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Hegemony of Sulinggih on Ngaben Ceremony towards Modernization Era in Bali

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Abstract

The hegemony of the Sulinggih or priest in the Ngaben ceremony in the era of modernization is an interesting phenomenon to study. As a spiritual leader in the Balinese Hindu tradition, the Sulinggih has a central role in the implementation of rituals, including Ngaben. However, along with the development of the era, there has been a shift in the practice and meaning of this ceremony due to the influence of modernization. This study aims to analyze how the hegemony of the Sulinggih in the Ngaben ceremony is maintained or changes amidst the social, economic, and cultural dynamics of Balinese society. Using a qualitative approach and ethnographic methods, this study explores how the authority of the Sulinggih in this ceremony is perceived by the community, as well as how adaptations are made in the face of changing times. The results of the study show that although modernization brings various changes, the authority of the Sulinggih remains strong in the social and religious structure, despite negotiating with economic and technological factors.

Keywords: Ceremony, Hegemony, Modernization, Ngaben, Sulinggih,

Introduction

Puspa (2011) stated that Ngaben is a cremation ceremony equipped with *banten* facilities, led by a priest, which is carried out by descendants who have the death to be cremated whether the Ngaben is carried out in a large or small manner. Wiana (2004) stated that the purpose and aim of Ngaben is to release the spirit from the elements that form the person who died to be returned to the universe through the sacred fire of the cremation and finally carried away to the water and escorts the spirit to the realm of divinity. Ngaben or cremation, is one of the important ceremonies in the Balinese tradition that has been going on for centuries. In this ritual, the Sulinggih or priest has a very central role, both in carrying out the ceremony and in providing spiritual understanding to the community. However, along with the development of the times and the era of modernization that continues to move forward, many aspects of this tradition have begun to change, both in form and in the role of the priest himself.

According to Geria (2008) what is meant by modern tradition is a tradition that includes elements that have developed since the colonial era, the era of independence until the current era of globalization. Its characteristics include mass education, a rationalized, coordinated, and communicated religious system internally and externally, mass production crafts, and a forward-looking orientation introduced by various departments. From this process, it can be understood that the interaction between small traditions and large traditions produces a traditional culture

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characterized by an expressive culture with dominant religious, aesthetic, and solidarity values. On the other hand, the meeting of traditional Balinese culture with modern traditions is marked by the integration of modern values in Balinese culture such as rationalization and commercialization of culture. According to Triguna (1994), today there appears to be a structural change in culture because many cultural activities in the sense of religious rites expressively experience changes in position and function that are not only in a religious sense, but often also occur because of social, economic, and political content. This context is apparent in its actualization of structural changes, especially observable in the ownership of consumptive property and increased education.

Changes in aspects of Hindu community life towards modernization namely changes in a total transformation from a communal life that tends to be collective towards economic and political patterns (Soekanto, 1990). Transformation as a form of modernization can be understood from social mobility, namely the occurrence of a population that is increasingly spread out, per capita income is increasing, and access to mass media is more intensive. Some religious and artistic lives experience a process of secularization and literacy rates are increasing, causing a process of rationalization which ultimately results in a process of secularization. Secularization occurs because people increasingly appreciate the importance of common sense as one of the characteristics of modern life compared to considerations of feeling and instinct.

The shift of Balinese culture from an agrarian (traditional) society to an industrial society is marked by strict regulation of time, space, energy, capital, and heterogeneity of community occupation. Thus, there is a cultural transformation from an agricultural culture to a service culture. Balinese society today is required to be able to act effectively and efficiently in facing their lives, including in terms of preparing and carrying out their religious ceremonies. In line with that, Wijaya (1991) stated that now many Balinese-Hindus buy various kinds of needs for their religious ceremonies. By buying, it means being more efficient, both in terms of time, energy, and cost.

