areca nut all over the guest's body, prioritizing the right limb, then the left. The meaning of *mayang* areca is as a seed that leads to new life. While the social value of *mayang* in the life of Vedic society, departs from the shape of *mayang* areca nut, which is soaring high with a vertical dimension, which means a relationship with God, and the outer skin covering a *mayang*, which has a horizontal dimension, which means kinship and protection among human beings. So the use of *mayang* betel in the ritual as a form of asking for blessing and protection from God so that guests and the community in

carrying out the ritual can run smoothly and safely.

3) *Sayangasi/Adong* Red Denotation

Sayangasi or red *adong* (*Cordyline fruticosa*) is a group of monocotyledonous plants which are often found in gardens as ornamental plants, having a single, lanceolate leaf with a length of 20-60 cm and a width of 5-13 cm, where the leaves are spread over the stem. In the *Eik Betbet* ritual, *Sayangasi/Adong* Merah uses only a few leaves which are applied simultaneously with *Mayang/Cob*. The meaning of *Sayangasi/red adong* has a sign of being protected and keeping away all diseases or viruses that can disturb guests. This is because the leaves of *Sayangasi/Adong* contain antibacterial properties, so local people often use it as a treatment. The social value of using red affection/*adong* is believed to be a repellent to reinforcements, so this plant is often found in the yard of the house for the purpose of neutralizing it, because it can repel all negative forces that want to attack the house.

4) Plate

The plate is a flat round container and slightly concave (flat). Usually a ceramic or porcelain plate is used in rituals as a container for putting *fartago* grass. In the past, the use of plates in rituals used king plates, but now the king plates used in rituals have gone too far, so they only use plain white plates as containers, but do not reduce the value of the ritual. The meaning of the plate is as a form of plea for the creator's protection from bad things that will befall the guests at any time. The social value of the people of Central Halmahera Regency believes that when faced with sustenance in the form of food it must be placed in a clean container, this keeps the food consumed later from being mixed with dirty things around it which will interfere with health. The use of plates is as a form of family protecting and keeping guests away from various diseases while in Central Halmahera Regency.

5) *Fartago* grass

Fartago grass is an artificial grass in the North Maluku. The scientific name of the skeleton grass is *Eleusine indica* (L.) Gaertn. This plant belongs to the Poaceae tribe, namely the grass tribe. This grass is one of the instruments used in the *Eik Batbet* ritual.

The meaning of using *fartago* grass/bones is used in the second stage of the ritual, *fartago* grass with the remnants of the soil attached to it is placed on a plate. *Fartago* grass markers symbolize the earth and growing on the earth has been touched and explored by guests. The social meaning of *fartago* grass is known as a type of grass that cannot be easily removed, so the Vedic community believes that the use of *fartago* grass in the *Eik Betbet* ritual is a form of strength both physically and spiritually in living life.

6) Water

Water is scientifically a chemical compound consisting of two elements, namely the element H₂ (hydrogen) which binds to the element O₂ (oxygen) which then produces the compound water (H₂O). The meaning of using water in carrying out the ritual is that after the guest has stepped onto the *fartago* grass with bare feet, after that the female elder

will wash the guest's feet by stroking them until the water is evenly distributed. The use of water in rituals has a sign as a symbol of purification or cleaning everything from dirt. The social value of water as a source of life, serenity, fertility and wealth that lies on the earth of *fagogoru* can also be imprinted on visiting guests.

7) Rice

Rice is the part of the grain that has peeled off its outer skin. The application of rice is the last part of the ritual. It is placed in a small plate so that it doesn't get scattered. The meaning of rice in rituals is a symbol of prosperity or well-being. In the past, rice was only consumed when Friday, and people relied on sago as a staple food. The social strata at that time clearly illustrated that only wealthy people consumed rice almost every day. However, this situation is reversed with the current reality, people now make rice as the main dish and sago is almost rarely consumed.

While the social value is the people of Central Halmahera Regency believe that the use of rice in the ritual by sowing it towards guests is a prayer and a wish for happiness, prosperity and wealth to accompany every step of the guests' footsteps. The dominant body movement prioritizes the right limb followed by the left is a form of good morals and behavior. The body movement resembles the *Lala* dance. According to Hasim (2022), the *Lala* Dance means an expression of gratitude for the various gifts of the Almighty to humans in the form of nature and the living things in it. This gratitude is expressed in the form of affection and attention that is always manifested in the daily life of humans.

