

Religiosity of Fishermen Community in Yeh Gangga, Sudimara Village, Tabanan District, Tabanan Regency

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ABSTRACT

The contribution of agrarian civilization in forming Hindu society in Bali has become a reference in discussing Balinese Hinduism. The anthropological concepts of Balinese society that are combined into Hindu life and its religious activities have become an inseparable part of each other. After research on the role of the sea and the coast in connecting Indian and Chinese civilizations to the Nusantara land, the role of coastal communities or the coast has become a concern in forming Hindu society in Bali. Coastal communities, the majority of whom are fishermen, have values and religious activities that show themselves as part of Hinduism in Bali which are more attributed to agrarian and urban communities. Studying coastal communities or fishermen in religious activities requires data collection from interviews, observations and literature studies, and in abstracting problems, phenomenology and hermeneutics theories are used. According to *Nelayan* Yah Gangga, the coast is an unlimited resource container that is communal-egalitarian. Religious activities of fishermen include asking for permission before going to the middle of the beach, purifying themselves with sea water, saying the name of *Hyang Baruna* when going to sea and performing *piodalan*.

Keywords: Fishermen, Religious, Yeh Gangga

I. INTRODUCTION

The spread of Hinduism and its development has always been associated with the traffic of agrarian kingdoms in the interior. Kingdoms near rivers can irrigate irrigation systems, accommodate many people with a structured social and bureaucratic system, so they are often called agrarian civilizations. Kingdoms such as Taruma Negara, Ancient Mataram, Jenggala, Kediri, Singasari and even Majapahit are concentric states with an agrarian character (Lombard, 2019: 72). The legacy of the kingdom is not only recognized through inscriptions, palm leaf texts, with abstract ideas of the mandala constellation, but also the god-king system (obedient to a single authority) which is closely related to the agrarian system and the renewal of the ancient tribal chieftain system or ancestors which are typically applied by Austronesian society.

However, Philip Bowring (2024) reminds us of the early AD period of the

Southeast Asian archipelago which was inseparable from the role of coastal communities in cultural diffusion. Ceramic ornaments, beads, knowledge in processing iron and copper along with patterns on iron and copper crafts that are typical of Southeast Asia (Dongson culture), India, China and Taiwan are evidence of early Indonesian civilization enlivened by the vision of trade. The ability to make boats as well, the egalitarian role of women, especially in trade, is part of the characteristics of coastal communities who live through fish and agricultural products taken from trading communities. Even since the presence of Srivijaya which also had an influence during the Syailendra era, it was said to be a kingdom that grew from the coast and sea trade, whose greatness was always attributed by other trade-based kingdoms in the Sumatra region to Malaysia as descendants of Srivijaya. Also after the collapse of Majapahit, the kingdom that

wanted to grow big had to control the sea and its contents as a port and trade traffic.

The importance of the role of the coast in the spread of religion, culture pays attention to the role of fishermen or people living in coastal areas. Referring to Nordholt's notes (2018) in *Spell of Power A History of Balinese Politics 1650*, states that the role of Kuta Port and Sanur in local and regional trade is quite significant, life on the coast also brings other cultures such as the Pandji story (Vicker, 2016: 4) and egalitarian attitudes are different from the character of agrarian society. Again quoting Nordholt (2018) There is one link that bridges between agrarian and coastal communities, namely the importance of water flow as purification so that Hindu religious rituals always involve water, it is also about purification, blessings and grace.

Bellwood (2019:335) believes that the Austronesian people who reached Southeast Asia already had sufficient knowledge to navigate the open seas. Waves of Taiwanese people with a steady agrarian and iron culture sailed the open seas, reaching the Philippines, Vietnam and Kalimantan, which finally reached Java and Sumatra. The Nusantara people or more narrowly as the Indonesian people have known interactions with other nations. Through the shipping route with outrigger boats which are the original work of the Indonesian people, around the Pacific Ocean coastal areas met with the Chinese, Persians, Arabs and Indians. Bowring (2019) in his book entitled *Empire of Wind: The Global Role of Asian's Great Archipelago* states that long before the AD century the ancestors of the Indonesian people had been able to navigate the Pacific and Indian Oceans, in contrast to the European people who initially sailed the closed Mediterranean Sea so that their cruising range was limited. Nusantara sailors by finding open straits stimulated them to sail the open seas.