Economic methods (commodification) in carrying out the Ngaben ceremony are increasingly widespread. For example, people in Traditional Villages in Bali including *sisya* (students) of a *griya* (residence of a Priest) will ask for a *banten* Ngaben complete with a Sulinggih (Priest) as the Ceremony Leader by handing over an amount of money that has been informed by the Priest in the *griya*. All of these experiences give very different meanings compared to the previous situation. Everything wants to be made practical without paying attention to the values of wisdom contained within it.

The dynamics of Hinduism and Balinese culture are not only about *banten*, for this Ngaben ceremony, the *bade* (tower for carrying the corpse to the grave) also becomes a commodity because it can be ordered from certain parties who provide the facilities, even to the grave the *bade* is placed in a place with wheels so that it only needs to be pulled without being carried. Even today the *bade* does not need to be carried because it can be placed on a car that has had its hood removed as done by the Pangkung Tibah, Tista, Gadungan, and Jadi Indigenous Peoples in Tabanan Regency. The workmanship of the *bade* with a technological system to get beautiful results through mechanical patterns with machines. The construction of the *bade* has been done with a *knockdown* system. With this system, the *bade* that is made in layers can be arranged when passing through a road that has obstacles, for example, the presence of electric or telephone cables on the way to the grave. As implemented by the Puri Ubud when carrying out Palebon/Ngaben. In carrying out the Ngaben ceremony, some people choose the crematorium.

Modernization, with all its impacts, brings challenges for Balinese society in maintaining traditional values. On the other hand, modernization also introduces various new ideas that influence people's perspectives on religion, spirituality, and the role of religious authority. In this context, this study focuses on the hegemony of the Sulinggih (priest) in the Ngaben ceremony in Bali, intending to explore the role, influence, and challenges faced by the priest in facing modernization.

Based on the description above, the problems raised in this case are: What is the role of the Sulinggih/priest in the Ngaben ceremony in the era of modernization in Bali?, How is the hegemony of the Sulinggih (priest) maintained or changed in the context of modernization? What are the challenges faced by the Sulinggih (priest) in maintaining their spiritual authority in this modern era?

Literature Review

Atmaja (2014) stated that in the 2000s, *banten* (offerings) for Ngaben, which is a death ritual in Balinese society, were obtained through the market, resulting in the commodification of *banten*. This condition was caused by the characteristics of *banten* as an economic good, more and more Balinese people, especially women, who could no longer make *banten*, and the spread of market ideology so that someone felt more comfortable buying *banten* for Ngaben than making it independently. This condition provided an opportunity for *griya* (the residence of the Sulinggih/priest) to develop the *banten* industry. This is also related to the ideology that applies to *griya*, namely the market ideology so that they see *banten* as a source of profit. The position of *griya* is stronger than that of *banten* consumers because *griya* controls various capital, namely economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital synergistically. As a result, *griya* as a producer of *banten* controls consumers hegemonically. This symptom is reflected in the determination of the price of *banten*, which depends on *griya*, while consumers only follow it. The article above also touches on the *geria* having hegemonic power because the *griya* that has a Sulinggih/priest can hegemonize the people/*sisya* because they have the power as patron-client, namely the father and his subordinates. In terms of the commodification of *banten* including Ngaben *banten*, then with the capital they have, be it cultural, social, symbolic, or economic capital, the Sulinggih (priest) can play with the price and the Ngaben ceremony which will be carried out.

Pitana (2020) discusses that carrying out crematorium ceremonies is a relatively new phenomenon in Bali, pioneered by Maha Gotra Pasek Sanak Sapta Rsi, who built the Santhayana Crematorium in 2008. The number of bodies cremated at the Santhayana Crematorium increases every year. The most common reasons for carrying out crematorium ceremonies at the Santhayana Crematorium are practical value and efficiency, in addition to reasons of lower costs and less intensive communication with the traditional village, especially for villagers who migrate outside the area. By using participant observation, in-depth interviews, and qualitative-interpretive analysis, this study confirms Giddens' Structuration theory, that as a duality, the structure becomes an obstacle and empowers actors to act, and the actions of actors that are patterned over a long period will form new structures. What is typical in the case of crematorium crematoriums in Bali is the transformation towards modernity but with the argument of returning to tradition, namely using the basis of ancestral teachings written in the lontar literature, especially the Lontar Yama Purana Tattwa

