

## The Experiences of Women Working as *Srathi* Within the Gender Ideology of Balinese Hindu Society as a Resource for Social Studies Instruction at Penebel State Junior High School 1

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### ABSTRACT

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#### Keywords:

Experience, *Srathi*, Gender Ideology, Teaching Resources, Social Studies

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The strong gender ideology within Balinese Hindu society influences the division of roles, power relations, and life experiences of women, including those who serve as *Srathi*. This study is motivated by the need to understand these lived experiences in the context of gender dynamics. This research aims to examine the experiences of women who work as *Srathi* within the dynamics of gender ideology in Balinese Hindu society and to explore its relevance as a source for social studies instruction at State Junior High School 1 Penebel. This qualitative phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of *Srathi* women in *Mengesta* Village through observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies involving *Srathi* women, village leaders, and social studies teachers. Data validity was ensured through triangulation, and analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model. This study employs Louis Althusser's theory of ideology, Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, Betty Friedan's liberal feminism theory, Simone de Beauvoir's existentialist feminism theory, and Dorothy Smith's standpoint theory. The results of this study indicate that the underlying motives of *Mengesta* Village women in carrying out their roles as *Srathi* are driven by economic motives, familial encouragement, community subjectivity, and traditional obligations. The experiences of *Mengesta* Village women who become *Srathi* can further be categorized into *sekala* experiences encompassing triple roles, marginalization, and resistance and *niskala* experiences encompassing spiritual intuition, messages from the unseen realm, and dream visualizations. These experiences hold strong potential as a critical, contextual, and locally grounded social studies teaching resource for Grade VII, Chapter IV on Community Empowerment.

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### INTRODUCTION

Gender is a construct concerning the differences in roles, characters, values, and psychological and emotional aspects between men and women, which are rooted in social and cultural norms (Umar & Nahrowi, 2010:29). In society, discussions of gender are highly relevant to various aspects of life, including the social, educational, economic, and political. The differential treatment between men and women stems from values, norms, and habits that develop and are transmitted across generations, thereby forming a gender ideology that regulates the conceptual relationship between the two (Widayani & Hartanti, 2015). Previous

studies also show that gender ideology, particularly patriarchy, has long been entrenched in social life. This ideology gives rise to practices of marginalization, stereotyping, subordination, and the restriction of women's roles, both in the domestic and public spheres (Muyassaroh, 2021:366–387). Nevertheless, a number of studies also demonstrate the existence of women's resistance against patriarchal norms, particularly through increased female participation in the public sphere. This confirms that gender ideology can be negotiated within social dynamics.

In the context of Balinese society, gender ideology is manifested through patrilineal and patrilocal systems that position men as successors to lineage, property, and family authority. Meanwhile, women frequently experience limited access to inheritance and customary decision-making (Rabbani et al., 2024:42–43). From an early age, gender role differences are socialised such that women are expected to manage domestic and customary work, while men are granted freedom and legitimacy as custodians of tradition (Septiari & Dhammayanti, 2023:132). One manifestation of gender ideology in Bali is evident in women who work as *Srathi* the primary practitioners responsible for the preparation of offerings and ceremonial facilities in Hindu religious ceremonies.

*Srathi* hold an important role in spiritual practices. Even so, they continue to bear the burden of triple roles, encompassing domestic, occupational, and socio-customary responsibilities. Furthermore, *Srathi* frequently experience marginalization, as their involvement in ritual decision-making remains highly limited. The social experiences of Balinese women as *Srathi* reveal a negotiation between conformity to customary norms and efforts to gain social recognition. This phenomenon reflects both the enduring influence of gender ideology and the potential for women's resistance within the customary structure. Therefore, a study of the experiences of *Srathi* women is highly relevant for development into a social studies teaching resource.

The experiences of women who become *Srathi* can be positioned as a social studies (*IPS*) teaching resource at the junior high school level, particularly for Grade VII, Chapter IV on Community Empowerment, which addresses socio-cultural issues (Bhattarai, 2024; Dashottar, 2025). The integration of gender-based issues with Balinese locality in social studies learning is expected to enhance students' awareness, empathy, and critical thinking skills regarding their surrounding social environment. The research problems addressed in this study are as follows: why women in *Mengesta* Village take on the role of *Srathi*; what experiences *Srathi* women have in relation to the practice of gender ideology; and how the relevance of gender ideology in the lives of *Srathi* women can be utilised as a social studies teaching resource at the junior high school level. Accordingly, the objectives of this study are to determine the reasons women in *Mengesta* Village take on the role of *Srathi*, to understand the experiences of *Srathi* women in relation to the practice of gender ideology, and to identify the relevance of gender ideology in the lives of *Srathi* women that can be developed into a social studies teaching resource at the junior high school level.

