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The Role of Traditional Leaders in Hindu Marriage Traditions in Mayasari Village, South Pamona Subdistrict, Poso Regency

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia is a country with a diverse array of ethnic groups, cultures, and religions, including Hinduism, which encompasses a wide range of traditions and religious practices. In the lives of Hindu communities, the role of traditional leaders is crucial as spiritual guides who lead the performance of religious rituals and ceremonies. This study aims to identify the requirements for becoming a traditional leader, the regulations that must be followed, and the role of traditional leaders in the implementation and preservation of Hindu marriage traditions in Mayasari Village, South Pamona Subdistrict, Poso Regency. This study employs a descriptive qualitative method with data collection techniques including observation, interviews, and documentation. The research informants consisted of traditional leaders, serati, and community members involved in the wedding ceremonies. The results of the study indicate that traditional leaders are selected based on good conduct, physical and spiritual health, as well as the ability to maintain personal purity and remain neutral. Traditional leaders are also required to adhere to rules regarding personal purity and moral ethics. During the marriage ceremony, traditional leaders lead the series of rituals, determine the auspicious date, oversee the preparation of offerings, and guide the community to ensure the rituals align with religious and traditional teachings. Additionally, traditional leaders play a role in preserving traditions through community education and the enforcement of customary laws. Thus, traditional leaders play a strategic role in preserving the continuity of Hindu marriage traditions in Mayasari Village.

1. Introduction

Indonesia is home to approximately 300 ethnic groups with diverse traditions and beliefs, as well as six officially recognized religions, one of which is Hinduism. Traditional religious leaders play a vital role in the practice of Hinduism in

Indonesia, a country known for its diversity of ethnic groups, cultures, languages, and religions. In Hindu religious practices, which are largely manifested through rituals and offerings, the role of religious leaders is essential to lead and guide the performance of these rituals. Hindu religious leaders are generally divided into two groups: *Dwijati*, known as *Panditas*, and *Ekajati*, known as *Pemangku* (Sugiarta, 2013).

Etymologically, the term *Pemangku* or *Pinandita* derives from the word *pangku*, meaning to bear or shoulder the responsibility as a servant and intermediary between the faithful and *Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa*. The *Pemangku* plays a vital role in guiding the faithful to lead a harmonious life in accordance with Hindu philosophical values, such as the concept of *Tri Hita Karana*, which emphasizes the harmony of relationships between humans and God, fellow humans, and nature. This role also supports the creation of a harmonious social life within a diverse society (Suhardana, 2006).

Within the context of the Balinese Hindu community living away from their homeland, such as in *Mayasari Village*, *South Pamona Subdistrict*, *Poso Regency*, Balinese cultural and traditional values are still upheld, ranging from language and social organization systems to religious practices. One example is the existence of the traditional *Subak* agricultural organization, which manages the rice field irrigation system. The tradition of deliberation reflects democratic values and respect for collective decision-making in resolving community issues (Ramadhan, 2025). The continuity of this tradition is also supported by the role of the *Pemangku* as a spiritual leader who fosters the ritual and customary life of the local Hindu community. Although the number of Hindus in the village is relatively small approximately 49 households due to population displacement following the *Poso* conflict the community continues to strive to preserve the traditions and customs passed down through generations. In this regard, the *Pemangku* plays a crucial role in safeguarding these traditions, including in the conduct of traditional ceremonies such as wedding rituals (Suhardana, 2006).

A *pemangku* is an individual who has performed the *yajna pawintenan* up to the *adiksa widhi* without any flaws or shortcomings, serving as a minister or intermediary between the faithful and *Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa*, according to the 1968 Decision of the *Mahasabha* of the *Parisada Hindu Dharma II* (Sugiarta, 2013). The word *pemangku* derives from *pangku*, which means to support or bear responsibility. A *pemangku* is also known as a *panglisir*, a figure held in high spiritual and moral esteem within their community. To become a *pemangku*, one must be free from the seven forms of intoxication, such as being intoxicated by wealth, physical appearance, intelligence, and so on (Wiana, 2013). A person who meets these criteria is called a *mahardhika* that is, pure, wise, and self-controlled. The *pemangku* is responsible for leading ceremonies, guiding the community, and maintaining the spiritual balance of society. The moral and spiritual qualities of the *pemangku* determine the sanctity of the ceremonies and the continuity of the traditions. Thus, a *pemangku* is not merely physically elderly, but also mature in virtue, compassion, and spiritual awareness.

