

The Role of *Bissu* and Their Existence in Modern Bugis Society of South Sulawesi

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ABSTRACT

A custom known as the mabissu tradition existed in the Bugis Bone kingdom prior to the influence of Islam. According to the ancient Bugis tradition, the word "bissu" itself is derived from the word "bessi" or "mabesi," which denotes a creature that is holy and pure. Male bissu or transvestites exist in addition to female bissu. In the past, Bissu held a prominent place in Bugis culture, were held in great regard, and served as the spokesperson for the king and his subjects. Furthermore, without bissu, the Bugis kingdom's ceremonial activities would not function. The bissu are also believed to be intermediaries to convey revelations from God to be delivered to the world. This is possible since they have the ability to master the Torilangi language (Language from the sky). Torilangi language is a language that can only be known by them and the gods. With this privilege, the existence of bissu is still maintained among the Bugis

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people to this day. However, in the current era of modernization, many bissu have switched professions to become indoboting (bridal make-up artists) and wedding organizers in order to meet their living needs. Because of this profession, many bissu experience social discrimination carried out by people who know very little about bissu.

Keywords: *Bissu, Indoboting, Gender, Bugis.*

INTRODUCTION

South Sulawesi is an area rich in customs and culture. It is home to a number of ethnic groups, including the Makassar, Mandar, Toraja, and Bugis tribe is by far the most prevalent. In Bugis tribe, there is a traditional art form that is quite thick among the Bugis people called *Mabissu*. The ancient Bugis priest, known to the Bugis tribe as *bissu* (a male who assumes the role of a woman) in pre-Islamic times, is well-known. The Bugis tribe's ancient records from several centuries ago, which describe the entrance of the main characters who appeared out of the sky, undoubtedly disclose this (Latief, 2004: 2).

Bissu has remained true to its role as the guardian of the Bugis tribe's traditional values and preservation in South Sulawesi to this day. Bissu enjoyed numerous benefits and contributed significantly to the development of the Bugis kingdom prior to the arrival of Islam. However, there were numerous challenges to Bissu's existence in the Bugis kingdom. One of these was the 1950 DI/TI rebellion, which was led by Kahar Muzakar and involved his attempt to eradicate Bissu, commonly

referred to as the Toba operation (repentance operation) (Tangke, 2007: 21). The busiest year for this operation was 1966. Since they believed that bissu practices were polytheistic and against to Muslim law and beliefs, all of the bissu equipment was drowned to the bottom of the sea. As a result, every aspect of Bissu worship or ceremony was totally eliminated.

Due to their shared identity in the perspective of the Bugis population, which is primarily Muslim, bissu has become extremely popular among them despite the advancement of the era. Since they look like women and do not want to recognize their male nature, the community views Bissu as a group of people who do not accept the *sunnatullah*. Additionally, it is viewed as going against their inclination to believe in the *arajang mustika*, who possesses supernatural abilities inherited from their forefathers. The Bissu actually claim that they perform the divinely prescribed rite, but in a different manner.

METHODOLOGY

In order to comprehend how these dances and spiritual practices endure and adapt in a constantly changing social and cultural context, research on the function of Bissu and its existence in contemporary Bugis society in South Sulawesi will need to use a comprehensive qualitative approach. As a representation of the merging of religious and cultural elements, bissu is significant to Bugis culture. The purpose of this study is to investigate the presence, function, and difficulties encountered by Bissu in Bugis society, which is becoming more and more impacted by modernization.

Researchers can delve deeper into the meaning, values, and social contexts found in Bissu practices in Bugis community according to this study's qualitative methodology. Additionally, dynamic social phenomena—like how Bissu customs change or adapt to the times—will be the focus of this method.

In order to characterize and elucidate the function of Bissu in contemporary Bugis society, qualitative descriptive study is the methodology utilized. This study will look at two aspects: (1) how Bissu functions in Bugis society's social and spiritual life, and (2) how

Bissu practices have changed or adapted to modern life. (3) The connection between Bissu and contemporary ideals like urbanization, globalization, and modifications to Bugis religious and traditional systems.

