



---

**Ritual Communication Strategies In Strengthening Hindu Community Social Relations In Mataram City During The Covid-19 Pandemic**

By:

I Gusti Komang Kembarawan  
Institut Agama Hindu Negeri Gde Pudja Mataram  
E-mail: [gustikembarawan@gmail.com](mailto:gustikembarawan@gmail.com)**Abstract**

*The Covid-19 pandemic has had a very significant impact on Hindu religious life in the city of Mataram, especially with regard to the implementation of a yajña ceremony involving the presence of a number of Hindus. This phenomenon affects the social bonds that have been built for a long time. In this regard, in this research, a study was conducted on ritual communication strategies in order to strengthen social solidarity of the Hindu community in Mataram City during the Covid-19 Pandemic. This study was designed in a qualitative descriptive type. The data are presented and analyzed using narrative texts to find answers to the research focus. This study found that there are at least four ritual communication strategies in order to maintain the social ties of the Hindu community. First, intensify communication through social media. Second, to regulate the implementation of religious rituals by complying with health protocols. Third, participating in Hindu religious enlightenment activities online so that it is expected to maintain communication even though it is through a virtual face-to-face process. Fourth, build harmonization of interpersonal communication in the family environment.*

**Keywords:** *communication strategy, ritual, social relations, covid-19 pandemic*

**I. Introduction**

The Corona Virus (Covid-19) pandemic has captured the world's attention because of the enormous impacts it has on human health. Various policies have been implemented in order to tackle the massive spread of the virus. The most important policy related to dealing with the corona virus is that social activity restrictions have a very significant impact on social life because there is a tendency to weaken social relations. Regarding the implementation of social restrictions, it also has a very significant impact on the social life of the Hindu community in the city of Mataram. The most notable impact was the restriction on holding large-scale social gatherings. The Hindu community in the city of Mataram since historical times has carried out Hinduism by involving the participation of many people, especially in carrying out Hindu religious ceremonies which are also known as ritual communication. Most of the implementation of Hinduism in Mataram City involves the participation of many people in the ngayah and ngeremba traditions.



The *ngayah* tradition is an activity of Hindus who work together and work hand in hand to complete religious ceremonies. *Ngayah* activities are generally carried out in a sacred place in the form of a temple. *Ngeremba* is a tradition that is almost the same as *ngayah*, only in a different place. *Ngeremba* is usually carried out in the implementation of Hindu religious ceremonies carried out in the family environment. Traditions in the implementation of Hindu religious ceremonies, both *ngayah* and *ngeremba* involve the participation of many people. People who come interact with each other to complete the implementation of religious ceremonies. Those who come to the event sociologically strengthen each other's social solidarity. Recently, these activities have experienced problems due to the implementation of social restrictions. The imposition of social restrictions in the long term can lead to erosion of the strength of social relations. This impact is very potential in realizing individualist attitudes.

Based on historical data, the Hindu community in Mataram City already has a religious social system that is practically used as a medium to establish social ties among Balinese people. Until now, this religious social system is relatively large in number which is still being maintained. These social systems, such as the *sidhikara* system, the *banjar* system, the *kebendesaan* system, the temple manners system, and a number of other social systems are used as a vehicle for realizing a mutual life that helps each other. Second, the religious social system is also used as a vehicle for carrying out the teachings of Hinduism in daily life. In this regard, the socio-religious system inherited by the ancestors of the Balinese people in Lombok has a very important role in implementing their belief system, especially with regard to the implementation of Hinduism.

The socio-religious system owned by the Balinese in Lombok as a legacy of their ancestors has an important meaning for social life, especially among Balinese Hindus. Although the religious social system is still traditional, it has enormous benefits in helping to overcome the problems faced, both individually and in groups. In the individual aspect, the religious social system owned by the Balinese helps to connect one individual to another and at the same time can forge social ties between them. A number of individual problems can be overcome by making contact with other individuals so that social relationships are established that can be used to create a life that helps each other in



overcoming the problems they face. This is indicated by a number of cases, such as in building a residence an individual cannot provide it himself, but requires the help of other individuals. This shows that the religious social system has an important role in building social relations between individuals in realizing a better life.

