

Spring 2014

# The Self-Supporting Women Of Wanita Hindu Dharma Indonesia (WHDI) Province Bali and Their Modern way of Thinking

Olivia Gregorius

*SIT Study Abroad*, [ogregori@bates.edu](mailto:ogregori@bates.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp\\_collection](http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection)

 Part of the [Civic and Community Engagement Commons](#), [Family, Life Course, and Society Commons](#), [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#), [Place and Environment Commons](#), and the [Tourism Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Gregorius, Olivia, "The Self-Supporting Women Of Wanita Hindu Dharma Indonesia (WHDI) Province Bali and Their Modern way of Thinking" (2014). *Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection*. Paper 1792.

[http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp\\_collection/1792](http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/1792)

This Unpublished Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the SIT Study Abroad at SIT Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection by an authorized administrator of SIT Digital Collections. For more information, please contact [digitalcollections@sit.edu](mailto:digitalcollections@sit.edu).

The Self-Supporting Women Of *Wanita Hindu Dharma Indonesia* (WHDI)  
Province Bali and Their Modern Way Of Thinking

Olivia Gregorius  
Project Advisor: I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, S.E., M.Si  
SIT Study Abroad  
Indonesia: Arts, Religion and Social Change  
Spring 2014

## **Table of Contents**

Acknowledgements .....	3
Introduction to WHDI .....	4
Introduction to my journey and observations .....	6
Women and Hinduism.....	8
Vision and Mission of WHDI.....	11
WHDI Symbol.....	12
Logistics of WHDI Province Bali.....	14
The Departments within WHDI Province Bali.....	17
Head of Management.....	17
Treasurer.....	18
Religion Department.....	19
WHDI Province Bali: Thoughts on the Religion Department.....	22
Organization Department .....	23
Economics Department.....	24
Social Department .....	26
Culture Department.....	28
Preserving Culture and Tradition in Every Day Life .....	31
WHDI Province Bali: Thoughts on Empowering Women .....	33
Women helping Women and Beyond.....	37
Balancing the Many Roles of a Hindu Woman in a Globalization Era .....	39
The Unique “Superwomen” of WHDI Province Bali.....	42
WHDI: Unity in Diversity.....	46

Conclusion .....	48
Recommendations For Further Study .....	50
Personal Communication Contacts and Information.....	51
References.....	54

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank some individuals for guiding me through my independent study period and writing process. I would first and foremost like to thank my advisor, Ibu Bintang for welcoming me into her home and inviting me to all of her daily activities. I would not have been able to attend all of the events or met any of the amazing women I have without her help and kind nature. *Suksma Ibu!* I would like to thank Ibu Bintang and Bapak Puspayoga for allowing me to stay at their lovely home. Thank you to Komang and Putu for keeping me company at Ibu Bintang's home and for always keeping me laughing and smiling. Thank you to Ibu Yuli and Bapak Suwiwa for allowing me to stay at their home for a short time and for sharing all of their valuable knowledge with me. I would like to thank Ni Nyoman Krisna Kumalayani (Kumala) for helping me to translate my interviews and for being a wonderful friend and companion throughout my study period! I would like to thank Agus Dharma Yoga Pratama (Agus) for helping me to translate some of the WHDI documents. Thank you to the SIT language teachers for their patience and help translating interviews. A special thank you to Riana for motorbike rides to interviews and relaxing lunch dates. Thank you to Bu Ary for her never ending support throughout the ISP period and for connecting me with WHDI Province Bali and starting me off on my journey. And last but not least, a huge thank you to the women of WHDI Province Bali as well as the Head and Vice Head of Management of WHDI Gianyar Regency for being so kind and for welcoming me into their WHDI family. Thank you for sharing your personal stories and including me in all your cultural and social activities. I will always remember your laughs and smiles and I will miss you all very much. *Suksma!*