The benefits of this research are twofold. Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on gender ideology, particularly in the context of Balinese Hindu society, by providing an in-depth phenomenological analysis of *Srathi* women lived experiences (Moniex et al., 2025; Titisari et al., 2024). It also contributes to the development of feminist theories specifically liberal, existentialist, and standpoint feminism as well as structuration theory, by demonstrating how agency and structure interact within a traditional religious setting. Practically, this research

benefits several stakeholders. For teachers, the findings serve as a reference for developing contextual and locally grounded social studies teaching resources, particularly for Grade VII, Chapter IV on Community Empowerment. For students, the integration of *Srathi* women's experiences into social studies learning is expected to enhance critical thinking skills, gender awareness, empathy, and understanding of socio-cultural issues within their local environment. For future researchers, this study provides a foundation for further investigations into gender ideology, local wisdom, and the development of culturally responsive teaching materials. For policymakers, this research offers insights into the importance of integrating local gender issues into the national curriculum in order to foster more inclusive and contextually relevant education.

## METHOD

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to understand in depth the lived experiences of Balinese Hindu women who work as *Srathi* within the dynamics of customary public life. A qualitative approach allows researchers to understand social phenomena holistically (Moleong, 2010). Phenomenology was selected as the methodological framework because this study focused on the lived experiences of *Srathi* women as experienced and interpreted by the subjects themselves (Sobur, 2014). This study was directed at addressing three main research problems, namely: (1) the reasons women in *Mengesta* Village take on the role of *Srathi*; (2) the experiences of *Srathi* women in relation to the practice of gender ideology; and (3) the relevance of *Srathi* women's experiences as a social studies (*IPS*) teaching resource. To analyse these three focal points, this study employs a range of analytical frameworks, including Louis Althusser's theory of ideology, Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, Betty Friedan's liberal feminism, Simone de Beauvoir's existentialist feminism, and Dorothy Smith's standpoint feminism.

Data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from the field through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Observations and interviews were conducted on several occasions throughout 2025 to ensure the depth and consistency of the data. Secondary data in this study refer to data sourced from documents in the form of journal articles and books supporting this research.

The primary informants in this study are women who work as *Srathi* in *Mengesta* Village, drawn from across seven different hamlets, so as to represent a variety of experiences and diverse social backgrounds. In addition to *Srathi*, this study also involved supporting informants, namely *Mengesta* Village stakeholders, village administrative staff, and social studies teachers at State Junior High School 1 Penebel. The involvement of supporting informants aims to enrich perspectives and strengthen data triangulation. Informant selection was conducted purposively, taking into account the relevance, experience, and direct involvement of each participant in religious practice, customary life, and education.

The data collection techniques employed encompass direct observation, which was conducted to capture the dynamics of *Srathi* women's lives in domestic, social, and religious ritual contexts. Observation was carried out through the stages of selecting observation objects, ethical reflective engagement, field note-keeping, and data coding. Through this observation, the researcher obtained contextual descriptions of role burden, gender role distribution, and social relations within the customary public sphere. The key to the success of observational research lies in the researcher's ability to obtain data appropriate to the phenomenon under review, whether through observation or listening to the research subject and subsequently interpreting it (Yusuf, 2013:384).

Interviews in this study employed a semi-structured technique, so that the researcher had a question guide while retaining the flexibility to explore informants' experiences in greater

depth. Interviews were conducted through the stages of preparation, implementation, and data recording. The researcher upheld research ethics by explaining the research objectives, maintaining the confidentiality of informants, and respecting Balinese Hindu customary values throughout the interview process. In addition to observations and interviews, documentation studies were employed to supplement the research data.

A documentation study is a data collection technique carried out using written records of various events. This technique involves the researcher examining various data required from existing files (Zuldafril, 2012:39). The documentation study encompassed the collection of journal articles, books, and relevant documents pertaining to *Srathi* women, gender ideology, and role burden practices.

Data validity was tested through data triangulation. Triangulation in credibility testing is understood as the checking of data from various sources across different time periods. The triangulation employed in this study includes both technique triangulation and source triangulation. Data analysis was carried out with reference to the Miles and Huberman model, which encompasses data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction is the process of managing data by sorting and simplifying it through summarising the key points relevant to the research focus (Sugiyono, 2019:440). The reduced data were then presented in the form of systematic descriptive narratives to facilitate understanding. This data presentation is a necessary step in determining the subsequent stage, namely the drawing of conclusions (Rijali, 2018:94). The final stage involves the drawing of conclusions through continuous verification, so that the findings accurately reflect the experiences of *Srathi* women within the dynamics of Balinese Hindu society.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Reasons Why Village Women Choose to Divorce become *Srathi*

In general, women in *Mengesta* Village take on the role of *Srathi* based on several motives, including economic motives, family encouragement motives, community subjectivity motives, and traditional motives. In terms of economic motives, women's involvement as *Srathi* is based on access to income in the form of material provisions that contribute to the fulfilment of household needs, as well as opportunities for women to actualize themselves through the work they obtain. Becoming *Srathi* also opens access to social network groups that possess strong economic capital. The involvement of *Srathi* in various customary activities and rituals brings them into contact with individuals who hold strategic positions in society and who possess economic capital, which naturally presents service opportunities for *Srathi*. This is reflected in a successful interview conducted with Mek Lis (63 years old), a *Srathi* from *Dusun Piling Kanginan*, on 30 July 2025:

