

Nggusu Waru Local Wisdom as an Ethical Framework for Gender-Inclusive and Child-Friendly Social Transformation in the Context of Social Development in Bima Society

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Abstract

Gender inequality and the vulnerability of women and children remain structural and cultural problems in many regions of Indonesia, including Bima. Various government policies have not yet been fully effective, as their implementation does not always align with the local values embedded in society. Nggusu Waru, a form of local wisdom from Bima that embodies eight moral principles related to knowledge, integrity, social responsibility, and the protection of vulnerable groups, actually holds significant potential as an ethical framework for promoting more gender-just social development. However, these values have experienced a decline in meaning due to modernization and the lack of cultural regeneration. This conceptual article proposes the integration of Nggusu Waru into social development through processes of value re-articulation, participatory approaches, and mainstreaming into village-level policies. Theoretical analysis indicates that gender inequality can only be addressed effectively when structural change is accompanied by transformation in social norms. By integrating gender theory, social norms theory, cultural capital, and Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology, this article formulates a conceptual model that positions Nggusu Waru as a value-based foundation for strengthening the protection of women and children, enhancing women's participation in the public sphere, and fostering a new, more egalitarian social culture. This integration is not merely an effort at cultural preservation, but a pragmatic, contextual, and sustainable strategy of social transformation aimed at creating a women-friendly and child-caring environment within Bima society.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Gender inequality and the vulnerability of women and children remain fundamental issues in Indonesia's social development, particularly in regions with limited access to education and social structures that are still strongly shaped by traditional norms (Sari et al., 2025). Although the state has adopted various policies on gender equality and child protection, their implementation at the community level often remains suboptimal. Indonesia's Gender Development Index (GDI) in 2023, which stood at 91.15, reflects persistent inequalities, especially in access to education, health services, and economic opportunities. These disparities are not merely structural in nature but are also deeply embedded in everyday social practices (Kelen & Nusa, 2024).

This situation is consistent with research findings indicating that patriarchal culture and traditional constructions of gender roles continue to be major barriers preventing women from attaining broader social roles (Erlina, 2023). The consequences extend beyond limited employment

opportunities or low levels of women's political participation to include an increased risk of gender-based violence. Violence against women, as documented in numerous recent studies, generates long-term physical and psychological impacts not only on victims but also on their families and social environments. Children are likewise part of this vulnerable group, indicating that the issue cannot be separated from the wider social ecosystem (Ardiansyah et al., 2024).

These conditions are also clearly evident in the context of Bima society, both at the municipal and district levels. Gender inequality manifests across multiple sectors, including education, employment, domestic life, health, and political representation (Asror et al., 2024). At the same time, Bima society possesses a rich cultural heritage, one of which is *Nggusu Waru*, a long-standing local value system that has served as a moral guide for fostering balanced, just, and responsible social character. This system encompasses eight moral and social principles emphasizing knowledge, religiosity, integrity, protection of vulnerable groups, and social responsibility (Koris et al., 2023).

Conceptually, *Nggusu Waru* aligns closely with the principles of inclusive and gender-just social development. However, its practical relevance has diminished due to limited preservation efforts and weak cultural regeneration. Many younger generations no longer understand the philosophical meaning of *Nggusu Waru* or perceive it as relevant to contemporary life. The loss of cultural education spaces, the absence of integration into local policies, and the lack of revitalization programs have further marginalized these values. Yet, as a moral ethos originating within the community itself, *Nggusu Waru* holds a level of legitimacy that externally imposed formal policies often lack (Pangga et al., 2025; Jailani et al., 2025).

Meanwhile, gender-based social development approaches adopted by the government tend to remain structurally oriented, relying heavily on regulations and formal programs without sufficiently connecting them to the cultural foundations of local communities (Pasciana et al., 2024). As a result, such programs are often perceived as alien or contextually inappropriate, limiting community support and engagement (Di et al., 2023). This disconnect between structural approaches and local cultural values renders social interventions vulnerable to failure or results in only superficial change (Fauziah et al., 2025).

Upon closer examination, *Nggusu Waru* possesses substantial potential as a foundation for a more inclusive, humanistic, and contextual social approach. Its values emphasize not only individual morality but also harmonious social relations, protection of vulnerable groups, and the importance of justice in communal life. By critically reinterpreting these principles and adapting them to contemporary needs, Bima society can rediscover a strong ethical framework for creating a women-friendly and child-caring environment.