The existence of water in the inner nature of the Hindu community in Bali creates a connection between land and sea, the recording is also found in ancient

manuscripts that mention two types of beauty or *dwi lango* namely *segare-gunung*, holy places placed on the coast, purification processes involving four-legged sacrificial animals, and the *melukat* procession. Following this flow of thought, it is interesting to examine how religious life in the modern life of coastal communities or those who live in coastal areas.

From the geographical side, the coastal community in the area close to the mountain provides an interesting and perhaps unique cultural and religious view. The Tabanan area which stretches along the beaches where the coastal or fishing community still exists, along with the existence of the mountain where there is a sacred place, Pura Kahyangan Jagat which is quite close, especially in the Yeh Gangga area which is part of Sudimara Village, Tabanan District. The fishing community who actively sail to find fish in line with maintaining religious life is the focus of the study and data that will be the focus of attention in this paper.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

The type of research used is descriptive research. This method is used to analyze research results but is not used to make broader conclusions (Sugiyono 2017) which aims to create a picture or description of an objective condition (Adiputra 2021). This research was conducted on Yeh Gangga Beach, Sudimara Village, Tabanan District, Bali. The time required for the study was 15 days, namely in February 2025. The unit of analysis in this study is the life or activities that show the religious attitudes of the fishing community in the Yeh Gangga coastal environment. Through in-depth interviews, observations and literature studies, it is hoped that data will be obtained to support answering the problems faced regarding the religious attitudes and activities of the fishing community on Yeh Gangga Beach. These religious activities can be abstracted through phenomenological explanations by phenomenologists such as Mircea Eliade (2016) so that the

interpretation of each activity comes from a condition or activity that shows itself without providing pre-conceptions, which are always related to the surrounding nature.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Location Conditions and Fishermen's Community in Yeh Gangga

The potential of the coastal area of Yeh Gangga Beach is reflected in the existence of community institutions that are active in their respective roles. Community institutions in the coastal area of Yeh Gangga Beach include; (1) *Subak*, (2) Fishermen's Group, (3) Traditional Village/*Pekraman*, and (4) Traditional Banjar. In addition to community institutions, the socio-cultural potential in the coastal area of Yeh Gangga Beach is the existence of rules or *awig-awig* in the form of *perarem*. The *perarem* in the coastal area of Yeh Gangga Beach is a *perarem* issued by the Yeh Gangga Traditional Village which aims to maintain harmony between socio-cultural activities, turtle conservation activities, and tourism activities in Yeh Gangga Beach.

Local regulations issued by the Yeh Gangga Traditional Village include a ban on taking sand, littering, a ban on tourists entering several sacred areas, and a ban on tourists visiting at night. In addition to community institutions and the existence of rules/*awig-awig*, the socio-cultural potential found in the coastal area of Yeh Gangga Beach is the existence of traditions/cultures that are still running. The traditions and cultures found in the coastal area of Yeh Gangga Beach are divided into several types, namely; (1) Traditional Agricultural Traditions, (2) Fishermen's Traditions, and (3) As a place to carry out religious rituals such as *melasti*, *melukat*, and *nganyut*.

The economic potential in the coastal area of Yeh Gangga Beach is the existence of local businesses owned by the indigenous people of Banjar Dinas Yeh Gangga. The coastal area of Yeh Gangga Beach also has several local productions that

can be economic potentials to be developed. The local production in the coastal area of Yeh Gangga Beach is; (1) Agricultural and Plantation Production such as rice, corn, soybeans, long beans, green beans, chilies, coconuts, watermelons, cucumbers, and several other agricultural products. (2) Fishery Production such as *mayung* fish, snapper, tuna, mackerel, *cucut* fish, ribbon fish, anchovies, and lobsters. And (3) Household Industry Production, namely the *pindang* industry, soybean chips and fried eel chips. In addition to local businesses and local production in the coastal area of Yeh Gangga Beach, other economic potentials in the coastal area of Yeh Gangga Beach are the existence of a business management institution in the form of LPD in the Traditional Village/*Pekraman* Yeh Gangga.

