

TRI HITA KARANA AND NATURAL RESOURCES

EXPLORING A WAY HOW THIS NATURE IS PRESERVED AND PROTECTED IN BALI AND LOMBOK ISLANDS

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PURPOSE

THIS study is an attempt to explore a way of nature preservation and protection and the relations between Tri Hita Karana, local wisdom and natural resources. In addition, explanations why local wisdom is related to sustainability of natural resources were sought by examining a number of intervening variables.

Design/Methodology/Approach: *A survey of 250 Hindu Balinese at two different settings, Bali (BL) and Lombok (LB) was conducted. Questionnaires dealing with the concept of Tri Hita Karana: belief, tradition, rites and festivals, and environment changes are distributed at two different settings to school children, the youth and the old. The collected sense data are statistically (%) analyzed.*

Findings: *Data analysis results that the practice and implementation of Tri Hita Karana are closely related to the preservation and protection of the natural resources in these two different Islands. The data also reveal that the involvement of the children, the youth and the old in practicing and implementing the local wisdom especially, in Ogoh-ogoh parade indicate positive increase in number. Therefore, Tri Hita Karana seems to have been practiced and effective way to keep the environment in harmony and balance.*

Research Limitations/Implications: *The data reported stemmed from two different settings and method of data analysis have been the limitation of the study.*

Practical Implications: *Results of this study support the notion Tri Hita Karana and the precept think globally but, act locally proved true. Hopefully, these results would be of help for the local government to better understand the concepts and develop a way for the preservation and protection of the natural resources.*

Originality/Values: *This is the first explorative study on Tri Hita Karana and natural resources in two different settings. The study offers significant information to Hindu Balinese and local government at two different Islands.*

Key Words: *Tri Hita Karana, Tradition, Environment Change, Rites and Festival.*

Tri Hita Karana has long been recognized and practiced (Mantra, 1993: 35) among the Balinese as a local knowledge. This paper addresses several issues which are interrelated: the comprehensive review of the concept *Tri Hita Karana* from the rather distant past, the past and the present, and the projected trends; which part of the concepts have been adopted by us in preserving and protecting the environment, if any, and the reason for adoption, the contribution of the concept which have been applied to the

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process of environment and water management for the betterment of human life, successful or not and why? The last part of this paper looks particularly at the impact of the implementation of modern science and technology on the quality of the life, and whether advancement in science and technology can help preserve our environment.

The present world presents phenomena of different kinds; and these make most of us, if not all, worried. Men are now impressed by material objects, power and the life of material wealth. We forget the good life to live; morality, ethics and spirituality is no longer a concern of many of us. Crisis, in all aspects of life, are now everywhere. The universe we live is not totally whole for human being. There are other living beings existing in this world. We never wonder, this world with its flowers, rivers, rocks, stars, sun, moon all did not come about by chance, said Bhagawadgita, the Devine Songs of Hindus. All these things we see around us, and all that we know of, must have become what it is today by some process, by design as it is mentioned in the Bhagawadgita (1987: 23). If we could understand this process, we would understand the nature of the universe, not necessarily sacrificing our own culture including the universe we live. It is cited in The Bhagawadgita, a book of scripture, that this Universe with all its contents was created; and the creation was love-based (2003: 358-70). Further it is cited that this creation is to be well preserved and protected from destruction. This is named *Tri Sakti*, the three Powers, that is Creator, Protector and Destroyer. Understanding, respect, tolerance and love are ways towards the protection and preservation of this universe. The universe in a small scale, a family house, is a house where we live.

Bali is a small island; it is only 5,632.86 km² (2,174.86 sq mi) in area and 3,891,428 population. Of these population, 89 % are Balinese and the others are Javanese (7%), Baliaga (1%) and Madurese (1%). The great majority of the populations are Hindu (92. 29%) by religion. Other religions are Muslim (5.69%), Christian (1.38%) and Buddhist (0.64%). The diversity in belief and ethnicity does not make Bali value free; they are all, in their daily life, governed by their own principles of belief. Respect, awareness, tolerance and understanding are, as they ensure, key to happiness. They believe that the good life to live is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge, the knowledge of the local wisdom. Bali has long been recognized as one of the most peaceful and interesting regions in the world over. As part of Indonesia, Bali is more popular and well-known than the republic of Indonesia; it is not surprising that if one frequently asked, "which part of Bali is Indonesia"? Surely this question implies that Bali, at least from the view of stranger, has attracted the attention of many people from all over the world. This is all due to the uniqueness of Bali. Bali offers a lot of things, their lives, religion, status and natural beauty, which are all unique in nature. For all of these, Bali is attributed, to many predicates such as the Island of Gods, the Island of thousand temples, the Island of Paradise, and the Island of many artists. *Tri Hita Karana* is one of those many unique concepts that is still and well be practiced in the Island.