## Introduction to WHDI

In the 1980s, Hindus in Indonesia were longing for a women's organization that focused on religious activities and social matters such as child education and ideal family coaching based on the values of *Dharma*. Local Hindu organizations were established in some provinces and cities, such as Hindu Dharma Women Association for Joys and Sorrows Activities (PWSHD), which was established in Jakarta in 1979 as well as a similar organization, established in West Nusa Tenggara in 1987 named Indonesian Hindu Dharma Women Association. These organizations became the foundation for a larger idea, which was the desire for a Women Hindu Organization throughout Indonesia. This organization soon became known as *Wanita Hindu Dharma Indonesia* (WHDI).<sup>1</sup>

Founded in 1988, WHDI has had a dual role in supporting women's place in the nation as well as religious objectives. On April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007 WHDI was officially accepted as the 80<sup>th</sup> full member of the Indonesian Women Congress (Kowani), an organization and national configuration for all women organizations in Indonesia.<sup>2</sup> Kowani serves as the umbrella for all groups ranging from professional, social, and religious objectives. Under Kowani, Women Hindu Dharma Indonesia is unique because each Hindu woman in Indonesia over the age of 17 years old is automatically a member of WHDI and it is their choice if they want to be involved.<sup>3</sup> In WHDI there are no prerequisites to attend any events or activities or to gain a management position. You just need to be a Hindu woman and have a passion for helping others and improving the lives of Hindu women in

---

<sup>1</sup> Agus Dharma Yoga Pratama, trans, *Senjarah Singjat: Organisasi Wanita Hindu Dharma Indonesia* (Jakarta, Indonesia), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Agus Dharma Yoga Pratama, trans, *Senjarah Singjat*, 2.

<sup>3</sup> I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, S.E., M.Si, personal communications (pc), 8 April 2014.

Indonesia.<sup>4</sup> Due to this, each of the members of WHDI has a different background, with varying past education and origins. WHDI strives to promote the idea of independent, intelligent and self-supporting women.

WHDI works to support Hindu women in all of their roles in society, as a mother, a wife, a worker, a WHDI member and more. WHDI rids the ideology of “housewifisation”, which Maria Mies, author of several feminist books, describes as “a process by which women are socially defined as housewives, dependent for their sustenance on the income of their husbands.”<sup>5</sup> They do not support this ideology that places women in a subordinate position to men and weakens their social, economic and political power in society. According to their vision and mission statement, this organization tries to create the idea of a modern Hindu woman, who respects her family, husband and religious duties, but is able to support herself mentally, socially and economically in society.

---

<sup>4</sup> I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, S.E., M.Si, (pc), 8 April 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Suryakusuma, *Sex, power, and nation*, 162-163.

## **Introduction to my journey and observations**

During my independent study period, I spent four weeks with the members of WHDI Province Bali. During this time I was able to participate in their organization's activities and events in order to gain first hand knowledge about what programs the women are involved in. Some of the events I attended include cultural activities such as seminars about traditional hair and makeup as well as marriage preparation, etiquette discussions, gamelan and traditional singing lessons and religious ceremonies such as weddings, cremations, a *mediksa* the blessing of new houses and shops and visits to different temples such as Batur temple and Besakih temple. In between activities I was able to interview many of the members who held management positions in WHDI Province Bali. Each interview was done in a casual setting, often during a car ride or at home, trying to fit it into their busy schedules. I was able to see into the lives of some of the women by visiting their homes and workplaces and meeting their families. Each woman opened up about their roles in the organization as well as their personal lives, how they are able to balance all of their roles as Hindu women and what they are passionate about in terms of women's empowerment and rights and preserving their tradition and culture in Bali.

I went into my independent study period wanting to know more about WHDI, an organization that I had very little knowledge of. I am interested in women's empowerment and I felt that WHDI Province Bali was a perfect place to spend my time learning about women who truly care about empowering the Hindu woman of Indonesia, particularly those living in Bali. I wanted to gain as much information as I could while attending all of their events and social activities as well as staying at the homes of some



of the women. I ended up staying in the home of I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, the Head of Management of WHDI Province Bali, while visiting other members during my stay. While staying with Ibu Bintang, I was able to capture the everyday life of a Hindu woman in Bali and add these experiences and observations to my studies, seeing first hand how she balances all of her roles in society.

