

Ethnic Diversity In Sikka Regency East Nusa Tenggara as A Principle Of Multiculturalism

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**Ethnic Diversity In Sikka Regency East Nusa Tenggara
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Abstract

Advances in technology have made a convenient human interconnection in all parts of the world. The boundary between nations due to ethnic and racial differences is increasingly blurred and the world united by a unifying global life. Global life in unity and diversity becomes a new value with multiculturalism as the main concept that needs to be internalized towards the world of peace and harmony. This study aims to elaborate on the existence of various ethnic groups and domiciles in Sikka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara. Various ethnic groups can navigate life in tolerance in an atmosphere of diversity that frames it. The study was conducted using a qualitative ethnographic approach as developed by Spradly. Data obtained through the process of participant observation, interviews and in-depth analysis of various forms of related documents. Data were analyzed using ethnographic analysis with 12 progressive and coherent steps. The results of the study confirmed that in Sikka Regency there are five major ethnic groups which are Sikka Krowe, Lio, Tana Ai, Palue and Tidung. All of five ethnic groups domiciles in various regions of Sikka Regency, starting from the west End bordering Ende Regency to the east bordering East Flores Regency. Each ethnic group has a history of formation processes that are not similar in terms of time and manner. However, they have similarities in the purpose of establishing an ethnic territory, specifically in the search for a better life. Interaction with the outside world makes ethnic diversity in Sikka Regency increasingly diverse not only from the physical elements of ethnicity, but also the diversity of belief systems, either native beliefs or beliefs due to external influences, such as language, and daily life patterns. Nevertheless, the diversity of ethnicity in Sikka Regency has brought forth to a peaceful and harmonious social life which is caused by customary ties and strong local wisdom values in maintaining social life without conflict. This is a strong principle for the implementation of multiculturalism values in the lives of the people in Sikka Regency.

Keywords: Cultural Diversity, Ethnicity, Multiculturalism, Sikka Regency.

INTRODUCTION

The idea of multiculturalism that widely discussed in today's global life is related to the ease of human interaction with the support of advancement in technology. Various forms of identities that differentiate of each ethnic group in the world seem to melt into new values for human life that is more advanced and prosperous in a frame of life full of peace without conflict because of the difference itself. In the anthropological context, each ethnic group develops and has its own culture as one way to answer the challenges of nature. Therefore, differences in natural challenges that faced will bring forth to different forms and cultural values as outcomes. In addition, differences are also factored by racial elements with their respective characteristics. Today's global politics, which is often influenced by identity politics (Rakhmani, 2020), is following the local situation and historical background and often strive on behalf of the people in the face of critical inequality due to the current neoliberal economic climate. Therefore, promoting the values of multiculturalism as a new attitude in global interaction is needed, especially in regions or countries that are built on a

multiethnic basis.

The concept of multiculturalism emphasizes great efforts to respect differences. Differences that are not well faced will be a source of disputes, conflicts, and violence (Sahasrad, 2017). Social conflicts are caused by issues of difference that can be vertical or horizontal. Initially, the context of the differences referred to in this multicultural idea revolved around the issue of race and culture. However, over time, the context of differences includes the difference in religion, nationalism (Song, 2017), gender, economic status, age, profession, physical conditions and so on. The internalization of the idea of multiculturalism is expected that the prejudice of several different aspects of social life will not become a source of social conflict. It is discussed in-depth in multiculturalism about how stereotypical thinking will only be detrimental because it will emerge suspicion. It is also stated on how to resolve conflicts originating from excessive suspicion for the interests of the world (Tiedt & Tiedt, 1995).

Indonesia is a unitary state that built from colorful forms of ideology, historical diversity, even physical and psychological mentality. The name Indonesian that is used today is determined through a long history and complex process. Anthony Reid (in Haedar, 2019) explained that the name Indonesia is a new term for a nation in the 20th century, from a European ethnologist in the late 19th century, which was later adopted by nationalist groups in the 1920s as national consciousness (Haedar, 2019). Historically, the geographical aspect of Indonesia currently stretches from Sabang to Merauke from Mianggas Island to Rote Island, covering land, sea, and air, including its biodiversity and inhabitants. Therefore, it was not surprising that since the 16th century, Indonesian territory became the target of Western colonialism through the process of imperialism and colonialism (Suswandari, 2017). The geographical position of Indonesian territory that stretches in the trade route was a bridge that connects the east and west world. It became a new magnet for the development of the ideology of liberalism in the 14th century and centuries onwards. This process is a door for change and an entry point for the formation of Indonesia that we know today, as a unitary state because it is built from a variety of diverse ethnic elements.