The primary goals of this research are to: (1) Determine the function of Bissu in contemporary Bugis society, and (2) Gain insight into how Bissu's existence is preserved or altered within a society that is becoming more and more impacted by modernization. (3) Examine how Bissu and religion relate to one another, particularly in light of Islam's dominance in South Sulawesi; (4) Review the opportunities and difficulties that Bissu practices encounter in the dynamic social and cultural landscape.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Sigeri kingdom in Pangkajene Regency and the BOSOWA kingdom (Bone, Soppeng, Wajo) are two of the major kingdoms that are part of the Bugis ethnic group. The term "bissu," which is derived from the word "bessi" or mabesi, which implies a creature that is clean, holy, and not dirty, as well as a creature that does not have breasts or menstruate, has a long history in the Bugis kingdom. In addition to female bissu, male bissu or transvestites also exist in the old Bugis tradition. Additionally, there are female bissu, who become to bissu when they reach menopause. As the spokesperson for the monarch and his people, bissu held a prominent place in Bugis culture and were held in the highest regard. Without bissu, the Bugis kingdom's ritual rites would not function. Additionally, Bissu are thought to act as go-betweens for God's disclosures to the earth. This is made possible by Bissu's unique capacity to learn Torilangi, also known as the language of the sky, which only they and the gods can understand. Because of this capability, Bissu's presence among the Bugis people has persisted to this day (Makkulawu, 2008: 44).

Makundrai (female), orowane (male), calabai (male resembling female), calalai (female resembling male), and bissu (a blend of all genders) are the five genders recognized in Bugis customs and culture. Regarding gender differences in general, we are all well aware of and appreciate the importance of upholding fundamental human rights, such as refraining from sexual harassment and gender discrimination, which are customs that have been passed down through the generations of the Bugis tribe.

There are five genders that are still recognized in the Bugis tribe's old culture. Orawane (male), the Bugis tribe's name for male, is one of the five genders. Like men in general, orowane has a tough and masculine attitude. When a guy gets married, he is seen as having complete responsibility for working and providing for his family. Accordingly, women in the Bugis tribe are referred to as makkunrai, or females, and they hold a significant status in their society. Because women of the Bugis tribe are the family's pride, this is symbolized by the custom of dowry money, whereby men will propose to Bugis women using dowry money or dowry dependent on the woman's social standing. In addition,

men who are born with female-like behaviors are referred to as calabai (men who behave like women). The Bugis, however, continue to view them as men who differ from other men solely in their disposition and character. They do not see themselves as women in this Calabai tribe either; they are simply perceived as such by the community. One distinctive feature of Calabai is that, according to Bugis tribal wedding customs, they are trusted by the Bugis community as the bride's mother. Therefore, the opposite of calabai is calalai, which refers to women who are born acting like men in their day-to-day interactions. The Bugis tribe still views them as women, nevertheless, and believes that their attitudes and traits set them apart from other women. Additionally, the Calalai do not view themselves as men in general. The final gender is bissu, which is a mix or combination of all the aforementioned genders. According to the ancient Bugis tribe, bissu is a mix of all the genders, and in their day-to-day lives, bissu have both feminine or weak and graceful traits and characters like women in

general and masculine traits and characters like men in general. Since they consistently follow the concept, which is the old Bugis tribe's ideology, this bissu is unique in that he has no lust for either women or men. According to the Bugis tribe's philosophy, a person who possesses both feminine and masculine traits that are integrated inside them and who lives a fair, balanced life without any dominance is holy, faultless, and sinless. But even in this day of modernization, a lot of individuals, including educators, are still unaware of the existence of bissu and their social role. Naturally, this is a problem that may affect the survival of bissu, whose numbers are getting smaller and smaller until they may eventually go extinct. Since it is the identity of the Bugis tribe in South Sulawesi and has a distinctive and unique cultural thickness that other cultures lack, this Bissu culture is actually one that needs to be preserved and maintained going forward. According to the Bugis tradition, *waria*, also known as calabai, always instill in themselves the qualities of bissu, or holy and fitri. Bissu, according to the leader of the South Sulawesi pabbantengai, is a waria derived from the word bismillah.

Additionally, he claimed that Bissu is the king's advisor, the Lagaligo culture's heir, and the custodian of the Bugis kingdom's historic heirlooms (Sumange, 2001: 108).

