

**THE INFLUENCES OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION OF HINDUISM CASTE
IN OKA RUSMINI'S NOVEL
(Pengaruh Stratifikasi Sosial Kasta Hindu Dalam Novel Oka Rusmini)**

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ABSTRAK

Studi ini berjudul Pengaruh Stratifikasi Sosial Kasta Hindu dalam Novel Oka Rusmini. Tujuan dari studi ini adalah untuk mengetahui tindakan dan pengaruh stratifikasi sosial pada kasta Hindu. Teori yang digunakan adalah stratifikasi sosial dalam Sosiologi Suatu Pengantar oleh Soerjono Soekanto, dan teori kasta Sociology oleh Schaefer. Analisis ini menggunakan penelitian kualitatif dimana data dianalisis dalam bentuk kalimat dan kata-kata. Hasilnya mengungkapkan bahwa ada beberapa tindakan-tindakan stratifikasi sosial yang digunakan dalam novel tersebut seperti: kekayaan, kekuatan, keturunan, dan pendidikan. Luh Sekar seorang Sudra yang sangat ambisius menikah dengan kasta Brahmana untuk mendapatkan status sosial, namun dia mengalami kehidupan yang menyedihkan yaitu dikucilkan dan diremehkan.

Kata Kunci: Kasta, Pendidikan, Keturunan, Penganut Hindu, Kekuasaan, Stratifikasi Sosial, Kekayaan.

1. Introduction

Earth Dance novel describes the social stratification which is connected with Hinduism caste in Bali. Based on that reason the writer wants to analyze the existential case that is occurred in the social stratification of Hinduism in Bali. It is not only occurred there but it happens in each society's layer generally. Even though the classification of caste just happened in Bali, but the fact is; someone will get respect from others when they come from high social status, it is contrary to the people who come from the low social status. It means which is happened to Sudra, it also happens to the low class. Based on the previous research, the writer decides research entitled "The Influences of Social stratification of Hinduism caste in Oka Rusmini's *Earth Dance*".

The Hinduism people in Bali with the various problems of social caste and customary rules that must be obeyed. The event in the novel occurred in 1996. As the author, Oka Rusmini describes specifically about life in Bali, so it can give new

knowledge to readers about the other side of the island of Dewata known for its exotic. The social issues presented by Oka Rusmini, problems the life of social stratification of Hinduism caste in Bali. In the novel by Oka Rusmini, caste Brahmin and Sudra became the main focus. The life of the Hindu community, Sudra class was considered to occupy the lowest level. As a result of the lowest level, the Sudra caste should be obedient to very harmful and discriminatory rules. A woman of the Brahmin caste such as the figure of Telaga in this novel should not be converted from a lower caste, must speak a different language, and look at all aspects of life from a higher perspective. The conflict begins when Telaga fell in love with the man of Sudra. In Hindu tradition, they believe if the marriage was done by two different castes, it will cause conflict in the future. If she is a Brahmin woman married to a man of Sudra, She must be ready to lose power, wealth and family. If he is a Sudra man who married Brahmin woman, then he should be ready to be exposed to social sanctions such

as expelled, ostracized and misfortune. Not only that, but a different marriage of caste is also considered a very bad thing because it defies the rules of the ancestors and does not respect the customs. The violent contradiction occurs, because the Sudra are considered slaves, and the Brahmin is the source of life for the Sudra. So it is not proper for a Brahmin to marry a Sudra because marriage different caste is very inappropriate and embarrassed by Hindu customs in Bali.

The Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the problems of the study are formulated as follows:

1. What is the implementation of the social stratification of Hinduism caste portrayed in Oka Rusmini's *Earth Dance*?
2. What are the influences of the social stratification of Hinduism caste portrayed in Oka Rusmini's *Earth Dance*?