Throughout out my time I was able to develop different focus questions and ideas in order to gain general information about WHDI as well as focus more closely on WHDI Province Bali. I decided to focus my time on WHDI Province Bali because I felt that with the rise in globalism and tourism to be most prominent in Bali, it would be interesting to see how these topics have effected the women's daily lives and the organization. It is hard to capture the depth of this organization so I tried to focus on certain aspects of WHDI Province Bali. I wanted to know about the activities and events of each department within WHDI including how these activities help the women of Bali as well as other individuals. I was also interested in how WHDI is able to promote a new modern role for Hindu Women while also preserving the culture and traditions of Hindu Women in Indonesia. I asked myself time and time again how they are able to balance all of their roles as mothers, Hindus, wives, workers, and more and have the extra time and energy to care for other women in the WHDI organization and Bali as a whole. During my time answering these questions, I learned how unique the women of WHDI Province Bali truly are and how their differences create many opportunities to spread Hinduism as well as women's empowerment.

## **Women and Hinduism**

In order to fully understand the women of WHDI Province Bali and their organization and due to the large role Hinduism plays in the organization, I felt as if I needed some background knowledge about women and their place in Hinduism. I was able to speak with one of the member of WHDI, Ni Luh Yulie Astini's husband, I Wayan Suwiwa, about this topic during my short stay at their home after being informed by some of the other women in the organization that he was a good resource.

Bapak Suwiwa claimed how women are not just their husband's wives but also their husbands Shakti's. He explained how different male deities such as Brahman, Wisnu and Suwa each have a wife, which are their Shakti's. A Shakti provides the power for their husband to achieve his goals and works as a support system, making them much more than just a wife because these male deities would not be able to succeed without their Shakti's. Brahman, the creator's wife is Saraswati, the goddess of wisdom. Brahman would not be able to be the creator if it wasn't for his wife's knowledge to support him along the way. The same relationship is visible for Wisnu, the protector, and his wife Laksmi, the goddess of wealth and Suwa, the destroyer and transformer and his wife Uma, goddess of power and creation of good over evil. These relationships display that in Hinduism they teach that males and females depend on one other to balance out each other's roles. They need one another to succeed and by supporting one another they are able to support themselves. One does not depend on the other but rather their skills and attributes are used equally.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Paraphrased from I Wayan Suwiwa, personal communications, 22 April 2014.

Bapak Suwiwa indicated that in Hinduism, men and women are created from the same materials and from the same god. They are created equal and are seen as equals in the Hindu religion. Bapak Suwiwa explained how often times in every day life, Hinduism becomes more about practice than theory. For example, a woman makes offerings and teaches her daughters to make offerings but she provides no explanation or philosophy as to why the offerings are being made. The idea of more practice than theory also occurs when examining the roles of Hindu women in society, particularly in Bali. Bapak Suwiwa indicated that in society and practice, women often times do not have roles that are seen as perfectly equal to those of men. Men are often times seen as more free, able to go out late at night and have fewer responsibilities when it comes to their religious duties. They are often career focused as well. While women on the other had must be at home to care for the children and the family and prepare their many religious activities such as making offerings. Due to all these responsibilities, it is often easier for the women to just stay at home. Bapak Suwiwa explained how this is due to natural habit and the fact that women and men have different habits that have developed over time in society and may not perfectly match the theory of Hinduism, where their roles are created equal.<sup>7</sup>

Bapak Suwiwa and I then discussed how WHDI ties into this issue of practice and theory for women's roles in Hinduism. He explained how WHDI is making women more aware of their roles and what they can do to make a larger impact in society. WHDI helps to make them aware that they can support themselves and that they do not have to just stay at home. They make a Hindu women's life easier by teaching them different life

---

<sup>7</sup> Paraphrased from I Wayan Suwiwa, pc, 23 April 2014.

skills. They also share the theory about Hinduism so that women understand the reasoning and philosophies behind their religious duties.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Paraphrased from I Wayan Suwiwa, pc, 23 April 2014.

