ABSTRACT
Tha'buthaaan art in Arjasa District, Jember, East Java, is one of the oldest arts that still exists today. This art has high cultural and historical value and reflects the identity of the local community. This research aims to understand the existence of tha'buthaaan art in Arjasa District from an anthropological perspective. The method used is qualitative with an anthropological approach, collecting information through interviews, observations, and literature studies. The results of the research prove that this tha'buthaaan has social, cultural, and religious functions. The existence of tha'buthaaan art is faced with various challenges, which also require efforts from various parties, not just artists. These efforts must be made to maintain this art. By understanding the extent of this art from an anthropological perspective, it is hoped that it can help in conservation efforts and promote the significance of traditional arts in the modern era.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Submitted 02/06/2024
Revised 12/06/2024
Accepted 25/06/2024
Published 20/07/2024

KEYWORDS
Tha'buthaaan art; Arjasa District; cultural preservation; anthropological study; social functions.

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.34007/warisan.v5i1.2256

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a very rich country, not only in biodiversity, but also in culture that is spread in almost every region (Hasyim, 2018; Retnowati, 2018). Each area has unique cultural characteristics (Latifah et al., 2021). Culture can be understood as comprising knowledge, beliefs, customs, local arts, and practices conducted by people in society (Mahdayeni et al., 2019). According to Koentjaraningrat, there are seven cultural components: religious or belief systems, kinship or social organization systems, knowledge systems, language or dialects, arts, livelihoods, and technology or equipment systems (Koentjaraningrat, 2016). However, with the advancement of time and technology, these cultures are losing their supporters and becoming marginalized.

One such threatened culture is traditional art. According to Koentjaraningrat (2016), art is something that lives and develops with the growth of aesthetic or beauty senses in every human heart from time to time. Art can only be assessed through the sense or heart (Koentjaraningrat, 2016). Art must be preserved because it is the identity, wealth, and characteristic of a region (Dibia, 2006). Art can also become a habit or the result of a community’s ideas, creating culture. All elements of society must help preserve it, not just by passing it down but also with the help of various elements to maintain its sustainability (Koentjaraningrat, 2000).

One region known for its traditional arts is East Java Province. This province is known for its rich social and cultural life. One of the districts with diverse local arts is Jember Regency. This district is known for various local arts such as lahibako dance, can-macanan, kadhuks tota’an, merpati ludruk, patrol mocoaan lontar, and tha'buthaaan art from Arjasa District. These arts are maintained by several studios serving as preservation platforms to prevent their disappearance. One local art still existing today is tha'buthaaan from Arjasa District, which has become a characteristic and icon of the district and its surroundings.

Arjasa District, one of the 31 districts in Jember Regency, was designated as a tourist cultural village in 2023. This district is known for its megalithic relics and numerous ancient sites. Its geographical location below the Hyang Argopuro mountains makes Arjasa District rich in highlands, hills, and agrarian products. Additionally, this district is famous for its local art, tha'buthaaan (Putri et al., 2020).
At first glance, this art resembles the ondel-ondel in Jakarta Province, but it has significant differences. From an anthropological perspective, the differences range from philosophical meanings to the oral history behind it. The oral history of the origin of tha'buthaan art cannot be separated from the village cleansing rituals performed monthly. According to community stories, this art originated in Arjasa District, specifically in a village named Kamal.

At that time, one of the villages in Arjasa District, Kamal Village, faced a food crisis or famine because their crops, such as rice and corn, were attacked by pests, resulting in crop failure. They also experienced difficulties due to a prolonged famine. Tha'buthaan art emerged as a form of the community’s belief and confidence at that time as a means to repel misfortune or an effort to obtain abundant harvests. The tha'buthaan tradition is mandatory at every village cleansing ritual or kadisah event held every second major harvest (Ini Fakta Menarik, Mengenai Kesenian Tabutaan Di Jember, Mirip Ondel-Ondel?, 2023).

One relevant study discussing tha'buthaan art is by Nia Afkarinatul Husna. This research outlines how tha'buthaan art has existed from 1980 to 2022, surviving as an art form and cultural wealth and the innovation and creativity of the Arjasa community, becoming an intangible cultural tourism opportunity. This study also explains efforts to preserve tha'buthaan art, one of which is through POKDARWIS in Arjasa District, which serves as a platform to help preserve this art (Husna, 2023).