Social systems that have important values in carrying out Hinduism as above will experience obstacles in their implementation due to the imposition of social restrictions to stem the spread of the Corona Virus (Covid-19) which is currently spreading. In relation to overcoming the weakening in the dimension of social solidarity and at the same time following government programs in preventing the transmission of Covid-19, a responsive strategy is needed. In connection with the above conditions, in this study an analysis of the ritual communication strategy implemented by the Hindu community in the city of Mataram in order to cope with the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic and on the one hand can maintain social relationships that have been built since historical times.

## **II. Research Method**

The design in this research is descriptive qualitative. In this regard, this study focuses on the sociological aspect of communication which is more concentrated on ritual communication strategies in maintaining social relations of Hindu society in Mataram City in the midst of the spread of the Corona Virus Pandemic (Covid-19). The type of data collected in this study is in the form of qualitative data. The qualitative data was collected in the field in accordance with the established data collection techniques. To complement the qualitative data obtained in the field, this study also includes quantitative data as supporting data. The qualitative data needed in this research are in the form of expressions, words, ideas, opinions, and notes related to the problem under study. The data sources in this study consisted of two sources, namely primary data sources and secondary sources. Primary data sources are informants who know about strengthening social relations based on clan similarity in Hindu communities in Mataram City. Informants as primary data sources are positioned to provide information in accordance with the data required in the research which was explored through interviews. Secondary



data obtained indirectly from the main source, but obtained through documentation data from a number of related agencies.

This study seeks to explore and collect data through several stages such as observation, interviews, and documentation. The following is a brief description of the data collection techniques. In observing the maintenance of social solidarity in the Hindu community in the city of Mataram in the midst of social restrictions in the handling of the Corona Virus Pandemic (Covid-19), researchers went directly to the field. In making observations, it is also accompanied by recording the results of observations. Before the researcher gets involved in any important activities at the research location, first the identification of influential groups in the research location is carried out. The goal is to make it easier to control the observation, so that the diversity of objects that must be observed can be avoided.

In connection with research that will examine problems related to communication strategies in the context of maintaining social social ties in the Hindu community in Mataram City in the midst of social restrictions in Combating the Corona Virus Pandemic (Covid-19) with a number of informants determined by purposive techniques. Interviews will be conducted with the aim of obtaining data that cannot be observed directly by the researcher. Interviews that will be conducted with the informants are free interviews in accordance with the interview guidelines prepared. Free interview in relation to this research is to conduct interviews by giving the broadest freedom to informants to convey information as research data. In this regard, the interview guidelines are not rigid in looking for data but are adapted to the conditions during the interview.

Documentation study that will be used as a data collection technique in this research is principally to find secondary data. Referring to Nawawi (1983:139) documentation study is a way of collecting data through written remains, especially in the form of archives and includes books on opinions, theories, arguments/laws and others related to research problems. . In this study, a documentary study is useful as a secondary data collection tool. Documentary sources include archival documents from both government and non-government institutions, literature, journals, statistics and other references relevant to this research. Very important documentation is related to the script of



maintaining social solidarity in the Hindu community in the city of Mataram in the midst of social restrictions in handling the Corona Virus Pandemic (Covid-19).

Data analysis techniques in this study were carried out through classification, reduction, and data interpretation. In this study, data classification is the stage of grouping data obtained based on data collection techniques while digging data in the field. Referring to the opinion of Bogdan and Biklen (in Suprayogo and Tobroni, 2001: 193) at the end of the analysis during data collection, the objectives of data collection were determined. The data collected from both informants, situations, and documents are determined. The use of data reduction techniques in this study relates to the selection of important data in accordance with the objectives of this study. Data reduction according to Miles and Huberman (in Suprayogo and Tobroni, 2001: 193) is a selection process, focusing attention on simplification, abstraction, transformation of rough data, which emerges from field notes. Data reduction took place continuously during the research. Before the data is actually collected, the anticipation of a reduction is evident when the research decides on the conceptual framework of the research area, research problems and the data collection approach chosen.

