

## The Implementation of *Tri Hita Karana* in the Preservation of *Ngayah* Culture in Bali

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**Abstract:** *Ngayah* is one of the local wisdoms that has grown and developed in Bali and is still practiced by the Balinese people to this day. Simply put, *ngayah* refers to voluntary activities performed without expecting material rewards, but for social and religious purposes. This activity is considered a social obligation that strengthens relationships among community members and enhances solidarity within the community. *Ngayah* plays an important role in the preservation of Balinese culture, community empowerment, and environmental awareness. However, in its development, *ngayah* faces challenges such as modern lifestyle changes, population migration, and a shift in social values that prioritize materialism. Efforts to preserve *ngayah* can be made through education and outreach to younger generations, the use of digital technology, and the provision of incentives or recognition. In the context of the *Tri Hita Karana* philosophy, *ngayah* demonstrates the harmonious relationship between humans, God, and nature, reflected in social activities involving mutual cooperation. Therefore, *ngayah* not only functions as a social activity but also as a means to strengthen the values of tolerance, togetherness, and harmony in Balinese society.

**Keywords:** *Ngayah*, *Tri Hita Karana*, Cultural Preservation

## INTRODUCTION

The diversity of the Indonesian nation, one of which is the uniqueness of life on the island of Bali, where the people who grow and develop are closely connected with the local social and cultural environment. The preservation of customs and culture in an area is highly dependent on the daily activities of the local community. The role of local governments

becomes very dominant in strengthening villages with their customs to maintain the harmony of tradition and culture.

Villages in Bali have unique characteristics that differ from one another due to their geographic location and the background of their communities, resulting in cultural differences, even within the same island of Bali (Windia & Dewi, 2021). Cultural traditions are habits performed in a region, where these habits are agreed upon by all the residents, creating peace and harmony among the local people. In Bali, these traditions are strong and solid, uniting the community into a cohesive activity, making Bali famous for its hospitality towards visitors as well as among its people.

One tradition that continues to be maintained in Bali and aligns well with the three concepts of *Tri Hita Karana* is *Ngayah* (mutual cooperation). *Ngayah* is a social obligation of the Balinese people as the practice of *karma marga*, carried out collectively with a sincere and heartfelt intention (Wiana, 2022). From an etymological perspective, the word *ngayah* originates from the words “*ayah, ayahan, pengayah, ngayahang*” (which are interconnected in a unity). The concept of *ngayah* is similar to the concept of *ngopin*, *nguopin*, or *ngaopin*, which refers to activities on a smaller scale, such as within family and household settings, and are directed toward horizontal relationships (among peers); this is called *ngopin*. Meanwhile, *ngayah* takes place on a larger scale and is often aimed at a vertical relationship with God, such as *ngayah* in sacred places or temples (*Pura*).

## **METHODS**

The literature review from various sources and theoretical studies related to the preservation of the *ngayah* culture in Bali and its connection with the implementation of *Tri Hita Karana* are used in the writing of this article.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Ngayah***

*Ngayah* is one of the local wisdoms that exists, grows, and develops in Bali. The culture of *ngayah* is still practiced and has not faded with the passage of time up to the present. Simply put, *ngayah* refers to voluntary activities in which an individual or group works sincerely without expecting material rewards, but rather for social and religious purposes. In Balinese society, the concept of *ngayah* is similar to the concept of volunteering, but it is still based on the customs and social rules that are prevalent in Balinese society. The activity of *ngayah* is considered a social obligation that must be carried out by the Balinese people, especially as a form of devotion to God and to fellow human beings. The tradition of *ngayah* is usually carried out in various activities such as mutual cooperation in the banjar (the equivalent of a

neighborhood unit) or at the pura (sacred temple). In practice, *ngayah* does not discriminate based on educational background, social status, or occupation. Anyone with a sincere heart and good intentions can participate in these activities

### **The Importance of *Ngayah* in the Life of the Balinese Community**

#### **1. Strengthening Social Solidarity**

One of the main values taught through *ngayah* is solidarity. Dinas Kebudayaan Provinsi Bali (2024) give directions, the Balinese people highly prioritize togetherness when facing challenges and problems. In every *ngayah* activity, whether building a temple, cleaning the environment, or conducting traditional ceremonies, each individual plays an active role regardless of social or economic status. This creates a strong emotional bond among residents, fosters mutual trust, and strengthens social relationships within the community.

