

IDA PEDANDA KANIA: THE DOMINATION OF WOMEN IN HINDU RELIGIOUS RITUALS IN BALI

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ABSTRACT

The dominance of power does not solely belong to men. The Balinese Hindu community is familiar with the participation of women in various fields of life, especially in matters of religious rituals. Through religion and its rituals, the Hindu community in Bali places women on par with men. In the religious realm, women have roles and duties that are equally important as those of men. The religious realm becomes one of the fields to observe the dominance of women. This is represented through the presence of female religious leaders who hold the title of Ida Pedanda Kania. Ida Pedanda Kania is a title bestowed upon women from Brahmana lineage who must first undergo all the purification rituals before they can serve as leaders of religious ceremonies. Direct observation is the appropriate method to obtain in-depth data related to this phenomenon. Using the social practice theory approach by Bourdieu was chosen to analyze the objectives of this research, which is to elaborate on the concepts of habitus, field, capital, and practice that will later answer how dominance in this religious field can be held by women with the title Ida Pedanda Kania. In addition, the aim of this research is also to explain how social reality can be shaped by women who perform tasks in the public domain. Using in-depth interview methods and conducting literature studies in data excavation is considered the most appropriate in this research. This research was conducted in Karangasem Regency because, according to data, the highest number of Hindu religious leaders is located in Karangasem Regency.

Keyword: the role of women, religious ceremonies, ceremonial leaders, performance, identity

INTRODUCTION

Bali attracts attention in various sectors of life. Its rich culture and intertwined traditions make it fascinating. One enduring tradition that binds its society to continue this heritage is the holding of various religious ceremonies. All layers and groups of Balinese society are involved in this process. One crucial aspect to highlight is the role of religious leaders who are at the forefront and play a primary role in these ceremonies (Suhardana,

2008:9). Given the multitude of ceremonies, it is not surprising that this role is undertaken by individuals who receive various titles or names. Generally, Hindu religious leaders in Bali are divided into two based on their consecration and duties: *sulinggih* and *pemangku*. A holy person who can perform religious ceremonies is commonly referred to as *sulinggih* with various titles according to their designation. According to Suhardana (2008:13), *sulinggih* refers to someone who has attained spiritual freedom, whose actions are no longer bound by worldly ties such as work or indulgent activities because they have achieved liberation.

Among the many *sulinggih* in Bali with various titles, the title *Ida Pedanda Kania* emerges. "Kania" means a girl or unmarried young woman in Sanskrit, while in the Balinese language dictionary, it has a similar meaning spelled as "Kanya." "Ida Pedanda" is a title given to someone from the Brahmana varna engaged in religious matters, particularly those who have become *sulinggih*. Therefore, the term "Ida Pedanda Kania" can be summarized as a girl from the Brahmana varna who serves as a holy person knowledgeable in the Vedas tasked with leading Hindu religious ceremonies (Sutjipta, 2016:32).

Suhardana (2008:86) states that *Pedanda Kania* has different roles and functions compared to *Pedanda Istri*, even though both are women. *Pedanda Istri* performs her duties to complete religious ceremonies because she inherits that role from her husband known as *Pedanda Lanang* due to several factors, including when *Pedanda Lanang* has passed away or is unable to fulfill his duties as *sulinggih*. In contrast, the responsibilities held by *Ida Pedanda Kania* do not derive from anyone else; she performs similarly to *Ida Pedanda Lanang*, who is typically male.

METHOD

The research method used in this study is qualitative research. A qualitative approach was chosen because it aligns with the research conducted, which aims to analyze and describe a social phenomenon (Ghony & Almanshur, 2012:13). The type of research used is descriptive and explanatory. Descriptive research means presenting data in the form of words and images obtained from interview transcripts, field notes, photos, videotapes, personal documents, notes or memos, and other official documents so that the research report contains quotes that can depict the situation in its original form (Moleong, 2014:11). Descriptive exposition was chosen because it can provide a detailed description of conditions and events in the field. This basis makes descriptive research

appropriate as it aims to analyze the role of Ida Pedanda Kania in conducting a religious ceremony and how such dominance can be created. Meanwhile, explanatory research is used to provide explanations for a phenomenon (Moleong, 2014:257). In this study, explanatory research is crucial because it can explain the extent of Ida Pedanda Kania's role in Hindu religious affairs.