Data that is analyzed during continuous research is always interpreted with the aim of obtaining meaning and significance, especially those related to the existence of the sanctity of the temple. Temples as part of culture, it is necessary to interpret actions related to maintaining social solidarity in the Hindu community in the city of Mataram in the midst of social restrictions in handling the Corona Virus Pandemic (Covid-19). Referring to Geertz (1973: 89) who holds the view that culture as a system of conceptions that is inherited and expressed in symbolic form, so that qualitative interpretation is an interpretation that uses knowledge, ideas and concepts that exist in the society being studied.

The technique of checking the validity of the data in this study uses triangulation techniques. This technique is done by re-checking the data that do not match each other. There are two types of triangulation in this study, namely the triangulation of the methods used in the research and the triangulation of data sources. These two triangulation techniques aim to check the validity of the research data.



### **III. Discussion**

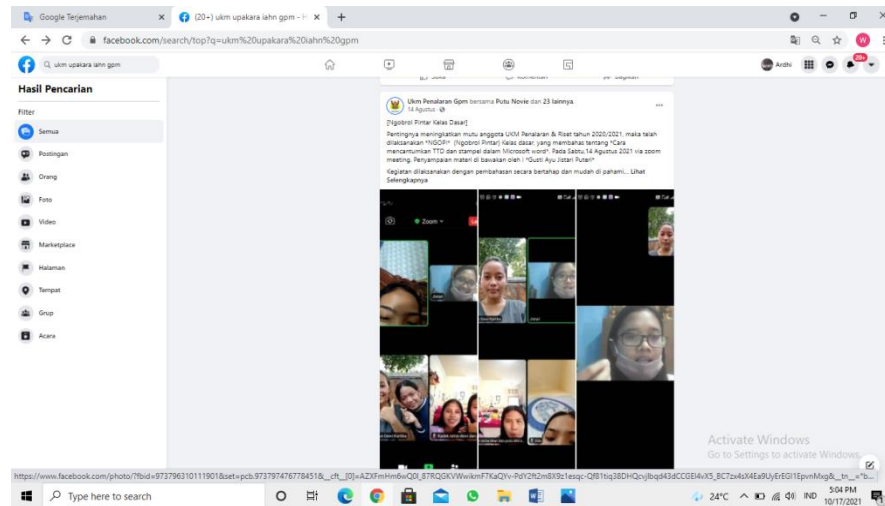
The social restrictions imposed by the government in order to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic have the potential to weaken social relations that occur in the Hindu community in Mataram City due to the decline in social interaction, especially in activities related to the implementation of Hinduism. In this regard, it is necessary to build a ritual communication strategy in order to maintain social solidarity in order to maintain social relations between individuals despite the government's appeal to avoid social interactions in everyday life. There are several ritual communication strategies that can be applied to maintain social relations so that people can still maintain the power of social solidarity, especially in the context of carrying out Hindu religious activities. The strategy is the intensification of communication through social media, regulation in the implementation of religious rituals by complying with health protocols.

#### **3.1 Intensifying Communication Through Social Media**

The social restrictions imposed by the government in tackling the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic have indeed caused social distancing between individuals because they do not communicate and interact directly. However, it is possible to communicate and interact using electronic media, such as cell phones, facebook media, instagram, twitter, zoom, google meet, and other electronic devices that can connect people through communication with electronic devices. In some cases the community indirectly cannot hold meetings, such as meetings, lectures, and other activities that are carried out directly. Advances in information technology are very helpful in connecting people to carry out joint activities that are carried out face-to-face. Activities that involve the participation of many people, such as meetings or other activities are greatly assisted when using electronic instruments to bridge these activities.