Tradition refers to the knowledge, customs, and doctrines passed down from generation to generation that serve as guidelines for community life (Funk, 2013). In a broad sense, tradition encompasses social and cultural activities that remain relevant to this day. Globalization and the changing times influence people's behavior and culture, making it necessary to preserve traditions to ensure their continuity (Diasti, 2010). Tradition is not merely an old custom, but a legacy that shapes the cultural identity of a community. In Indonesia, traditions vary from region to region due to geographical conditions and differences in local culture. The preservation of traditions is essential to maintaining the continuity of values, norms, and practices passed down by ancestors. Thus, tradition serves as a social and cultural foundation that guides communities in their behavior and the performance of customary rituals for generations to come.

In Hinduism, marriage or *pawiwahan* is a sacred ceremony marking the entry into the *Grahasta Asrama*, the second stage of the *Catur Asrama* (Sudiani, 2019). This ceremony binds the bride and groom physically and spiritually as husband and wife, purifies the bride (*sukla swanita*) from evil influences (*Bhuta Kala*), and prepares for a holy lineage (Prasada, 2021; Pawana, 2018). The objectives of the wedding include fulfilling *Dharma*, producing offspring, and fulfilling *manusa yadnya* (Titib, 2006). In Balinese tradition, marriage is divided into *Mepandik* (the man as the *purusa*) and *Nyeburin/Nyentana* (the woman as the *purusa*) (Ningsih, 2020). The process follows customary law (*dresta*) and is adapted to each region (Subrata, 2020). In the *Manawa Dharmasastra IX.101–102*, this ceremony emphasizes loyalty, self-control, and spiritual responsibility for both the bride and groom.

The preservation of Hindu wedding traditions involves the practice of noble cultural values, local wisdom, and social harmony (Khrisna, 2022). The Balinese community in Mayasari Village upholds traditional wedding customs, including offerings, attire, decorations, and protocols for receiving guests. These traditions have been passed down from the island of Bali and are still practiced even though they are a minority in the local village. The presence of the *pemangku* is crucial in maintaining the continuity of the ceremonies, determining ritual procedures, and ensuring compliance with the *awig-awig*, the customary rules governing community behavior (Khrisna, 2022). This preservation underscores that culture remains alive through the maintenance of traditional practices, the guidance of spiritual leaders, and community involvement in rituals. Thus, Hindu marriage traditions remain preserved, even in an environment different from their cultural origins.

This study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the role of traditional leaders in the religious and social life of the Hindu community in Mayasari Village. Specifically, this study aims to explain the requirements that must be met by an individual to become a traditional leader. Additionally, this study aims to outline the various regulations and provisions that must be adhered to by an individual who has been appointed as a traditional leader in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. Furthermore, this study aims to explain the role of traditional leaders in the conduct of Hindu marriage traditions in Mayasari Village, particularly in presiding over the ceremony and providing guidance regarding the performance

of traditional and religious rituals. This study also aims to examine the role of traditional leaders in efforts to preserve Hindu marriage ceremonies in Mayasari Village, so that traditions passed down from generation to generation can be maintained and carried out by the local community.

2. Methodology

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method to understand social phenomena in their natural context, with the researcher serving as the primary instrument. Qualitative research is grounded in postpositivist philosophy and focuses on the natural conditions of the research subjects (Sugiyono, 2016). This method allows the researcher to obtain in-depth information regarding the role of traditional leaders in Hindu marriage traditions in Mayasari Village, South Pamona Subdistrict, Poso Regency. The research was conducted in Mayasari Village because the Hindu community there, although a minority, continues to uphold customs, particularly marriage ceremonies. Observations were conducted from the research planning stage to understand the role of traditional leaders in the preservation of customs. The research timeline was adjusted to ensure that the data collected reflected actual practices within the community.

Table 1. Interview Guidelines

Frequently Asked Questions	
1	What are the requirements to become a traditional priest?
2	What is the role of traditional priests in conducting Hindu wedding ceremonies in the village of Mayasari?
3	What regulations must a person follow to become a traditional priest?
4	What is the role of traditional priests in preserving Hindu wedding ceremonies in the village of Mayasari?
Clarifying Questions	
1	Who can become a traditional marriage officiant?
2	What are the requirements for becoming a traditional marriage officiant?
3	How is the selection of a traditional marriage officiant conducted?
4	What is the role of a traditional marriage officiant in Hindu wedding traditions?
5	How can a traditional marriage officiant act as a mediator in a marriage?
6	What taboos must a traditional leader avoid?
7	What regulations must a traditional leader follow?
8	What role does a traditional leader play in preserving Hindu marriage traditions in the village of Mayasari?
9	How does a traditional leader preserve traditional ceremonies in the village of Mayasari?