## **Vision and Mission of WHDI**

WHDI has a set mission and vision for its organization across Indonesia. I was able to find this mission and vision statement in the law of organization handbook, *Anggaran Dasar & Anggaran Rumah Tangga: Wanita Hindu Dharam Indonesia*.

WHDI's vision is to create a positive and healthy view of a Hindu woman. To promote independent, intelligent, self-supporting Hindu women who have good manners and hearts and a modern way of thinking. The mission of WHDI is to have a social organization that is based on the Hindu religion, increase the quality of Hindu women's resources (example: education), keep the activities they plan up to date with modern times, and to develop good manners and positive thinking in everything they do.<sup>9</sup>

The vision and mission statements of WHDI create the idea of independent, self-supporting Hindu women who working alongside men in society as opposed to simply depending on them for all of their needs. The organization's vision and mission also treats the women of WHDI as individuals with unique strengths and skills, which allow them to be successful members of the group. It is their hearts, creative minds and love for their Hindu religion that allows them to be a part of this organization.<sup>10</sup>

WHDI's vision and mission statements display the core ideas and focus of the organization. I felt that sharing these statements was important in order to gain an idea of why WHDI exists and why it is an important part of Indonesia.

---

<sup>9</sup> Ni Nyoman Krisna Kumalayani, trans, *Anggaran Dasar & Anggaran Rumah Tangga: Wanita Hindu Dharma Indonesia* (Jakarta, Indonesia, 2012), 3.

<sup>10</sup> Ni Nyoman Krisna Kumalayani, trans, *Anggaran Dasar & Anggaran Rumah Tangga*, 3.

## WHDI Symbol



I found that WHDI's symbol is very special because it shows how their organization is unique and promotes individuality as well as supports their vision and mission statements. The symbol is the identity of WHDI and helps to determine the basic principles and aims of the organization. The writing "*Wanita Hindu Dharma Indonesia*" forms an outer circle around a lotus flower with three petals along with the "Om" symbol. The writing consists of the basic gold and black colors of WHDI. The symbol of Om on top of the lotus flower symbolizes God. This shows the women's connection to their religion and how they unite together to serve God in everything they do.<sup>11</sup> The three lotus flowers on the lotus leaves represent the concept of *Tri Hita Karana*. *Tri Hita Karana* is an important ideology used in WHDI, particularly in WHDI Province Bali because the philosophy blends well with Balinese Culture.<sup>12</sup> *Tri Hita Karana* translates to three causes of happiness that are related to balanced relationships with three different

---

<sup>11</sup> I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, S.E., M.Si, pc, 8 April 2014.

<sup>12</sup> Ni Luh Yulie Astini, personal communications, 7 April 2014.

elements. The first deals with cultural and spiritual elements, the second, social economic and community elements and having balanced relationships with others and the third is related to natural and environmental elements and having a balanced relationship with nature.<sup>13</sup> The three leaves themselves symbolize the *Tri Kaya Parisudha*, which is three things a human should purify which include their deeds, speech and mind. The eight flower petals represent the eight directions in the world. The eight directions of the world include eight different deities that are the guardians of eight different directions: North, Northeast, East, South East etc. The circle within WHDI graphic symbolizes the unity and endless sisterhood among the members of WHDI. While observing the women of WHDI Province Bali, I could not help but notice the amount of unity and friendship in the group of women. I believe that this part of the symbol is highlighted in the everyday lives of the group as they support one another. The five colors in the design represent different aspects of the organization. The white represent holiness, the yellow represents greatness, the dark green is for peacefulness, the red is for braveness and the black means strong heart. The colors symbolize the different aspects of the personalities of the women in WHDI.<sup>14</sup>

The symbol's meaning explains that WHDI has a duty and obligation to educate their members to be good figures in society. This includes in their family, and to their country, nation and religion. While conducting their duties as women they should always be holding on to their inner truth of a good personality. This personality includes, being

---

<sup>13</sup> Anak Agung Raka, lecture on "Cultural Tourism", 6 March 2014, Program Center, Bedulu.