The Objectives of the Study

Related to the problems of the study above, the objectives of the study are formulated as follows:

1. To find out the implementation of social stratification of Hinduism caste in Oka Rusmini's *Earth Dance*
2. To find out the influences of the social stratification of Hinduism caste in Oka Rusmini's *Earth Dance*

2. Review of Litterature

Definition of Social Stratification

"Social stratification is a structured ranking of entire groups of people that perpetuates unequal economic rewards and power in society. It involves how social inequalities are passed on from one generation to the next, thus producing groups of people arranged in hierarchical order", (Schaefer in his book *Sociology*, 1986:190).

According to Pitirim A. Sorokin in Maryati and Juju's book, *Sociology*. (2001:21) "Social stratification as the distinction of the population or society into classes arranged in a stratum (hierarchy). The existence of a society layer plays an important role in the social activities of individuals or groups within a social organization. Without the social

layers in the society then the society will be interesting to be seen, known, and learned".

Character of Social Stratification

Social stratification is a necessity in society. As long as in society there is something that is appreciated then it will be the seeds that grow the system of layers. In society, there are two characters of social stratification. The first is open stratification which the system has a wide range to move and change its social standing in the eyes of society. The second is closed stratification which the possibility of someone to move and change the position already or almost closed.

Closed Social Stratification

Stratifikasi ini adalah bentuk strata yang anggota dari setiap stratanya sulit mengadakan mobilitas vertikal. Mobilitas mereka hanya terbatas pada mobilitas horizontal. Karena itu, stratifikasi sosial ini bersifat diskriminatif, misalnya, sistem kasta pada masyarakat India, masyarakat rasialis, dan masyarakat feodal. (This stratification is a kind of strata that a member of each layer have difficult hold vertical mobility. Their mobility is limited to horizontal mobility. Therefore, this social stratification is discriminatory, for example, the caste system of Indian society, racial society, and feudal society. (my translation).

Basic Stratification in Society (Formation)

The basis of stratification in society is due to the existence of something more valued, such as wealth, science or power. As long as society rewards something that is considered more, social stratification in society will still exist. So who has it in the value or the amount more, the automatically social class will rise.

According to Mariati and Juju in their book *Sosiologi* (2001:23-24), the basic stratification in society can be divided into:

Wealth

The division or stratification of societies based on the economy will distinguish the community over the ownership of the property. Based on the ownership of

property, the community can be divided into three classes. (My translation).

a. Upper class

The upper class consists of a group of rich people who can freely meet the needs of their lives, even excessively. Common criteria used to place a person in this class include home, luxury cars, savings in large landholdings, and large taxes' (my translation).

b. Middle class

The middle class consists of a group of people who are well off who have been able to meet basic needs (primary). (mytranslation).

c. Lower class

The lower class consists of a group of poor people who still cannot meet their primary needs. (My translation).

Power

(Power is related to one's ability to determine his will towards others (who are dominated). Power is supported by other elements, such as position or position in society, possessions, intelligence, even cunning. Members of the people who have the greatest power and authority will occupy the topmost social layers. Conversely, underpowered members of the community are merely subordinates who will occupy the lower layers. There are two forms in power there are leader and subordinate).

a. Leader

The leader is consist of a group of strong people, intelligence people, and superior knowledge

b. Subordinate

The subordinate is consist of a group of a lower in rank or position. (my translation).

Heredity

In feudal society, members of the people of the royal family or nobility will occupy the upper layer. Concrete examples of feudalism in the wonders are the title of *Andi* on Bugis society, *Raden* on Javanese society, *Tengku* in Aceh society, and *Kraeng King* and *Kraeng Dalu* family in Manggarai society. Generally, people call them by saying "blue-blooded". Such a right is also present in the

Balinese society who divides their society into Brahmin, Knight, Waisya, and Sudra caste. In these societies, the descendants of the Brahman group are the most respected. There are two forms in heredity, they are nobility and ordinary people. (Mytranslation).

a. Nobility

The group of people belongs to the noble class in a country, especially those with a hereditary or honorary title. (Mytranslation).

B. Ordinary People

The ordinary people are a group of people in a society or organization who have no power. (My translation).