DISCUSSION

The Role of Balinese Hindu Women in Religious Ceremonies

The role of women in the current era cannot be denied to have undergone several shifts. In the past, Balinese Hindu women were required to master the skills needed to prepare the facilities and infrastructure for offerings, but now that obligation has shifted. Because the expanding and broadening needs also require women to be able to move into fields outside of religious matters. However, the role of women in the religious field has not simply disappeared; there are still Balinese Hindu women directly involved in the creation and even the process of religious ceremonies. If previously there was the term "serati banten" for Hindu women who had the ability to master all the procedures in making banten or offerings or ceremonial tools, on the other hand, there is Ida Pedanda Kania who has a very complex role in the field of offerings, namely being the person responsible for completing the ceremony (muput karya). Ida Pedanda Kania is a title or designation for a woman who dedicates her life to the field of religion. Ida Pedanda Kania consists of two words, namely Ida Pedanda and Kania. As explained in chapter two, Ida Pedanda is a title given to a sulinggih who comes from the Brahmana caste (Suhardana, 2008:55-59). Meanwhile, Kania in the Balinese dictionary means woman or girl. Gadis in this context does not refer to a woman's virginity, but rather emphasizes being single or unmarried.

Ida Pedanda Kania is a woman born into the Brahmana caste who later dedicated her life to religious pursuits. In summary, someone who holds the title of Ida Pedanda Kania is a woman who holds a position equivalent to a man with the title of sulinggih. Their duties and authority are similar to those of men who hold the title of sulinggih. Having the same primary duties as other sulinggih, the classification of Ida Pedanda Kania based on title or type is the same as other sulinggih, namely sulinggih siwa and sulinggih budha. However, for the classification of sulinggih bhujangga, Ida Pedanda Kania does not belong to that category, because in reality, Ida Pedanda Kania Bhujangga has not been found in the field.

A woman who holds the position of Ida Pedanda Kania like this further strengthens the important role of women, not just as assistants in preparing offerings or ceremonial items, but also in conducting religious ceremonies. Most religious leaders are men, but the presence of Ida Pedanda Kania explains that women can also become religious leaders with the same duties as men. However, it is not as easy as it seems, considering the several factors mentioned above that influence a woman to take on such a role. He is like the usual *sulinggih* who undergoes the *diksa* ceremony, but as previously explained, there is one striking difference in the *diksa* ceremony he performs, which is that he undergoes *diksa* alone. If in the general *diksa* procession, those involved are men and women who are married, it is different with Ida Pedanda Kania who performs the *diksa* alone or singularly. In addition, there is no difference in the procession, the type of offerings is the same, and the procession itself is also the same. Therefore, after performing *diksa*, an Ida Pedanda Kania plays a dual role as both a man and a woman.

The difference then becomes very clear with a married couple who decide to become *sulinggih*, having distinct tasks that can be directly identified just by sight. Ida Pedanda Lanang (the term for the husband) plays the role of the *puput karya*, and this role is considered a public role, categorized as activities associated with masculinity. Meanwhile, Ida Pedanda Istri (the term for the wife) only serves as a companion and is tasked with assisting the duties performed by Ida Pedanda Lanang. This does not happen with Ida Pedanda Kania, she performs her own duties and dual roles. A female Ida Pedanda can perform ceremonies and take on roles like Ida Pedanda Kania as long as the male Ida Pedanda (husband) has passed away, if the female Ida Pedanda has undergone the *ngelinggihang weda* ceremony (a formal inauguration before a *sulinggih* performs the *loka palasraya*), and if the female Ida Pedanda is a *prami* (descendant of the Brahmana caste) (Suhardana, 2008:112). This is also based on the decision of Ida Nabe (a teacher) that if the nabe does not permit Ida Pedanda Istri to perform the ceremony even though she has met the requirements as described, then she is not allowed to complete the ceremony (finish the ritual).

Actually, it's not a very big problem because there are still solutions to address it, but it cannot be denied that there are shifting values. One of the traditional values that changes if many Balinese Hindu women have the ability to buy rather than understand the process of making it is the activity of *ngayah*, because no one knows the process of making offerings. *Ngayah* is simply understood as an act of mutual assistance. However, *ngayah* is not just ordinary help; *ngayah* is often associated with religious aspects. When

the community engages in activities at the temple, especially participating in preparing the facilities and infrastructure for the rituals, it is at that moment that the term "ngayah" is used and not the term "gotong royong" which is commonly known (Anatara. 2012: 26-27).