Land use in the coastal area of Yeh Gangga Beach is dominated by rice fields, covering an area of 1,136,759.09 m² with a percentage of 68.9%. This shows that the agricultural sector still dominates land use in the coastal area of Yeh Gangga Beach. The next area of land use is as a settlement with an area of 133,975.26 m² with a percentage of 8.12%. In addition to rice fields and settlements, there are other uses in the coastal area of Yeh Gangga Beach, namely as dry fields with an area of 125,986.18 m² with a percentage of 7.64%, beaches with an area of 117,036.33 m² with a percentage of 7.09%, tourist accommodation with an area of 44,196.64 m² with a percentage of 2.68%, industry with an area of 12,663.94 m² with a percentage of 0.77%, worship with an area of 1,236.29 m² with a percentage of 0.07%, education with an area of 1,370.74 m² with a percentage of 0.08%, trade with an area of 1,102.56 m² with a percentage of 0.7%, and other land uses with an area of 75,504.04 m² with a percentage of 4.58%.

3.2 The Meaning of Yeh Gangga Beach for Fishermen

Individually and socially, humans in struggling with their world always face various problems and different escalations. Every problem in their life always involves

efforts to respond, the adaptive attitude inherent in humans guides them in carrying out functional actions starting from abstracting the problems and the responses they witness. Human problems are not only unique and particular but have a universal side that applies to all social and cultural patterns of society. What is faced by developing societies also has the same problems for advanced societies, depending on how a society relates it to the values that develop in its body. In its body, every society has values that build a view of life towards the world it faces so that it is possible to conduct a study in formulating responsive actions, these values are the same in every society but have different levels.

The theory of value orientation is defined as "A conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means and ends of action" (Kluckhohn in Parsons and Sihls, 1961:395). Society or individuals have a conception in themselves, both recorded and manifested implicitly and explicitly and are a roadmap in formulating choices, modes, approaches, means and actions to be taken in facing life's problems. This assumption is rooted in a view of the theory of value orientation that society is a system formed from ideas that are tested and reflective, adaptive and progressive, so that every life problem faced always has a possible solution because the problems revolve around possible problems. Following this idea, the fishing community who are always faced with the sea give meaning to the entity associated with their lives so that they can always be compounded and linked to each other, humans in this context fishermen give meaning to the sea they face.

According to Made Purwadi (40 years old), he said that I wake up at 03.00 in the morning and go straight to the beach to look for fish, shrimp or lobster, with all the equipment that has been prepared yesterday, there (the beach) my life begins and lasts, this beach is rich in marine products and I

feel like I am in the middle of a large expanse of warehouse. Following Purwadi's opinion, Yeh Gangga Beach, apart from being a place of work with an economical-practical nuance, Yeh Gangga Beach is also a second home because the intensity of going to sea or looking for fish starts from early morning, and in navigating the beach you have to know the waves or general knowledge about the condition of the beach that must be held. Another fisherman, I Wayan Suarya (47 years old) explained that Yeh Gangga Beach is often a place to hold cleansing rituals, especially during *sasih kaanem* or *kapitu*, but more than that for me because my livelihood is the result of here, this is more than my soul.

Referring to Suarya's view above, the beach is an extension of a fisherman's soul besides also having an economic-practical meaning, all activities can be done on the beach from the profane related to the body, to the sacred related to the soul. Knowing the condition of the body is very important to know or as knowledge to obtain health or productivity. The Head of Fishermen Yeh Gangga I Kadek Wita (39 years old) emphasized that knowing the condition of the beach is balanced with knowledge of the seasons as a sign that what is outside the beach and inside the beach must be mastered for the fishermen themselves, such as the *sasih kaulu* who rarely or even cannot go to sea. It is likened to a mandala or an egg, knowledge of the season is the outside, knowledge of how to fish is the egg white and knowledge of sea conditions is the egg yolk, all three are integral parts that form the knowledge of a fisherman.