The above research shows that there has been a transformation in the implementation of the Ngaben ceremony where the ceremony can be carried out in a place that is not in a traditional cemetery but in a crematorium. Ayunita et al. (2022) stated that the Ngaben Local Culture is one

part of the Pitra Yadnya ceremony, which can be interpreted as the process/ceremony of burning corpses to return the spirits of ancestors to their place of origin which is equipped with banten/offerings. The Ngaben Local Culture aims to accelerate the return of the Panca Maha Bhuta elements in the human body (*bhuana alit*) to the universe (*bhuana agung*). The analysis above provides an overview of the Ngaben ceremony as the return of elements in the human body to the universe.

Segara (2020) stated that several reasons can be described as to why the “*bade beroda*” trend is chosen. First, of course, it must be traced from external factors that have caused many shifts, including becoming “*bade beroda*”. If we refer to the time aspect of the emergence of *bade* in the 1970s, it was not considered a cultural object product that could be used as a commodity, but rather as a representation of joy and sorrow through cooperation. Now *bade* is produced to meet commodities through buying and selling. The flow of economic and technological developments has also caused a change in mindset, especially starting in urban areas where the cremation ceremony using *bade* has taken up a lot of time and energy. The emergence of “*bade beroda*” economically and technologically to meet the failure of modern humans to no longer always be in their communal environment.

The research above illustrates that changes in the means of carrying the body to the grave no longer use human power, but with wheeled tools by placing the *bade* on a means with wheels. Indeed, this provides the fact that there has been a change in the cremation ceremony because of the influence of technology and the economy.

Solidarity is a state of relationship between individuals and/or groups based on moral feelings and beliefs that are shared and strengthened by shared emotional experiences. Solidarity emphasizes the state of relationships between individuals and groups and underlies shared attachment in life supported by moral values and beliefs that live in society. The real form of shared relationships will give birth to emotional experiences, thus strengthening the relationship between them. Social solidarity is an emotional and moral feeling formed from relationships between individuals or groups based on mutual trust, common goals and a sense of solidarity and shared responsibility (Soekanto, 2011).

Research Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with ethnographic methods to deeply understand the phenomenon of Sulinggih hegemony in the Ngaben ceremony in the modernization era. Data were collected through participatory observation in the Ngaben ceremony, in-depth interviews with Sulinggih, families who performed the ceremony, and Balinese community leaders. In addition, a literature study was conducted to examine historical developments and theories related to hegemony and changes in religious rituals. The data obtained were analyzed using interpretive methods to reveal how Sulinggih maintain their authority amidst social and technological changes, and how society responds to this dominance.

The research method used in this study is qualitative with a descriptive analysis method. The descriptive method is a method that studies the status of human groups, objects, conditions, systems of thought, or classes of events in the present (Moleong, 2014). The purpose of this study is to describe and provide a systemic picture based on data and facts related to the phenomenon being studied, namely the social dynamics of the Ngaben ceremony in Bali.

The data used in this study are sourced from primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with parties who are considered to have the capability and

are directly related to the problems to be studied. In this study, primary data were obtained through interviews with informants, namely Sulinggih (Reverend/IPGPBM) (Informant 1), Chairman of Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia, Bali Province (Informant 2/INK), Religious Leaders (Informant 3/IMPS), Academics (Informant 4/IWS), Traditional Leaders (Informant 5/IKD). Secondary data were collected through literature studies related to the hegemony of Sulinggih (Reverend) in the Ngaben Ceremony in the era of modernization. At the data analysis stage, both primary data from interviews with informants were combined with secondary data collected through literature studies. Both primary and secondary data were processed, then verified and matched with each other. So that only data that is relevant to the research needs is used.