*"In carrying out my role as Srathi, money is of course never far from one of my reasons. If there are people who wish to place an order, I will make it. Orders also vary some want Banten otonan, banten wedding, Banten odalan, Banten melaspas home, and so on. Usually, they have their own prices. For instance, Banten otonan ranges from 2–3 million rupiah, Banten wait 15–20 million rupiah, offerings with a capital of 7 million rupiah, Banten melaspas house 15 million rupiah, and Banten cremation 30 million rupiah."*

Mek Lis acknowledged that financial factors greatly influence her role as *Srathi*. This is attributable to the fact that women are often positioned as household financial managers and even serve as supplementary breadwinners. In such circumstances, taking on the role of *Srathi* becomes a strategy for sustaining economic stability without having to leave the social and cultural sphere. Furthermore, becoming a *Srathi* has clear economic implications, as *Srathi* are

able to accumulate financial benefits that can be used to meet household needs or to renovate their homes. This is evident from the observational data presented below.



**Figure 1. Condition of the house owned *Srathi***

Source: Documentation Personal, 2025

The observational results above indicate that the residential conditions of *Srathi* households are generally very good. This is understood not merely as a contribution from the husband, but also as a significant contribution from the *Srathi* herself as an active participant in the pursuit of household livelihood. These conditions naturally have implications for the overall stability of the family's economic circumstances. Examined through Althusser's framework, Balinese customary ideology frames the making of *Banten* as though it were an act of *ngayah*. Nevertheless, this ideology simultaneously becomes a medium through which women are able to accommodate their family's economic needs, permanently wrapped in religious nuance. The material existence of this ideology is evident in the activities of *Srathi*, manifested through concrete practices such as the creation and management of *Banten*, the determination of ceremony types, and the maintenance of relationships with traditional community members, stakeholders, and *yajamana*. These activities take place within the vehicle of the family as an Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), which functions to socialise knowledge and skills. In such circumstances, economic motives operate alongside the language of devotion, so that women continue to receive remuneration without displacing the symbolic meaning of their role within society (Althusser, 1984).

Beyond economic motives, there are also family encouragement motives that underlie Mek Mariasih (56 years old) in taking on the role of *Srathi* in *Belulang* Hamlet, who was successfully interviewed on 26 August 2025:

*"Before, when I was still at home as a young unmarried woman, I was often taught by my mother and grandmother about the procedures for making Banten. My mother and grandmother were among those who were very skilled at making Banten. I would often observe this every day, and my grandmother once said that a Balinese woman must be able to make Banten at least make Banten saiban. Therefore, to me, the most ideal way to carry out my role as a Balinese woman is to be able to mejajitan and to know the various types of Banten."*

The interview excerpt above demonstrates that the formation of women's roles as *Srathi* is deeply rooted in personal experiences from early childhood, namely through the process of family socialisation from a young age. The informant further revealed that her learning of *Banten*-making procedures was acquired through daily interactions with her mother and grandmother. This learning process took place informally and performatively within everyday

life, such that the knowledge and skills of *Banten*-making were instilled naturally in Mek Mariasih.

Examined through Simone de Beauvoir's framework, Mek Mariasih's participation as *Srathi* occurred as a result of the process of *becoming a woman*, or an ongoing feminization since childhood. The woman who becomes a *Srathi* is not born to be one, but rather is formed through lived experiences shaped by the internalisation of values, norms, and social expectations regarding how a Balinese woman ought to conduct herself in society. The family tradition of passing down *Banten*-making skills across generations illustrates how social structures tend to shape women's identities through roles that are culturally embedded and naturalised over time (Beauvoir, 1949).



**Figure 2. Paruman Election *Srathi***

Source : Documentation Personal, 2025

Women in *Mengesta* Village also take on the role of *Srathi* due to community subjectivity. This subjectivity-based selection process within the customary community often unfolds gradually. Typically, a woman who will eventually become a *Srathi* is first involved in certain customary activities, and then slowly gains the trust and recognition of the community to take on the role of *Srathi*. This is further supported by a statement from Mek Wiji (73 years old), a *Srathi* from *Wongaya Betan* Hamlet, *Mengesta* Village, who was successfully interviewed on 26 August 2025:

*"Before becoming a Srathi, I originally had the desire to become a trader. However, because this role had already been entrusted to me by the community and the responsibility had been placed upon my shoulders, I then shifted and dedicated myself entirely for the sake of the customary community as well as for my own sense of fulfilment. Becoming a Srathi naturally has physical consequences in terms of fatigue. This is because being a Srathi requires one to balance oneself between various responsibilities, both as a homemaker and as a Srathi."*

The interview results above indicate that Mek Wiji's decision to take on the role of *Srathi* did not originate solely from a personal aspiration from the outset. Prior to assuming this role, Mek Wiji had the desire to pursue another profession, namely as a trader. However, this choice ultimately shifted when the customary community recognised that Mek Wiji possessed considerable capability in *Banten*-making, and consequently entrusted her with the responsibility of serving as *Srathi*. This circumstance naturally demonstrates that the designation of a person as *Srathi* does not originate from personal choice alone, but is greatly influenced by the decisions of the customary community.