Tha'buthaan art is unique to be studied from the perspective of anthropology encompassing the seven cultural elements. Additionally, a study by Nua et al. (2023) explores the changes and developments in tha'buthaan art during that period. They also investigate the traditional elements within it and the process of making and pre-event activities that have evolved from 2006 to 2020 (Nua et al., 2023).

Over time, tha'buthaan art is no longer just held during village cleansing events but also in various events to entertain the community, such as Independence Day celebrations, weddings, circumcisions, and others. When performed to entertain the community, tha'buthaan art does not use many attributes or equipment, unlike during the kadisah or village cleansing events, which use many preparations and offerings before the event begins. The philosophical meaning of tha'buthaan art is depicted through dolls with scary faces, some with fangs, and others resembling barong or Balinese leak. This art symbolizes the repelling of negative elements, with tha'buthaan deriving from the Javanese word "butha" or "butho," meaning giant (Ini Fakta Menarik, Mengenai Kesenian Tabutaan Di Jember, Mirip Ondel-Ondel?, 2023).

This research discusses the existence of local art in Jember Regency, particularly Arjasa District, which has this unique local art, tha'buthaan. Another aim of this research is to study the uniqueness of tha'buthaan art from an anthropological perspective. The limited research on tha'buthaan art interests the authors to write an article discussing this art.

**METHOD**

This research is a scientific process conducted following established methods and procedures. This narrative presents a qualitative description of the existence of local culture in Arjasa District, Jember Regency, namely tha'buthaan art (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Through an anthropological approach encompassing the seven cultural elements according to Koentjaraningrat, this study dissects tha'buthaan art to discover its uniqueness, compare it with ondel-ondel based on the seven cultural elements, and determine whether tha'buthaan art can be categorized as a culture that fulfills all these elements (Koentjaraningrat, 1980).

This study is classified as qualitative research with an anthropological approach based on the seven cultural elements (Ratna, 2010). This approach is used to understand the cultural elements in the local art of Arjasa District, tha'buthaan (Suyanto & Sutinah, 2005). To gather information and data, the authors interacted and directly observed the art performers, namely the owner of the tha'buthaan art studio in Calok Hamlet, Arjasa District, Mr. Misbari, 62 years old. This approach aims to obtain a detailed description and analysis of culture based on field data and understand how the community performs this art, the processes or stages, historical background, and how this culture is used in daily life (Miles et al., 2014 Miles).

Data sources on tha'buthaan art include written and unwritten sources. Written sources were obtained from previous relevant research journals and news from official websites. The authors also conducted interviews with tha'buthaan art performers in Calok Hamlet, Arjasa District, namely Mr. Misbari, the owner of Sanggar Sinar Baru. This
interview serves as an unwritten document. The selected informants met the criteria of being studio owners and family members of studio owners. Other sources include photos of activities, interviews, and tha'buthaan art photos at Sanggar Sinar Baru.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Background of Tha'buthaan Art in Arjasa District

Geographical Location of Arjasa District

Arjasa District is one of the 31 districts in Jember Regency, known for its fertile soil due to volcanic soil characteristics. Many residents work as farmers, cultivating rice fields, while others work on plantations. Arjasa District covers an area of 401 km² and borders Jelbuk and Patrang Districts to the north, Sukorambi District to the west, Pakusari District to the east and south, and Jember city to the north. The district is about 9 km from Jember's city center.

Arjasa District comprises six villages: Kamal, Biting, Candijati, Arjasa, Kemuning Lor, and Darsono. This district has significant agrarian potential, especially in agriculture, including rice fields, non-rice fields such as goat pens, tegalan, gardens, and other lands like houses and buildings. Due to its agrarian potential, Arjasa District is considered a rice granary supporting Jember Regency's national food security. Besides producing rice and secondary crops, Arjasa District is also known for its fruit production due to the many highlands and hills, making the air temperature relatively cool.

Geographically, Arjasa District is located below the slopes of the Hyang Argopuro Mountains. This geographical location has led to the discovery of many megalithic or prehistoric sites in the area, such as kenong stones, sarcophagi, and terraced altars. These findings serve as educational grounds for history researchers and tourist destinations.