Indonesia today is Indonesia that is built from various ethnic colors, as expressed by Salahudin (2015), "... this nation is not only multi-ethnic (Javanese, Sundanese, Acehnese, Bugis, Flores and so on) but also multi mental crossing (Islam, Christianity, Chinese, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucius, Portuguese, Dutch, capitalists) ". This condition is reflected in a variety of different identities and declared itself on August 17th of 1945, to be an independent Indonesia, a nation of one Indonesia, speaking one Indonesian language as it had been pledged by Indonesian youths in 1928. The vast range of Indonesian territory is from the western ends on Sabang Island until the eastern end of Merauke.

Sikka Regency is one of the eight regencies in Flores Island, East Nusa Tenggara Province. Sikka Regency has its capital in Maumere, which is currently known in the song "Gemu Famire", a rhythmic gymnastics song that is very popular among Indonesians. Sikka Regency is selected in this research due to life in the harmony of its inhabitants in many differences and existing conditions. Sikka Regency can be stated to be a miniature of Indonesia because in this district social system was built from various elements of ethnic and sub-ethnic diversity. The social system is strongly and uniquely bound in cultural and customary ties, conform with the history of the Sikka Regency itself. The name Sikka is taken from the name of a village located in Lela District, about 30 km from Maumere, the capital of Sikka Regency. At first, the village of Sikka was the center of government of the Kingdom of Sikka and became the starting point for the arrival of the Portuguese on Flores Island. In this Sikka village, there is the Church of Saint Maria Imaculata Lela, as the oldest church in Sikka District, a legacy of the Portuguese that was inaugurated on December 24,

1899. Sikka Regency consists of 21 districts that are actively developing to improve the welfare of their communities. Ethnic diversity in Sikka Regency is highly factored from the mythological situation of village formation (*natar*), domicile area, activities to fulfill daily needs, patterns of daily behavior, and language used. Broadly speaking, there are five major ethnic groups in Sikka Regency, namely Sikka Krowe, Lio, Tana Ai, Palue and Tidung.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptually, the term ethnic is generally to refer to a group of indigenous tribes in various parts of the world, including Indonesia. The use of this ethnic concept also includes the indigenous tribes of the Indonesian people. However, the emergence of ethnic terms is often used to refer the traditional tribes. In Greek, the term ethnic comes from the word *Ethnos* and is interpreted as *originally meant heathen pagan*. This term has been used in England from the 14th century to the mid-19th century to refer to a certain racial character. In the United States as a multi-ethnic country, some ethnic terms emerge after World War II along with the arrival of various ethnicities and races outside the Americas with various backgrounds to achieve new lives in life. The best known statement to discuss ethnic issues in America is as follows: "... as a polite term referring to Jews, Italians, Irish and other people considered inferior to the dominant group of largely British descent" (Eriksen, 2002). This statement was further emphasized by Eriksen (2002) that "... all of that approaches agree that ethnicity has something to do with the classification of people and group relationship". The ethnic term was used in the United States to refer to and distinguish among Jews, Italians, Irish and others as an inferior group compared to the large and dominant British group (Eriksen, 2002). Furthermore, the term ethnic is agreed as an approach to classify social groups in their interactions.

The term ethnic and ethnicity which later became an important study in social sciences and humanities began to be widely used, so lessen the use of the term "tribe" which sounds conventional. Ethnic, ethnicity and ethnic identity (Banks & Banks, 2019; Glazer, Moynihan, & Schelling, 1975; Naroll et al., 1964; Salim, 2006; Suswandari, 2017) are three important things from many social themes which continue to grow and be discussed. Ethnic is an association of people who speak one language and have the same sense of identity, have the same historical experience, usually interact with each other intensively and with high frequency (Koentjaraningrat, 1998). Naroll et al. (1964) defines ethnic groups as a population that is biologically capable of reproducing and surviving; have the same cultural values and be aware of a sense of togetherness in a cultural form, form their communication networks and interactions, and determine the characteristics of their groups that are accepted by other groups and can be distinguished from other population groups.