<sup>14</sup> I Kadek Suastika, trans. *Rancangan Ketentuan Atribut: Wanita Hindu Dharma Indonesia*. Jakarta, Indonesia. 2011.

pure and holy in thinking, acting and talking, being wise and sincere in anything they do, staying intelligent and clever and taking high responsibilities.<sup>15</sup>

The symbol of WHDI displays the organization's unity among the members and their close ties to Hinduism and women's empowerment. The symbol shows that the women respect the Hindu religious philosophies and try to implement them into their activities and events as well as their daily lives.

### **Logistics of WHDI Province of Bali**

As I interviewed the members of WHDI Province Bali I was able to gain an insight into some of the basic logistics of how WHDI works and the different components of the organization. These logistics also helped me to understand who the core management group was and how they work together in each of their departments.

Overall there are thirty-three Provinces of WHDI in Indonesia. Within WHDI Province Bali there are eight regencies, which include Gianyar, Badung, Tabanan, Jemberana, Buleleng, Klungkung, Karangasem, and Bangli and one city, Denpasar.<sup>16</sup> The Province of Bali has the largest membership in all of all the provinces in Indonesia.<sup>17</sup> Evaluating and monitoring all of these regencies in Bali is WHDI Province Bali. Along with this task they also run their own activities and events. There are about sixty

---

<sup>15</sup> I Kadek Suastika, trans. *Rancangan Ketentuan Atribut*.

<sup>16</sup> I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, S.E., M.Si, pc, 8 April 2014.

<sup>17</sup> "Hut WHDI Bali; 'Tingkatkan citra diri perempuan dan amanat sebagai Ibu,'" The Voice of Women in Bali, Accessed April 13, 2014, <http://www.balisruti.or.id/hut-whdi-bali-%E2%80%9C-tingkatkan-citra-diri-perempuan-dan-amanat-sebagai-ibu%E2%80%9D.html>



members in WHDI Province Bali and around thirty members in each of the different regencies. The number of active members depends on the location of the regency and the population of women surrounding the site.<sup>18</sup>

WHDI Province Bali, as well as all of the regencies and Denpasar city, runs their portion of the organization similarly. In each of the areas, they have the same positions of management and departments. For instance all the regencies in Bali follow the same organization rules and working plans based on the forums of WHDI, but differences may include those based on tradition. For instance in Gianyar they teach a certain type of gamelan with Geguritan verses, which they call Sekaa Geguntangan WHDI Gianyar and combine this with Balinese dance.<sup>19</sup>

Monitoring each branch of WHDI is the Head of Management. Under the Head of Management are the General Secretary as well as the Treasurer and Vice Treasurer, the Vice Secretary, Administration Affairs and Internal Affairs positions. There are five main departments and they include Religion, Organization, Economics, Culture, and Social Programs. There is a head of each of these departments as well as management positions for different aspects of the particular program.<sup>20</sup> For the events and activities in each of the departments they collaborate with other organizations, resources, and experts as well as receive training for themselves by attending different classes. Every five years new management is chosen for the WHDI organization. In order to become the Head of a certain position you must have been an active member in the organization first and

---

<sup>18</sup> I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, S.E., M.Si, pc, 8 April 2014.

<sup>19</sup> Dra. Anak Agung Rae, personal communication, 24 April 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Ni Putu Rianasari, trans, *Materi Musyawarah Nasional III: Wanita Hindu Dharma Indonesia* (Jakarta, Indonesia. 2011).

show that you have the passion and time management skills to perform the duties.<sup>21</sup>

Meetings are held every month or so for the core group of active members of WHDI.