House Construction according to the concept *Tri Hita Karana* is the reflection of mini-universe. The houses of the Balinese people are constructed in accordance to the *Tri Hita Karana* concept (<http://www.balivilladirectory.blogspot.com>, 2012). Such orientation is based on the guidelines that the north-east angle is the sacred point and thus reserved as the place for the house temple or sometimes, family shrines, or Sanggah as it is called by the Balinese. In contrary, the west-south angle is the side of the lowest value in house construction setting, is the side for the house entrance. A wall called Aling-Aling is built at the entrance door, Angkul-Angkul, it does the function as a block for the inside, and also it is used as a way to drive away devil spirits. In this part of the compound it is also built the Jineng, paddy warehouse and the kitchen, Paon. Then the following structures are found Bale Tiang Sanga, Bale Sikepat/Semanggen and Umah Meten. The three structures, Bale Tiang Sanga, Bale Sikepat and Bale Sekenam, are open structures. Court yard, Natah, is built at the center part of the house. The bedroom, Umah Meten, is the one for the head of family, or the daughter. Umah Meten is the structure with four walls as it aimed to have higher security than other rooms, the places for important and valuable goods. This kind of typical Balinese house, (see appendix 03), usually comes with a border in the form of fences around the construction.

The Concept of *Tri Hita Karana* is rooted from the Hindu concept; it is a religious concept (<http://www.balistarislnd.com>, 2012). Nowadays it becomes the point of the hotel, restaurant and other building

assessment in the world. The Balinese traditional architecture is not only monumental, but also a reflection of both philosophical and religious teachings. At least the teaching of how dwelling place, a family house should be constructed; and the understanding of how this universe, mini-universe is divided into three parts. The cosmogony is, according to the concept of Hindu, oneness of three worlds, *Tri Bhwana*, which is called Bhuhloka, Bhwahloka, and Swahloka (<http://www.theceremonyinbali.wordpress.com>, 2012). Each of this world, Loka, has its habitants by itself. *Tri Hita Karana* is also concerned with the concept of life. In addition of this three concepts, cosmogony is also contextually related to religious concept. *Tri Hita Karana* simply means three causes of happiness. Tri “three”, Hita “happiness” and Karana is “causes”. It is a Sanskrit linguistic unit, meaning to keep harmonious and balanced relationship between human to Almighty, human-to-human and human to environment. Implicit in this concept is that this nature should be preserved and protected from destruction.

These three concepts are most popular in Bali. The concept comprising three parts: that is Parhyangan, Pawongan and Pelemahan, respectively. Parhyangan is one of the three concept related to the god (<http://www.balistarisland.com>, 2012). On this stage, the human is demanded to keep the harmony and balance with god. This concept has huge meaning where the Balinese are discipline and feel confident to do this. It is not only to do the praying at the temple, but also perform all activities related to good thing to live, such as building the temple, cleaning the temple, keeping the religion symbols and keeping the environment healthy.

Pawongan in this concept is required to keep the harmony and balance relationship between human to human and human to environment. This concept has emphasized how to keep good relation with others. The simple ways to execute the implementation of this concept are to conduct three good things: to think, to speak and to conduct the good things. By conducting three good things, to think, speak, and act aright, that is called *Tri Kaya Parisuda*, we are ensured to have carried out the *Tri Kaya Parisuda*. This is true because *to be is to become* (Alder, 1983: 36). If we are thinking and feeling aright, good speech and action will automatically follow. Pelemahan, a Balinese, comes from lemah, meaning the land or environment. Generally the Pelemahan in *Tri Hita Karana* is all aspects related to the environment. Base on this concept the Balinese has treated the environment well beings; and they believe that the good environment will give a better life to live. An instance that the Balinese have practiced and implemented the *Tri Hita Karana* is that on the Tumpek Uduh, Tree day, based on the Balinese calendar. It is a celebration day for plantation and tree. The Balinese on this special day provide special offering to the tree. The purpose is that the tree has and will give them prosperity. And a day of silence, a 24 hours doing nothing, named Nyepi, is carried out once a year. It is one of the most important days in Bali religious belief. This day of silence is celebrated on the basis of four principles of guidance, Catur Brata Penyepian. The first is prohibition of lightening fire, the use of lightening for the satisfaction of pleasurable human appetites, known as Amati Geni; secondly, prohibition of all forms of physical works other than those of dedicated to spiritual cleansing and renewal, Amati Karya; thirdly, prohibition of movement or travelling, Amati Lelungan; and lastly, prohibition of all forms of entertainments, recreations or general merrymaking, Amati Lelangunan. As a consequence, all streets are empty and closed; and all business is off. The day is marked by stillness and quietness.