Education

The amount of knowledge that individuals have acquired, either formally, through education, or informally, affects how they behave. As a result of differential amounts and types of education and other learning experiences, the amount of knowledge is differentially distributed and may be conceived of as forming a stratified structure among the individuals in a society. In societies that value science or education, people who have the skills or professions will gain greater respect than those who have no skills, low education, or illiteracy. The example of people belongs to this class are; researchers, scholars or lecturers, doctors, judges, and athletes. Education is grouped into two sections they are higher education and low education. (My translation).

The Influence of Social Stratification

Social stratification has been universal in time and space. The existence of social stratification in society brings influence such as the existence of high and low class. In daily social life, stratification becomes a habitual lifestyle. According to Kamantoin *Pengantar Sosiologi* (2004:95) "*Status kehormatan biasanyadinyatakanoleh faktaba hwa diatas semua itu gaya hidup tertentu dapat diharapkan dari semua orang yang ingin menjadi anggota lingkaran dari masyarakat.*" (Status honor is normally

expressed by the fact that above all else a specific style of life can be expected from all those who wish to belong to the circle) (my translation).

Definition of Caste of the Society in Hinduism People

“Castes are hereditary systems of rank, usually religiously dictated, that are relatively fixed and immobile. The caste system is generally associated with the Hindu religious faith in India. Caste membership is established at birth since children automatically assume the same position as their parents. Each caste is quite sharply defined, and members are expected to marry within the same caste”. (Schaefer in his book *Sociology* 1986:194).

According to Supratikno in his book *history of Balinese Culture* (1984: 41) in the middle of the nineteenth century, the caste divided into four classes following the caste system, Brahmin, Satrya, Waisya, and Sudra.

Supratikno (1998: 41-43) suggests the four major castes namely:

1. Brahmin caste
Brahmin caste is a caste of a society that has a profession in the field of religion or religion like a priest. The Brahmins caste is given the title of Ida Bagus (male) and Ida Ayu (female).
2. Knight caste
In this caste, the Hindu people are entitled to be kings and soldiers. Courage is a character that must exist in every knight. According to Hinduism, the fallen knights will arrive in heaven, the heaven of Indra's dwelling place. The Apsara (female dancers) will scramble to embrace such a hero. The honorific names given for this class are the Great Gods for men and the Great Gods of Princess for women.
3. Waisya caste
The caste of the merchants who are obliged to advance prosperity, and is the lowest caste entitled to invade the Aryans themselves. The sign of this Aryan distinction is worship (a holy rope) held on the left shoulder to the right waist. The name of honor for this caste is Gusti.
4. Sudra Caste

Sudra caste consists of small farmers and laborers and their duties serve the three castes on it. Members of this caste have no honorific name because they were born as servants.

The Implementation of Social Stratification of Hinduism Caste in Oka Rusmini's *Earth Dance*

The caste system and customs in Bali are capable of making disputes between groups. The journey up to now in Bali is still felt because there is a certain of groups that still maintain the feudalism of the nobles who are categorized as "blue blood". Caste can be a factor in the oppression of other groups. There are four basic stratifications in society such as wealth, power, heredity, and education. The analysis of the four basic stratifications in society, presented as follows:

Wealth

Wealth relates to income, with the greater of income, a person can have a greater chance for himself or herself to have as many possessions as possible. As it is portrayed in:

“Grandmother was a very strong woman, the daughter of a rich nobleman. She had been contented since childhood. Her every wish was granted her. People said that the grandmother's mother had been rich and beautiful too, while her father had been a Pandita, a learned man, and priest, with many family retainers who were loyal to the griya. That was why grandmother enjoys their higher status and respect than any other woman in the griya.” (Rusmini, 2007:15)

By wealth of the grandmother, she will have a lot of chance to get what she wants. That is why she does not want to lose all the status she gets, even she does not want her son to marry the lower caste which can cause the higher status and respectable Pandita lost the integrity of caste Brahmana.