Other notions explain that ethnic and ethnicity refer to a certain social group and are marked by the same historical setting, the same traditions, the same language, religion/belief in the same highest substance and eventually become an identity that differentiates from other ethnicities. The ethnic term is often confused with race. Race in the anthropological context is more directed at the physical characteristics of certain groups, for example, blue eyes, sharp nose blonde hair are a feature of the Aryan race that descended the people in Europe. Yellow skin, slanted eyes, straight hair are the Mongoloid race are the feature that descends in people in the East Asian region (China, Mongolia, Japan, Korea). Thus, there is a clear boundary between ethnic, ethnicity, and race in the discussion of a particular social group.

The concept of ethnic according to Isajiw (1993) as a complex phenomenon consisting of four things, namely:

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(1) ethnicity conceive as a primordial phenomenon, (2) ethnicity conceive as an epiphenomenon, (3) ethnicity conceive as a situational phenomenon, (4) ethnicity conceive as a pure subjective phenomenon . "... the concept of ethnic group is the most basic...ethnicity as an individually experienced phenomenon. Ethnicity itself is an abstract concept which includes an implicit reference to both collective and individual aspects of the phenomenon.

The primordial ethnic theory explains that ethnicity as a phenomenon sees more on its existence is an undeniable element of the nation because it is related to mutual relations between humans and territorial areas that are strengthened by the existence of kinship, or the existence of an ethnic group formed in an ongoing social system (e.g. customs, religion/beliefs, language and so on) (Isajiw, 1993). Furthermore, in situational theory related to ethnic and ethnicity, it is more emphasized that ethnic groups are entities that have been built based on the similarity of the inhabitant as a selective response to certain historical social conditions (Mendatu, n.d.). In this situational theory, the emphasis is more on the cultural similarity factor compared to the blood similarity (Helius, 2009; Mendatu, n.d.) Relational theory is based on the view that ethnic groups are a combination of two or more entities that have similarities or differences that have been compared in determining the formation of ethnicity and the maintenance of its boundaries (Isajiw, 1993). The relational theory is based on the view that ethnic groups are a combination of two or more entities that have similarities and differences that have been compared in determining the formation of ethnicity and the maintenance of its boundaries. Ethnic existence is supported because of the existence of different entities (Mendatu, n.d.). In other words, ethnicity is the basis in the ethnic group that collectively united the concept between individuals and the phenomena that surround them.

Furthermore, Ratcliffe (2010) explained about ethnic groups in what Max Weber has revealed as follows:

"Max Weber ... used to the term ethnic group to connote those human collectivities which entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of the customs or both, or because of memories of colonization or migration".

In this theory, Max Weber sees ethnic groups related to physical types, customs or both related to the history of the colonization and the migration history of the ethnic group in question. The ethnic concept more dominantly defined as an anthropological community that is bound because of one descent, with the same historical setting, the same tradition, the same cultural expression with certain characteristics and distinguishes from others (Zainuri, 2004). In each ethnic group, they usually have a common desire to maintain various forms of identity they have as they have pride in their identity. They are bound to ascribed status, as social attributes that are closely attached to a person's self because of their origins both physically and socially (Zainuri, 2004).

Indonesia is a country that was established by the great support of various ethnic groups in various regions throughout its territory. The description of ethnic diversity in Indonesia has been discussed by Sutasoma in the Majapahit era called Bhineka Tunggal Ika. The diversity that was initiated by Sutasoma describes the various forms, colors, and patterns that are built up in social relations both individually and in groups. The term Unity in Diversity in Sutasoma is a way to bring many people together in various regions of the motherland (Ghufron, 2017). This confirms that the ethnic diversity in Indonesia is something that cannot be denied. Also, from various ethnic groups, none of the ethnic unity in this country claims that they are the most original, genuine or primordial when compared to other parties (Dahana, 2016). Therefore, the soul and feelings eventually becomes an attitude to