The formation of the three layers of knowledge is the result of repetitive activities that are integrated into the body of the Yeh Gangga Fishermen community. Borrowing Magnis-Suseno (1991) the formation of a person's knowledge of entities outside themselves also then becomes knowledge that is recorded in themselves as capital in acting and expressing themselves including in their worldview. Fishermen are

known to be persistent and disciplined because they have to start fishing in the morning, meticulous because they must always focus on fishing, have cultural modalities regarding the seasons and types of fish and shrimp. Being egalitarian because the sea is a big house full of resources so that anyone can earn a living from there regardless of social structure. In addition to being economically-practical for the Yeh Gangga Beach Fishermen, it also has symbolic and socially-egalitarian meaning.

3.3 Religiosity of Fishermen on Yeh Gangga Beach

Referring to the research of Santosa, et al. (2022:18) regarding spatial planning in the Yeh Gangga Beach area, the Yeh Gangga Area is divided into 4, including: 1) *Melasti* Area (Area designated for religious rituals). The Yeh Gangga Beach Area is a coastal area used for *melasti* ceremonies. 2) Turtle Conservation Area. Yeh Gangga Beach is a beach used as a stopover for turtles to lay eggs. 3) Sacred Temple Area. In the Yeh Gangga Coastal Area, there are several temples that are supported by the Yeh Gangga Traditional Village community. The existence of this temple certainly limits activities outside of religious rituals to be carried out in this temple area. The temples in the coastal area of Yeh Gangga Beach include; 4) Special Tourism Designation Area. There are ecotourism potentials in the coastal areas.

Activities that show the religious character of Yeh Gangga Beach Fishermen are always starting the search for fish by offering *canang* at the *Pelinggih* around the beach and on the shore, as a sign of asking permission to go to sea and take the results. As explained by Fisherman I Made Purwadi (40 years old) that Yeh Gangga Beach is like a house or container filled with resources, but not only belongs to him, so he must ask for permission to take them. Fisherman I Kadek Wita (39 years old) said that worship of the God of the sea, namely *Sang Hyang Waruna*, is always said, as well as *Sang Hyang Bayu* as the ruler of the wind, because

with his support and permission, sea products can be obtained. By saying these two manifestations of God, it is hoped that all efforts and energy expended will not only produce results but also be a blessing or gift from the ruler of the beach as a manifestation of the omnipotence of *Hyang Widhi*.

In addition to routinely performing *melasti* both during the *Nyepi* and *Piodalan* period at *Pelinggih* Pantai, it is explained that offerings in the form of seafood are also presented as a form of gratitude to *Hyang Widhi* in this context Dewa Waruna and Dewa Wayu because in the journey to get seafood, they gain fortitude and patience in the middle of the sea which is full of challenges, said Fisherman I Wayan Suarya (40 years old). Dark conditions and uncertainty require a strengthening force so that praying, saying the holy name of God besides relying on the knowledge that is possessed is a psychological weapon in facing it. In addition, before starting to go to sea by wetting the head and feet with sea water, it is hoped that they will be clean before entering the middle of the beach, I Kadek Wita explained that sea water, apart from being a means to livelihood, is also a holiness for him to go to the stomach of the beach which is also a sacred location and full of challenges on a *sakala* and *niskala*.

IV. CONCLUSION

The religious life of fishermen on Yeh Gangga Beach has a double connection with the agrarian area that is often studied as a reference for the religious life of the Hindu community in Bali. The coastal area which also has rice fields and is close to the mountains creates a unique perspective in interpreting the surrounding nature. Fishermen interpret the Beach as Farmers interpret their rice fields, namely, as a home or container full of livelihood resources, as well as communal and egalitarian shared ownership because it is a shared area, there is no stratification in taking resources as part of a livelihood.

The following in their religious activities, Fishermen on Yeh Gangga Beach

always ask for permission first before looking for fish in the form of *canang* offerings. In addition, they purify themselves by pouring sea water on their faces and feet because the central area of the Beach is believed to be part of the *genah* or *linggih* of *Hyang Baruna*. Saying the names of *Hyang Baruna* and *Hyang Bayu* as a manifestation of *Hyang Widhi* as the ruler of the sea and wind in supporting Fishermen in looking for fish in the Sea.

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