**Figure 1 Religious Communication Through Social Media**



*Source: Social Media Facebook UKM IAHN Gde Pudja Mataram in 2021*

Based on the documentation data above, it appears that social media has an important role as a vehicle for conveying information or communication related to activities related to the implementation of Hinduism. They convey messages to Hindus about something that contains knowledge, education, or related matters. with interaction and communication using social media. Social restrictions that are carried out directly are indeed not allowed during the covid-19 pandemic, but by using social media they can freely convey information related to the teachings of Hinduism and the implementation of Hinduism which is carried out during this period. the covid-19 pandemic Communication through social media during the covid-19 pandemic is a very important activity to do in order to strengthen social relations, especially among Hindus so that social solidarity can still be maintained.

Based on observations in the field, the Hindu community in Mataram City has taken the initiative to hold virtual face-to-face meetings through WhatsApp groups in a banjar or community group. They will use WhatsApp to communicate if there is something very important to convey. They can communicate with each other in conveying a message or overcome the problems they face through the WhatsApp group. WhatsApp media is also widely used to upload important events that can provide information to the public by using a virtual face-to-face model.



The use of electronic media as a tool to communicate by a community group is recognized by I Gede Subrata (an informant), as conveyed in the interview summary which in outline conveys that indeed, as we all know, the government has implemented social restrictions in order to avoid the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic globally. massive. Even though people cannot communicate directly, now there are electronic media that can help bridge communication within a community group. Through electronic media they can convey messages to each other, either in the form of writing, pictures, or do virtual face-to-face. This is very helpful for the Hindu community when there are important activities that need to be delivered quickly and do not cause face-to-face meetings. This electronic media also plays an important role in maintaining social relations in a group or banjar in the Hindu community in Mataram City.

Based on the informant's expression above, it is revealed that people who have difficulty meeting face to face in conveying a message can use electronic media as a tool in communicating. The social restrictions imposed by the government are indeed very good for reducing crowds so that it is hoped that the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic can be cut off. The communication carried out by the Hindu community in the city of Mataram using electronic media is actually a form of adaptation to the current conditions. Although communication media using electronic devices do not provide an opportunity for face-to-face meetings, through virtual face-to-face certain messages can be conveyed quickly and can still comply with the government's appeal not to gather in crowds. Communication using electronic media that is carried out intensively also has the potential to maintain social relations, especially in conveying information related to religious ritual activities.

### **3.2 Arrangements in the Implementation of Religious Rituals by Obeying Health Protocols**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Hindu communities are required to comply with health protocols in activities related to the implementation of Hinduism. In addition, people who want to carry out prayers are also arranged in a certain way so as not to cause a crowd. In this regard, in front of the temple gate, generally there are those who guard



and at the same time regulate the Hindus who will enter the temple area so that they can be orderly and also not crowd. Arrangements in the implementation of religious rituals by complying with health protocols in the temple environment, as shown in the following picture.

**Figure 2 Compliance with Health Protocols in the Temple Environment**



*Source: Research Documentation, Year 2021*

Based on the documentation data above, it can be seen that Hindus who carry out religious activities in a temple are required to comply with health protocols by using masks. health protocol. This condition must be maintained during the Covid-19 pandemic as a form of adaptation to new normal conditions and at the same time still be able to carry out obligations as devout religious people.