A local wisdom-based approach is not cultural nostalgia; rather, it represents a pragmatic strategy for fostering social change that is more acceptable, participatory, and sustainable. Integrating *Nggusu Waru* into the agenda of gender-just social development means bridging the community's cultural roots with the demands of contemporary social transformation. In doing so, society not only preserves its ancestral heritage but also mobilizes it as a moral resource to address the increasingly complex challenges of gender inequality and child protection.

2. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This article employs a conceptual and normative qualitative approach to analyze the potential integration of the local wisdom of *Nggusu Waru* into gender-just social development. The study does not involve empirical field data collection; instead, it is grounded in theoretical analysis and systematic interpretation of scholarly literature, policy documents, and relevant conceptual frameworks related to gender equality, social norms, local wisdom, women's empowerment, child protection, and participatory development (Savira & Honosutomo, 2024; Kasim & Nuwa, 2025).

The analytical process is conducted through three main stages. First, the study undertakes an identification and mapping of theoretical frameworks used as analytical tools, including gender

theory, social norms theory, concepts of social and cultural capital, women's empowerment frameworks, and participatory approaches. These frameworks function as analytical lenses to understand the relationship between local cultural values and gender inequality within social contexts (Sara et al., 2024).

Second, the core values and principles of *Nggusu Waru* are conceptually examined through these theoretical lenses to assess their relevance in promoting the protection of women and children, enhancing women's participation in the public sphere, and fostering more egalitarian social norms. At this stage, *Nggusu Waru* is treated as a value system and moral ethos, rather than as an object of empirical measurement (Nurhasanah et al., 2024; Ardiansyah et al., 2024).

Third, the results of the conceptual analysis are synthesized to formulate a conceptual model for integrating *Nggusu Waru* into social development, particularly through participatory approaches and the mainstreaming of values into village-level policies and development planning. This model aims to provide a contextual and applicable framework without claiming empirical generalization (Savira & Honosutomo, 2024).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: MAIN ARGUMENTS

3.1. Repositioning *Nggusu Waru* as a Framework for Modern Social Ethics

Nggusu Waru essentially constitutes the foundation of social ethics within Bima society, developed to regulate behavior and social interactions in everyday life. The eight principles embedded within it are not merely customary norms, but reflect an integration of intellectual, spiritual, moral, social values, as well as protection for vulnerable groups. In the past, these values functioned through strong informal transmission processes within families, through traditional leaders, religious figures, and collective social practices. However, modernization and changing lifestyles have disrupted this chain of transmission, causing *Nggusu Waru* to gradually lose its practical context and remain largely as cultural knowledge without effective praxis (Ilmiah et al., 2025).

Therefore, repositioning *Nggusu Waru* is essential not as a nostalgic effort, but as a strategic step toward building a social ethical framework that is relevant to contemporary challenges, particularly issues of gender injustice and the vulnerability of women and children. This repositioning requires contextual reinterpretation without eroding the core values that have long formed the identity of the community. By shifting *Nggusu Waru* from a mere cultural symbol to a modern ethical guideline, this local wisdom holds significant potential to serve as a moral instrument that drives more equitable and inclusive social transformation (Putri et al., 2026).

3.2. Gender Inequality as a Structural and Cultural Problem

Gender inequality in Bima does not exist in isolation, but rather emerges from a complex interaction between structural and cultural factors. Structurally, inequality manifests in limited access for women to higher education, decent employment, and low representation in strategic positions within government and social organizations. Culturally, women are often framed within domestic roles perceived as “natural,” thereby severely limiting their participation in public decision-making processes. Social perceptions that position women as supporting actors—rather than full leaders—trap them in recurring cycles of subordination (Wati et al., 2025).

These conditions indicate that formal policies alone are insufficient to address gender inequality. Cultural interventions are equally crucial, as deeply embedded social norms often exert stronger influence than written regulations. It is within this context that *Nggusu Waru* finds its renewed relevance. Core values such as justice, protection of vulnerable groups, social responsibility, and integrity can be reactivated as cultural foundations for building more egalitarian social relations between men and women. Thus, *Nggusu Waru* is not merely preserved

as ancestral heritage, but revitalized as a tool to address long-standing gender disparities (Dewi et al., 2025).

