

## **RESISTANCE TOWARD CULTURAL DOMINATION IN HINDU BALINESE COMMUNITY IN PRAYA REGENCY CENTRAL LOMBOK**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The application of the bureaucratic system of regional autonomy has an implication toward the freedom to express ethnic identity within a social life. Especially in the communities that have a diversity of ethnic groups could experience duality. On the one hand, the group that occupied the majority position can express their identity freely without obtaining obstacles. On the contrary, the identity of which is owned by minority groups may not be able to express their identity in completely as often experienced the dominance of the majority group. This case is experienced by Hindu Balinese ethnic in Central Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara Province. Freedom in the area of expressing cultural identity is not fully realizable. Cultural dominance was marked by violence against aspects of cultural identity in the implementation of the Hindu religion. Based on the issues raised, this article would discuss the background of cultural dominance and Balinese ethnic community strategies in addressing the cultural domination by the majority group.

**Keywords: resistance, cultural domination, Balinese ethnic.**

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## I. Introduction

National reforms initiated in 1998 brings a very broad implications for the changes in the bureaucratic structure of government in the Republic of Indonesia, such as the occurrence of a number of changes in the state system, both in the system of central and local government administration. One of these is the imposition changes on regional autonomy system by Act No. 12 in 2008. The outcome of the Act carries wide implications for the system of government because of enactment, the government system which was originally centralized transformed into a decentralized, which produces some opinions. First, anyone considers that regional autonomy will further increase activity in the area of governance. It is based on the assumption that the amount of authority given to the district / city and limited autonomy to the provinces. In other hand, regional autonomy would lead to inefficiency and ineffectiveness because of the authority granted is too broad and emerging a rigid regionalism and exclusivism. This can be detrimental to ethnic / religious minorities so that it is not conducive for the empowerment and improving the welfare of people, especially minorities.

This is the case occur among Hindus in Central Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara Province. The Hindu community in the town of Praya, Central Lombok Regency, is a minority group who often gain dominance of the majority group, the Sasak ethnic population which is Muslim. The majority of the group is natives of the island of Lombok. In terms of the demographic composition, the Sasak group has a majority of the population far more than the Balinese Hindus ethnic. The enactments of government regional autonomy sistem give a sense of domination to the society of Hindu Balinese ethnic, particularly with regard to the cultural dominance from the majority group.

Expressing religious teachings can be realized in various ways which are implemented in cultural activities. This is indicated by the presence of the fusion between the Hindu Religion with Balinese Culture practiced by Balinese community. Hindu Balinese who live in Central Lombok are still preserving cultural traditions inherited from their ancestors in the past. As is the case with the Hindu community in Bali, the Hindus in the city of Praya, Lombok also using cultural aspects as media appreciation of the Lord, as the use of a sacred place in the form of temples, *sangah* or *merajan*, and other forms of cultural artifacts.

The enactment of the bureaucratic system of regional autonomy, many changes were occurred concerning the cultural aspect. The government system of regional autonomy opened up opportunities for the creation of conditions that give the authority to the sons of the soil in taking the control of a number of things in their region. This phenomenon is one of the other phenomena indicated by the strength owned by the son of the soil to do cultural dominance against parties who are not the sons of the soil. The case is shown by the cultural dominance as happened among the Hindu community in Praya, Central Lombok. In this case the Balinese Hindu community is a minority tribe while Sasak Muslim constituted the majority.

In Praya, the freedom to express cultural identity is not fully being realized. This is especially after the reform that cause changes in the bureaucratic system and the regional autonomy. Cultural dominance was marked by violence against aspects of cultural identity in the implementation of the Hindu religion. The case occurred at the end of the beginning of 2008. At that time the mass actions that invade, destroy and set fire to buildings and *pelelingih* in the Sangkareang temple in Keru Village, Narmada District, occurred on Tuesday, January 15, 2008 around 23.30 pm. It has tarnished the spirit of unity in diversity and tolerance and inter-religious harmony. Pura Sangkareang as cultural ethnic identity of Balinese Hindus had stood since hundreds of years ago (could have been built since the late 1680-) and has encountered several restoration. In 2006, Hindu Balinese ethnic around renovate the temple back and scheduled the *piodalan / pujawali* on January 22, 2008, on the full moon.