acknowledge the existence of others and provide equal opportunities in one frame called multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism is the institutionalization of cultural diversity possessed by ethnic groups in a nation-state through language, legal systems, government policies in health, housing, education, and other fields. Multiculturalism is an understanding that recognizes differences and diversity within a framework of togetherness and equality. The multicultural attitude is characterized by individual behavior that illustrates the attitude of respecting differences, the wisdom to accept differences without any boundaries as a unity, has a strong national insight, has a cross-cultural insight that is in doubt, and always desires to coexist in an atmosphere of peace and harmony. Multiculturalism is a system of understanding and behavior that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society (Banks & Banks, 2019). Indonesia's diversity can be illustrated by social differentiation in the form of religious, cultural, ethnic, social, political orientation, group affiliation, and so on (Suswandari, 2016). The multicultural structure of the Indonesian population is the main social principle for the formation of the Republic of Indonesia. Geertz (in Budihardiman quoted from Salahudin, 2015) explained that Indonesia is nations with different sizes, meanings, and characters through a grand narrative that is historical, ideological, religious, which are linked into an economic and political structure together. These different conditions will become spectacular if managed by placing differences as a great force for the nation. Conversely, if differences are always raised as something sharp, then social conflict will be born and impacted on people's lives. This situation was exploited by colonial orders which placed conflict management in the direction of perfecting its power through the politics of divide et impera.

Hen, Kraus, and Goroshit (2016) explain multiculturalism as a concept that discusses differences and the extent of variation in the lives in ethnic groups. In writing also explained that multiculturalism:

“... that it relates to the following aspects: demographic facts, describing the coexistence of peoples from different ethno-cultural backgrounds in a single society or organization, an ideological aspiration celebrating diversity, a set of policies aimed at managing diversity or a process by which ethnic and racial groups leverage support to achieve their aspirations “.

Multiculturalism is closely related to the demographic reality of a nation, the description of differences in ethnic and cultural backgrounds, the aspirations to celebrate differences in ideology, and the policies to organize differences in the same aspirations. Multiculturalism also responds to differences as an important factor in a force. In the psychological aspect, multiculturalism reflects political and ideological attitudes that can accept and support the diversity of cultures in a society. Multiculturalism recognizes and upholds differences in society, not just descriptive differences but also normative differences, namely differences that exist are not merely known but must be realized in an egalitarian and democratic life (Suswandari, 2017).

A nation that is formed due to ethnic differences requires its key in maintaining and respecting the sustainability of existing differences. The Indonesian interculturalism, by Dahana (2016), stated as "... not a space that enables the emergence and growth of sentiments, sectoral egoism, prejudice, especially discriminatory attitudes towards other different ethnic groups". Therefore, in an open global era, it is necessary to strengthen a new understanding of the importance of multicultural attitudes in the souls of every nation. It is important to maintain a peaceful life and not fulfilled by prejudices because of the existence of others who are different. In this context, Chang (2014) stated a new formulation of constructive multiculturalism which is indicated by:

- (1) All religious groups, ethnicities, languages and other backgrounds should be encouraged to emphasize aspects of tradition that enable them to respect and understand one another.
- (2) In the process of building the identity for those who displaced by migration, transmigration, and urbanization, assistance that is needed by each individual can be provided.
- (3) The educational process should be developed to support interaction and encourage mutual respect between communities.
- (4) Involving all parties in the process of dialogue with others, so that socialization can be held about the meaning of multiculturalism

The attitude of multiculturalism is shown by the ability to see differences as reality and provide opportunities for actualization. Constructive multiculturalism formulated by William Chang laid the foundation for the attitudes and behavior of various parties to be able to respect each other and involve all parties to take part in the socialization process, especially in the education world. Therefore, the attitude of multiculturalism should be the soft skills of teachers in addition to other competencies, so the prejudiced conditions related to ethnic origins, racial performance, religion, language, word terms, gender, economic background, geographical area setting do not become stereotypes in the interaction with one another. Appropriate constructive multiculturalism is to guarantee ongoing global interaction. Therefore, the attitude of constructive multiculturalism starts from the basic level, namely from the internalization and socialization of mutual understanding of "the other" from a positive perspective. A priori and prejudice attitude will become obstacles in the process of realizing this constructive multiculturalism (Chang, 2014).