Results and Discussion

Results

The cremation ceremony in this modern era involves a Sulinggih (priest) as the leader of the ceremony, but in the Hindu tradition in Bali, the cremation ceremony requires banten. Thus, the Sulinggih can determine the type of cremation that will be carried out for the person who has died. Thus, the Sulinggih has hegemony because it determines the type and banten that will be used in the cremation. As stated by informant 1/IPGPBM) below.

Every time someone goes to the griya to ask the Ratu (respectful term for the Sulinggih/priest) to lead the ceremony, they will certainly be told about the type of cremation ceremony that will be carried out, a large or small cremation. If it is a large cremation, it will cost a lot and if it is small, it will be cheaper.

With the description above, there has been a consensus between the Sulinggih and the person who has died, so that the Ngaben ceremony can be carried out. The Ngaben ceremony is a death ceremony that must be carried out by the Hindu community. The highest assembly of Hindus has set rules that must be carried out by its people, such as the following interview excerpt.

To carry out this ceremony, the community can choose a priest as the leader of the ceremony. Nowadays, due to the influence of modernization, especially technology, a crematorium can be used, and the body can be carried using wheels or cars, including Ngaben in a crematorium. We cannot avoid technological advances, but be wise in using technology (Interview with informant 2/INK).

The following shows a picture of a bade using wheels and cars as a technology that influences the means of the Ngaben ceremony as an advancement in modernization.



Figure 1. Bade using wheels (Puspa Documentation, 2024)



Figure 2. Bade using a car (Puspa Documentation, 2024)

Technology in the modern era has made it easier for Balinese people in the Ngaben ritual because the change in work from agrarian to industrial has caused Balinese men to be no longer accustomed to *negen* (carrying) let alone carrying bade to the grave, so the technology in the picture above is used for this Ngaben ceremony. There are no restrictions from the leader of the Ngaben ceremony, namely the Sulinggih/priest.

In the Ngaben ceremony, a Sulinggih (priest) is needed to lead the ceremony, wherever the ceremony is held. If it is held in a crematorium, then there is already a package with the price and the leader of the ceremony. However, those who have died are also given the opportunity to bring their own leader, of course there will be an agreement here. Balinese people still use wangsa, so those who have died will choose a Sulinggih called Pedanda from the Brahmana dynasty, Bagawan from the Kstraia dynasty, Resi Agung from the Wesya dynasty, and Pandita from the Sudra dynasty. The important thing is that the ceremony is carried out and runs smoothly (Informant 3/IMPS)

Ngaben is a death ceremony that will be faced by all Hindu people in Bali. After being born and living, then by God's will the last is to return to meet Him. Therefore, this ceremony must be prepared because it will never be known when God wills. As stated by informant IV/INS below.

Ngaben in Balinese Tradition is part of the spiritual life of the Balinese people related to beliefs about life after death. This ceremony involves sacrifice as a form of respect for ancestral spirits. Previously, various literatures mentioned that Ngaben is a ritual led by a priest or Sulinggih who has a high position in the hierarchy of Balinese Hinduism (Interview with informant IV/I W S).

Hegemony in Gramsci's Perspective where Antonio Gramsci, a Marxist thinker, introduced the concept of hegemony which refers to social domination accepted by society through culture and ideology. In the Balinese context, the hegemony of the priest in the implementation of Ngaben can be seen as a cultural and spiritual domination accepted by the Balinese people as stated by Informant V

Modernization and Religion where modernization is often seen as a threat to established traditions. Many studies show that modernization brings changes in religious practices and spiritual views. In Bali, this phenomenon is seen in changes in the way the Ngaben ceremony is carried out which is influenced by technology, economics, and Western values (Interview with informant V/IKD).

Thus the results of interviews with informants in this study related to the hegemony of the Sulinggih in the Ngaben ceremony in the era of modernization in Bali.