The Bugis people hold bissu in high esteem due to their magical abilities and roles in ancient ceremonies. Acquiring the title of bissu is more challenging than anticipated, as certain requirements and prohibitions must be fulfilled to attain this status. For instance, prior to being inaugurated as a bissu, one must refrain from donning unsuitable attire, exhibit no flirting behavior, and maintain a life devoid of any involvement in sexual prostitution. Initially, contemporary Bugis individuals often struggle to differentiate between bissu and calabai. This is due to the similarities in character, attire, and cosmetics between bissu and calabai. Upon closer examination, substantial distinctions emerge between the two; bissu face specific criteria and bans, including a lifelong ban on marriage, but calabai are permitted to marry. For a calabai to attain the status of a bissu, he must undergo ordination, referred to as the irebba tradition

(Lathief, 2004:39). In contemporary society, bissu remain essential as a supplement to traditional activities and sacred ceremonies, such as the descent into rice fields and the inaugural opening of rice fields. The Bugis people hold that bissu can bestow blessings and act as intermediaries between heaven and earth, transmitting revelations from the terrestrial realm to the creator to ensure fertility and protection throughout the gardening process till harvest. During the rice field ceremony, the bissu will conduct a ritual prior to the planting of the initial rice, after which the landowner will plant the first rice, followed by subsequent planting till completion. Subsequently, the community convenes to share a meal as a manifestation of appreciation for the creator. This ritual continues to be practiced in rural regions, particularly those abundant in agriculture. The mabissu tradition is practiced not only in rural areas but also in urban settings, where bissu are utilized in numerous wedding rituals, purifying of heirlooms, and similar ceremonies. The predominant tradition in metropolitan locales is the washing of heirlooms, sometimes accompanied by a significant event including diverse

cultural leaders from many regions to observe the washing of heirlooms or arajang conducted by the bissu, which serves as a principal component of the ritual. The ritual of washing antiques from the Bugis kingdom continues to be observed and remains an annual event aimed at preserving the customs and culture of the Bugis tribe. Within the Bugis community, the bissu serves a crucial role as an adjunct to various activities, including rituals and traditional wedding ceremonies. The role of bissu in marriage within the Bugis community is:

1. Tradisi *Mabissu* Dalam Prosesi Penjemputan Pengantin

The bissu hold a significant significance in the wedding ceremony of the Bugis tribe. Prior to executing the *ijab qabul*, the bissu conducts a purification rite for the bride and husband to seek blessings from the Creator. This custom is typically referred to as *ma'dewata*. Subsequent to the *ma'dewata* procession, the bissu engage in a dance offering procession known as the *mabissu* custom, during which they sit around the arajang, reciting prayers of worship and praise to the deities. The procession is directly

led by *puang lolo*, the head of the bissu in the Bugis tribe. Following the bissu's chanting of prayers and praises to the gods, they form a circle around the arajang while dancing to traditional Bugis music, characterized by the sounds of drums, the *puik-puik* (a typical Bugis wind instrument), and a resonant gong (*manyambeang*, 1983: 101).



Picture 1. *Bissu - Picking Up the Bride*
(Documentation by Laode Rahmat 11
September 2024)

Mabissu is a dance executed by bissu during specific ceremonial ceremonies, such as rice field ceremonies, weddings, the washing of heirlooms, or other customs. During the ancient Bugis period, the *mabissu* dance served a religious purpose, as bissu were esteemed priests or spiritual leaders under conventional doctrines of the Bugis kingdom (Anwar, 2007:24). The *mabissu* dance comprises two components: *serelalosu* and *manggiririk*. *Serelalosu* is a dance movement characterized by the

dancer's swaying while doing *lalosu*. *Maggiri* is a *bissu* dancer who, adorned with a *keris*, pierces his body as an act of submission to the creator, symbolizing the science of immunity. Nonetheless, the execution of the *magiri* custom must be conducted with precision, as only *bissu* are permitted to partake. The *bissu* conduct their rituals with reverence, initiating a sacred bathing ceremony, dispersing flowers, honouring their ancestors, and seeking permission from their forebears.

2. *Bissu* in the Bridal Blessing Ritual

In the Bugis tribal wedding procession, following the couple's *qabul* and before to their entrance to the thrones accompanied by *mabissu* dances, the bride and groom first participate in a blessing parade conducted by *bissu*. The Bugis community has the belief that the bride and husband will form a family shielded from danger (*balla*) and granted eternal life, perpetually blessed by the creator. Upon completing the blessing procession, the bride and groom depart the room to the wedding throne to

commemorate their joy alongside family and relatives, while also greeting the guests awaiting their arrival.