“I'm tired of being a poor woman. No one respects me. My father was mixed up

in politics and no one knows whether He's alive or dead. People cast me out, saying that my father was a traitor to the nation, that I am the daughter of a communist! My father made a mistake and now my whole family carries the burden. Sometimes I think I'd kill him if I ever met him!"(Rusmini, 2007: 21)

Luh Sekar or Jero Kenanga is a beautiful dancer from Sudra. It has a harsh nature. Whatever her desire must be achieved including being the prettiest dancer, even though her body is a stake. She is ambitious to marry a Brahmin to raise his rank, whatever the risks. According to her opinion, the most important are the throne and the wealth, because the one who has the throne and rich, they will be happy. This hardness arises because she is the daughter of a PKI, so she has no place in society.

In people's minds, Brahmana people have a high position in society. Because of the wealth they have, they will receive big respect from other people who come from the lower class, because Ngurah Pidada is a Brahmana so people around him will be more respectable to him than other people who are Sudra.

"Ngurah Pidada was most likely to give Sekar money during a *jogged* performance. Often he gave enough to feed the four women in her family for a whole week. When this happened, Sekar did not need to sell banana leaves at the market just to buy half a pound of rice and a bit of dried fish."(Rusmini, 2007:22)

Ngurah Pidada from Brahmana caste gets underestimating to Sekar from the Sudra caste that looks Sekar down by squeezing her bottom. His hands feel and explore her body and she cannot do anything or even stop of being touched, but for people who are coming from the lower class, Sudra with their lack of wealth will not have as many chances as it is portrayed in Luh Sekar statement: "I'm tired of being poor. I'm tired of my family's lack of status" (Rusmini, 2007:33).

"That woman hasn't had a lot of experience. She's a noblewoman whose life since childhood has been full of goodness and plenty."(Rusmini, 2007: 60)

The quotation above explains the prosperity of the Brahmin caste. They are born as a rich because Brahmin is a great caste, they come from intellectual professions such as scholars, priests, and spiritual teacher. Just like Telaga's grandmother, she is the daughter of a priest and her life is well fed. No wonder if she has already felt the pleasure starting from her childhood.

"There would never be a true gentleman from among those of noble descent who could be willing to take her hand and ask her to live in the place most covered by a Balinese woman, at least not if the man was truly noble." (Rusmini, 2007: 68)

The statement above portrays that wealth is the most important thing to measure someones deserve.

Power

Power is the capacity to achieve the goals in social systems. Society believes by having a big power, it will give them a lot of chances or opportunities to get closer to our future, that is why power becomes one of the measurements to give any result to someone. When someone has big power, people will respect him or her but people will not respect you if you do not have any power.

"I'm tired of being a poor woman. No one respects me. My father was mixed up in politics and no one knows whether he's alive or dead. People cast me out, saying that my father was a traitor to the nation, that I am the daughter of a communist! My father made a mistake and now my whole family carries the burden. Sometimes I think I'd kill him if I ever met him" (Rusmini, 2007:22)

Sekar is getting tired to be poor with a lack of power. Because she comes from Sudra

who has a lack of power, with has no respect from society, addition by her father who has ever made a mistake, so the whole family carries the burden include her. Actually, Sekar has the capability of dancing and she has a good body but because she is a Sudra, so she does not have any opportunity as well as the Brahmana gets.

“You’re afraid to recognize what I’m capable of, aren’t you? I know, and you know it too, that the village elders understand I have a dancer’s body. They’re not blind to the fact that I’ll be able to brighten up the village. One day people from all over will know about this village because of me. (Rusmini, 2007: 26)”

Luh Sekar has talent and potential in dancing. She has a beautiful face and a beautiful body, but because she comes from a caste of Sudra who is underestimated by the people in her village. So it can be concluded that social caste stratification has the effect of obliterating other people's hopes of dreaming. And this statement shows also her friend who is afraid to recognize her capability in dancing because she is from the low status of Sudra.