From Pierre Bourdieu's perspective, Mek Wiji's experience demonstrates that the role of *Srathi* is the product of a socially constructed practice, formed through the dialectics of *habitus*, capital, and field. The *habitus* has long been shaped by customary socialisation, which has

implications for the disposition to accept a role of devotion as something natural for Mek Wiji. Within the field, the community holds the authority to determine which individuals possess the appropriate capability or cultural capital. Meanwhile, social capital manifests in the form of communal legitimacy, which encourages Mek Wiji to fulfil her role as *Srathi* (Bourdieu, 1990).


Another motive underlying women in *Mengesta Village* taking on the role of *Srathi* is rooted in traditional motives. Traditional motives stem from the prevailing perceptions held by Balinese society, including the *Mengesta Village* community, regarding the ideal image of Balinese womanhood. According to this societal perception, Balinese women are regarded as figures who must be capable of making *Banten*. This perception naturally underlies women in *Mengesta Village* taking on the role of *Srathi*.

This is evident from the statement of one *Srathi*, namely Mek Rasmini (56 years old), who was successfully interviewed on 26 August 2025:

*"To be a Balinese woman, one must be able to make Banten at least make Banten saiban. In addition, Balinese women must be able to mejejaitan, metanding, and even macal Banten. Therefore, to me, the most ideal way to carry out my role as a Balinese woman is to be knowledgeable about the various types of Banten."*

The interview results indicate that Balinese women's identity is not solely defined in biological terms, but is born from a socially and culturally rich meaning of ideality encompassing the knowledge and skills that lead to ritual roles. Mek Rasmini's statement further reinforces the fact that technical abilities such as *mejejaitan*, *metanding*, and *macal Banten* constitute standards that women are expected to possess and master. This increasingly confirms that Balinese women who are considered to fulfil normative standards are those who are able to internalize and practice culturally transmitted values from generation to generation. These normative standards do not arise naturally, but rather emerge through strong mechanisms of value inculcation. In addition to the interview data, there are observational data that demonstrate the technical capabilities that must be possessed by *Srathi*, including Balinese women in general.

**Table 1. Activities Making Banten by Mek Rasmini**

No	<i>Srathi</i> Name	Activity Making <i>Banten</i>	Picture
	Mek Rasmini	<i>Nyait Banten</i>	

**Figure 3. Mek Rasmini is *mejejaitan***  
Source : Documentation Personal, 2025

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Mek Rasmini      *Banten Matching*



**Figure 4. Mek Rasmini is *matching***  
Source: Documentation Personal, 2025

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Mek Rasmini      *Macal Banten*



**Figure 5. Mek Rasmini is *macal***  
Source : Documentation Personal, 2025

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Source: (Author's field documentation, 2025)

The observational results above indicate that the activities carried out by *Srathi* follow a consistent pattern, beginning with the activity of *nyait* or *mejejaitan*, followed by *metanding*, and concluding with *macal Banten*. These stages reveal the existence of a systematic sequence in the *Banten*-making process, wherein each activity possesses its own distinct function and meaning within Balinese Hindu religious ritual practices. Examined closely through Simone de Beauvoir's framework, women are currently undergoing a process of feminisation, or *becoming a woman*. In Beauvoir's view, women are not born with certain inherent characteristics, but rather become women through social and cultural processes that socialise particular values from an early age. The standards that are present are formed through the processes of socialization and the internalization of cultural values. This perspective further confirms that the socio-cultural construction of the ideal woman is the product of a long-standing social construction, such that women fundamentally still possess the possibility of interpreting their own feminine identity within social life.

### ***Srathi* Women's Experience in relation with Gender Ideology**

The experiences possessed by *Srathi* are divided into two, namely *sekala* experiences and *niskala* experiences. This distinction between the physical and the spiritual originates from one of the foundational concepts in Balinese Hindu thought, namely *Rwa Bhineda*. *Rwa Bhineda* can also be interpreted as the balance of human life within a dualistic dimension, which holds to the belief in the existence of two opposing supernatural forces. In essence, *Rwa Bhineda* can be understood as a pattern of life centred on dualism, encompassing such opposites as up–down, day–night, right–left, and *sekala–niskala* .

*Sekala* experiences are related to the practice of gender-laden ideology, particularly in its manifestation as patriarchal ideology, which is expressed through triple roles, marginalization,



and resistance. Triple roles refer to the combination of three roles that collectively impose a triple burden upon women. These triple roles encompass women's work in the domestic sphere, the customary sphere, and the occupational sphere. This is supported by a statement from another *Srathi*, namely Mek Mariasih (56 years old), a *Srathi* from *Belulang* Hamlet, *Mengesta* Village, who was successfully interviewed on 26 August 2025:

*"When carrying out all of this work, I naturally experience physical fatigue, as I must fulfil all of my roles both as a homemaker and as a Srathi in the public sphere. Twenty-four hours a day feels insufficient when managing a number of matters simultaneously, especially when Banten orders are many, and even more so when ceremonies are approaching one after another."*

This statement clearly indicates that the triple roles of women result in considerable physical fatigue. Women are required to manage reproductive, productive, and socio-ritual roles within the same time frame, without any support mechanism or equitable distribution of work. The fatigue experienced is a direct consequence of the unequal distribution of labour. This experience of fatigue reflects a form of exploitation of women's time and bodies, rarely accompanied by adequate protection or compensation.