Social and Cultural Conditions of Arjasa District Community

The majority of Arjasa District's population is Muslim. The main occupation of the residents is farming, either as landowners or farm laborers. Other prominent professions are in the service and industrial sectors. The commonly used languages are Madurese and partially Javanese, reflecting the local cultural terminology derived from Madurese (Arrovia, 2021).

Arjasa District has unique art that has become the area's icon, tha'buthaan art. This traditional art remains preserved and exists today, especially in traditional events such as village cleansing or kadisah in Madurese, routinely conducted after the second major harvest. The local community believes tha'buthaan art serves as a repellent for bad luck and a request for abundant harvests. Additionally, this art is performed to ask for rain during the dry season (Nua et al., 2023).

Tha'buthaan art is known for the creativity of the Arjasa community in preserving their culture. Preservation efforts are made by packaging this culture to be accepted by the community through studios gathered in POKDARWIS (Tourism Awareness Group). One well-known studio is Sanggar Tha'buthaan Sinar Baru owned by Mr. Misbari. Preservation efforts also involve the younger generation, ensuring this art form's continuity. The high participation of the community, including the youth, in tha'buthaan art demonstrates a high appreciation for local art. The productive age group acts as the main drivers and supporters of this art form's continuity. POKDARWIS also helps preserve tha'buthaan art (Putri et al., 2020).

The origin of tha'buthaan art cannot be separated from the fertile conditions of Arjasa District, where many residents work as farmers. This art is also related to oral history, mentioning that Kamal Village experienced a six-year famine due to crop failures. The community survived by eating tubers like taro. During that time, a couple danced with their hands tied to their waists, accompanied by the sound of a pounding mortar, which then became a ritual of parading tha'buthaan around the village as a repellent for bad luck. This art uses male and female dolls with scary faces made of wood and bamboo.

Initially, tha'buthaan art was a mandatory part of village cleansing or kadisah events after the second major harvest. A village thanksgiving was held the day before, with offerings of red and white porridge and agricultural products. The next day, the event began with releasing pigeons as a symbolic gesture and opening with salawat prayers (interview with Misbari, May 23, 2024). Tha'buthaan art was designated as an Intangible Heritage from Jember Regency, officially recorded on the website warisanbudaya.kemdikbud.go.id in 2021 with registration number 202101503 in the
performing arts domain, originating from East Java Province. This achievement is an essential step in preserving tha'buthaan art in Arjasa District to prevent its extinction.

Seven Cultural Elements Perspective on Tha'buthaan Art

The Tha'buthaan art superficially resembles the Ondel-Ondel of Betawi from Jakarta, but in fact, these two art forms exhibit significant differences when viewed from the perspective of the seven elements of culture. In Koentjaraningrat's book, "Pengantar Ilmu Antropologi" (Introduction to Anthropology) (1985), anthropology is described as a discipline that comprehensively studies humans, both physically and culturally, in various contexts. This branch of science involves research on human origins, physical and cultural changes, and the variations that occur among humans worldwide.

Anthropology is part of the social sciences that examines the relationships between humans and their environment, encompassing social structures, religion, language, knowledge systems, technology systems, and livelihoods (Koentjaraningrat, 2016). Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, anthropology strives to explore and understand the diversity of human cultures.

According to Koentjaraningrat, there are seven elements of culture: language, knowledge systems, social organization, living equipment systems, livelihood systems, religious systems, and art (Koentjaraningrat, 2016). These seven elements complement each other within a culture. Culture is very broad and thus requires detailed examination. It is dispersed across various regions of the world in diverse forms, making it a fascinating topic to study. One of the unique cultures to study from an anthropological perspective is the Tha'buthaan art in Arjasa District. This art form fulfills the seven elements of culture, and thus, clear differences can be observed between Tha'buthaan and Ondel-Ondel from Jakarta.

Language

The people of Jember Regency have a Pandhalungan culture, a blend of Javanese and Madurese cultures. However, different regions in Jember Regency have their ethnic dominance resulting from historical events (Arrovia, 2021). Jember, with its fertile soil, became a plantation center for the Dutch colonialists. Due to these plantations, many workers from outside Jember, such as Banyuwangi and Madura Island, were brought in. They came not only to work but also to settle and spread their culture, creating a multi-ethnic society.