Discussion

According to the theory of hegemony, the practice and mode of operation of power tend to shift from state power through the hands of government bureaucratic apparatus to the hands of capital owners (the holding of capital). This means that the source of power is not only in the hands of state officials or bureaucratic apparatus but is more owned by business groups, namely Sulinggih (Reverends) which is shown through the dominance of Sulinggih becoming more influential in determining religious practice policies including in determining everything about ceremonies.

Gramsci (1971) uses the term hegemony to refer to the way dominant groups in society gain support from subordinate groups through the process of intellectual and moral "leadership". Hegemony is power based on consensus or agreement that directly or indirectly and openly or secretly influences the cognitive and affective structures that are controlled. The more sophisticated the hegemony is implemented, the less visible the power that is exercised. So, the hegemonized group has its reasons for accepting the values, ideas, and leadership of the hegemonic group.

Bocock (1986) said that hegemony is related to three areas, namely economy, state, and civil society. Consumers get satisfaction in organizing the Ngaben ceremony, traditional officials get satisfaction because their community can carry out the Ngaben ceremony smoothly because the *upakara/banten* is available even though entrepreneurs rarely donate the proceeds of their *banten* sales to the Traditional Village and producers/entrepreneurs get economic satisfaction.

Consensus in the concept of collective consciousness is a requirement needed to achieve the goal of achieving moral action in carrying out the Ngaben ceremony as self-integrity that individuals are able to face challenges. Complying with the *awig-awig* rules in the Traditional Village, such as *ngayahang banjar* when there is a death followed by a Ngaben ceremony, will also strengthen the bonds of brotherhood. Collectively when the *krama banjar ngayah*, then there will be something for them to do. If all *banten* is done with commodification, then there will be nothing for them to do. Therefore, there should also be offerings made at home, for example, offerings to ask for *tirta* (holy water) which will be offered during the cremation ceremony.

a) *The Role of Sulinggih in the Ngaben Ceremony*

Sulinggih (Priest) plays a very vital role in the Ngaben ceremony, both as a ritual leader and as a spiritual guide for the bereaved family. In some traditional villages in Bali, priests not only lead prayers and ceremonies but also provide teachings about the meaning of life and death. This

shows their dual role as spiritual and social leaders in society. The Ngaben ceremony is a cremation or cremation ceremony in the Hindu tradition in Bali. This ceremony aims to purify the spirit of the deceased so that it can return to the ancestral realm or achieve moksa (liberation from the cycle of reincarnation). In its implementation, the Sulinggih or priest has a very important role because he acts as a spiritual leader who guides the spirit with prayers and sacred rituals. Here are some of the main roles of Sulinggih in the Ngaben ceremony:

1) **Guiding the Ceremony Procession Sacredly**

Sulinggih is tasked with leading the entire series of ceremonies to ensure that they are following Hindu teachings and the Vedas. He ensures that all stages of the ritual run correctly and following custom.

2) **Carrying out the Pabersihan and Pamuputan Ceremonies**

Before the body is burned, a *pabersihan ritual* is performed to purify the spirit of the deceased. Sulinggih leads this ritual with holy mantras, holy water (*tirta*) and offerings. The *pamuputan ceremony* is the final stage before the cremation of the body, where Sulinggih provides *tirta pengentas* help release the spirit from worldly attachments.

3) **Delivering the Atma to the Ancestral Realm (Pitara)**

In Balinese Hinduism, the spirit of the deceased must go through several stages to reach the realm of the ancestors or *swarga loka*. (a) Sulinggih recites holy mantras so that the spirit finds a clear path. (b) The prayers that are said help the spirit not to get lost in the intermediate realm (*bhuvar loka*) and can go to heaven or moksa.

4) **Providing Tirta (Holy Water) in Every Stage of the Ritual**

The Sulinggih has the authority to make and provide holy *tirta*, which is used to purify the corpse, family, and ceremonial environment. This *tirta* functions as a spiritual means to cleanse and purify the karma of the deceased spirit.