Data was collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to directly observe the practice of traditional customs and the roles of traditional leaders. Interviews were conducted face-to-face and were divided into structured and unstructured interviews to obtain both primary and secondary data (Muri, 2014). Documentation was used to examine documents, photographs, and artifacts related to traditional wedding ceremonies. The data obtained was analyzed through interpretation. Interpretation involved unpacking the meaning of the data, connecting sources, and using historical concepts and

theories as analytical tools. The results of the interpretation were presented in a systematic report to ensure they are understandable and acceptable to readers.

3. Result and Discussion

Mayasari Village was originally the Mayoa 1 Transmigration Settlement Unit (UPT), established by the government in 1981. The transmigrants came from Java, including Yogyakarta, Ponorogo, Blitar, Lumajang, Jember, and surrounding areas, as well as from Bali, specifically Gianyar, Tabanan, and Jembrana. In 1985, through deliberation and mutual agreement, UPT Mayoa 1 officially became a village named Mayoa Sari Village, which later evolved into Mayasari Village as it is known today. Geographically, Mayasari Village is situated in a hilly area at an elevation of approximately 560 meters above sea level. The village is one of 12 villages in South Pamona Subdistrict, Poso Regency, covering an area of approximately 10 km² with a population of 1,902 people. Mayasari Village has a tropical climate, characterized by a long rainy season and a relatively short dry season.

Several previous studies have examined the marriage traditions of Balinese Hindus in various regions. Wahyuni (2017) study on the Traditional Customs of Balinese Ethnic Marriage Ceremonies in Palu (1980–2016) shows that traditional Balinese marriage customs continue to be practiced by the Balinese diaspora, even in marriages with people from other ethnic groups such as the Toraja. Furthermore, Widyani's (2013) study on the Traditional Wedding Ceremony of the Balinese Ethnic Group in Lambunu explains that the conduct of traditional Balinese weddings has undergone several adjustments in its stages due to the influence of cultural, educational, economic, and temporal factors, although this has not diminished the core meaning of the ceremony. Meanwhile, Erawati (2014), in her study on Inter-Caste Marriages among the Balinese Ethnic Group in Tolai Village, explains that the Balinese traditional wedding procession consists of two main stages: the pre-wedding stage and the ceremony stage, which involves various traditional rituals. Although these studies have discussed the marriage traditions of Balinese Hindus, research on the role of traditional leaders in the implementation and preservation of Hindu marriage traditions in Mayasari Village, South Pamona Subdistrict, Poso Regency, remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by specifically examining the role of traditional leaders in maintaining the continuity of Hindu marriage traditions in the region.

Research Findings

Requirements for Becoming a Traditional Leader

Research findings in Mayasari Village indicate that the requirements for becoming a traditional leader include being a holy person within the Hindu faith, meeting both physical and spiritual criteria, being free from physical or mental disabilities, maintaining a neutral stance, and exhibiting good conduct. Jero Mangku Gede I Nengah Surna explained, "A traditional priest...must be physically and spiritually healthy, must not engage in gambling, and must have a pure mind...must remain

neutral and not discriminate against people.” The interview with Jero Mangku Gede I Nengah Surna and Jero Mangku Dalem I Ketut Dirgo at Pura Gede can be seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Interview with Jero Mangku Gede I Nengah Surna and Jero Mangku Dalem I Ketut Dirgo at Pura Gede

The selection of a priest is typically based on lineage; however, if no eligible candidates are available, a nephew, sibling, or member of the indigenous community who meets the criteria may be chosen. Jero Mangku Dalem I Ketut Dirgo stated, “If the lineage does not meet the requirements, another person may be selected through a consensus of the congregation or the traditional village.” Serati Ni Wayan Lasti added, “They must be physically and mentally healthy, not gamble, not be intoxicated, not be illiterate, and have undergone the diksa ekajati ceremony.” I Nyoman Selatra emphasized, “If all requirements are met, the candidate undergoes the diksa ekajati ceremony so they can perform their duties.” Ni Wayan Sepen and Ni Made Sudiasih highlighted the exemplary nature of a traditional leader: “A traditional leader must exhibit good behavior, wisdom, compassion, and fairness...so they can serve as a role model for the community.” A traditional leader is selected based on behavior, knowledge, physical and spiritual health, and the ability to maintain neutrality. Leaders who meet the criteria undergo the diksa ekajati ceremony as a first-level purification.