#### **2. Preservation of Culture and Traditions**

*Ngayah* plays an important role in the preservation of Balinese culture and traditions. Many traditional and religious activities require active participation from the community, such as the *melasti* ceremony, *odalan*, and celebrations of other significant days (Suryawan, 2022). By participating in *ngayah* activities, future generations can learn about the noble values of Balinese culture, understand the symbolic meanings of various ceremonies, and become involved in maintaining the continuity of existing traditions.

#### **3. Community Empowerment**

Through *ngayah*, the Balinese people not only maintain good social relationships but also empower themselves to create positive changes within their community. Many traditional villages in Bali rely on *ngayah* for the construction of public facilities, such as roads, bridges, and other public infrastructure (Kusuma & Sasmita, 2023). With *ngayah*, the community can be more self-reliant and less dependent on external aid, thereby fostering improvements in their social lives.

#### **4. Environmental Awareness**

As part of the practice of *ngayah*, many activities focus on maintaining cleanliness and environmental conservation (Widiantara & Putra, 2023). For example, cleaning beaches, preserving the ecosystem around temples, or planting trees. In Balinese culture, nature and the

living environment hold significant importance in spiritual life, and *ngayah* serves as a means to nurture and protect the surrounding environment.

### **Challenges in Preserving *Ngayah***

Although *ngayah* has become an integral part of Balinese culture, there are several challenges to its preservation, especially with the advancement of time.

#### **1. Changes in Modern Lifestyle**

The Balinese community, especially those living in urban areas, is starting to be influenced by a modern lifestyle that tends to be more individualistic and focused on economic activities. This has led to a decreased interest and participation in *ngayah* among the younger generation. Daily routines such as work and studies are the main reasons for the decline in participation in *ngayah* activities (Sujana & Raka, 2024).

#### **2. Population Migration**

Many of Bali's younger generation move away to other regions or large cities in search of better job opportunities. This phenomenon has led to a reduction in community participation in village-based *ngayah* activities, as those living outside Bali are not always able to return and participate in these activities (Ardana & Dewi, 2021).

#### **3. Social and Economic Changes**

Adnyana (2023) said, changes in social and economic structures also affect traditional values, including *ngayah*. In a society that increasingly prioritizes material results and individualism, there is a tendency to reduce activities that are performed without immediate material reward.

### **Efforts to Preserve *Ngayah***

There are several ways that the Balinese community, the government, and other parties who care about Balinese culture can contribute to the preservation of the *ngayah* culture:

#### **1. Education and Socialization for the Younger Generation**

One of the best ways to preserve *ngayah* is by introducing this concept to the younger generation. Through formal and informal education, the values of *ngayah* can be taught from an early age, so that children and teenagers understand the importance of mutual cooperation

and togetherness in social life (Arimbawa & Wimbawa, 2021). Schools in Bali can emphasize activities that involve social participation within their curricula.

## 2. **Adapting *Ngayah* to the Digital Era**

Although times have changed, the concept of *ngayah* remains relevant. One way to ensure that *ngayah* continues to be practiced is by utilizing technology and social media. Community activities or traditional ceremonies can be promoted online to encourage participation, even from those living outside Bali (Suryani & Widana, 2022).

## 3. **Encouraging *Ngayah* Activities in Tourist Communities**

Tourists visiting Bali can be invited to participate in social and cultural activities. By involving tourists in *ngayah* activities, they not only gain cultural experiences but also help fund or support these activities, which benefit the local community (Bali Post, 2024).

## 4. **Providing Incentives or Recognition**

The community can be given recognition or incentives for their active participation in *ngayah* activities. These rewards could include acknowledgment at the village level or material support that helps sustain these activities.

### ***Ngayah* in the Concept of *Tri Hita Karana***

Mutual cooperation is closely related to the philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana*, which forms the foundation of Balinese life and is the concept behind *Ngayah* (Kemenparekraf RI, 2023). *Tri Hita Karana* refers to the three causes of happiness and prosperity, based on the harmony between three aspects: the relationship with God (*Parahyangan*), the relationship with fellow humans (*Pawongan*), and the relationship with nature (*Palemahan*).

In the context of *ngayah*, every activity carried out aims to maintain balance in social and spiritual life. The implementation of *ngayah* reflects a relationship based on tolerance and mutual respect among people, characterized by *asah*, *asih*, and *asuh* (teaching, loving, and guiding). Therefore, through the practice of *ngayah* in the banjars of Bali, social harmony is created, which also plays a role in maintaining inter-religious tolerance.