Figure 2. *Bissu* - When preparing ritual equipment offerings (Documentation by Laode Rahmat 11 September 2024)

Bissu will perpetually fulfill their primary role of safeguarding *arajang* (holy heirlooms of the Bugis realm), which will be protected by transvestites (*calabai*). *Calabai* are individuals created by God in the guise of men who adopt feminine behaviors in their daily lives. According to Eastern perspectives, humans possess both virtuous and vice-laden traits, encompassing morality, customs, and character (Sumange, 2007:108).

3. The Role of Bissu in Bugis Community Traditions

a. *Function of Bissu in Bugis Society in the Past Days*

In the ancient Bugis kingdom, bissu served two distinct functions in both historical and contemporary contexts. Historically, bissu served as a prerequisite for conducting rituals of the ancient Bugis royal family, which involved the purification of heirlooms from the ancient Bugis tribes, including the BOSOWA Kingdom (Bone, Soppeng, Wajo), the Sigeri Kingdom, and other kingdoms. Furthermore, the bissu participated in the benediction of the bride and groom, who, before to the *ijab qabul*, engaged in a ritual of holy water sprinkling conducted by the bissu. The bissu served as *sandro* or shamans in the traditional medicine of the ancient Bugis tribe, conducting healing ceremonies with offerings and treating the ill until their recovery. The bissu would request rice to be sent, which would be ceremonially offered and subsequently returned to the patient or ill individual for cooking and consumption at home. The ancient Bugis thought that rice

ceremonially offered by the bissu, if ingested, would amalgamate with the flesh and bones until their souls and bodies were fully restored. In the contemporary day, bissu have integrated with the mainstream populace. This is due to the fact that bissu no longer reside in the palace of the ancient Bugis tribe. Nonetheless, the presence of bissu remains essential for the Bugis tribe during wedding ceremonies and regional rituals.

b. *Function of Bissu in Bugis Society in the Recent Days*

1) As Indo' Botting (Bridal Make-up Artist)

In the modern age, the Bugis bissu serve not only as leaders of ancient ritual rites but also as bridal makeup artists. This is due to the fact that numerous bissu have founded beauty salons today. The bissu utilize their abilities to generate income to satisfy their need.

Relying just on the outcomes of traditional ceremonies is insufficient due to the unpredictability of their scheduling.

The bissu are employed to manage home décor, culinary services, and bridal attire, in addition to renting ornaments for the bride, groom, and their entourage. The bissu typically

conduct traditional ritual ceremonies of the Bugis tribe and serve as *indo boting*. Consequently, it serves as the primary source of sustenance for *calabai*, rendering their life predominantly self-sufficient.

In the contemporary age of modernization, *bissu* fulfill their daily requirements by working as bridal makeup artists, providing wedding decorations, catering at weddings, or assisting with the attire of the bride and groom. Throughout this endeavor, *bissu* remain cognizant of their primary responsibility, which is to conduct the traditional ritual rites of the Bugis tribe. Currently, the majority of individuals employ the services of *bissu* for preparing snacks or substantial meals at weddings. Furthermore, they are utilized to organize the attire of the bride and groom before to their departure to the *ijab qobul* venue. Besides organizing costumes, they may also facilitate *udat* rites or rituals for cleansing relics from the ancient Bugis kingdom. They pursue this career due to the current threat to the existence of *bissu*, prompting many to seek income as *indo*

'botting (bridal make-up artists).

2) The function of *Bissu* as *Sanro* (shaman)

In present Bugis society, numerous individuals continue to seek the services of *sanro* (shamans), whom they think possess the ability to heal various ailments, including headaches, gout, cancer, witchcraft, and other illnesses. Besides treating ailments, they are also employed to identify auspicious days and simultaneously avert calamities. The Bugis people present a reward of rice in varying quantities to a *sanro* or shaman when seeking treatment, contingent upon the number of family members requiring healing. This rice is offered to the *bissu*, accompanied by a ritual involving the burning of candles and spices as part of the healing process. Subsequent to executing the rite, the *bissu* retrieves holy water from an ancient jar adjacent to the king's bed and administers it to the patient, as the holy water is thought to possess the capacity to heal many ailments.



Figure 3. *bissu* When performing traditional rituals (Documentation by Laode Rahmat, September 11, 2024).