The existence of social restrictions imposed by the government in order to cope with the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has the opportunity to weaken social ties among Hindus in Mataram City because direct communication and interaction is decreasing. In this regard, Hindus can respond to this by regulating the pattern of direct interaction and communication, especially in relation to the implementation of religious ceremonies by regulating the procedures for presenting the community in these religious ritual activities. This was stated by Ida Made Santi Adnya (an informant), who in general stated that, as we all know, the government has imposed social restrictions on activities that can create crowds. This is also included in the implementation of Hindu religious rituals which are indeed characterized by their togetherness, both in carrying out ritual



facilities and in relation to their presence in praying. We from Parisadha have appealed to the people if there is a pujawali activity in a temple, the presence of Hindus should be arranged so that they do not come together to the temple so that it has the potential to create a mass crowd. This arrangement can be done by scheduling Hindus who come to carry out Hindu religious ceremonies with the shift model, meaning that they are made into groups to perform prayer activities, for example, so that they do not come at the same time. It can also reduce crowds. In addition, they must continue to comply with health protocols to avoid the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on the informant's expression above, there is one important thing that can be done as a strategy for the loosening of social ties in relation to the implementation of social restrictions to tackle the spread of COVID-19. Those who want to carry out Hindu religious ceremonies are still given the opportunity, but by arranging themselves so that they don't come together to the place of the ceremony so as to avoid crowds. In this way people can still meet each other even though the number is still limited. With them automatically meeting each other emotionally they can still make contact and at the same time there is an opportunity to remind each other as fellow ummah which in the end social ties can still be maintained.

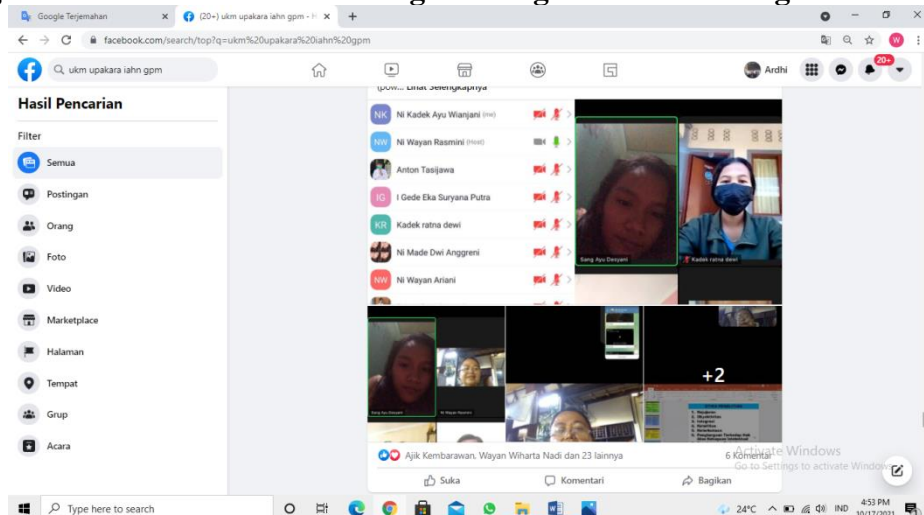
Another thing conveyed by the informant above relates to his appeal to always remind Hindus to comply with health protocols. This is an effort to keep themselves safe from exposure to the corona virus so that the health of Hindus can still be maintained. Although they are arranged to enter a holy place, there is an opportunity for them to meet each other and remind each other that they still have a strong relationship as people who have the same identity, especially the similarity in identity as followers of the Hindu religion. The expression conveyed by the informant above is also one of the strategies in maintaining social solidarity among Hindus during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **3.3 Participate in Hindu Religious Enlightenment Activities through Online Media**

It is very important for Hindu religious enlightenment activities to be carried out through online media as a vehicle for increasing religious knowledge and at the same time as a vehicle for maintaining social relations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there are

Hindu religious enlightenment activities through the media that can be followed to increase Hindu religious knowledge and at the same time as a vehicle for indirect communication related to religious materials that need further enlightenment. In this regard, the following shows the activities of religious enlightenment delivered online through the media zoom.