These are all intended to keep the environment harmonious and balanced. There is no activity during the day of silence. All streets are free from pollution as indicated Figure 1.

According to some resources, Nyepi is annual purification day of the Hindu-Balinese New Year, usually celebrated at the beginning of the tenth Balinese month or at the end of March or at the beginning of April. In the evening peoples leave their houses carrying Ogoh-Ogoh, a big puppet represents an evil. Everybody make noise as much as possible to frighten the evil; the idea is to drive away the bad spirit as far as possible from the Island. On the actual day of Nyepi, as indicated by the word Nyepi, “Silent Day”, all peoples in Bali stay at their homes. Nobody is out door; there is no traffic on that day; and no noise may be heard outside the house; and no light may be seen. Quiet, dark, no activities and silence characterize the Day.

There is a strong link between scientific propositions (Figure 2) and *Tri Hita Karana*, the concept of Balinese house structure. The process of knowing begins with *Belief*; it is Parhyangan, the place of



Figure 1

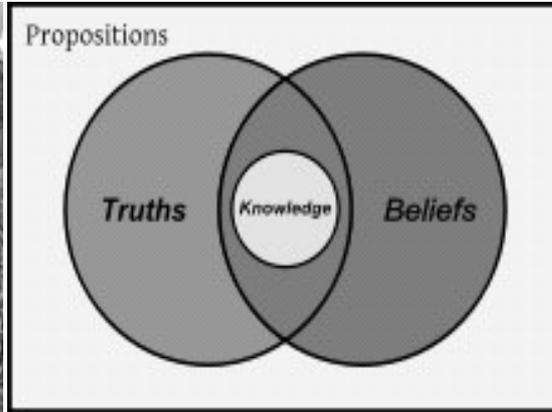


Figure 2

worship; *Knowledge*, the result of the knowing process, is Pawongan, the dwelling place for human; man has or acquires knowledge (Dawkins, 2007: 17; Diamond, 1974: 33). While *Truth*, the end of knowledge, is Pelemahan, the place for other creatures. Science and technology if cooperated with *Tri Hita Karana* in their practice and implementation may bring happiness to the greater number of beings and keep the environment harmonious and balanced. We should change our belief and view of the universe. The answer to environment change, is change. The attitude of being flexible and sensitive, the ability to perceive the old problems in a new ways are, then, becoming a must. Everyone should be willing and ready to change.

The possession of knowledge by man and the application of knowledge in this life, if not well-controlled, might endanger not only human resources development, but the environment is of no exception. The following few lines cited below clearly illustrate how dangerous man's knowledge is.

If all the good people were clever
And those that are clever were good,
This world would be nicer than ever.
But it seems as though seldom if ever
Do the two hit off as they should
The good are so harsh to the clever

The clever are so rude to the good

The cultivation of human resources, as it is implied in the cited lines, at least, as I understand it, should be in cooperation between intellectually and morally good. Put it another way, the implementation of knowledge should be directed toward the happiness of human beings and morally based. Otherwise, it may endanger the nature and man's place in it. This is true as Bacon claims that knowledge is power (Anderson, 1948). Science and technology, from the stand point of economics, may bring better life, but material objects as such do not make people happy (Patterson, 1970: 27). Enjoyment, pleasure, fame and status and the like are transient and they are not able to permanently satisfy the human spirit. Happiness, however, can be obtained only by seeking that which is permanent and not subject to change. The concept of *Tri Hita Karana* is the concept of happiness.

The successful practice and implementation of the *Tri Hita Karana* concept in Bali are made possible by the active involvement of the women. Women play a very important role in preserving and protecting the environment. Balinese people are very devoted Hindu; their religious lives have been part of their daily activity. There is a strong link between religious belief and life and the social status of women in Bali. It is taken for granted that men and women are two different individuals. Women, as most Balinese believed them and are still practiced among the Balinese society, are considered inferior than

those from men in terms of intellectual capacity, leadership and management. For most Balinese, women most important duty is to do house work. Such perception on women has made women the second being in every family house. This position of women in Bali affect their everyday lives; their lives are colored by religious activity; most women, if not all, spend their lives from early in the morning up to late afternoon even night, working at home. From cooking and preparing food for the family, taking care for the children have become their routine and their primary and most crucial daily duty to perform.

In religious activity the role they play is great, if not the greatest; their involvement in all aspects religious ceremony, (see appendix 05 and 11), has been the determinant factors for the success of every Hindu religious rites and festivals including the implementation and practice of Tri Hita Karana. It seems that their lives is nothing, but religious. The belief that the Balinese women are characterized by their being religious is proved to be true. It is true that there is no life without religious activity in Bali (Pudja, 2003: 51). Rites and festivals are part of their lives. The fact that one can see and watch, in every corner of the Island, women in Bali preparing offering every day, right after the cooking hour is over. No one is allowed to have lunch before this little offering, made of rice, salt, and red union, dedicated to the evil is carried out. The idea behind all these activities is the sustainability of the fresh and healthy environment. Inclusive in this idea is the balanced and harmonious relationship.