The temple restoration is about to enter the final phase, but it becomes shattered because of a group of demonstrators who did not want the temple to be there. The reason was, the absence of the permission from the Minister of Home Affairs and based on the act No. 08 in 2006 and No. 09 in 2006 on guidelines for the execution of tasks of Regional Head/ Deputy Head of the religion harmony maintenance, empowerment forum for religious harmony and the construction of the houses of worship. Whereas the Joint Regulation only applies to the establishment of the new places of worship, not a heritage temple that has been aged long before the joint regulation exists, even Pura Sangkareang has existed hundreds of years old without being questioned. Mass actions that destroy the temple were clearly a criminal offense. However, the security forces do not act swiftly and are impressed on the side of the perpetrators of the destruction of the temple

by letting them roam freely and even give them space to demand cessation of the construction of the temple on the pretext that the temple construction does not have any permission.

Another case, which indicates the domination of cultural identity among Hindu Balinese ethnic community is also occurred in a sacred place in the family environment. This is demonstrated by the events that befall in *sanggah* (holy place in Hindu family environment) owned by I Wayan Sumendra completed in a *pelaspas* ritual (performed a purification ceremony) on 12 December 2008, which is done/*puput* by Ida Pedanda Manuraksa from *Gria Sweta*. The owner is given 24 hours to dismantle the *sanggah* building. Besides that, the religious conversion of Hindu Balinese ethnic is also indicated by a number of men turning to non-Hindu religion by marriage. If it is viewed in a paternalistic system of Balinese culture, a boy born in a Hindu family environment is a symbol of *purusa*; the boy should not do the religious conversions for any reason.

Changes in the governance of the government bureaucracy, especially since the enacted Law on Regional Autonomy as in the case shown above provides flexibility for local indigenous people to set themselves widely. In relation to that phenomenon, the euphoria is raised, caused by a dramatically social and political changes since the political reform in 1998, whereas it can not be a reason to release the conception of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia on the policy of the regional administration and the implementation of regional autonomy. Reforms that gave birth to Law No. 22 in 1999 and Law No. 25 in 1999, as amended by Law No. 32, in 2004 and Law No. 33, in 2004, and last amended again by Law No. 12 in 2008. Although it is considered a fundamental change in the regional administration, the formulation remained essentially refers to the conception of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia.

With regard to the appearance of the above cases, the Hindu Balinese ethnic community residing in Central Lombok aims at addressing it by doing some resistance. They get unfair treatments because of their cultural identity implemented under pressure from the majority, but they are still trying to maintain their cultural identity as a legacy of their ancestors in the past.

## Discussion

### **The Underlying Reasons of the Emergence of Resistance toward Cultural Domination of Majority Group in Hindu Balinese Ethnic Community in Praya Regency Central Lombok**

The existence of Hindu Balinese ethnic community in the city of Praya, Central Lombok regency is relatively long. They come due reason for seeking livelihood, either in the area of government or as self-employed. Until now, they still preserve their cultural system as a heritage in the new place. Although among them are not from the same area in Bali, but after occupying his new residence in the city of Praya they gather themselves and from a community system in the form of social unity/*banjar*. This system is a means to carry out the social, cultural, and religious activities and also community life order that bears a resemblance to the place of origin, Bali.