Every active member must know the Hymn and March of WHDI, which is used before each meeting and other events.<sup>22</sup>

WHDI is a very social organization and most of their information is provided orally. The members indicated that they found out about WHDI through other members who were family members, friends or co-workers.

---

<sup>21</sup> I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, S.E., M.Si, pc, 8 April 2014.

<sup>22</sup> Ni Luh Yulie Astini, personal communications, 7 April 2014.

## **The Departments within WHDI Province Bali**

I asked each woman during the interview process about their position in WHDI Province Bali in order to gain more of an understanding of their programs and Departments and how they promote their religious and women empowerment ideologies through their actions. Many of the department's programs overlap so departments must work together to plan activities. I have combined the women's answers who have specific roles to create an over view of the departments of WHDI Province Bali along with some insight from WHDI Gianyar regency. Although this overview is only of WHDI Province Bali it shows the vision and mission of WHDI as a whole quite well.

I was able to participate in some of their activities, which was a highlight of experience while working with their organization. Understanding more about their programs allowed me to see how their actions are impacting and helping women as well as promoting the diverse nature of their organization and their unique vision and mission statements.

## **Head of Management**

I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati is currently the Head of Management of WHDI Province Bali. As Head of Management, Ibu Bintang is responsible for monitoring all aspects of WHDI Province Bali. Ibu Bintang explained that women join WHDI because of the concept of *ngayah*. *Ngayah*, is a Hindu concept the means doing something because you really believe in it and not expecting anything in return. This is a very popular idea that keeps the WHDI's philosophy alive.<sup>23</sup> As Head of Management, Ibu Bintang must make sure that this concept is the women's reasoning behind their activities

---

<sup>23</sup> Paraphrased from I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, S.E., M.Si, pc, 8 April 2014.

and events along with those all over Bali. Ibu Bintang describes how one of the most important parts of life is having the ability to do something for others. She has had many different leadership roles and in WHDI she gathers the issues she sees in society and tries to bring them to the forefront. Some of the issues she focuses on are those related to the reluctance to inherit the art and culture in society, the issue to health, the issue of environment and the importance of giving support to those with disabilities and the elderly. She hopes to focus on these issues as she continues her position in Head of Management of WHDI Province Bali. Ibu Bintang indicates that her main ambition along with focusing on these issues for WHDI is for the Hindu Women of Bali to “enhance their potential ability and to play a role not only as the core of the family but also as the activator and the leader in the society.”<sup>24</sup>

### **Treasurer**

In the Treasurer position is Ni Wayan Rusni, who was one of the former secretaries of religion during the previous management period in 2006-2011. As treasurer of WHDI, she manages the money that the organization makes and the money given from the government for different activities and classes. The money goes into supplies for events such as seminars and entrepreneurship classes. She explained that the women make money for the program by creating and selling their own products, a program run by the economics department.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Agus Dharma Yoga Pratama, trans., *Tokoh Wanita Bali Di Bidang Sosial Budaya: Biography of I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, SE., M.Si.*, (Denpasar, Bali), 1-5.

<sup>25</sup> Paraphrased from Ni Wayan Rusni, BA., pc, 9 April 2014.

## Religion Department

The secretary of the religion department is Wayan Karthi. As secretary of the department she helps to organize and plan many of the religious activities within the organization. These activities are very diverse and range from the arts to seminars and classes. Ibu Karthi described the different art activities that occur in the organization, such as gamelan classes and lessons that the women can attend and help teach.<sup>26</sup> I was able to have a class to learn to play gender while spending time with Ibu Bintang. I realized then that many of their art activities are quite difficult! Ibu Bintang informed me that it takes lot of practice and not to worry because not all Hindu Balinese women can do it!<sup>27</sup> The women also have singing activities where they gather together and sing different Hindu mantras that all Hindu women should know. I had the opportunity to attend one of these singing lessons. Some of the women knew a bit more than others so they were able to guide the other women along. The women explained how they sing at different ceremonies and at the temples they visit. I found the songs and type of singing to be quite difficult and the women giggled as I tried to sing along.