This is in line with the etiquette of religious teachings which are recommended to start a good thing, you should put the right thing first, in contrast, when you let go of something or start something bad, you should start from the left. The *Eik Betbet* ritual has a spiritual value, in the series of processes there is an element of divinity, namely through this ritual humans represent gratitude to God for protection from all harm. The things we carry out can be approved by God Almighty (Visser, 1994).

d. The efforts to preserve and develop the *Eik Betbet* Ritual

Along with the times, changes in life are inevitable. Even in the implementation of the *Eik Betbet* ritual, changes are considered something natural, and are seen more as a readiness to welcome the future as well as a response to changing times and technology. Changes in the process of carrying out rituals are inevitable and have taken place little by little over time. Like the use of a king's plate in the *Eik Betbet* ritual which functioned as a container for putting *fartago* grass, now switching to using a plain white plate without a pattern, it is also different from the container used to collect water, which used to use a teapot/kettle with a capacity of half a liter, now it has a capacity of half a liter. instead of using medium-sized white bowls, this was due to the lack of availability of either king plates or teapots.

Even though this has become a support in carrying out the *Eik Betbet* ritual to welcome guests which were carried out by previous ancestors. The most important thing is not to

reduce the meaning contained therein. According to Koentjaraningrat, (1982) that as a concrete step in dealing with the many threats and influences from changing times that are so swift on local culture, then of course there must be synergy and good cooperation between the government and the community. Preserving and developing the *Eik Betbet* ritual in today's modern era can be done in various ways. The Central Halmahera Regency Government has carried out an action plan for the development of the *Eik Betbet* ritual as follows:

1) Protection

The protection of the *Eik Betbet* ritual is an effort to maintain cultural sustainability. This scope is pursued through inventory, security, maintenance, rescue, and publication. The inventory of objects for the promotion of the *Eik Betbet* ritual is carried out through the Integrated Cultural Data Collection System with recording and documenting, establishing and updating data as its stages. The synergy between the Regional Government of Central Halmahera Regency and the Center is crucial for inventorying data on objects for the promotion of the *Eik Betbet* ritual, in which both play a role in facilitating everyone in recording and documenting cultural objects (Sutrisno, et al. 1998).

The action plan for the development of the *Eik Betbet* ritual in Central Halmahera Regency needs protection. The following safeguards are as follows: 1) Protection of community customs and traditions through preservation activities by the Culture and Tourism Office of Central Halmahera Regency and 2) formation of a regional regulation on the preservation of customs and the empowerment of traditional institutions in Central Halmahera Regency.

2) Development

The development of the *Eik Betbet* ritual is an effort to revive the cultural ecosystem as well as to enhance, enrich and disseminate culture in Central Halmahera Regency. Development is carried out through dissemination, assessment and enrichment of diversity. The action plan is prepared based on the community tradition development strategy. The following is the action plan for the development of the *Eik Betbet* ritual in Central Halmahera Regency.

1) Development of local content on the values of the *Eik Betbet* ritual to strengthen community unity in Central Halmahera Regency, 2) formation of a task force for the preservation and development of customs and socio-cultural values of the people in Central Halmahera Regency, 3) conduct socialization on the formation of a task force for the preservation and development of customs and socio-cultural values of the people in Central Halmahera Regency, 4) building public awareness about the importance of the *Eik Betbet* ritual to strengthen cultural development in Central Halmahera Regency, 5) increasing public knowledge about artistic values related to traditions in Central Halmahera Regency, 6) increasing activities for preserving artistic values for cultural actors in Central Halmahera Regency, and 7) building cooperation with the government to develop cultural promotion activities in the arts sector in Central Halmahera Regency.

2) Utilization

To carry out the utilization of the *Eik Betbet* ritual cultural promotion object, the Central Halmahera District Education Office focuses on four national goals to be achieved, namely increasing national character through internalization of cultural values, innovation, increasing adaptation to change, across cultures cultural communication and intercultural cooperation. Then, it aims to increase cultural resilience, improve the welfare of the people of Central Halmahera Regency as follows: 1) publication of *Eik Betbet* rituals through book writing, research and social media, 2) improving education and training for indigenous peoples and cultural actors in Central Halmahera Regency, and 3) formulation of community and cultural empowerment programs in Central Halmahera Regency.