**Figure 3. Activities of Hindu Religion Enlightenment Through Online**



*Source: IAHN Gde Pudja Mataram UKM Facebook, 2021*

Based on the documentation data above, it appears that there are activities that use online media to provide increased knowledge to the Hindu community. Those who participate in these online activities can increase their religious knowledge regarding matters that need to be sharpened, guiding Hindus in carrying out Hindu religious teachings during the COVID-19 pandemic. The online activities in the picture above have a very important role in exploring religious materials and at the same time as a medium of communication to establish social ties among Hindus.

The limitations to direct social interaction among Hindus during the COVID-19 pandemic which has the potential to weaken social ties can also be overcome by participating in Hindu religious enlightenment activities, such as dharma discourse, dharma tula, or webinars. Hindu religious topics can be followed by Hindus to be able to interact even though it is face-to-face. This is as expressed by I Dewa Ketut Mertayasa (an informant), who in general stated that Hindus must obey the government's appeal in tackling the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic by not doing activities that can cause



crowds. Indeed, when viewed from the aspect of direct interaction, it has the potential to stretch social relations, especially among Hindus because they are rarely able to communicate directly. This is also not an obstacle if we want to meet indirectly and can be done through network media in activities related to Hindu religious enlightenment, such as *dharma* discourse, *dharma tula*, webinars, or other activities carried out *daring* (online). Through these online activities, Hindus can face each other virtual with other Hindus and can also interact face-to-face so that there will be potential to get to know each other despite being limited by a very long distance. This is one way to maintain the strength of social relations that occur among Hindus. Currently, there are relatively many sources that provide Hindu religious enlightenment services online, it is only up to us to be active to access and participate in these activities.

Based on the informants' expressions above, it is revealed that there are strategies that can be used to conduct virtual face-to-face in the form of online Hindu religious enlightenment activities that can open up opportunities for interaction with other Hindus, such as *dharma wacana* activities, *dharma tula*, webinars or other activities. Other activities that can be used as a medium to communicate with fellow Hindus face-to-face. What is very important in this strategy is to be able to build the emotion of togetherness with fellow Hindus even though the communication is face-to-face. The emotion of togetherness that can be built through involvement in activities that have the nuances of enlightening Hindu religious knowledge is very potential in maintaining social ties with fellow Hindus so that social solidarity can be fostered.

### **3.4 Building Harmonization of Interpersonal Communication in the Family**

The family has a very important role as a place for interpersonal communication to realize the strengthening of social ties informally. The family environment is the beginning of informal education that can be used as a reinforcement for education in the next phase when a child is increasingly showing development, both physically and psychologically. During the COVID-19 pandemic, interpersonal communication in the family environment has a very important role in strengthening family ties. In a broader dimension, interpersonal communication in the family has a very important role in



communicating at a higher level. Based on the results of observations in the field below, the process of interpersonal communication in the family environment is shown.

**Figure 4 Interpersonal Communication in the Family Environment**



*Source: Research Documentation, Year 2021*

Based on the documentation data above, there are pictures that show communication that occurs in the family environment interpersonally. This is a form of strengthening ties in the family during the COVID-19 pandemic. Communication within the family is very important as an effort to realize social ties in the realm of because of social restrictions to communicate directly with many people so that direct communication is only possible at the family level. The essence of the interpersonal communication process carried out in families during the covid-19 pandemic is very important to express things that need to be discussed, both concerning education, religion, association, future plans, and so on. This is an implementation of human existence as homosocial beings who tend to communicate with the public to convey certain things.

Humans as homosocius creatures will not be able to live perfectly without involving themselves in socially nuanced activities. In this regard, humans always need the presence of others in order to show their existence. Hindus in the city of Mataram are also social beings who need the presence of others to show their existence. One thing that is important in order to show self-existence in the social world can be done through the family environment as expressed by I Made Sri Wirdiata (an informant) who in outline reveals that as Hindus in Lombok, especially in Mataram City, we cannot deny that we need people. others to further enhance our lives, because we are social creatures. The



problem now is that there is a covid-19 pandemic that doesn't allow us to interact with other people freely as happened in the period before the covid-19 pandemic. And it is very reasonable that if social contact does not occur, it has the potential to weaken social relations. To overcome this, if social contact cannot be carried out directly on a wider scale, social contact within the family can be intensified in order to build self-perception that we still exist socially. In this regard, presumably the social relations with family that were built during the COVID-19 pandemic still exist through good interpersonal communication within the family environment.