WHDI holds classes to teach women how to dress appropriately for ceremonies. Ibu Karthi explains how this is especially important for the teenage girls who tend to follow new trends such as shorter sleeves on the kebaya, which according to the women is not appropriate for temple.<sup>28</sup> Ibu Bintang also included that there are certain colors that are appropriate for certain occasions.<sup>29</sup> Many of the women confessed that their

---

<sup>26</sup> Wayan Karthi, pc, 9 April 2014.

<sup>27</sup> I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, S.E., M.Si, pc, 10 April 2014.

<sup>28</sup> Wayan Karthi, pc, 9 April 2014.

<sup>29</sup> I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, S.E., M.Si, pc, 9 April 2014.

daughters often put on the wrong type of dress and are a bit stubborn when asked to change. Seminars such like these address some of the problems when it comes to preserving culture and one of these ways is through appropriate dress. I attended many different ceremonies with the women from WHDI and was given different kebayas to wear to each of the ceremonies. For instance they provided me with a purple kebaya for one of the weddings and explained that this was the traditional color a wedding ceremony. I found these explanations to be very helpful as I tried to each day learn more about how to blend in and be aware of their culture and traditions.

Some of the other religious activities include classes on how to prepare for religious ceremonies. Ibu Karthi explained how it is part of a women's duty to attend religious ceremonies. For instance if someone in your village is getting married you are required to help prepare for the wedding by making food, banten, arranging the set up of the ceremony etc. That way when someone in your family gets married the other women in your village will help you. One must also attend ceremonies for people outside of their village if one is invited in order to show support.<sup>30</sup> For instance, I attended a mediksa for one of the Women in WHDI who was becoming a priest with other members of WHDI. I also attended many different houses days before ceremonies such as cremations and weddings to provide an offering or gifts for the preparation for the events. During this time as well, and particularly during the wedding ceremonies with the members of WHDI I noticed all of the women's hard work and I was amazed when examining all of the banten they had created and arranged. The religion program holds classes about the philosophical value of offerings as well as how to make offerings. The classes include

---

<sup>30</sup> Wayan Karthi, pc, 9 April 2014.

lessons on how to make different types because as Ibu Bintang said multiple times over the course of our conversations, “Being Hindu is so flexible!” One afternoon Ibu Bintang sat and tried to teach me to make different types of banten, starting from a simple offering and then getting more elaborate. She laughed as my pieces ripped and fell apart over and over. I asked how she was able to make them so quickly and she replied that she has been doing it since she was young. She states, “It is just part of our daily life. But I truly enjoy it! All women can be good Hindus.” There are different types of banten that you can make that are different sizes based on how much money you have and also how much time you have. It does not matter which one decide to create.<sup>31</sup> Ibu Karthi states, “As long as it is for God and comes from your heart than it does not matter.”<sup>32</sup>

The Religion Department of WHDI organizes trips to different temples for ceremonies throughout the year. They will all go to visit a temple together and they will provide transportation. On April 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> I traveled with some of the members to Baisaki Temple and Batur Temple. It was a very wonderful experience to see the women uniting together for their religion and God. They all wore matching temple attire and allowed me to join in on the outfit, wearing a white kabaya with gold trimming and a dark green sarong with a gold sash. The women also dressed up their hair in traditional hair and makeup. I really enjoyed my visits these two beautiful temples with them. I was able to capture first hand their devotion to their religion and had the honor of praying

---

<sup>31</sup> I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, S.E., M.Si, pc, 9 April 2014.

<sup>32</sup> Wayan Karthi, pc, 9 April 2014.

alongside them. They brought offerings in preparation to gain full positive energy from the spirits during prayer and as a gift of thanks.