In the present Bugis kings, each palace is protected by *bissu*, as exemplified in Soppeng Regency, where the kingdom resides in Bola Ridie (yellow house) within Lalabata District. The *bissu* have been employed to safeguard and cleanse the artifacts of the Soppeng kingdom for the past 20 years. The *bissu* store these heirlooms in a designated location. The location serves as a site for offerings within the Soppeng royal palace. Occasionally, these *bissu* conduct specific rituals to cleanse these artifacts. They regard these objects with maternal affection. They assign names to each of these relics. This practice is based on the belief that ancestor spirits reside within these treasures, capable of incarnating and

possessing the souls of their owners during their use (Jushar, Devi. 2015: 37). According to the customs of the Bugis people, individuals must don sarongs prior to entering the designated bola ridie room. Furthermore, entry into the salassae palace area prohibits the wearing of yellow and green attire, as these colors symbolize the prestige of the Bugis tribe and are reserved for those of noble lineage, excluding subordinates or individuals of the lower caste who are not royal descendants. This is performed to honor the ancestors of the former Bugis tribe. Furthermore, the Bugis individuals are prohibited from donning traditional Bugis batik sarongs upon visiting the Soppeng kingdom. This is performed to honor the ancestors (To Manurung) who have bequeathed their heirlooms.

Subsequently, Puang Matoa will arrange offerings to conduct the ritual prior to the guests articulating the intent of their visit. The ritual is conducted to seek permission from the ancestral spirits (To Manurung) and to show reverence towards them. The items presented at the offering site consist of spices, young coconut, incense, one bunch of bananas, black and white sticky rice, and holy water

(Desantara. Makkaluwu. 2008: 42). Given the diverse duties and actions of the bissu outlined above, they are presently encountering numerous internal controversies. A significant number of bissu are presently facing social discrimination. Many contemporary Bugis individuals possess limited awareness of the presence of bissu within the Bugis community. This discrimination may be perpetrated by children, adults, and occasionally parents, who are expected to serve as positive role models but can, at times, engage in discriminatory behavior themselves. Bissu are frequently subjected to teasing, bullying, and at times, experience physical or psychological assault. This has undoubtedly diminished the bissu population, and if it persists, the survival of bissu may no longer be feasible, potentially leading to extinction. The causes threatening the existence of bissu in contemporary Bugis society, concerning the dimensions of Feminism and Masculinity, are:

a. Dimensions of Feminism

This dimension pertains to a

more elegant and soft physique. The public perception of the bodily phenomena in this dimension is sometimes characterized as transvetisme or as a male exhibiting feminine trait, particularly in terms of physical appearance, attire, behavior, and daily demeanor. This dimension is susceptible to peripheral social acts that conflict with religious beliefs, rendering it taboo concerning the male body, which leads to a loss of social function. From this feminist perspective, bissu exhibit a delicate and graceful bodily demeanor. Consequently, many contemporary individuals perceive bissu as transvestites or effeminate men who engage in street solicitation, leading to significant mental and physical discrimination against them. Children frequently ridicule them by using derogatory terms, and numerous individuals also deride and admonish them under the guise of religious justification, often employing harsh and inhumane rhetoric, despite the fact that they are human beings deserving of gentle and humane counsel. This discrimination is undoubtedly attributable to religious influence,

which leads many individuals to assert that God created just one pair of men and women to exist as spouses. This idea leads many individuals to deride the bissu severely. They are frequently ostracized by organizations with limited understanding of bissu. Indeed, from the perspective of humanity, we are inherently social beings who must consistently engage with one another, promote tolerance, and coexist together.

b. Dimensi Maskulinitas

This dimension is not prominently seen in the bissu's physique, as it is regarded as an intermediary gender, neither masculine nor female. Nevertheless, to the untrained observer, this dimension is not very prominent, leading some individuals to perceive bissu not as sacred figures but rather as mere incarnations or manifestations of ordinary transvestites who no longer engage functionally in societal life.

In this dimension, it will not be apparent in males, as they

possess a masculine aspect; but, the transformations in bissu, particularly in calalai (women who resemble men), will be distinctly observable. This is due to the fact that women typically exhibit feminine attributes; nevertheless, in this instance, the woman displays masculine characteristics. Nevertheless, the occurrence in contemporary Bugis society pertaining to this tragedy garners minimal notice and does not elicit significant social discrimination.