Based on the expression conveyed by the informant above, it seems that family institutions have an important role during the COVID-19 pandemic to carry out intensive communication within the family environment. This is based on the fact that the family is a micro-scale social system as a medium for self-actualization and gaining social recognition even though the scale is still in the micro order. Interpersonal communication within the family is basically a very important thing that underlies the occurrence of social relationships on a micro scale. This is also a capital that can later be applied in communication in a wider range involving social dimensions in a wider environment so that social relations can be maintained and even strengthened. In this regard, the ideas conveyed by the informants above are very important to be implemented in order to maintain the strength of social relations starting from the micro scale, namely within the family as a vehicle to build the strength of social solidarity on a macro scale.

Based on the description above, strategies that can be applied to strengthen social relations during the COVID-19 pandemic need to be applied as a way to maintain social ties so that the Hindu community in Mataram City can maintain social solidarity in the era of social restrictions implemented by the government. This condition is related to the structuration theory proposed by Anthony Gidens that humans are determined by the structure that binds them. In order to strengthen this structure, humans must also build certain ways which are determined by space and time. In connection with the COVID-19 pandemic, events that can change the social structure so that the Hindu community must respond in a wise and wise way in maintaining that structure, especially regarding social solidarity.





#### IV. Conclusion

There are at least four ritual communication strategies in order to maintain social relations in the Hindu community in the city of Mataram in the midst of social restrictions in tackling the spread of covid-19. *First*, intensify communication through social media. This has the potential to build communication among Hindus by using social media which can maintain the resilience of social relationships. *Second*, the regulation of the implementation of religious rituals by complying with health protocols. This is done by implementing prayer activities in rotation with the aim of reducing the crowd. This is done during the *pujawali* ceremony at a temple by regulating the mobility of Hindus who enter the temple so as not to cause a crowd and at the same time are required to comply with health protocols. *Third*, participating in Hindu religious enlightenment activities online so that it is expected to maintain communication even though it is through a virtual face-to-face process (not face to face). This can be expected to increase the emotion of togetherness which has the potential to maintain social relations. *Fourth*, build harmonization of interpersonal communication in the family environment. It is hoped that this will serve as the basis for gluing social relations on a micro scale which will have implications for a wider scale within the Hindu community on a macro scale.

#### Bibliography

- Abdullah, M. A. 1996, *Studi Agama, Normativitas Atau Hisorisitas?* Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar
- Abdul, S. 2002. *Sosiologi Skematika, Teori Dan Terapan*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara
- Garna, J. K. 1992 *Teori-Teori Perubahan Sosial*, Bandung: PPs-Universitas Padjadjaran
- Geertz, C. 2001. *Agama Sebagai Sistem Kebudayaan, Dalam Dekonstruksi Kebenaran Kritik Tujuh Teori Agama*, Terjemahan Inyik Ridwan Muzir, M. Syukri, Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD
- Geriya, I. W. 2008. *Transformasi Kebudayaan Bali Memasuki Abad 21*. Surabaya: Paramitha.
- Handari, N. 1983. *Metode Penelitian Bidang Sosial*, Yogyakarta: Gajah Mada University Press



Hendropuspito, D. 1983. *Sosiologi Agama*, Yogyakarta: Kanisius

Poloma, M. M. 2003. *Sosiologi Kontemporer*, Terjemahan Team Penerjemah Yasogama  
Jakarta: PT Raja Grasindo Persada

Ritzer, G. 2004. *Teori Sosial Modern*, Terjemahan Muhammad Taufik, Yogyakarta:  
Kreasi Wacana.