3.3. Transforming *Nggusu Waru* through a Value Re-Articulation Approach

For *Nggusu Waru* to function effectively in a modern context, its values must undergo a process of re-articulation. Re-articulation involves reinterpreting the moral messages embedded within these values so they align with contemporary social needs. The value *Dou ma dei ro paja ilmu*, for instance, can be understood as a form of cultural legitimacy for women to pursue higher levels of education. Meanwhile, *Dou ma dodo tando tambari kontu*, which emphasizes care for vulnerable groups, may be interpreted as a moral call to protect women and children from violence and discrimination (Kartika, 2016).

Through such re-articulation, local values are not forcibly inserted into modern contexts, but are re-understood in ways that maintain their relevance, authenticity, and practical power. Re-articulation also prevents a narrow interpretation that traditional values must be preserved exactly as they were in the past. Instead, it provides space for communities to redefine their cultural values in pursuit of broader social goals, including the creation of women-friendly and child-caring environments (Makna et al., 2024).

3.4. Integrating Local Values into Public Policy: From Norms to Regulation

One of the most significant challenges in social development lies in the weak linkage between cultural values and formal policies. Many village development programs are implemented without considering local values, resulting in limited community acceptance and a lack of cultural legitimacy. Conversely, customary values often operate independently, unsupported by regulatory structures that would allow them to endure over time (Afandi et al., 2024). Therefore, integrating *Nggusu Waru* into public policy constitutes a highly strategic step.

This integration can begin with the internalization of values at the community level, such as strengthening the role of traditional leaders, organizing intergenerational workshops, and institutionalizing value reflection within village forums. Subsequently, local values need to be formalized within policies such as Village Medium-Term Development Plans (*RPJMDes*), Village Regulations (*Perdes*), and village service standards that explicitly ensure the protection of women and children. Institutional-level integration further reinforces this process through the establishment of women- and child-protection forums and community-based mechanisms for reporting cases of violence (Soedarwo et al., 2022). Through these measures, local values no longer rely solely on cultural memory, but become embedded within a legal and sustainable development system.

3.5. PAR-Based Social Intervention Model (Participatory Action Research)

The Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach represents an appropriate strategy for implementing *Nggusu Waru* values in social change processes. PAR operates through the active involvement of community members in problem identification, action planning, collective reflection, and shared decision-making (Ilmiah et al., 2025). This approach ensures that communities are not merely policy recipients, but become the main actors driving change. Through iterative cycles of action and reflection, communities can critically assess whether *Nggusu Waru* values are genuinely practiced in social life or merely remain as rhetorical slogans.

By employing PAR, communities are given space to directly evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, make adjustments, and adapt strategies according to local needs. This participatory approach also fosters a strong sense of ownership, ensuring that change is not imposed in a top-down manner but emerges organically from internal community dynamics. As a result, the revitalization of cultural values through PAR becomes more robust, context-sensitive, and sustainable (Putri et al., 2026).

3.6. The Formation of New Norms through Social Proof Mechanisms

Social norm change is unlikely to occur unless communities observe tangible examples of new behaviors that are considered acceptable and legitimate. Social norms theory suggests that shifts in expectations emerge when people repeatedly witness behaviors that are publicly displayed and socially endorsed. In the context of revitalizing *Nggusu Waru*, the creation of social proof can be achieved by promoting women in public leadership roles, encouraging traditional leaders to articulate values in progressive ways, and organizing public activities that demonstrate collective commitments to non-violence and child protection.

Through such concrete actions, communities gradually develop new understandings of what is considered normal, appropriate, and worthy of emulation. When women-friendly and child-sensitive behaviors consistently appear across various social spaces, new norms are formed organically. At this stage, *Nggusu Waru* is no longer understood merely at a theoretical level, but becomes embodied in everyday social practices.

3.7. *Nggusu Waru* as an Instrument for Creating Safe Spaces for Women and Children

A women-friendly and child-sensitive environment is not solely determined by physical infrastructure, but also by the quality of social interactions and the cultural foundations that shape them. Safe spaces must exist not only physically, but also socially, psychologically, structurally, and culturally. *Nggusu Waru* provides a strong moral foundation for the creation of such safe spaces. Values such as honesty, social solidarity, moral responsibility, and protection of vulnerable groups have direct implications for how communities treat women and children.

In this context, the revitalization of *Nggusu Waru* is not merely an act of cultural preservation, but a practical strategy for building a culture that rejects violence, encourages women's participation, and places child well-being as a shared priority. When these principles are successfully internalized, communities do not simply conceptualize safe spaces abstractly, but practice them as lived realities in everyday interactions.