#### **1. Intimidation toward Balinese Ethnic Religious Culture Practice by Majority Group**

Intimidations done by dominant society against minority group are embodied by the pressures made by majority group. In general, the emergence of intimidation can not be separated from the aspect of power. Members are more willing to impose their will on the smaller number group. One of the cases occurred when one of the Hindu families held a religious cultural activity, namely *melaspas sanggah* ritual (purifying sacred buildings in the family) attended by the Sasak people who are Muslims. Intimidation was done in the form of demolition of the *sanggah* by the deadline of 24 hours. Besides, there was also vandalism in the temple which is used as a place for worship by Hindus in Lombok, *Pura Sangkareang*. This case is a reflection of a failure of implantation values of togetherness and implementation of religious teachings. This incident of temple destruction was occurred after the regulation of decentralization was released.

#### **2. Decreasing opportunities of Minorities in Occupying Important Positions in Government Bureaucracy System**

The application of regional autonomy governance system carries huge implications on the livelihood of the social, cultural, and religious communities. The majority and a native of Central Lombok have a great opportunity to gain privileges, including the system of government bureaucracy. Changes in government bureaucracy system of regional autonomy also resulted in a loss of respect for people who have achievements. In this regard, those who excel in a particular field will not be possible to be put in the appropriate expertise place. This case can be

arised when there are people who have good achievements can not be appreciated because they constitute a minority.

### **3. The Impairment of Balinese Community Economic System by Majority Group**

In the economic field there is such a tendency of local ethnic communities (Sasak) Muslim majority to always limit the creativity of Hindu Balinese ethnic, mainly engaged in the provision of food stuffs associated with pork is forbidden food for Muslims. They often follow practices that are not proportional to the Bali traders at Kota Praya, by exhaling issue of *halal*, *haram*, and unclean. It brings a huge impact on the economy impairment in Balinese people. The above conditions in accordance with the expression of Sanderson (2010: 83) who argued that with the advent of Islam, refrain from eating pork in the nation of Israel entered directly into a set of other specified food law that decided supernaturally. Pigs are specially treated with contempt in the Quran, and Muslims today as the nation of Orthodox Israel are forbidden to eat pork. This condition is part of an effort to marginalize Balinese people who are Hindu in Central Lombok by the domination of a number of aspects that are important to the existence of Hindu Balinese ethnic community in the town of Praya, Central Lombok.

### **4. Unequal Distribution of Teachers in Formal Education System**

Domination by the majority group Muslim Sasak against Hindu Balinese ethnic community was also in the field of education. This was evidenced by the absence of a Hindu religious teacher, whereas education should be felt by all religious, racial, ethnic, and without discriminating one to another. The unequal development of student makes education tend to be more concerned with the development of certain aspects of personality only, which is particular and partial. In fact, real growth and development of students is the goal to be achieved by schools and teachers.

### **The Attitudes of Hindu Balinese Ethnic Community at Kota Praya, Central Lombok toward Cultural Dominance from Majority Group**

The attitudes of Hindu Balinese ethnic community in Kota Praya, against the cultural dominance of the majority is manifested in the form of resistance that is done in providing resistance to such dominance. These attitudes are more subtle so as not to cause the things that are destructive. There are a number of resistance attitudes against domination such as:

### 1. **Cultural Resistance against Majority Group**

Cultural resistance carried out by the Hindu Balinese is to strengthen the aspects of *sraddha* (faith teachings of Hinduism). Reinforcing this conviction is done by giving religious teaching conducted by religious institutions such as the (PHDI “*Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia*”) Indonesia Hindu Association of Central Lombok District. This activity is carried on religious holy days such as the full moon/*puinama*, *tilem* by giving *dharma wacana* at the temple after worshipping. Hindus who attend the worshipping activity will get religious enlightenment, so hopefully it can improve religious understanding and contribute to the strengthening of religious and cultural identity they have. Other programs that is done to improve *sraddha* of the young generation is to do *sraddha* devotion to God, for example by making the *canang sari*, *canang raka*, *canang pajegan*, activate *pesantian* (religious courses) and learn chants of *sekar alit* until *sekar agung*.