Rules That Traditional Leaders Must Follow

A traditional priest must maintain his purity and adhere to certain rules. Jero Mangku Dalem I Ketut Dirgo stated, “A priest must not commit crimes, carry or handle unclean objects, and must not consume forbidden foods.” Jero Mangku Gede I Nengah Surna added, “A priest who has taken the ekajati vows may still consume meat, but may not marry more than once without undergoing a renewal of vows...work that requires carrying or handling unclean objects is prohibited.” An interview with Mrs. Ni Wayan Sepen, a serati, can be seen in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Interview with Mrs. Ni Wayan Sepen, a serati

Ni Wayan Sepen emphasized, “Priests must maintain their purity: they must not commit crimes, gamble, get drunk, or commit adultery. If they violate these rules, they will be stripped of their position” (Ni Wayan Sepen). Ni Wayan Lasti and Ni Made Sudiasih added that priests must prioritize the interests of the congregation, maintain proper conduct, and avoid work that tarnishes their purity. Traditional priests are required to maintain their personal sanctity by avoiding criminal acts, gambling, drunkenness, work that tarnishes their sanctity, and actions that contradict Hindu teachings. The level of ordination dictates several additional prohibitions, such as the consumption of meat and remarriage.

The Role of Traditional Priests in Hindu Wedding Ceremonies in Mayasari Village

The traditional priest serves as the leader of the entire wedding ceremony, from determining the auspicious date, presiding over the betrothal, the wedding ceremony, to the reception. Jero Mangku Dalem I Ketut Dirgo explained, “The role of the traditional priest...is to preside over the betrothal, conduct the biokaon ceremony...and lead the reception.” Jero Mangku Gede I Nengah Surna added, “Traditional priests also act as mediators between the bride and groom’s families and provide guidance regarding the marriage...each wedding ceremony differs according to caste, region, and type of marriage.” Mr. I Nyoman Selatra emphasized, “Traditional leaders determine the auspicious date, offerings, and traditional rituals...they do not work alone, but are assisted by serati and parisada.” Serati Ni Wayan Sepen and Ni Wayan Lasti stated that the traditional priest is

present at all stages of the ceremony, including determining the offerings and directing the community's collective effort. Ni Made Sudiasih added, "The traditional priest plays a role from start to finish, even presiding over traditional divorces."

The Role of the Traditional Priest in the Preservation of Wedding Ceremonies

Traditional leaders also play a role in preserving traditions through education and community engagement. I Nengah Surna stated, "Traditional leaders hold community meetings...so that traditional knowledge is absorbed by the community." I Ketut Dirgo emphasized his role as a mediator and community mentor: "Ensuring all wedding rituals follow tradition...providing guidance so that the younger generation understands the customs." Mr. I Nyoman Selatra and Ni Wayan Sepen added that the leaders oversee the preparation of offerings, involve young men and women in the decorations, and guide the community to keep traditions alive. Ni Made Sudiasih emphasized, "The way leaders preserve traditions is by involving their community in everything." Thus, traditional priests not only lead wedding ceremonies but also safeguard the continuity of Hindu culture through education, community engagement, and the upholding of ancestral traditions.

Discussion

Requirements for Becoming a Traditional Priest

Traditional leaders are selected according to several methods outlined in the handbook on traditional leadership by Jero Mangku Dalem I Ketut Dirgo, which serves as a guide for the performance of the duties and responsibilities of traditional leaders (Sudharta, 2005). These methods include:

- a. Based on lineage
A regent is replaced if the previous regent dies or is unable to perform his duties. If there is more than one eligible descendant, the selection is governed by the provisions of the customary village. If there are no descendants, a replacement may be selected from among the closest relatives.
 - b. Through an election
Candidates for temple officials are selected by the temple board based on good character and conduct; they must be free from alcohol abuse, gambling, or other vices, and must remain neutral. The results of the selection are presented at a congregational meeting to seek consensus and approval of the candidates.
 - c. Through the Nyanja or Metuwun Method
Selection via nyanja/metuwun involves a mangku lancuban from outside the village who provides spiritual guidance. The name mentioned by the
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mangku becomes the candidate for the position, and this process may be repeated if the result is not conclusive.