In addition to the interview data, field observations were conducted regarding the practices and activities of *Srathi*. The activities of *Srathi* do not occur partially but rather unfold simultaneously within their daily lives. A clearer picture of the practice of triple roles carried out by women who become *Srathi* will be described through their daily activity schedules, as presented in the following table.

**Table 2. Activities Making of Banten by Mek Mariasih**

Name <i>Srathi</i>	Activity <i>Srathi</i> – Dimension Activity <i>Srathi</i>	Picture
<b>Mek Mariasih</b>	Cooking – Dimensions Domestic	
<b>Mek Mariasih</b>	Drying Clothing – Dimensions Domestic	

**Figure 6. Mek Mariasih currently cook**  
Source : Documentation Personal, 2025

**Figure 7. Mek Mariasih currently drying clothes**  
Source : Documentation Personal, 2025

<b>Mek Mariasih</b>	Sweeping – Dimensions Domestic	
<b>Figure 8. Mek Mariasih currently sweeping</b> Source : Documentation Personal, 2025		
<b>Mek Mariasih</b>	<i>Ngae Banten</i> – Dimension Social Culture & Economy	
<b>Figure 9. Mek Mariasih currently make Banten</b> Source : Documentation Personal, 2025		
<b>Mek Mariasih</b>	Ngarit in the Rice Fields - Economic Dimension	
<b>Figure 10. Mek Mariasih currently harvesting</b> Source : Documentation Personal, 2025		

Source: (Author's field documentation, 2025)

Based on the observational results presented in the table, specifically regarding Mek Mariasih's activities as a *Srathi*, it is evident that the pattern of Mek Mariasih's daily life as a *Srathi* unfolds with a layered distribution of roles. Mek Mariasih performs domestic roles such as cooking, drying clothes, and sweeping. These activities are then followed by socio-cultural and economic activities as a *Srathi*, through the making of *Banten* as well as full participation in social activities within the surrounding community, such as *ngayah* at the temple. The visible activity patterns also demonstrate that these roles are not executed separately but rather overlap and intersect with one another. This confirms that the burden of layered roles is not to be assessed as a purely individual experience, but rather constitutes a general pattern in the lives of *Srathi* women in *Mengesta* Village.

Examined through Betty Friedan's feminist framework, this condition of triple roles reveals the existence of *The Problem That Has No Name*, which refers to the latent dissatisfaction arising from women's perception that their socially standardised roles are something natural and inevitable. Although *Srathi* women contribute crucially to the family economy through their *Banten*-making services, this role is not publicly positioned as primary productive work, but is instead understood as an extension of domestic roles and women's

devotion. As a result, women experience a loss of self, whereby they make immense personal sacrifices in order to meet the demands of the ideal standard of Balinese womanhood.

The naturalisation of triple roles does not occur solely at the practical level, but operates at the ideological level as well. This can be observed through various institutions within the customary village. For instance, the family institution can be interpreted as an Ideological State Apparatus (ISA). The Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) is an apparatus that operates dominantly at the level of ideas, doctrines, and related discourses. Nevertheless, this apparatus can also perform a repressive function (Saputra et al., 2024:205). The task of the ISA is to interpellate women as subjects who are ready to perform *ngayah* and who are prepared to accept work beyond economic or socio-ritual labour as a moral responsibility. Gender ideology, particularly patriarchy, tends to operate in ways that are unrecognised by Balinese women who become *Srathi*, such that they interpret all of their roles as part of their natural disposition and moral responsibility, especially in domestic roles.

Marginalization can be understood as the positioning of individuals in a disempowered status, characterised by limitations and the denial of opportunities to participate in important decisions (Griffin, 2017). This marginalization is evident in a number of interviews delivered by several *Srathi*, among them a statement from a *Srathi* from *Dusun Mengesta*, namely Mek Supiyati (63 years old), who was successfully interviewed on 26 August 2025:

*"In the paruman, I feel that Srathi do not need to be involved, because it is naturally not in accordance with our main duties and functions. The main duties and functions of Srathi are only to carry out what is deemed necessary. Moreover, this has already been considered the standard. Unless, of course, the offerings are felt to be insufficient — in that case, Srathi will be involved in proposing new ideas related to the procurement of Banten."*

The interview results above demonstrate the absence of *Srathi* participation in the *paruman*. This absence has even come to be understood as something natural and appropriate within the distribution of tasks determined by custom. The statement regarding the non-involvement of *Srathi* does not occur without reason, but rather because the duties and functions assigned to them have already been clearly delineated. These *tupoksi* reveal the existence of clear boundaries between the role of implementer and the role of decision-maker within customary dynamics. This division is not only shaped by exclusion, but is also the consequence of norms that have been deeply internalised over a long period within the customary community.

In addition to the interview results, the researcher also obtained observational data in the form of photographs from a *paruman*, which demonstrate the absence of women in the dynamics of customary decision-making. This is evident from the following observation.