### 2. **Improving Identity Awareness**

The Hindu community in the city of Praya, Central Lombok districts mainly comes from Bali. The identity of Hindus in Central Lombok has many similarities with their ancestors in Bali. In line with this, the Hindu community in Kota Praya has a noble culture that is maintained until now, such as; a sense of community and a sense of mutual cooperation, mutual help and unite with each other are still exist. Hindu culture is not just an ideal expression and application of great epics in *itihasa* and *purana*. However, in fact the true culture is discarding the animal nature and bad habits while developing good habits and also character.

The main reference for the realization of togetherness of Hindu Balinese ethnic is an obligation to respect the rights to the diversity of the culture or the rights to different cultures / practices that worth to be respected. Tolerance and efforts to eliminate conflict are done by the realization of *ahimsa* (non-violence) teaching that previously popularized by Mahatma Gandhi. The value of *ahimsa* is the factor that brings harmony and unity inside and outside the human self. Implementation of some concepts are expected to bring Hindu community in Lombok Tengah to an understanding that the essence of human life in this world are brothers as listed in the

contents of the *Upanishads*, namely; *wasu dewa kutum bakam*, the manifestation of peaceful society is characterized by the absence of violence or the people who never use violent means.

### **3. Social Protest to Local Government**

Cultural dominance carried out by the majority community against Hindu Balinese ethnic community promotes social protests. Social protests carried out by Hindu community through the institutions established by the Hindu community as the Indonesia Hindu Association (PHDI) of central Lombok regency.

Piliang (1999: 29) states that modernization and development in this era has brought contemporary society into the new realities of life, such as comfort, pleasure, and freedom. However, modernization in the political sphere on the contrary has led to the loss of the realities of the past along with the wisdoms of the past behind it, which is even more valuable for the development of human beings, such as a sense of community, a sense of beauty, spirituality vibrant, the spirit of morality, and community spirit. Departing from the process of change, the role of Hindu Balinese ethnic leaders in Central Lombok in the era of globalization become more apparent, when the concept of theology has penetrated the social reality, ie up to the level of action (social action).

### **4. Demandingan Equal Rights and Obligations for All Communities**

Hindu Balinese community in the city of Praya, Central Lombok also wanted equality with the majority community. This relates to their demands for a balance between the rights and obligations. It is mainly in the equality of treatment from the authorities, such as in terms of facilities and infrastructure facilities.

The existence of the Balinese people in the remote areas in Central Lombok is very difficult to get the attention of local authorities. Nevertheless, they continue to struggle to realize the expectations, especially in terms of temple building, such as *Tri Khayangan* as a means to conduct religious activities. There are many obstacles such as the access road to the holy sites in remote areas. This indicates that the Hindus in the remote area also intend to establish identity with regard to aspects of trust.



To build self-identity among Hindus in remote areas as described above is in line with the theory put forward by Barker (2004: 170), which essentially reveal that identity is a process that must be built, and part of the self description emotionally. Hindu Balinese ethnic residing in Central Lombok regency is increasingly marginalized in politics and government bureaucracy as a result of regional autonomy. However, there is a dimension which strengthens Hindu Balinese ethnic belief that lies behind the domination implicitly.

## **5. Strengthening Cultural and Religion Identity Among Hindus**

Hindus always attempt to hold marriage ceremonies as well as with the *memadik* procession / asking and wearing traditional dress to the temple although certain values that live in Hindu Balinese ethnic society has undergone many changes in line with the influence of the forces of change that swept Balinese ethnic.

The preservation ideology of indigenous Hinduism in any event e.g. *memadik* is reproduced and communicated by *Pembayun* and *Pelamin*. One of the core discourses that is often delivered in the context of indigenous preservation is “the need to respect and preserve the Hindu customs and rituals as the ancestral cultural heritage that has been implanted sincerely and full of confidence because it is still deemed functionable. In addition, it also has a social value concerning the valuable ethics and etiquette that have a symbolic function, and it is important for the harmony in society.