Methodolgy

This study is a survey of 250 Hindu Balinese who live in two different Islands, Bali (BL) and Lombok (LB). The characteristics of these 250 samples are somewhat similar; they are all devoted Hindu, and they have the same religious experience, cultural background and similar tradition. Information dealing with opinion, perception, experience, and participation of the local people about the implementation and practice of TRI HITA KARANA is collected by means of questionnaire. Through the process of identifying, classifying and analysis of the questionnaire the collected empirical data are statistically (%) analyzed.

Results

Through the process of identifying, classifying and analysis of the questionnaire the data are presented in the tables that follow.

Q	06-12/N=50 N : %	13-19/N=65 N : %	20-25/N=50 N : %	25-35/N=50 N : %	35-45/N=35 N : %	Average (%) (%)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	D/46:92	D/35:54	D/40:80	D/45:90	D/25:71	77
2	B/40:80	B/45:69	B/35:70	B/40:80	B/30:86	77
3	A/45:90	B/40:61	B/38:76	B/45:90	B/30:86	81
4	B/42:84	B/55:85	B/36:72	B/40:80	B/34:97	84
5	C/48:96	C/60:92	C/45:90	C/39:78	C/32:91	89
6	C/48:96	C/62:95	C/40:80	C/42:84	C/29:83	88
7	A/48:96	A/58:89	A/38:76	A/48:96	A/31:89	89
8	D/48:96	D/60:92	D/37:74	D/48:96	D/32:91	89
9	D/45:90	D/58:89	D/45:90	D/37:74	D/30:86	86
10	D/46:92	D/60:92	D/47:94	D/46:92	D/28:80	90
11	A/40:80	D/55:85	D/32:64	D/43:86	D/33:94	82
12	D/47:94	D/62:95	D/42:84	D/41:82	D/29:83	88

Notes: 1 = Question; 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 = Age-based Participants; N = Total of Participants, and average number of participation.

Discussion

Results of the survey reveal that school children age (06-12) years, in terms of quantity, 46 (92%) out of 50 is better than others. Their involvement in the practice and implementation of Tri Hita Karana especially, in the Ogoh-ogoh parade, suggests that the activities attract them to join the procession (Frost, 1953: 23). This high participation of the school children, regardless to whether they understand or not the concept of Tri Hita Karana is of meaningful points for us. Because to say that they are interested in the parade is the same thing as to say that they are actively participating in the activities (Pudja, 2003: 73). This is true as Woods (1972: 16-17); Diamond (1974: 10-12) and Anderson (1948: 217) claim that a statement is true if there are some possible sense experience; put it another way, all knowledge is rooted in sense experience. In Alder's words (1983), synthetic statement, all statements that are back up by some empirical evidences are considered true (Dawkins, 2007: 48). The second active and high percentage participation come from the Youth 45 (90%) out of 50; only 5 (10%) of the samples do not take part in the parade. This is not to say, however, that they are not involved at all. Their involvement is in the preparation. The third is that from the group aged 20-25 (80%) followed by the Old aged 35-45 (71%) and the group of aged 13-19 (54%). On average, the rate of local people participation is 71.40%. The next important points we can say is that the participants of the parade are dominated by men that is 71%; Hindu by religion (89.40%); and it was successful (88%). They all enjoyed (89.20%) the event; Tri Hita Karana is believed to keep the environment harmonious and balanced (90%); because its importance (86%); jointed the event every year (90%); they followed this tradition as an heritage (89%) and finally, Tri Hita Karana has been implemented and practiced successfully, and can help preserve and protect the environment from destruction (88%).

Conclusion

I have, in this survey, presented why the environment should be preserved and protected from destruction; I have also presented how this environment should be preserved and protected. Tri Hita Karana, the Hindus Balinese most sacred precept, which has been and shall be practiced in Bali and Lombok has been successfully implemented in all aspects of life. They reason that Tri Hita Karana with all its dimensions Silent Day, Tumpek Uduh, Ogoh-ogoh Parade and other religious activities, and housing construction are closely linked to the preservation and protection of the environment. Academically, the concepts Tri Hita Karana and scientific proposition are related. As a native of Bali, who was born and has grown up in Bali, I would kindly invite all of us to start practicing the concept Tri Hita Karana. My suggestion is that we should begin from the simple one, that is, stop driving cars just for one day; start walking for a short distance; stay at home and turn off your electricity power just for one night only. We may think globally but, we should act locally. Hopefully, by so doing we shall be free from pollution and live a healthy life.

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