“In the first year of her marriage, Sekar’s two sisters, who had been jobless up to that point, found work and the family’s economic situation improved a little. And, since her marriage, people who had previously never shown concern towards the family began to show them more kindness.”(Rusmini, 2007: 49)

Sudra people have to pass a hard life, not many chances or opportunities they get to change their life. Even though Sekar has married Brahmana, people still regarded her as Sudra, especially in her husband's family.

“Meanwhile, in her husband’s family, Sekar had to act like a *Sudra* woman. She had to speak a more refined level of language with people of the *griya*. She could not share the same glass with her child. She could not share her leftovers with people of the *griya*, not even with

the child she had given birth to.” (Rusmini, 2007: 49)

Many rules that Sekar has to follow because she comes from Sudra such as; she cannot share many things, even with her child.

a. Heredity

Heredity is a group of people belongs to a lower class or higher class. There are two forms in heredity, they are nobility and ordinary people. Nobility belongs to the noble class in a country, especially those with a hereditary or honorary title. Ordinary people are a group of people in a society or organization who have no power.

“It’s because she’s the daughter of a Brahmana that the Gods give her taksu, that inner potency invisible to the naked eye. It’s so amazing... Look at her! When she dances, all eyes devour her. How lucky she is. She was born into nobility, and She's rich and pretty too. The gods are truly choosy whom they smile upon,” said one woman,” (Rusmini, 2007: 9).

The strata factors of the Balinese are distinguished in their caste position. The caste of Brahmana with the caste Sudra adrift of distant social distance. In the book of Bali has also been written with the existence of that difference until now, and has become a foothold for life in society. The people who are in the caste of Sudra, are obliged to respect the upper classes of the Brahmin caste. In other words, the influence will cause envy and jealousy to the Brahmins.

“Don’t you take my grandchild to that house of theirs, “She warned. “My grandchild is a Brahmana, not a sudra. Don’t you understand? If you take them to your home too often, the child won't have a royal glow. Do you understand that, Kenanga?” Her mother in law’s voice was piercing. Sekar fell silent.”(Rusmini, 2007: 49)

Discrimination occurs within the family itself. Differences can cause

problems and lead to disharmony of family relationships and bad influences in society. Luh Sekar knows the risks to be lived as a Brahmin's wife. She follows all the rules that are in gray and face the ridicule that might be occasionally catapulted by one of the griya families who see Sekar's background as a Sudra woman

In Balinese, caste is an inheritance from ancestor to the next generation, and one of their inheritance is a name, the giving name is based on the caste adhered them, and their name will be automatically changed when their caste is changing. If their first name is Ida, they will be recognized as Brahmana, but if their first name is Luh, there will be recognized as a Sudra. In Bali, people will recognize someone's caste based on their first name. It can be seen from the quotation below:

"Telaga remembered when she had asked her mother, "Why don't you use 'Ida Ayu' in front of your name, Meme?"

Because I am not an *Ida Ayu*, She said. "I am a common woman. There's no noble blood flowing in my veins. A common woman like me must change her name if she is taken into *agriya* family. 'Jero Kenanga', that's my new name." (Rusmini, 2007: 49)

Luh Sekar's bitter life makes her become a trauma. It is because she comes from Sudra caste who does not have any power, wealth, even has not any getting respect from other people as the Brahmana, every person treats Luh Sekar and her family in discrimination. Luh Sekar does not want her bad experience will happen to her daughter, Telaga, so she gives her daughter advice as to the statement below:

"That woman hasn't had a lot of experience. She's a noblewoman whose life since childhood has been full of goodness and plenty." (Rusmini, 2007: 60)

A Brahman has a life of happiness because since they were children, they had been treated with wealth, abundant needs and

power. Different from a Sudra who lives on the mercy of a Brahmana. Brahmana employs the Sudra to help them perform their activities such as a servant.

Education

Education is the knowledge that individuals have acquired, either formally or informally. As a result of differential amounts and types of education and other learning experiences, the amount of knowledge is differentially distributed and may be conceived as forming a stratified structure among the individuals in a society.