Jember Regency consists of various ethnic groups, including Javanese, Madurese, Arab, and Chinese. Each ethnic group has its dominance, such as the Madurese ethnic group, which is more dominant in northern Jember, covering Arjasa, Sukowono, Jelbuk, Ledokombo, Mayang, Pakusari, and Sukowono Districts. Therefore, residents in northern Jember, such as in Arjasa District, predominantly use Madurese for communication, although some also use Javanese. Unlike ondel-ondel art in Jakarta, which uses Betawi language, as it is adapted to its origin and became popular when performed by the artist Benyamin Sueb in 1971 (Putranto, 2020).

Tha'buthaan art significantly differs from Jakarta's ondel-ondel, especially in language usage according to its region of origin. Ondel-ondel tends to use Betawi language in its accompanying songs, and its opening often involves pantun exchanges between two parties using Betawi language. Meanwhile, tha'buthaan art uses several Madurese terms, such as "butha," meaning giant. Additionally, terms like "totha'an dhereh," "laép lanjheng," "selametan kadhisah," and "tajin mirah bik potéh" indicate that tha'buthaan art uses the Madurese language system. Even the accompanying songs in tha'buthaan art can use Javanese or Oising, depending on the song performed, such as the Grajagan song, and the prayers during the opening or thanksgiving ceremonies usually use Arabic (interview with Misbari, May 23, 2024).

Knowledge System

Local arts like ondel-ondel and tha'buthaan art differ in their knowledge systems, including the local knowledge about nature, culture, values, and norms prevalent in society. This knowledge is evident from the stories contained in these arts, symbols, and performers' behaviors during performances. There is also knowledge about flora and fauna related to religious or symbolic reasons for their selection as symbols or basic materials.

Historically, Jakarta Province has been a trading center since the Dutch colonial period. According to Betawi people, ondel-ondel art is believed to have existed before Indonesia's independence, during the Dutch colonial period in Batavia (Jakarta's name at that time). Some also say that ondel-ondel emerged before Islam spread in Java. Ondel-
Ondel emerged as a repellent for bad luck among the Betawi people and as a personification of ancestors to protect their descendants.

Two tall dolls were created, one with a scary face and the other with a cheerful face, with the white face symbolizing purity. Ondel-ondel is now not only a sacred doll but also a medium to entertain the community in various events like Betawi weddings. There are specific rituals or ceremonies before making the ondel-ondel framework. The materials used must follow the existing classification. Ondel-ondel performers must be physically strong and have a steadfast heart because, during performances, they must carry the doll over a considerable distance (Putranto, 2020).

Figure 1. Musical instruments of tha’buthaan art Sinar baru, Arjasa District
Source: personal documentation at Sanggar Sinar Baru in Calok hamlet, May 23, 2024

Unlike tha’buthaan art, which originates from Arjasa District, a fertile region where many residents work as farmers. This geographical condition gave rise to tha’buthaan art, originating from a prolonged famine. Besides local knowledge, there is also traditional knowledge about making masks, costumes, musical arrangements, and performance procedures in tha’buthaan art, including the measurement of doll shapes, sizes, and diameters. Modern knowledge in tha’buthaan art includes using musical instruments combined with modern instruments, the accompanying songs, and modern documentation tools (interview with Misbari, May 23, 2024).

Tha’buthaan art also serves as a social-based learning medium in schools, such as in a study applied at SMAN 3 Jember in social studies lessons. Tha’buthaan art became a model for creative-critical heritage-based learning, alongside other Jember arts like can macanakan kadhu. Creative-critical learning models allow students to understand and analyze local culture, such as the Pandhalungan culture, where local wisdom is highly appreciated by the younger generation (Widiyawati, 2019).

In 2020, the Arjasa Police, along with the sub-district government, held a socialization event with a local wisdom-based resilient program. In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic was rampant, though not as severe as in 2019. The Arjasa Police chose to engage with local arts like tha’buthaan and macopat as an approach to the community through folk tales about the origins of these arts, highlighting past epidemics that had affected the Arjasa community, as believed by the local people. The stories told were familiar to the community, such as the pagebluk epidemic and the famine that had plagued the community. Thus, tha’buthaan serves not only as art but also as a knowledge system for the community.