- d. Through the Lekesan or Sekar Method
This method resembles a traditional lottery, in which betel leaves (lekesan) are marked with a special sign to determine the chosen priest. The number of betel leaves is adjusted according to the number of temple members, and the selected candidate cannot refuse.

After becoming a priest, there are a number of prohibitions that must be observed, including abstaining from certain meats or alcoholic beverages, refraining from gambling, not remarrying without a priest's blessing, and avoiding places of misfortune, as outlined in the Kusuma Dewa manuscript.

Rules That Must Be Followed by a Traditional Leader

A traditional priest, especially one classified as a holy person (Ekajati), is required to follow a set of rules and ethical codes that emphasize personal purity and morality (Sudharta, 2005). The primary principle is to maintain personal purity by refraining from committing crimes or acts that defile spiritual values, as priests are regarded as sacred by the Hindu community. Additionally, priests are prohibited from performing physical labor that requires carrying or lifting unclean objects, as the head is considered the holiest part of the body in Balinese Hindu tradition; thus, coming into contact with unclean objects can violate this purity (Sudharta, 2005). Restrictions on meat consumption are also enforced according to the level of spiritual attainment. Priests who have reached a certain level of spiritual attainment are required to be vegetarian, while Ekajati priests are still permitted to consume meat. All these regulations emphasize that a priest's behavior must always reflect sanctity and uphold spiritual dignity in the eyes of the faithful.

The Role of Traditional Priests in Hindu Wedding Ceremonies

Traditional priests play a central role in Balinese Hindu wedding ceremonies, from guiding the preparation of offerings to reciting mantras (Sudharta, 2005). In the preparation of offerings, the priest determines the types of banten according to the scale of the ceremony, such as pedangen-dengen (peras, ajuman, daksina), tataban, sesayut, pengambyan, sanggah urip, tetimpug, and other symbolic items that symbolize purity, balance, and the readiness of the bride and groom to enter married life. The priest leads all stages of the ceremony, including:

- a. Mesedek (engagement), marking the start of the marriage process; this can take the form of nyentana/nyeburin or mepadik.
 - b. Selection of an auspicious date, based on the Balinese Hindu calendar, which influences the smooth running of the ceremony and married life.
 - c. Ngekeb, a body scrub and sacred bath for the bride as a symbol of self-renewal.
 - d. The pickup of the bride-to-be, marking her readiness to leave single life behind.
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- e. Mekala-kalaan/Mebyakala & Medagang-dagangan, cleansing of body and soul and a symbol of household responsibility.
- f. The mekala sepetan & metikeh dadakan ceremonies, symbols of the couple's purification and the unity of male and female energies.
- g. Mepegat & Mejauman (taking leave), marking the transition to married life and bidding farewell to the ancestors.
- h. Reciting mantras and performing ngelukatan for personal purification, and natab banten pedengen-dengen for the purification of offerings, accompanied by holy water and incense.

Thus, traditional leaders not only oversee the symbolic and ritual aspects but also ensure that the entire marriage process proceeds in accordance with the spiritual and traditional values of Balinese Hinduism.

The Role of Traditional Leaders in Preserving Hindu Marriage Traditions in Mayasari Village, South Pamona Subdistrict, Poso Regency

Traditional leaders in Mayasari Village play a strategic role in preserving Hindu marriage traditions. One of the efforts undertaken is through the organization of lokhasabha, which are meetings among traditional leaders at various levels, from the village to the regency. These meetings aim to discuss cultural preservation, religious education, and customs, involving people from various generations to foster harmony and active interaction. Additionally, traditional leaders establish village youth organizations, which serve as training grounds for prospective brides and grooms in preparing traditional ceremonies, participating in communal work at the temple, leadership training, and involvement in religious activities. On a broader scale, these organizations are consolidated into larger regional organizations encompassing multiple villages at the sub-district, provincial, and even national levels, to strengthen solidarity and the preservation of traditions through seminars, competitions, and other religious activities.

Traditional leaders, together with traditional officials, also establish awig-awig traditional regulations governing the engagement and marriage process, including administrative requirements, approval mechanisms, and penalties for those who violate the rules. For example, the engagement must be finalized at least 30 days before the ceremony, marriage documents must be complete 15 days in advance, and violations of traditional customs may result in specific fines. These awig-awig serve to maintain customary order, honor parents, and ensure that marriages are conducted in accordance with customary and religious provisions. Through various activities, organizations, and customary regulations, the traditional leaders of Mayasari Village play a vital role in preserving the continuity of Hindu marriage traditions while fostering a generation that understands cultural values and the spirit of mutual cooperation within the community.