5) **Supervising the Symbolization of the Release of the Spirit (Ngeseng or Cremation of the Corpse)**

When the corpse is burned, the Sulinggih continues to worship and recite mantras. (a) He ensures that the cremation process takes place according to the sacred teachings. (b) If using *Bade* (cremation tower) and *Lembu*, the Sulinggih also leads the transfer of the corpse to the cremation site with certain prayers. Sulinggih has a dominant role in various aspects of Ngaben, including (a) Ceremony Leader: Sulinggih leads the Ngaben procession, from preparation to the implementation of the cremation ritual. (b) Prayer and Mantra Giver: Sulinggih is tasked with reciting sacred mantras (*puja mantra*) which are believed to help the spirit reach a higher realm. (c) Spiritual Advisor: Families who are carrying out Ngaben often consult with Sulinggih to determine a good day (*dewasa ayu*), the type of ceremony, and procedures for carrying out the ritual. (d) Connector with the Spiritual World: Sulinggih is believed to be a bridge between humans and the gods, so his/her presence is considered important in ensuring the success of the Ngaben ceremony.

6) **Leading the Ngeroras Ceremony (Post-Ngaben)**

After Ngaben, the *ngeroras ceremony* is usually held (12 days after Ngaben) to ensure that the spirit has reached a good realm. Sulinggih again leads prayers and purification ceremonies for

the bereaved family.

b) Hegemony of Sulinggih on Ngaben Ceremony in the Modernization Era in Bali

Although modernization has brought many changes, the role of Sulinggih (priest) in Ngaben is maintained. However, there is a shift in terms of techniques and methods of implementing the ceremony. For example, the use of technology in documenting ceremonies. Society is now more open to innovation in the series of ceremonies, although spiritual values are still maintained. Hegemony in this context refers to the dominance or strong influence of Sulinggih (Hindu priests in Bali) in implementing the Ngaben ceremony. Sulinggih has high spiritual and social authority in Balinese Hindu society, especially in religious rituals such as Ngaben, which is a cremation ceremony as part of the soul's journey towards moksa. In the era of modernization, the influence of Sulinggih in the Ngaben ceremony remains strong, although there have been some changes due to developments in the era. Several aspects of Sulinggih hegemony in the era of modernization include:

- 1) **Exclusivity of Ritual Knowledge:** Not everyone understands the sacred texts of the Vedas and lontar palm leaves used in the Ngaben ceremony. This makes the community increasingly dependent on the Sulinggih to ensure that the ceremony is carried out properly.
- 2) **Commercialization of Rituals:** In some cases, the hegemony of the Sulinggih is associated with the increasing costs of the Ngaben ceremony. The costs for the services of the Sulinggih, the yajña ceremony, and various ceremonial facilities are increasingly expensive, often becoming a burden for the families carrying out the ritual.
- 3) **Standardization of Ceremonies:** As more and more Balinese people pursue formal education and enter the global environment, there is a desire to simplify the Ngaben ceremony. However, the Sulinggih still have a role in adapting the ritual to remain following the teachings of Balinese Hinduism.
- 4) **Adaptation of Technology:** The Sulinggih have begun to utilize technology such as social media and live streaming to spread Hindu teachings and provide spiritual guidance, including in the implementation of the Ngaben ceremony.
- 5) **In the era of globalization, challenges to the hegemony of the Sulinggih are increasingly real, but they still maintain their dominance in various ways:**
 - a) **Preserving Traditions Amidst Foreign Influences:** With the influx of foreign cultural influences, there has been a shift in the mindset of the Balinese people. However, the Sulinggih still plays a role in maintaining the Ngaben tradition so that it is not eroded by modernization.
 - b) **Improving Religious Education:** The emergence of Hindu educational institutions, such as Pasraman and Hindu-based universities, strengthens the position of the Sulinggih in shaping the community's understanding of Hindu rituals and teachings.
 - c) **Modernization Without Losing the Essence:** Some Sulinggih try to adapt the ritual to modern conditions, such as holding mass Ngaben to reduce costs, but still maintain its spiritual elements.
 - d) **Role in Spiritual Tourism:** Many foreign tourists are interested in the Ngaben ritual, so the Sulinggih have a role in introducing and explaining the spiritual meaning of this ceremony to the world.