The primary offenders are women, as they often experience less physical abuse than men due to their inherently kind nature. Instances of physical violence are infrequent in this dimension, particularly following the introduction of religious influences within the Bugis tribe. Many masculine individuals, including women, don the hijab, thereby concealing and diminishing their masculine traits to ensure their acceptance within the Bugis community, thus safeguarding against discrimination and preserving their security. In the contemporary age of modernization, numerous individuals are often unfamiliar with their local cultural

traditions, such as the bissu tradition among the next generation in the Bugis region, which significantly impacts the current status of bissu.

c. The Influence of Modern Bugis Society on Bissu

During its development, the mabissu tradition started to diminish within the Bugis community. This is attributable to the extensive cultural acculturation and the numerous inter-tribal marriages, resulting in an uneven manifestation of the Bugis tribe's cultural depth, particularly with the mabissu heritage. This mabissu culture is preserved only in some locations that remain dense. The scarcity of the mabissu culture significantly affects the mabissu dancers (men performing female roles), who previously concentrated on the mabissu ritual dance but have now transitioned to careers as bridal makeup artists, decorators, and similar professions. This influences the community's perception of bissu, equating their role with that of transvestites who engage in self-commercialization. Furthermore, the community's or the contemporary millennial generation's ignorance about the

existence of bissu inside the Bugis tribe exacerbates the controversy around bissu's existence in the Bugis tribe. The numerous bissu dancers face discrimination when executing the mabissu ritual during traditional ceremonies. During a cultural procession, numerous youths and children implicitly discriminate by shouting at street transvestites, which significantly impacts their mental well-being. They question why they are likened to transvestites who engage in street prostitution when, in reality, they merely uphold and embody the traditional customs and culture of South Sulawesi, including the mabissu heritage. Nonetheless, despite facing numerous forms of social prejudice from contemporary millennial society, the mabissu dancers persist in upholding this mabissu legacy. They assert that the sanctity and purity of their ancestral land, as upheld in the Bugis tradition through generations, must be preserved; if not by us, then by whom? Consequently, the bissu dancers perpetuate regeneration to ensure the continuity and sustainability of the mabissu tradition within the Bugis community. The presence of bissu in South Sulawesi is currently undergoing significant transformations, largely

attributable to the proliferation of traditions that have become excessive, resulting in the dilution of the original elements of mabissu dances. Consequently, the head of bissu in Pangakjne district (bissu eka) consistently organizes events or performances in Soppeng district, showcasing this dance in accordance with its traditional order and authenticity. This is intended to inform the community that this is the authentic presentation of the mabissu dance and to introduce the existence of the bissu gender in South Sulawesi. Undoubtedly, it is a significant difficulty for bissu dancers to preserve and disseminate this traditional dance uniformly throughout South Sulawesi, particularly in urban regions that are markedly modern, beyond just the Pangkep region. They are largely unacquainted with the mabissu tradition, particularly youngsters and the millennial generation, who remain distant from familiarity with this custom. The mabissu custom is predominantly showcased at cultural events in Makassar, South Sulawesi; yet, many young individuals remain unaware of this bissu culture.



Figure 4. Bissu when performing the ritual of accompanying the traditional leader (Documentation by Laode Rahmat, September 11, 2024)

CONCLUSION

Bissu continues to serve as the custodian of the preservation and cultural values of the Bugis people in South Sulawesi. The bissu in the Bugis tribe's beliefs are portrayed as semi-divine beings with supernatural powers, serving as intermediaries for celestial revelations and advisors to the king. They ascertain auspicious and inauspicious days to determine the appropriate timing for warfare, thereby ensuring the security of the Bugis kingdom. In contemporary society, bissu serve not only as conductors of traditional Bugis rituals but also as bridal makeup artists who operate beauty salons. Bissu also serve as Sanro or shamans to heal

many critical and minor ailments, as well as to address witchcraft. The bissu employ their abilities to sustain themselves and fulfill their essential needs. Essentially, every individual embodies diverse gender identities that warrant acceptance, exemplified by the bissu in South Sulawesi, whose historical significance as esteemed advisors to the king in the post-modern era contrasts sharply with contemporary urban social perceptions that regard them as disreputable transvestites and harbingers of misfortune, often subjecting them to mental and physical abuse. Nonetheless, numerous individuals continue to honor the bissu, particularly in rural regions, who persist in maintaining this custom. Consequently, we, as adherents of Bhineka Tunggal Ika, must consistently cultivate an attitude of respect for our fellow human beings for the collective benefit.

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