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach as used by Spradley (1997), due to its close relation to the life of certain ethnic groups in a certain area. Data extraction was carried out by participant observation, in-depth interviews, and observation of supporting documents. Data were analyzed using an ethnographic analysis tool that involved 12 gradual progression paths. Every informant's activity is recorded in the field notes, coded and analyzed by the domain, the taxonomy and so on. Data triangulation is done to find the validity of the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sikka Regency is a part of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) Province. This province is a region with a unique topography because it consists of islands and the mainland. Overall, East Nusa Tenggara Province has 566 islands, and only 42 islands are inhabited while 524 others have not been inhabited. The major islands of the NTT region consist of Flores Island (14. 231 km²), Sumba Island (11,040 km²), Timor Island (14,394.90 km²) and Alor Island (2,073.40 km²) (Handoyo et al., 2014). Each island is divided into several regency systems. Currently, Flores Island is divided into eight districts namely: Manggarai Regency, West Manggarai Regency, East Manggarai Regency, Ngada Regency, Nagekeo Regency, Ende Regency, Sikka Regency, East Flores Regency (Flotim), as shown on the map below.

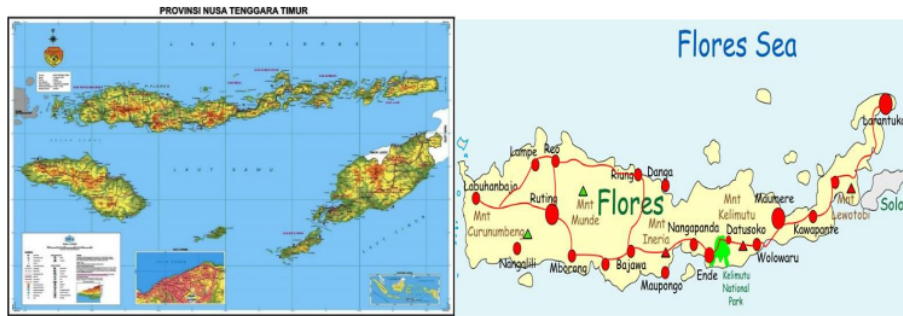


Figure 1. Map of East Nusa Tenggara

The map above describes several regencies that are part of the East Nusa Tenggara Province. The map confirms that the regency area in NTT is bounded by land and sea. In addition, several regencies are islands with their unique characteristics. Sikka Regency is on Flores Island. Separately, Sikka Regency is shown in the following map below.

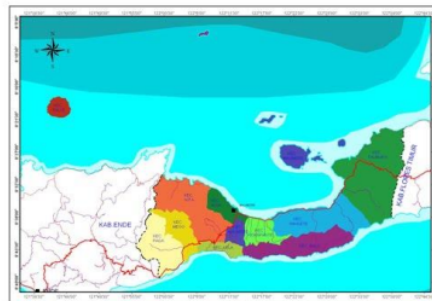


Figure 2. Map of Sikka Regency

Looking at the picture above confirms that Sikka district on Flores Island is beautiful regency. The Portuguese used to call the island as *Copa de Flores* or Tanjung Bunga, as it is the name of the island in the eastern tip of Indonesia five centuries ago when they first set foot in Flores. The beautiful name of the island of Flores truly represents the beauty and natural resources of Flores that is so extraordinary today. Flores Island in the history of the local community is also known by the name Nusa Nipa, Ular Island (Nipa). This is to illustrate the pride of this island that looks like a snake that swerves extends from the west end next to Pantar Island to the east end, next to Alor Island (Anonim, 2011).

In its development of Sikka Regency is inhabited by various ethnic groups that have been going on for hundreds of years ago. They are domiciled in certain regions as shown below.

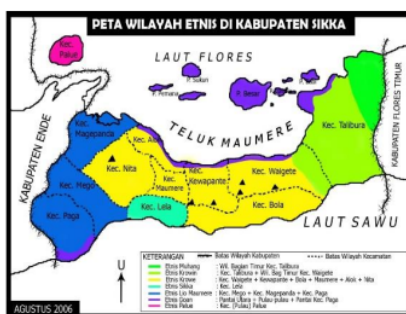


Figure 3. Map of Ethnic in Sikka Regency

The picture above clarifies ethnic distribution in Sikka Regency (Longinus, 2009). Furthermore, the description of various ethnic groups in Sikka Regency can be observed in the following explanation below.