**Figure 11. Paruman in Mengesta Village**

Source : Documentation Personal, 2025

The photograph above depicts the atmosphere of a *paruman* dominated exclusively by men as the primary actors in the customary decision-making sphere. The men sit in a circular arrangement, collectively conveying opinions and determining outcomes through collective deliberation. Meanwhile, women, including *Srathi*, are notably absent from the *paruman*. This situation represents the dominance of men in customary decision-making. Despite the fact that in daily practice *Srathi* perform highly significant functions in safeguarding the continuity of customary activities and rituals, their non-involvement in the *paruman* can be interpreted as a manifestation of marginalization. This is attributable to the positioning of women as marginalised actors within power dynamics, particularly in matters of decision-making. This naturally has implications for how women's needs cannot be articulated to their fullest extent in the policies produced.

From the perspective of Dorothy Smith's standpoint feminism, this marginalization reflects an epistemic inequality between women's lived experiences and the knowledge formally recognised by social structures. The knowledge of *Srathi* women concerning role burdens, ritual practices, and customary dynamics constitutes a form of situated knowledge born from everyday practical experience. However, this knowledge is not positioned as authoritative knowledge, because customary structures remain dominated by a masculine perspective. As a result, *Srathi* women experience epistemic injustice, wherein their lived experiences are not utilised as the primary basis for the formulation of customary rules or policies, despite their being key actors in ritual practices.

Gender ideology also gives rise to dimensions of resistance among *Srathi* women in their efforts to assert their presence within the customary sphere. This is illustrated, for example, by a statement from Mbah Budi (73 years old), who was successfully interviewed on 19 December 2025:

*"Because I understand more deeply about the ritual burdens, that is what makes me different from other Balinese women. I have come to understand the burdens involved — for instance, Banten cremation, which must be carried out and contains various types of ceremonies, such as the toy new, kumkuman, tirta cleaning, and so forth. Even the stakeholders, before a ceremony has begun, will already coordinate with me regarding all the ceremonies that are necessary. Thus, in this matter, a close synergy takes place."*

The interview results above demonstrate that *Srathi* women possess religious knowledge authority derived from lived experience and mastery of ritual burdens. This holistic knowledge of ceremony types, functions, and the equipment required for ceremonies naturally positions *Srathi* as important agents in the continuity of ritual. This authority is not merely technical in nature but also holds symbolic significance, as it demonstrates a depth of religious understanding that is not monopolized by formal actors such as customary stakeholders, but is also embodied by women through their sustained cultural practice.

To further clarify *Srathi* women's knowledge of ritual burdens, the researcher conducted in-depth field observations regarding the skilled and proficient activities of *Srathi* in the making of *Banten*. The observational results can be seen in the following table.

**Table 3. Activities Making Banten by Mbah Budi**

No	<i>Srathi</i> Name	Activity Making Banten	Picture
1.	Grandpa Budi	<i>Nyait / Mejejaitan</i>	
	Grandpa Budi	<i>Banten Matching</i>	
	Grandpa Budi	<i>Macal Banten</i>	

**Figure 12. Resistance *Srathi* past Activity Banten Sewing**

Source: Documentation Personal, 2025

**Figure 13. Resistance *Srathi* past Activity Banten**

Source: Documentation Personal, 2025

**Figure 14. Resistance *Srathi* past Activity Macal Banten**

Source : Documentation Personal, 2025

Source: (Author's field documentation, 2025)

The experiences of *Srathi* women in *Mengesta* Traditional Village do not only reflect the practice of patriarchy, but also contain various forms of resistance that are subtle, contextual, and sustained. This resistance does not always manifest as open rejection of the customary structure, but rather is realised through negotiation, adaptation, and the strategic utilisation of available spaces within the social system. *Srathi* women continue to fulfil the ritual roles assigned to them, while simultaneously developing autonomy through the mastery of ritual skills, social networks, and an increasingly economically recognised role within society.

From the perspective of Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, the resistance practices of *Srathi* women reflect the capacity of agency operating within and through structure. The customary structure naturally imposes limitations in the form of rules, norms, and gender role divisions, but it also provides sources of symbolic and social power that can be appropriated by women. Reflexive monitoring of action is evident when *Srathi* women recognise the limitations of their position within the customary structure, yet nonetheless choose to remain

present and play an active role as a strategy for defending their existence and gaining social recognition. In this way, the resistance of women is not destructive in nature towards the structure, but rather gradually transformative through the meaningful reproduction of social practices.

Within Michel Foucault's framework, the resistance of *Srathi* women can be understood as an inherent dimension of power relations themselves. Where there is power, there is always resistance. The customary power that regulates the bodies, time, and roles of women is never entirely totalising, as it always leaves spaces for alternative practices. The mastery of ritual knowledge, the ability to arrange *Banten*, and the strategic position of women in the sustainability of customary ceremonies all constitute points of resistance that allow *Srathi* women to maintain their social bargaining power. This resistance is not realised in the form of frontal opposition, but rather through the command of knowledge and practices that cannot easily be replaced by other actors.