Atmaja (2014) states that in the *griya* (the Priest's residence) there is a Sulinggih and outside the *griya* (*non-griya*) there is certainly no Sulinggih (non-Sulinggih). The relationship between *griya*, *non-griya* or Sulinggih – non-Sulinggih is tied to the relationship between *siwa* – *sisya* which is characterized by a *patron–client* or father–subordinate relationship. This relationship is classy because they control capital accumulation differently (Bourdieu, 1977, 2010; Haryatmoko, 2010:13-19; Harker, R., Mahar, C. Wilkes, C., 2013), namely, *griya* are in the upper class, while *sisya* are in the lower class. The position of *griya* is in the upper class because *griya* are richer in capital than *non-griya* (non-Sulinggih, *sisya*), in the form of cultural, symbolic, social, and economic capital. Thus, *griya* symbolized by Sulinggih are positioned as holy people, while *non-griya* are profane people. Holiness causes Sulinggih to be able to position themselves as mediators in the relationship between *sisya* and the gods in rituals. Geria can also give alms (funds) to the students, including religious services, and the students repay this with devotion or service.

c) Criticism and Challenges to the Hegemony of Sulinggih in Ngaben Ceremonies in the Modernization Era in Bali

Although Sulinggih has an important role, several criticisms have emerged, including:

- 1) High costs, some people complain that Sulinggih services and ceremony costs are too expensive, making it difficult for the lower middle class.
- 2) Lack of flexibility, some young Balinese groups who are more modern want ritual simplification but are still hampered by the dominance of Sulinggih who still maintain traditional rules.
- 3) Competition with modernity, the emergence of rational and secular views makes some people question the relevance of several aspects of the ritual, although they still respect the role of Sulinggih.

New technology and the emergence of critical people are drivers of change in every society (Laurer, 1993). With technology, there will be improvements in people's lifestyles. Critical people will be able to criticize previously carried out practices. In the development of Balinese society, changes as a result of the emergence of technological innovations and the courage of society to criticize their environment are slowly becoming more visible.

One of the main challenges faced by pastors is maintaining their relevance in a society that is increasingly connected to the outside world. In addition, pastors must also be able to explain traditional values to the younger generation who are more accustomed to modern and materialistic life. In some villages, there is a tendency for pastors to adapt to changing times, such as introducing new concepts in religion that are more in line with modern life.

1) Social and Cultural Change

Shift in Traditional Values

- a) Modernization has caused some people to start abandoning or not understanding the traditional and spiritual values in the Ngaben ceremony.
- b) The younger generation is more influenced by foreign cultures that are more practical and less concerned with rituals that are considered complicated and time-consuming.

- c) Increasing Practical Lifestyle
- d) Many families prefer mass Ngaben or modern Ngaben which are simpler and faster, compared to traditional Ngaben which requires a long preparation time.
- e) Some families even choose direct cremation without a complete traditional ceremony, so that the role of Sulinggih in this ritual becomes more limited.

2) Technology and Globalization

a) Influence of Social Media

- 1) The rapid spread of information through social media can lead to misunderstandings about the Ngaben ritual.
- 2) The emergence of criticism or sceptical thoughts from modern society towards traditional rituals can reduce respect for the role of Sulinggih.

b) Digitalization of Ceremonies

- 1) Some religious ceremonies are now conducted virtually or broadcast live, changing the direct interaction between the Sulinggih and his congregation.
- 2) This has the potential to reduce the spiritual meaning that is usually more felt in direct interaction.

According to Ogburn, technology is a mechanism that drives change, humans are forever trying to maintain and adapt to nature which is constantly being renewed by technology (Lauer, 1993).