A tangible example of the application of *ngayah* within the concept of *Tri Hita Karana* can be seen in various activities, such as mutual cooperation in building places of worship, bridges, and disaster response, as was the case in the village of Songan, Kintamani, Bangli. All

Balinese people, regardless of religious, ethnic, or social background, come together to help, whether materially, physically, or mentally (Darmayanti, 2022). This is a concrete example of diversity that strengthens social integrity and prevents intolerance in community and national life. Thus, *ngayah* is not just a social activity but also serves as a means to build and strengthen the values of tolerance, togetherness, and harmony in Balinese society, in line with the principles of *Tri Hita Karana*.

*Ngayah*, a Balinese term, signifies the act of selfless service or devotion. It is a fundamental aspect of Parhyangan, one of the three pillars of *Tri Hita Karana*. *Parhyangan* refers to the harmonious relationship between humans and God. Within this context, *ngayah* is not merely a religious obligation but a way of life, a spiritual practice that deepens one's connection with the divine (Suryani & Raka, 2024). By engaging in *ngayah*, Balinese Hindus believe they are expressing gratitude to the gods and contributing to the spiritual well-being of their community.

*Ngayah* plays a crucial role in fostering community cohesion and strengthening the social fabric of Balinese society. Through collective acts of service, such as participating in temple ceremonies or communal work projects, individuals develop a sense of belonging and shared purpose. *Ngayah* also promotes values of cooperation, respect, and humility (Santosa, 2024). By working together for a common goal, Balinese people strengthen their bonds and create a supportive social network.

Beyond its social implications, *ngayah* holds profound spiritual significance. It is believed that by offering selfless service, individuals purify their minds and hearts, and move closer to the divine. Through *ngayah*, Balinese Hindus seek to overcome ego and attachment, cultivating qualities such as compassion, patience, and gratitude (Geriya, 2024). By dedicating their time and energy to serving others, they believe they are fulfilling their spiritual obligations and contributing to the cosmic order.

*Ngayah* is a Balinese term rooted in the concept of gotong royong, or communal cooperation. It's a fundamental aspect of the *Pawongan* dimension within the *Tri Hita Karana* philosophy, which emphasizes harmonious relationships between people. *Ngayah* involves active participation in community activities, contributing one's time, effort, and resources for the betterment of the community.

In the context of *Tri Hita Karana*, *ngayah* is more than just doing work. It's a spiritual practice that fosters a sense of unity and belonging. When individuals engage in *ngayah*, they are not only contributing to the physical development of their community but also strengthening the social bonds that bind them together. It's a way of expressing gratitude for

the blessings they have received and giving back to the community that has nurtured them (Putra & Adi, 2024).

*Ngayah* is a Balinese term deeply rooted in the concept of *Palemahan* within the broader philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana*. *Palemahan* refers to the harmonious relationship between humans and their natural environment. *Ngayah*, often translated as "community service" or "collective work," embodies the spirit of communal cooperation and responsibility towards the environment (Ginandjar & Andika, 2023).

In the context of *Tri Hita Karana*, *ngayah* is more than just physical labor. It signifies a spiritual connection to the land and a recognition of the interconnectedness of all living beings. When Balinese people engage in *ngayah*, they are not merely working to improve their surroundings but also participating in a sacred ritual that strengthens their bond with nature. Through *ngayah*, the community reinforces the idea that human well-being is inextricably linked to the health of the environment.

The practice of *ngayah* is diverse and can encompass a wide range of activities, from maintaining irrigation systems to cleaning temples and beaches (Maharani, 2024). These activities are often carried out collectively, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose. *Ngayah* is not seen as a burden but rather as an opportunity to give back to the environment and to strengthen the social fabric of the community. By participating in *ngayah*, individuals contribute to the sustainability of their environment and perpetuate the values of *Tri Hita Karana* for future generations.

The practice of *ngayah* has numerous benefits for individuals and communities. On a personal level, *ngayah* can help individuals develop a sense of purpose, belonging, and fulfilment (Putra & Adi, 2024). It also promotes the development of important life skills such as teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving. For communities, *ngayah* fosters a sense of solidarity and cooperation, helping to build stronger, more resilient communities.

## CONCLUSION

Preserving the *ngayah* culture in Bali is an important step for maintaining social harmony, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability. Although facing challenges in the modern era, with appropriate adaptation and the involvement of all parties, *ngayah* can continue to be an essential part of Balinese life. By preserving and continuing this tradition, Bali not only upholds the noble values of its culture but also strengthens solidarity among residents, protects the environment, and builds a better future for the generations to come.

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