Social Organization and Kinship

Tha’buthaan art is typically showcased in social and communal events such as weddings, circumcisions, and village cleansing ceremonies (kedisah). This demonstrates that the art form serves to strengthen social bonds and community relations among its members. Prior to the performance, a village thanksgiving ceremony is held in the local prayer houses, bringing people together for a common activity. Additionally, the preparation for the performance involves collective effort and mutual cooperation among the community members (interview with Misbari, May 23, 2024).

The organizational structure of tha’buthaan art is centered around studios, encompassing both owners and performers. There are also associations or guilds that consolidate these studios into a unified organization with shared goals and interests, known as the Tourism Awareness Group (POKDARWIS). Tha’buthaan art has several studios spread
across various areas in Jember Regency, including Arjasa, Jelbuk, Sukorambi, Pakusari, and Kalisat. Each studio has its unique characteristics, such as Sanggar Putra Barong, which presents tha’buthaan in the form of Balinese barong, and Sanggar Sinar Baru, which has been a classic tha’buthaan studio since 2004. All these studios are gathered under a single umbrella and are under the auspices of the Jember Regency Tourism Office, as evidenced by the existence of an official arts organization card. The preservation of tha’buthaan art is inseparable from the role of the local community, who actively participate in and contribute to its preservation (interview with Misbari, May 23, 2024).

Unlike tha’buthaan art, ondel-ondel art has studios scattered throughout Jakarta. These studios collaborate with the government through event invitations and training programs for the introduction of local ondel-ondel art. Additionally, the Betawi Cultural Institute (LKB) oversees the local arts of the Betawi community, including ondel-ondel. Besides the governmental organizational system, kinship systems are also established during the creation or performance of ondel-ondel, bringing together people of various ages and fostering cooperation both before and during the event (Putranto, 2020).

Both tha’buthaan and ondel-ondel arts have groups that officially support the preservation efforts of these art forms. The aim is to ensure their continuity and recognition by the public, despite having different organizational names such as LKB or POKDARWIS. Both organizations share the same goal: to provide a platform for local arts and to preserve them according to their vision and mission in the context of local art preservation.

**Equipment System**

Tha’buthaan art is unique in its use of equipment, which reflects various aspects of the local community’s life. Arjasa District, where most residents are farmers, utilizes equipment to support their daily lives. Similarly, in tha’buthaan art, the equipment used includes both modern and traditional tools, such as those for making woven crafts, masks, costumes, and other decorations. Additionally, the musical instruments used are still traditional, such as gongs, kenongs, and others (Nua et al., 2023).

**Livelihood System**

Tha’buthaan art is closely linked to the livelihood system of the community in Arjasa District, Jember Regency, East Java. The stories embedded in this art narrate the famine period in Kamal Village, one of the villages in Arjasa District, where the majority of the residents are farmers. Tha’buthaan art is believed by the local community to bring abundant harvests and ward off bad things, and therefore it is always performed after the second major harvest.

With the existence of this art, the residents of Kamal Village are not only farmers but also craftsmen or tha’buthaan doll makers who are part of studios to preserve it. According to Misbari, tha’buthaan art was originally only for village cleansing rituals or kadisah events, but over time it has evolved into community entertainment for events such as Independence Day celebrations, circumcisions, and weddings. The rental or performance fees can range from Rp1 million to Rp1.5 million, providing a source of income for the art performers. Certain events like Independence Day also offer economic opportunities for local vendors (interview with Misbari, May 23, 2024). Tha’buthaan art also boosts
tourism in Arjasa District, making it an icon of the district and spreading to several areas in northern Jember. Tha'buthaan art encompasses economic capital, both material and financial, owned collectively or individually.

Similar to ondel-ondel art in Jakarta Province, tha'buthaan art also becomes part of the livelihood system, enhancing the economy of groups or individuals and becoming a regional tourism icon. However, there are differences in preservation and skill dissemination efforts. Ondel-ondel has undergone extensive training, while tha'buthaan relies more on the local community's interest. Ondel-ondel training efforts are also supported by the government and online media, such as the official website of the Jakarta Department of Culture and Tourism, which provides guidelines for making ondel-ondel, including the selection of materials for the framework and the required diameters.