Beyond *sekala* experiences, *Srathi* also possess unique experiences related to matters of a *niskala* nature. *Niskala* experiences pertain to how *Srathi* navigate their role within social life. This is reflected in an expression from a successfully conducted interview on 31 January 2026:

*"During my time working as a Srathi, I have had experiences of a spiritual, niskala nature. One night while I was asleep, I received a vision that someone nearby would soon pass away. Even so, it was still not entirely clear. The following day, while I was making Banten, news came of the death of that person."*

The interview results above reveal the mystical experiences undergone by Mek Nuratni as a form of inner visualisation arising from a dream. Although the experience was felt to be unclear, it was sufficient to demonstrate the existence of a subjective experience in the *niskala* dimension. In other words, the dream became a medium connecting personal consciousness with the spirituality of the *Srathi*. Furthermore, the correspondence between the dream visualisation and the news of death received thereafter strengthens the legitimacy of this *niskala* experience.

The spiritual experiences undergone by *Srathi* can be analysed through Michel Foucault's perspective, particularly in relation to the formation of the subject and technologies of the self. According to Foucault, *Srathi* function as ritual subjects who are constituted performatively through the rituals they carry out. The visualisation that arises demonstrates the existence of a mechanism of ritual internalisation operating within the inner self of the *Srathi*, beyond the sensory world. This experience reveals a profile of *Srathi* that is not only constructed within the socio-spiritual sphere, but also dwells within each *Srathi*'s own inner self.

Thus, the spiritual experiences possessed by women who work as *Srathi* cannot be separated from the mechanism of self-construction as a religious figure. Ritual activities, spiritual discipline, and sensitivity to intuition ultimately form a distinctive configuration of subjectivity. Through a Foucauldian lens, these experiences are not merely viewed as individual phenomena, but rather as mechanisms of subject production within the mystical-spiritual realm, which position *Srathi* as subjects who hold both spiritual authority and social legitimacy within the local community.

## The Relevance of Gender Ideology Issues in The Life of *Srathi* Women as Social Studies Teaching Resources at Junior High School Level

Here is the proofread and revised text:

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Social studies learning is inherently closely connected to society. The purpose of social studies learning is to develop students' potential to courageously face challenges in life and to adapt intelligently to their environment (Bawa et al., 2014:1). In other words, the goal of social studies learning is to equip students with critical and logical thinking skills, a spirit of deep inquiry, problem-solving abilities, social life skills, and a commitment to and awareness of social and humanitarian values (Mardani et al., 2021:55). To achieve these objectives, social studies learning must therefore remain closely connected to the life of society, and even tends towards teaching resources that are contextual in nature, or that place emphasis on social phenomena in everyday life. In other words, social phenomena become the objects of study examined within social studies (*IPS*). This includes matters of local culture; the integration of local culture into social studies learning holds an important place in strengthening students' identity, as it is able to bring the richness of local culture closer to students' daily lives while simultaneously socialising ethical values in a natural manner (Romli et al., 2025:186). As such, issues such as the experiences of women in the profession of *Srathi* are a fitting subject to be implemented in social studies learning, particularly within the Independent Curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka*). This is in line with a statement from the social studies teacher at State Junior High School 1 Penebel, namely Mrs. Juli, who was successfully interviewed on 8 July 2025:




*"The potential issue of gender ideology and its influence on women who work as Srathi can be integrated into the Social Studies (IPS) Curriculum to increase students' awareness and understanding of social and gender issues — namely, women's involvement — so that students can understand the importance of women's participation in religious and spiritual activities, as well as how gender ideology can influence that involvement. Furthermore, this issue is in accordance with the subject matter in the Grade 7 social studies textbook at the junior high school level, particularly in Chapter IV on Community Empowerment, with the Learning Outcomes focusing on explaining problems in socio-cultural life. This issue has not yet been covered or discussed in social studies learning."*

The interview results above indicate that the role of women as *Srathi* is not only laden with socio-cultural context from the customary community, but also holds very strong potential to be incorporated into social studies (*IPS*) learning. Moreover, social studies is a contextual discipline that takes social phenomena as its daily objects of study. The experiences of *Srathi* women can therefore represent the existence of women's active participation in the religious and spiritual sphere, accompanied by a critical understanding of it. By raising this issue, students will be invited to understand that women's roles within the customary community are laden with social and gender values. The integration of this issue into the social studies curriculum can be incorporated into the Grade VII subject matter, particularly Chapter IV on Community Empowerment, which also discusses socio-cultural problems, including those caused by gender inequality and the socialisation of values originating from ideology in social life.

Furthermore, the interview also reveals a gap in social studies learning. This is attributable to the fact that discussions concerning women's roles, including in the context of religious and customary representation through the presence of *Srathi*, have never been directly addressed. Therefore, the experiences and other matters related to *Srathi* women can be developed into a new teaching resource that is rich in contextual and critical values. This is highly relevant to the social studies Learning Outcomes that focus on the ability to explain socio-cultural problems. This approach not only enriches social studies teaching materials but also plays a highly important role in deepening gender awareness, reflective attitudes, and social justice values in students, particularly those at State Junior High School 1 Penebel.