"To realize this particular ambition, Kenanga invited a dance teacher to teach Telaga every afternoon. The teacher was Luh Kambren, the best and most expensive in the whole village. She was rarely willing to teach and share her skills and secrets, and anyway, these were secrets that Telaga often found difficult to grasp" (Rusmini, 2007: 68)

Telaga is her mother's hope. She wants to give the best for Telaga. One of them by providing dance education. To be a dancer must be a child of a public figure. The evidence shows when the magnitude of influence Brahmins in Balinese society has spread in such a way all aspects.

"I used to like teaching at the high school. The students seemed serious about learning the dances. But, unfortunately, they didn't put much effort into taking notes. They studied only so they could graduate. They didn't want something more, like with research, for example. It was only foreigners who came to me to ask me things..." (Rusmini, 2007: 68)

In Balinese, one of the important values to increase their status is education by having a high education, they will be respected by society. But not all people get a lot of opportunities in getting a high education particularly for Sudra, as it has happened to Luh Kambren, she never has any good education. It is because Sudra's lack of

wealth and moreover to have high education, to eat is enough for them.

The Influences of Social Stratification Caste on the Novel in Oka Rusmini's *Earth Dance*

The influences of social stratification portrait through character is conflict. Social stratification makes lower castes under domination, discrimination, and underestimation by high caste. If the gap due to the difference is so sharp it does not close the possibility of social conflict between social class one with other social classes.

The social stratification is a vertical distinction of classes manifested by the highest levels of society to the lowest with the predominant or dominant criterion. The last is the size of education or size of scientific knowledge which is often used by members of society whose value is science. Basis for the formation of social coatings are; the size of wealth (material) can be a measure of the placement of community members into existing social layers, whichever has the greatest wealth of which they will belong to the top layer in the social coating system, and vice versa, which has no wealth will be categorized into low class. Second, the size of power and authority, a person who has the greatest power or authority will occupy the top layer in the social coating system in the society concerning. Third, the size of honor, the size of this honor is deeply felt in traditional societies, usually they are very respectful of people, who have many services to the community, the parents or the people who behave and virtuous.

The life of the Hindu community, Sudra class was considered to occupy the lowest level. In Hindu tradition, they believe if the marriage was done by two different castes, it will cause conflict in the future. If she is a Brahmin woman married to a man of Sudra, She must be ready to lose power, wealth and family. If he is a Sudra man who married Brahmin woman, then he should be ready to be exposed to social sanctions such as expelled, ostracized and misfortune. Not only that, but a different marriage of caste is also considered a very bad thing because it

defies the rules of the ancestors and does not respect the customs.

Conclusions

1. Social stratification happens because of something that can be provoked the injustices experienced by individuals, families, and group. The division of social layer within the Balinese society where they uphold caste in their social life. Brahmana is more respected and has a high status in society because they have wealth, power, heredity, and education. Wealth to grab something, the power to get a position in society, heredity to make differences between nobility and ordinary people, and education to get greater respect than those who have not education. It is contrary to Sudra from the lowest caste. For the family of the Brahmin caste the dignity must be kept so that people outside the Griya will respect them. Families of the Brahmin caste want their children to marry someone from the an equal caste.
2. The influences of social stratification make lower castes under domination, discrimination, and underestimation from the higher caste. Discrimination, under the domination and underestimation by high castes, are forms of injustice due to caste system misconceptions that are believed to be largely Balinese and to this day still, prevail because it is a belief that is a tradition and has been believed from their ancestors.

Suggestions

Based on the results of this analysis, the writer wants to give some suggestions to the reader for use in daily life, such as the following:

1. Self-awareness is needed both of individuals and society not to do discrimination of any kind as it will create disharmony to a relationship in society.
2. It is suggested to readers that they should respect their fellowship with a

human being regardless of their status, gender, wealth, education, heredity, and power so the relationships of a family and society can be harmonious and work well.

3. It is suggested to the reader that we may have an ambitious but not to sacrifice those whomust be loved especially, families.

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