Furthermore, for a woman who becomes a *sulinggih*, the ability to master the process of making offerings is not only seen as an act to perpetuate existing traditional values but also as proof to the community that a woman who becomes a *sulinggih* should not only be respected for her social position as a religious leader. That ability will instill confidence in the community, that besides her role and duties as a *sulinggih*, which means a revered position, she is also respected. This shows that besides position, ability is also highly considered, especially for a *sulinggih* who is, by definition, a woman. Because there will be different perspectives on the abilities in the field of rituals possessed by an *Ida Pedanda Kania* compared to an *Ida Pedanda Istri*. Even though both are women, their abilities can be different. For example, *Ida Pedanda Istri* who has a husband, she received the title of *sulinggih* because her husband decided to become a *sulinggih*. The provision has been clearly outlined above, if a wife does not have the ability in the field of *upakara*, she will still receive the title of *Ida Pedanda* because of her husband. Unlike *Ida Pedanda Kania*, who already possesses proficient skills in the field of *upakara*. Such abilities greatly represent a Balinese Hindu woman who is required to possess skills in the field of offerings. From this ability, it will strengthen the community's belief in women's capabilities, not only based on their social class or the position they hold.

Not only applicable to *Ida Pedanda Kania*, but also to *serati banten* who are not from the Brahmana lineage, they will also be considered in society due to their mastery in the field of offerings and ceremonies. The difference is that the role of *serati banten* is not as extensive as that of *Ida Pedanda Kania*. The *serati banten* are only tasked with preparing all the offerings, as Darma (2017:23) states that there are three things that must be considered in preparing the offerings: knowing what is needed, processing it, and presenting it (offering or *mebanten*). Meanwhile, *Ida Pedanda Kania* has a very important role as an intermediary between humans who offer offerings (*banten*) and God as the recipient of the offerings (*banten*) as a manifestation of gratitude. As explained above, the offering in question is in the form of *yadnya*, which aims to repay a previous debt. This is represented through the duties of the *sulinggih*, namely *loka palasraya* (Suhardana, 2008:76), which is not possessed by *serati banten*.

The Dominance Of Ida Pedanda Kania In The Religious Field

Pierre Bourdieu was a French thinker who sought to understand the social structure of society, as well as the changes and developments occurring within it. For him, social analysis always aims to uncover the structures of economic and symbolic domination within society, which always conceal the injustices within it. In short, this theory can be used to dissect the phenomenon that has been formulated in the research statement above. The researcher wants to see how these three concepts work and are implemented in the existence of Ida Pedanda Kania as an individual with dominance.

The concept of capital developed goes beyond just the idea of material assets to include capital that may be social, cultural, or symbolic. Capital is viewed by Bourdieu as the basis of domination and legitimacy. The most influential capital in Ida Pedanda Kania's position as a religious leader is intellectual capital, the knowledge in the field of religion that she possesses, through a long and diligent pursuit. In addition, capital also supports her process of becoming a religious leader through a series of ceremonies that can only proceed if there is sufficient capital. The coronation takes a lot of time and money. Before officially becoming a religious leader, one must undergo the diksa procession, a purification ceremony, and the rebirth process of knowledge. Social capital also plays an equally important role. This social capital includes disciples or followers who indeed serve his family and adhere to every teaching that is passed down through generations. These three capitals cannot function independently; they must be interconnected.

The realm is formed from interactions with others or external parties, which constitute a network of objective positional relationships. The realm referred to in this context is the ongoing numerous ceremonies in Balinese Hinduism, which cause the roles of Ida Pedanda Kania as religious leaders to be enduring and continuously needed. In addition, this realm also serves as a platform for women's existence to actively participate in all the series of religious ceremonies. In this context, the realm of religious ceremonies becomes a platform for women to perform and carry out tasks that are not only domestic in nature.

CONCLUSION

The dominance of Balinese Hindu women in the religious sphere did not emerge without reason. Analyzing with a social practice theory approach can explain how this dominance was formed and has persisted until now. The existence of Ida Pedanda Kania as a woman who holds an equally important position and role in the realm of religious

rituals as men proves that Balinese Hinduism positions women on par with men, which can still be explained academically. During the research and data collection process, up to the analysis stage, no obstacles or hindrances were found from Ida Pedanda Kania, who is a woman holding the responsibility as the ceremony leader and completing religious ceremonies. Because it aligns with the root meaning of "sulinggih" itself, which refers to someone who holds a prominent position in society due to their abilities in the field of religion.

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