To date, Sikka Regency with its ethnic diversity can be a mirror in the application of multicultural attitudes in Indonesia (OP, 78 years old, 2019). As mentioned in the previous discussion, that Sikka Regency is a district with diverse ethnic elements with different religious adherents. The population of Sikka Regency is 80% Catholic; it is related to the historical aspects that shape it. However, other religions also have the same space and right to conduct their worship activities. Interactions that occur between different ethnic groups show such natural rights, without any pressure and pressure from one another. Muslims who live in coastal areas have an important role as a supplier of marine fish needs for Sikka Regency and also other NTT regions. Trade relations between the Muslim community and the indigenous communities of Sikka Regency and their ethnic diversity have been well established for a long time (AR, 70 years old, 2019). The Geliting area became the initial area of interaction. Geliting Mosque is the first mosque in the Maumere region. In subsequent developments, there are many Flores people who were studying at IKIP Muhammadiyah Maumere, the only Islamic high education institution in Sikka Regency. Eighty percent of IKIP Muhammadiyah Maumere students are Christians. They carry out studies and lectures in full tolerance. Lecturers of IKIP Muhammadiyah Maumere also consist of Christians who can carry out lecture activities as usual. On the other hand, various traditional Christian ceremonies, such as Christmas celebrations, funeral and other worship, which invite Muslims to come as part of mutual respect, the Muslims of Sikka Regency would attend. The host usually prepared a special menu for Muslims, which are cooked by Muslims and cooked at a Muslim home as ER, 38 years old (2019) informant said as follows:

“...yes, I am from Javanese descent, I was born here, I went to a Catholic elementary school, but in the afternoon I study the Koran at the mosque near my house. When in school we follow the school rules. The schools also respect us Muslims, they weren't forcing us to follow all rituals, except for knowledge. Besides, there is a tradition of Sambut Baru, it is for the Catholics here and this is a tradition with a big party. We Muslims came and prepared a special banquet for Muslims. So tolerance in this regency is safeguarded since childhood”.

Furthermore, NN, 62 years old (2019) a third generation Bugis woman, explained the following:

“When I went to school in Maumere, I lived in a Catholic dormitory with friends who were also Catholic. I am both Muslim with another friend. During the month of Ramadan, the dorm prepared us a place for tarawih prayers and was not allowed to go to the mosque because they were far and quiet. To break the fast and eat sahur, even though only the two of us are fasting, the dorm still prepared our meal. The food prepared for us is also halal food for us. So we have been with non-Muslims for a long time and there are no problems.”

These two interactions make a strong foundation for the form of multiculturalism behavior have become a profound attitude for people who live amid differences. How to respond to different "others" well is a necessary attitude because it emphasizes more on a life of peace and harmony for others. The concept of constructive multiculturalism as initiated by Chang (2014) can be applied in Sikka Regency. The first concept is the implementation of multicultural values based on traditional values, namely the life that upholds the spirit of mutual cooperation. Mutual cooperation is part of the value of local wisdom in all ethnic groups in this Sikka Regency (Krowe, Lio, Tana Ai, Palue and Tidung). Mutual cooperation is reflected in the lives of these five ethnic groups, for example in building traditional houses in Sikka Krowe called Lepo. In addition, there are mutual cooperation to build traditional places of worship called mahe, carry out traditional ceremonies, open new farm or cultivate land that is done by ethnic Tana Ai, remind of the Pije period for the Palue ethnic, which is the prohibition period to cultivate the land, and also mutual cooperation to conduct sea ceremonies for Tidung people and so on.

CONCLUSION

Five ethnic groups in Sikka Regency become an important element of the region and become the identity of Sikka Regency. The five ethnic groups have unequal identities, but traditional values, local wisdom or their local knowledge are the basis of customary ties that reinforce differences into power to live in peace and harmony towards happiness in the world and the hereafter. The difference as something that was predestined has a strong binding in the conscience of their lives to become brothers to build prosperous Sikka Regency. The attitude of multiculturalism is firmly planted through customary agreements which are held in high respect by each other. Thus, customs with good values in them have been binding in the differences towards the life of peaceful and prosperous Sikka Regency.

This research is very interesting in the effort of elaborating on the values of local wisdom that are spread across various ethnicities in Indonesia, including in Sikka Regency, to instill multicultural values early on. This research has a lack of understanding of local languages because each ethnicity has different languages. Besides, the scarcity of written sources is another obstacle in this study. Moreover, the existence of informants prioritizes oral tradition rather than writing tradition. As a result, once the main informant dies, it is difficult to find local values in ethnic diversity in Sikka district. Hopefully, this research will become a written source that can be utilized by many stakeholders who interested in exploring ethnic and multicultural studies.

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