3) Coaching

The efforts to develop the *Eik Betbet* ritual are more focused on preventing intellectual property claims. In this law, maintenance efforts emphasize efforts to prevent damage, loss or destruction of objects for the promotion of culture. Thus, the steps taken by the Central Halmahera Regency Education Office are in the form of maintaining the nobility and wisdom of objects for the promotion of culture, using objects for the promotion of culture in daily life, maintaining diversity, animating and maintaining cultural ecosystems for each object of cultural promotion, and passing on objects of cultural promotion to next generation.

The efforts to develop the Central Halmahera Regency Education Office as follows: 1) conduct training education for the indigenous and cultural communities of Central Halmahera Regency, 2) fostering traditional life and traditions in supporting social cohesion in Central Halmahera Regency, and 3) community empowerment based on customary values in Central Halmahera Regency.

Likewise, efforts are made through non-formal channels. The community must understand and know the various cultures that we have. The government can also focus more on non-formal education. The existence of the *Eik Betbet* ritual in Vedic society is a religious act that is integrated in forms and activities showing a system of symbols of social cohesion and social transformation in strengthening emotional bonds between communities. Ritual celebrations present expressive and communicative symbols that have mystical-spirituality values. According to Shils (1981) communication between humans does not only use verbal symbols but also non-verbal symbols. These non-verbal messages not only strengthen the verbal messages conveyed, sometimes they even convey separate messages.

The *Eik Betbet* ritual which continues to live and thrive among the people of Central Halmahera, it needs to be preserved as a form of appreciation for local wisdom which contains many moral and religious values that can contribute positively to the development of the nation's civilization and culture, as well as a form of positive-constructive religious and cultural relations. According to Suryo (2001), this relation means that Islam as a normative teaching originating from God is accommodated into culture originating from

humans without losing their respective identities. Because in principle all the heritage and cultural values of the past need to be properly appreciated by passing them on from generation to generation.

In the procedures and processions for implementing the *Eik Betbet* custom, when viewed from the value of Islamic teachings, it appears that the customs of the people of Central Halmahera are very thick with Islamic nuances, in addition to their cultural features which are still the ancestral cultural values of the community. This means that in the customary ritual of *Eik Betbet* it seems integrated between Islamic elements and cultural elements.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the description previously, it can be concluded that the existence of rituals in all regions is a religious act that is integrated in form and activity. One form of ritual that is still maintained today is the welcoming ritual. The welcoming ritual ceremony which is known by the people of Central Halmahera Regency as *Eik Betbet* or stomping the ground is a marker of the cultural identity of the local community.

As a society that upholds traditional values, the *Eik Betbet* ritual is a form of appreciation or respect for guests as well as an expression of gratitude for safety and sustenance to God Almighty. Messages are conveyed both in verbal form (prayers) and in nonverbal forms such as the use of symbolic objects (white cloth, betel nut, red affectionate/*adong* leaves, plates, *fartago* grass, water and rice) which are entirely implied by the values and ideology shared by the local community.

The series in the celebration of the *Eik Betbet* or stamping on the ground ritual presents expressive and communicative symbols that have social values. Departing from the *Fagogoru* philosophy of the *Gamrange* community (three lands), namely *Weda*, *Maba* and *Patani*, which are sources of customs reflecting religious and cultural values in the social life of the community. The basic value of *fagogoru* is a basis for honoring guests which is packaged in the *Eik Betbet* ritual, as a manifestation of respect between humans.

The value dimension in the *Eik Betbet* ritual includes spiritual values and social values. Spiritual value is a manifestation of worship, submission and exaltation to the Creator as one of the basic human instincts regarding the recognition of the existence of God. The social value in carrying out rituals manifests a close sense of brotherhood for fellow human beings, besides that it is also to maintain local wisdom. Changes in life are inevitable. As a concrete step in dealing with many threats and influences of the changing times that are so swift on local culture, of course there must be synergy and good cooperation between the government, schools and the community.

The *Eik Betbet* ritual in the tradition of the people of Central Halmahera is a reflection of the local wisdom of the people of Central Halmahera which has been passed down from generation to generation until now, and it has made an

important contribution to the development of Indonesian society and nation, especially in the formation of the character and character of society, because the main source in development and character building is sourced from the values of religious teachings and local wisdom values. So that the local wisdom that exists in each region needs to be nurtured, preserved as well as published so that it can become a basic source in the formation of the Indonesian nation's character.

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