3) Economic Challenges

a) High Ceremony Costs

- 1) The Ngaben ceremony requires a large cost, starting from making ceremony equipment, and ritual materials, to giving alms to the Sulinggih.
- 2) Some families choose a cheaper way or even avoid the complete ritual so that the role of the Sulinggih is reduced.

b) Ceremony Commercialization

- 1) In some cases, traditional ceremonies experience commercialization, where the business aspect is more dominant than the spiritual meaning.
- 2) The Sulinggih sometimes has to face pressure from parties who want to shorten or simplify the ritual for economic reasons.

4) Changes in Belief Patterns

a) Influence of Other Religions and Beliefs

- 1) Interaction with other cultures and religions through globalization has caused some individuals or families to question the relevance of Ngaben or even adopt other practices.
- 2) Some people choose a more universal method of cremation that is not related to Balinese Hindu rituals.

b) Less Involved Younger Generation

- 1) Many younger generations are busier with work and modern life so they do not understand or do not want to be involved in the Ngaben ritual process.
- 2) This has resulted in fewer people having a deep understanding of the role of the Sulinggih and the procedures for the ceremony.

The word Sulinggih means that the person concerned is a person with the status of a good and holy person both physically and mentally. Sulinggih is also called anak lingsir. Even those who are no less when talking to other people Sulinggih call themselves bapa. The words lingsir and bapa are symbolic titles to show that Sulinggih is a parent or father, not only old or father in terms of age, but more importantly old or father seen from the perspective of religious mastery both cognitively and affectively and psychometrically. Another symbolic capital is the *griya* building which is often built magnificently, the great name of the family and high social status as reflected for example in the name of the dynasty in Bali, namely the Brahama dynasty (caste) which gave birth to the brahmana pandita who holds the title of Peranda. Social capital includes social networks in the form of *siwa-sisya* links. Sisya as subordinates (clients) show social solidarity towards siwa (geria, patron) because their relationship is based on magical religion which is expressed in the ideology of dana-bhakti (Siwa provides religious services = funds and sisya repays it with devotion = bhakti).

The Siwa label also reflects that the Sulinggih has a very important position, namely connecting or even representing the god Siwa as the highest god in the Siwa Sidhanta school - dominant in Balinese society in dealing with sisya as his subordinates (Atmadja, 2010a; Suhardana, 2011). Lord Siwa is very important, not only as the highest god but also as the centre of everything (Anandamurti, 2006). In Balinese society, Shiva is also analogous to Surya (eye or sun). This idea is in line with the position of Shiva, namely providing enlightenment in the form of spiritual guidance and ritual leadership for Hindus - *lokapalasraya* to realize welfare for sisya (Suhardana, 2011). Thus, it is not surprising that sisya are afraid to leave their Shiva because it can cause their lives to become dark - not having Surya (eye, sun). A dark life is marked by disaster, for example, incurable diseases, a chaotic family economic life, families are often disharmonious, and so on.

The imbalance in capital control not only results in the upper class being invincible but also controlling the students. As a result, the relationship between *griya* and students is not only classy but also has a dimension of power. The basis of geriatric power is essentially cultural capital and symbolic capital in the form of religious knowledge contained in Hindu religious scriptures and their interpretations. The interpretation of Hindu religious scriptures, among others, takes the form of palm leaves carried out by *griya*. This activity provides an opportunity for *griya* to interpret holy books to strengthen their position as the dominant class.

Conclusion

The hegemony of the Sulinggih/priest in the Ngaben ceremony in Bali is still very strong despite the influence of modernization. Balinese society tends to maintain the spiritual values taught by the priest, even though the implementation of the ceremony has changed in form and method. Modernization presents challenges for priests in maintaining their authority and relevance in this increasingly developing era. Therefore, efforts are needed from both parties—priests and society—to maintain a balance between tradition and innovation in the implementation of the Ngaben ceremony.

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