### **The Strategy of Hindu Balinese Ethnic Community in Conducting Resistance toward Cultural Dominance from Majority Group at Kota Praya, Central Lombok**

In order to overcome the cultural dominance carried on by the majority group, Hindu Balinese ethnic community in the city of Praya, Central Lombok applies a number of strategies, including:

#### **1. The Improvement of Education Quality among the Young Hindus**

Strategy through education with respect to the purpose of constructing identity of Hindu Balinese ethnic in Lombok Tengah is done either individually or in groups. Professionally, the strategies are aimed at the ability to understand and master the contents of the sacred books. Religious

education instilled in children from an early age to adulthood in Central Lombok becomes a shield to protect the Hindu identity.

## **2.Strengthening the Cultural Awareness through Formal,Non-formal and Informal Education System**

In Central Lombok Balinese Hindus since the early development of the Hindu until now, *Pinandita* and *Pandita* is the only dominant figure which is structurally and functionally give a very significant influence in the development of the educational mission, in this case the basic framework of Hinduism, namely the *upacara*, *susila*, and *tattwa* derived from the Vedas. Informal religious institutions, such as *pasraman kilat* and development center, also play a significant role. In addition, it is also WHDI (*Wanita Hindu Dharma Indonesia/ Female Hindu Dharma Indonesia*), forming a dance studio in order to preserve the culture of Bali.

As the dominant figure as well as a respected family in the community of Hindus in Lombok Tengah, the *Pinandita* and *Pandita* in the internal environment of his family provide a very strict religious and manners education to their children since an early age, before children was worth additionally received education in *pasraman*, *griya*, or at school. With such a model of education their children are expected to behave and act nice, polite and have a good manners so that later can be role models and figures to continue as *manggala upacara*/leading the rituals. In addition, they are expected to capable of maintaining their status as a respectable family.

Through that early childhood education, the religious elite, religious teachers in Central Lombok teach children about ways students read the Vedas and understand its contents in the right way from an early age. In addition, the teacher instils the values of life in *Trikaya Parisuda* to the society and also the rights and obligations as a Hindu. One of the important values and liabilities are invested in the education process in accordance with the norms of Hindu teaching that refers to the sacred Vedic literature is respectful and obedient students' obligation on *Catur Guru*; namely *Guru rupaka* (parents), *Guru pengajian* (teacher giving lessons in schools), *Guru wisesa* (government) and *Guru swadiaya* (Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa).

The efforts to improve the religious and culture knowledge by Balinese Hindus in Central Lombok recently began to be realized in the form of non-formal education. A form of non-formal education is characterized with Hindu concept called *pasraman*. *Pasraman* and similar activities oriented on religion and culture. *Pasraman* education activities involve students in formal education which aims to inculcate religious and cultural education. This activity model is known as *pasraman* or often known by the weekly school. It is the synergistic efforts with government programs, especially in instilling and preserving the cultural values of the nation.

The most important movement in the effort of strengthening *sradha bakti* to the gods and Hindus identity of Balinese Hindus conducted through formal ways. In order to achieving these goals, various educational institutions were built, which established Hinduism schools. There are establishment of Hinduism schools such as; Dwijendra schools and STAHN Mataram College.

The awakening of formal educational institutions based on Hindu and public education at the early childhood level through college has a very wide influence in Hindu society on the island of Lombok and Central Lombok in particular. Thus, education has been used as the main base of the struggle of leaders / religious elite on the island of Lombok. This was done in addition to the purpose or common interest, namely to establish the Hindus identity that can not be separated from the subjective interests of the elite, namely to preserve the legitimacy of their identity as Balinese Hindus.

### **3. Religious Values Internalization through Religious Events**

In Balinese Hindu community, religious ritual is very important. In connection with it, in the ways that have been inherited from the ancestors, it is the way to express and respond to the world around them and to maintain order and stability of social relations in society. One of them is their sacred places such as temples. Implementation of the traditions of ritual performed by Hindus is very dense which almost covers the entire life especially the most fundamental is the problem of the activities related to religious practices, social, and education.