Religion or Belief

The majority of Arjasa District's residents are Muslims, and tha'buthaan art is closely related to the local community's beliefs. This is evident from the development of oral stories passed down through generations about tha'buthaan and the religious elements in its symbols and religious rituals during performances. For instance, tha'buthaan masks are made to look frightening to symbolize giants. Additionally, there are prayer rituals and thanksgiving before and during performances, using Islamic prayers, although there are also offerings like agricultural products or red and white porridge and incense burning. The goal is to ensure the event runs smoothly from start to finish (interview with Misbari, May 23, 2024).

Ondel-ondel art also demonstrates a strong belief system. The majority of the Betawi people are Muslims, but ondel-ondel art was initially influenced by ancestral beliefs as a repellent for bad luck and the personification of their ancestors. There is a belief that ondel-ondel emerged before Islam spread in the archipelago. The religious elements are visible in the creation process, where the selected materials must be of high quality and carefully chosen. The person making ondel-ondel must perform specific rituals or ceremonies, including fasting, to ensure the doll and the creation intentions are in harmony.

Art

Art is often associated with aesthetic and beauty values. Both tha'buthaan and ondel-ondel arts have unique beauty and characteristics. Tha'buthaan art, for example, is characterized by dolls with hands placed on the waist, while ondel-ondel has freely moving hands. Both consist of male and female dolls. However, tha'buthaan has collaborated with other arts like can macanan kadhuk, ayam-ayaman, and Balinese barong, while ondel-ondel's development has focused more on musical and mask aspects (interview with Misbari, May 23, 2024).

The musical instruments used in tha'buthaan art are still traditional, such as gongs, kenongs, and kendang, but some have incorporated keyboards as a form of modern music. Tha'buthaan art includes carving and decorative arts, especially in making faces and frameworks, with bright and dark costumes to distinguish male and female dolls, reflecting Madurese culture's black, white, and red colors. Tha'buthaan faces are made scary with bulging eyes and fangs to symbolize giants, aiming to ward off negative elements from the village according to local beliefs. Some tha'buthaan dolls are also decorated with ornaments on the clothes and head to make them more attractive (Zoebazary, 2021).

In ondel-ondel art, the male doll has a red face with fangs and a scary expression, symbolizing firmness and ferocity, while the female doll has a white, smiling face, symbolizing purity and cleanliness. These dolls are created in pairs as a symbol of natural balance in Betawi people's beliefs. Ondel-ondel male dolls are usually red, symbolizing firmness, strength, courage, and a strong ego, while the female dolls are white, symbolizing purity, friendliness, and grace. Ondel-ondel consists of two main parts: the body and the head, decorated with floral and fauna motifs and colorful crowns symbolizing coconut trees, a symbol of Sunda Kelapa, Jakarta's old name before becoming Batavia. Traditional musical instruments like drums, tehyan, flutes, and gongs are used to accompany the performance (Putranto, 2020).

Both ondel-ondel and tha'buthaan arts in Arjasa District are cultural heritages rich in meaning and value. These arts not only serve as entertainment but also contain moral and spiritual meanings reflecting local wisdom. Amidst modernization, preserving these arts is a shared responsibility involving all community layers, including the young
generation eager to learn. Many efforts are made to preserve tha'buthaan art, such as those by Mr. Misbari, who performs tha'buthaan at various events like kadijah, weddings, and circumcisions, as part of the preservation efforts.

**Figure 3.** Tha'buthaan dolls belonging to Sanggar Sinar Baru
Source: personal documentation at Sanggar Sinar Baru, May 23, 2024

**CONCLUSION**

Art in society always plays different roles and functions in each supporting group. Anthropologists have found that art expresses cultural values and societal concerns. Through anthropological studies, we can understand the history and development of art within an ethnic group or nation. Tha'buthaan art in Arjasa District, Jember Regency, holds high cultural and traditional value and plays an essential role in community life. An anthropological study shows that tha'buthaan art is not just a performance but also a complex cultural system with profound functions and meanings. Therefore, continuous preservation efforts involving various parties, including the government, community, and productive young generation, are needed.

The limitation of this study lies in its narrow focus on a particular form of local art, which may not encompass other art variations in Jember Regency or other regions. Moreover, this study relies heavily on secondary data sources and limited interviews, making the obtained information possibly not fully representative. Further research with more comprehensive methods and a broader sample is necessary to obtain a more complete picture of traditional arts in this area.

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