3.8. The Conceptual Model as a Blueprint for Social Change

All of the above discussions converge on the need to establish a systematic framework to ensure that the integration of *Nggusu Waru* into social development is conducted in a structured and coherent manner. This conceptual model summarizes the relationships between cultural values, participatory interventions, public policy, and the formation of new social norms. The model serves as a long-term roadmap for social change, positioning local values as ethical foundations, policies as structural instruments, communities as the primary drivers, and women and children as the main beneficiaries (Wati et al., 2025).

Table 1. Conceptual Model for Integrating *Nggusu Waru* Values into Gender-Just Social Development

Component	Description
INPUT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Core values of <i>Nggusu Waru</i> (eight principles) 2. Local actors: traditional leaders, religious leaders, women, children, village government 3. Resources: training modules, campaign media, facilitators, support from local institutions
PROCESS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Value re-articulation through intergenerational workshops 2. PAR (Participatory Action Research): iterative action reflection cycles 3. Policy mainstreaming at the local level: integrating values into <i>RPJMDes</i> and <i>Perdes</i> 4. Social proof campaigns: role models, public activities, community dialogues

OUTPUT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contextualized local value modules 2. Community forums for women and child protection 3. <i>Perdes/RPJMDes</i> adopting <i>Nggusu Waru</i> values
OUTCOME (Medium Term)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased women's participation in village forums 2. Indicative reduction in gender-based violence 3. More child-friendly public facilities
IMPACT (Long Term)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. new social culture that is more gender-equitable 2. Improved protection and well-being of women and children 3. Revitalization of <i>Nggusu Waru</i> as a foundation of modern social ethics

This conceptual model illustrates how *Nggusu Waru* values can be systematically integrated into social development oriented toward gender justice, women's protection, and child welfare. The model is structured through a layered framework consisting of input, process, output, outcome, and impact. Each component performs an interrelated function and operates as part of a unified and sustainable social change mechanism.

3.9. Input: The Foundation for Initiating Change

The input component describes the resources, actors, and core values that form the initial foundation for implementing the model. The core values of *Nggusu Waru* eight principles that regulate social behavior within Bima society function as a moral framework guiding change. These values do not operate in isolation; they require local actors who serve as key drivers, including traditional leaders, religious figures, village governments, as well as women and children as both target groups and collaborative partners. In addition, inputs include supporting resources such as training modules, campaign media, facilitators, and partner institutions that provide technical and social support. These inputs ensure that the process is grounded not only in cultural values but also in adequate social capacity, institutional strength, and knowledge infrastructure (Dewi et al., 2025)e.

3.10. Process: Planned Mechanisms of Social Change

The process component constitutes the operational core of the model. At this stage, *Nggusu Waru* values are not merely introduced but are re-articulated to align with contemporary social contexts. The re-articulation process is carried out through intergenerational dialogues, workshops, and collective reflection, enabling communities to reinterpret the relevance of these values in present-day life. The Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach strengthens this process by positioning communities as active subjects who plan actions, implement them, and engage in joint reflection. This model is crucial because it places communities as owners of the change process rather than passive recipients of external programs.

Furthermore, *Nggusu Waru* values are integrated into formal village policies such as the *RPJMDes* and *Perdes* to secure structural legitimacy. Cultural reinforcement is also pursued through social proof campaigns by presenting role models, facilitating public dialogue, and promoting positive practices that can be emulated by the community. Through these mechanisms, the process acts as a bridge between cultural values, social practices, and behavioral change.

3.11. Output: Immediate Results of Process Implementation

Outputs represent the direct results of the process stage. At this point, re-articulated *Nggusu Waru* values are translated into contextualized and accessible training modules. In addition, community forums focused on women's and children's protection are established to serve as platforms for representation, advocacy, and coordination among local actors. Other outputs include village policy documents, such as *Perdes* and *RPJMDes*, that explicitly adopt *Nggusu Waru* values within a framework of women's and children's protection. These outputs

demonstrate that change does not remain at the discursive level but takes concrete form within local structures and institutions.

3.12. Outcome: Medium-Term Social Impacts Experienced by the Community

Outcomes refer to social changes that emerge once outputs are consistently implemented. At this medium-term stage, changes become evident in community behavior and social dynamics. Women's participation in village forums increases as they gain greater acceptance and support through reinterpreted cultural values. Indicative reductions in gender-based violence begin to appear as communities develop social mechanisms to encourage prevention and reporting, while rejecting violence as behavior incompatible with *Nggusu Waru* values. Additionally, public facilities such as village halls, children's play spaces, and service areas begin to be designed or adapted to be more women- and child-friendly. These outcomes demonstrate that cultural values integrated into policy and community practice can generate tangible social change.