Religious practice for Balinese Hindus is concerning on religious holy days such as *puja wali*, *Siwa Latri*, *Saraswati*, *Galungan*, *Kuningan* and *pujnama tilem*. It is celebrated by the Hindus

with sincere *sradha bhakti*, even more in *puja wali* great deals of people from various backgrounds come to the temple in order to deliver to the worship service. Usually, before the appointed day, there are several activities such as competitions, namely *majejaritan* competitions, quiz, *makidung*, read the *sloka*, *darma wacana* and *tri sandya* competition. Therefore, at the peak of the event before a joint prayer session begins with speeches and the distribution of prizes to the winners, *darma wacana* after praying together and *nunas tirta wasuh pada*. Ritualism in Hinduism is described well in order to be understood by Hindus in Central Lombok, especially the younger generation.

#### **4.Culture Acculturation between Bali and Sasak**

Strategies and models of art galleries and cultural establishment have a common goal, namely to dig Hindu art and culture by preserving the noble values. Hindu tradition can be used as a symbol of living identity as Balinese Hindu in Central Lombok. Other meanings are as legitimate interests particularly those involved in it. That is important because the persistence of the existence of Balinese Hindu social status is highly dependent on the survival of the arts and culture of Balinese Hindus in Central Lombok regency.

Local religious and cultural symbols with a variety of resources or political power is great for getting and gain sympathy in order to preserve the identity of Hindus. This potential is used to avoid hegemony practices and the use of religious institutions and customs are often used to gain the sympathy of other people in this case is to obtain support and legitimacy in running power. Empirical evidence on the use of cultural symbols, customs, and art by modern Hindu elite is used as a means to facilitate and attract sympathy from Sasak elite in realizing cooperation between Hindu Balinese and Muslim Sasak ethnic.

#### **5.Strengthening the Economic System**

Economic investment strategy with an effort to construct Balinese Hindu identity in Central Lombok regency is done both individually and collectively. Individually these strategies done personally by Hindu ethnic in an effort to make the accumulation of economic capital, as conceived by Pierre Bourdieu, 1990, includes equipment production, material, and money that is easily used for any purpose and passed on from one generation to the next generation.

Economic investment strategies which are done collectively involve the participation of *tempekan* in order to build economic order that is potentially owned by Balinese Hindus in Lombok. Hindus should be more creative and have initiative towards productive in order to improve the economy, such as improving human resources in order to have the skill and are able to facilitate human resources.

Human resources utilization among the Hindu ethnic in Lombok Tengah actualized through the business line formation in order to improve the economy, such as vending offerings (manufacture ritual tools/ *bebanten*), the vehicles washing centre, opened the workshop and savings gathering in every *tempekan*. Those efforts generally require skills in which the Hindus need to be creative and disciplined.

## **II. Conclusion**

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that the background of the cultural dominance in the Hindu community of Balinese ethnic at Praya, Central Lombok is occurred by the intimidation toward the cultural practice of Balinese ethnic, decrease the chance of minorities in key positions in the government bureaucracy system, the weakening of Balinese economic system by the majority, inequity distribution of educators in the formal education system.

The attitude of the Hindu community of Balinese ethnic at Praya, Central Lombok towards cultural dominance of the majority is as follows: cultural resistance against the majority group, increased awareness of identity, social protest to the Local Government, demanding equal rights and obligations of all communities, strengthening cultural identity and religion among the Hindus.

The strategy of Hindu community at Praya, Central Lombok in doing resistance toward cultural dominance of the majority is as follows: improving the quality of education among the younger generation Hindu, strengthening cultural awareness through the non-formal and informal education system, planting religious values through religious activities, rituals, Bali-Sasak culture acculturation, and strengthening the economic system.

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