The findings of this study are consistent with several previous studies that have examined the marriage traditions of Balinese Hindus in areas outside their homeland. Wahyuni (2017) research indicates that the Balinese Hindu community in Palu continues to uphold their traditional wedding customs despite living in a

culturally distinct environment. This finding aligns with the results of this study, which show that the Balinese Hindu community in Mayasari Village also continues to practice traditional Balinese marriage customs even though they are a minority group and are far from their homeland. This indicates that marriage traditions serve as a key aspect of cultural identity that Balinese Hindus in diaspora communities continue to uphold.

Furthermore, Widyani (2013) study explains that the performance of traditional Balinese wedding ceremonies may undergo adjustments due to local social, economic, and cultural factors, yet these do not diminish the core meaning of the ritual. The results of this study also reveal a similar phenomenon, where the Hindu community in Mayasari Village continues to perform the main stages of the wedding ceremony, despite certain adjustments made to suit local community conditions. Thus, marriage traditions are maintained as an important part of the community's religious and social life.

Furthermore, Erawati (2014) study explains that the Balinese traditional wedding procession consists of pre-wedding stages and the performance of ceremonies involving various traditional rituals. These findings are also consistent with the results of research in Mayasari Village, which indicate that the wedding process encompasses various ritual stages, ranging from the proposal, the selection of an auspicious date, to the purification ceremony for the bride and groom. The distinction between this study and previous research lies in the focus of the analysis. While earlier studies emphasized the stages and forms of the wedding ceremony, this study places greater emphasis on the role of the traditional leader (pemangku adat) as both the ritual leader and a key figure in preserving the continuity of Hindu wedding traditions within the diaspora community. Thus, this study complements previous research by offering a new perspective on the importance of the role of traditional leaders in leading wedding processions and preserving the traditions of Balinese Hindu weddings in Mayasari Village.

Traditional priests play a crucial role in preserving traditions and conducting Hindu weddings, both spiritually and socially. The process of becoming a priest is carried out through several mechanisms, such as lineage, selection based on conduct, or traditional spiritual methods (nyanja/metuwun and lekesan/sekar), with the requirement that priests must maintain their purity and adhere to strict customary regulations. In the context of marriage, traditional leaders serve as ritual and symbolic guides, ensuring that all stages of the ceremony from the proposal to the purification of the bride and groom are conducted in accordance with Hindu spiritual and customary values. Additionally, traditional leaders actively contribute to cultural preservation through the establishment of village youth organizations, the organization of lokhasabha gatherings, and the formulation of awig-awig as guidelines and sanctions to maintain customary order. Thus, traditional leaders not only preserve the continuity of marriage traditions but also shape a generation that understands cultural values, ethics, and mutual cooperation, ensuring that Hindu traditions remain sustainable and relevant in the lives of the Mayasari village community as well as the broader Hindu community.

4. Conclusion

Based on the data collected during the study, it can be concluded that a traditional leader is selected not solely on the basis of lineage, but rather with greater emphasis on good conduct and character, physical and mental health, and mental clarity. Candidates for the role must be free from physical or mental disabilities, maintain a neutral stance, and be capable of acting fairly, as the responsibilities they bear are immense in leading traditional ceremonies and guiding the community. The traditional priest plays a central role in Hindu wedding ceremonies, from the beginning to the end of the procession. The priest leads the ceremony, determines the types of offerings used, and provides guidance to ensure that all rituals align with tradition and religious values. This role is crucial because Hindu wedding traditions cannot be carried out haphazardly without the guidance of sacred figures such as traditional priests and *sulinggih*.

In addition, a traditional leader is required to maintain personal purity, refrain from committing crimes, and avoid work that defiles purity, such as carrying or handling unclean objects. Dietary restrictions also apply according to the level of ordination; priests of a certain rank are required to be vegetarian, while *ekajati* priests are still permitted to consume meat. All these rules emphasize that traditional priests must always serve as moral and spiritual role models for the Hindu community. The role of traditional priests in preserving marriage traditions in Mayasari Village is particularly significant. In addition to leading ceremonies, the priests also actively organize *lokhasabha* meetings among traditional priests in Central Sulawesi to discuss cultural preservation and involve the community in traditional activities. The priests ensure that every step of the marriage ritual adheres to ancestral traditions, using written guidelines as a reference, so that the continuity of tradition is maintained and the younger generation can learn about and preserve Hindu cultural values.

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