These interview findings are further reinforced by findings from the documentation study of the social studies (*IPS*) learning textbook in Chapter IV, which reveals the limited coverage of social phenomena related to gender equality in the existing learning materials.

**Table 4. Material in the Social Studies Textbook for Grade VII Middle School**

Social Studies Material for Junior High School Class VII Community Empowerment Package Book	Material Image Community empowerment
Overexploitation of Development	
<p><b>Figure 15. Development Exploitation Material</b> (Source: Social Studies Textbook for Junior High School Grade VII)</p>	
Social Inequality and Poverty	
<p><b>Figure 16. Gap Material</b> (Source: Social Studies Textbook for Junior High School Grade VII)</p>	
Gender Inequality	
<p><b>Figure 17. Gender Inequality Material</b> (Source: Social Studies Textbook for Junior High School Grade VII)</p>	



**Figure 18. Juvenile Delinquency Material**  
(Source: Social Studies Textbook for Junior High School Grade VII)

Source: (Author's field documentation, 2025)

Based on the results of the documentation study of the learning materials contained in Chapter IV on Community Empowerment, particularly the sub-chapter discussing problems in socio-cultural life, it can be observed that socio-cultural life problems in Indonesia remain widespread and highly prevalent. These include the exploitation of overdevelopment, social inequality and poverty, gender inequality, and juvenile delinquency encompassing acts of vandalism, inter-student brawls, and narcotics abuse.

Although substantive discussion of gender inequality is already contained within the social studies textbook, the discussion focuses solely on the figures of Indonesian women such as Dewi Sartika and Kartini as demonstrations of women's presence and contributions. However, in the context of regionalism within Indonesia, the substantive learning aspects have yet to adequately address matters of locality, including issues of gender and cultural equality at the local level. One of the layers that remains undiscussed is the phenomenon of *Srathi*. This continues to demonstrate the existence of a gap in contextually grounded social studies learning.

Beyond this, Mrs. Juli also emphasized the importance of this issue being incorporated into social studies learning, as well as the role of schools in supporting learning that is sensitive to socio-cultural issues, including those related to gender and Balinese women's locality.

*"This issue is very important to discuss in social studies learning. This is because social studies (IPS) teaching resources that raise the theme of women, specifically Srathi, in Balinese Hindu society can increase awareness. I hope that the development of IPS teaching resources that raise the theme of Srathi women can increase students' awareness of the roles and contributions of women in Balinese Hindu society. Furthermore, through the development of these social studies teaching resources, schools can develop students' skills in analysing and understanding issues related to socio-cultural life and Balinese locality."*

The interview results above demonstrate that the issue of women specifically, the experiences of women who work as *Srathi* within the dynamics of Balinese Hindu society holds very strong urgency for incorporation as subject matter in social studies learning. Mrs. Juli observed that the social studies (*IPS*) teaching resources currently in use still offer limited representation of women's experiences and roles within a society dense with religious and spiritual life. By presenting the theme of *Srathi* women as learning material, students will gain a deeper understanding of women's contributions to the life of the Balinese people.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing discussion, the conclusions of this study are as follows. First, with regard to the first research problem, the reasons women in *Mengesta* Village become *Srathi* are attributable to several motives, namely economic motives, family encouragement motives, community subjectivity motives, and traditional motives. Economic motives arise from the fact that women who work as *Srathi* sell their skills and services in the making of *Banten*. The second motive, namely family encouragement motives, can be observed in how previous family members whether mothers or grandmothers passed down skills and knowledge related to ritual burdens to the *Srathi*. Meanwhile, the third motive, namely community subjectivity motives, refers to how women in *Mengesta* Village take on the profession of *Srathi* based on the trust extended to them by the community. The final motive, namely traditional motives, refers to the prevailing societal perspective regarding the obligatory ideal standards of Balinese womanhood that women are expected to fulfil. Second, the second research problem addresses the experiences of women who become *Srathi* in relation to the practice of gender ideology, which are divided into two categories, namely *sekala* experiences and *niskala* experiences. *Sekala* experiences can be observed through triple roles, marginalization, and resistance. Meanwhile, *niskala* experiences are related to dream visualisations. Third, the third research problem addresses the aspects that can be developed into learning outcomes. These outcomes include students being able to develop sensitivity towards social issues in society, students being able to deepen their understanding of the portrait of gender ideology through the experiences of women who become *Srathi*, students being able to strengthen their understanding of the reasons women become *Srathi*, and students being able to develop an understanding of issues that can be developed into teaching resources.

With reference to the conclusions of this study, several suggestions are also conveyed to a number of parties. First, through this study, it is hoped that the findings can serve as reference material for students at school, enabling them to understand the deeply rooted gender ideology within society through the experiences of women who work as *Srathi*. Second, through this study, educators particularly teachers at the junior high school level are expected to be able to enhance their innovation in delivering classroom learning. Third, through this study, the findings can serve as a reference source for future researchers seeking to further explore the concepts and theories related to the experiences of women who work as *Srathi* through the lens of gender ideology, which can be utilised for conducting similar studies.

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