3.13. Impact: Long-Term Social Transformation

Impact reflects the long-term vision of the model. At this stage, Bima society moves toward a new social culture that is more gender-equitable, as *Nggusu Waru* is understood not as a static tradition but as a living ethical foundation. The protection and well-being of women and children improve sustainably as social values, policy structures, and collective behavior reinforce one another. In the long run, revitalizing *Nggusu Waru* transforms it from a cultural heritage into a modern ethical identity capable of addressing contemporary challenges. This model positions local culture as a driver of social transformation rather than an obstacle or symbolic ornament.

3.14. Implications

The integration of *Nggusu Waru* values into gender-just social development generates significant implications that directly affect communities, policy frameworks, and trajectories of social change. The first implication is the strengthening of cultural foundations within development processes. Development policies have often operated outside local contexts, leading communities to feel detached from implemented programs. By utilizing *Nggusu Waru* as a moral foundation, development policies are no longer perceived as external impositions but as expressions of Bima's own social identity. This strengthens policy legitimacy and facilitates acceptance and sustainability of social development programs.

Another implication concerns gender equality. The re-articulation of *Nggusu Waru* values enables communities to understand gender issues not as foreign concepts but as integral to their own cultural heritage. Principles such as protection of the vulnerable, encouragement of knowledge, justice in social relations, and personal integrity provide a cultural basis for recognizing women as active subjects of development. This opens opportunities for increased women's participation in village decision-making, education, economic activities, and local leadership. In this way, local values function as a bridge that mitigates cultural resistance to gender equality.

A further significant benefit is the formation of a more responsive and accessible social protection system. When *Nggusu Waru* values are combined with participatory approaches and formal policies, communities gain stronger mechanisms to prevent and address violence against women and children. Village forums, village regulations, and social proof campaigns grounded in cultural values provide victims with a sense of safety to speak out and seek support. This transformation fosters a more caring, open, and violence-intolerant social environment.

Additionally, revitalizing cultural values strengthens social cohesion. In societies experiencing pressures from modernization, intergenerational value conflicts often arise. Through intergenerational dialogue and PAR processes, *Nggusu Waru* values are revived as shared guidelines acceptable to both older and younger generations. Strong social cohesion facilitates collective problem-solving, cooperation, and future planning with a shared vision.

Another implication is the improvement of village development quality. When cultural values inspire village regulations and medium-term planning documents, development directions become more sensitive to the needs of vulnerable groups. Budget allocation becomes fairer, public services become more user-friendly, and social spaces become safer. Value-based policies also reduce the risk of program failure or unsustainability because communities are involved from the planning stage.

In the long term, integrating Nggusu Waru values contributes to the formation of a modern ethical identity for Bima society. This identity not only strengthens cultural pride but also enables communities to face global challenges without losing their local roots. These values become a source of social strength, fostering new generations who are more caring, just, ethical, and respectful of the dignity of women and children.

4. CONCLUSION

The integration of *Nggusu Waru* values into gender-just social development demonstrates that local wisdom is not merely a cultural legacy but a source of social ethics capable of addressing contemporary challenges. Persistent gender inequality and the vulnerability of women and children in Bima cannot be resolved solely through structural policies. These issues require cultural approaches that address the underlying social norms shaping collective behavior. This is where *Nggusu Waru* holds strategic relevance: values such as justice, protection of the vulnerable, integrity, and respect for knowledge provide a moral foundation for more equitable and inclusive social change.

Through value re-articulation, participatory approaches, and integration into formal policies, *Nggusu Waru* can shift from a traditional symbol to a living modern ethical framework that operates within village development contexts. The proposed conceptual model clearly illustrates the relationship between cultural values, participatory mechanisms, local institutions, and long-term impacts on community well-being. With support from communities and local actors, these values can create safer social spaces for women and children, strengthen women's participation in decision-making, and reduce practices of gender-based violence.

Ultimately, revitalizing *Nggusu Waru* is not merely about preserving cultural identity but about constructing a new moral foundation for sustainable social development. This approach enables Bima society to confront modern challenges without losing its traditional roots. By embedding these values into policy and social practice, communities can build a future that is more just, inclusive, and dignified for all citizens—especially women and children, who have long been the most vulnerable groups within social structures.

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