WHDI also holds discussions about Hindu religion as well as cross religion forums to learn and talk about other religions in the surrounding area in order to create an environment of respect. They hold discussions in order to gain a multicultural knowledge.<sup>33</sup>

Ibu Karthi also explained how the women from WHDI Province Bali often go on “roadshows” to the other regencies in Bali to teach classes and have discussions. They visit the different regencies once a year, usually at the end of the year around November or December, to discuss Hinduism and any problems that might be going on. An example that she stated was the fact that there are different traditions in different regencies so sometimes it is hard to make one perception about tradition and religion with so many differing ideas. Traditional differences may exist in how women make the banten, differences in sizes, designs etc. The discussion of which tradition is right and wondering if one of them is wrong can occur. WHDI Province Bali is then there to discuss and address the fact that the women must respect the differences between regencies.<sup>34</sup>

### **WHDI Province Bali: Thoughts on the Religion Department**

When speaking to the women of WHDI, I found that the religion department was often many of the women’s favorite part about their organization. They believe that this program really serves to help women. For instance, Ibu Karthi explained how the

---

<sup>33</sup> Ni Putu Rianasari, trans., *Materi Musyawarah Nasional III*.

<sup>34</sup> Wayan Karthi, pc, 9 April 2014.



religion program helps women to “really understand the meaning of the Hindu religion and the real meaning of prayer.” This department helps to improve ones knowledge about Hinduism and be able to apply it to their daily lives. She believes that the religion program helps women to have a more peaceful mind and heart while preparing for a ceremony as well as engaging in one.<sup>35</sup> WHDI teaches how to make the preparation come from your heart not just because it is one of the duties for women. Ibu Rusni, the current Treasurer and former secretary of religion of WHDI Province Bali explained how she believes that studying the Hindu religion, “cleans the mind, and the heart and frees you from any mistake that you have made. Praying makes you more healthy and teaches you to care for others and to help them.” She explained how WHDI teaches women to love their religion and have the knowledge to pass it along to their children. She states that it is important to have Hinduism in times of forgiveness, when forgiving yourself or others that have done wrong. She loves being with the women of WHDI because they all care about religion and they can unite for God.<sup>36</sup>

### **Organization Department**

The current Head of the organization department is Rai Tantri Muka. When I spoke with her she explained that in her position she monitors and evaluates activities as well as the different regencies. She makes sure that WHDI is running successfully in each of the regencies and that there are active members throughout Bali.<sup>37</sup> Ibu Bintang explained that one of the biggest challenges that WHDI faces that there is a lack of

---

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>36</sup> Ni Wayan Rusni, BA., pc, 9 April 2014.

<sup>37</sup> Rai Tantri Muka, pc, 13 April 2014.

understanding and socialization about WHDI. She further states that many women think that WHDI is only about Hinduism but in fact it is about women's empowerment too.<sup>38</sup> It is the organization department's jobs to make the information about WHDI clear and to promote the organization in other regencies.

The head of Outside Relations in the organization department is I Gusti Ayu Sri Ardhini. She explained that in her position she creates documentation of all the WHDI activities as well as take pictures of the activities. She also writes a summary for the local newspaper about the activities and they publish it.<sup>39</sup>

The organization department makes sure to create good relationships with other organizations including government organizations protecting women and children in Indonesia and Bali in order to create lasting relationships for collaboration and support. Along with these relationships, they try to make a connection with the media in order to promote their organization and distribute information.<sup>40</sup>

### **Economics Department**

The secretary of the economics department is Anak Agung Oka Prayawati. As secretary of the department she helps to oversee activities and makes reports about the different programs that go on in the department. The economics department focuses on promoting women's empowerment in the economy in Bali and Indonesia. She described some of the activities that they plan such as seminars about entrepreneurship. The economics department focuses on the idea that women should not just stay at home and

---

<sup>38</sup> I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, S.E., M.Si, pc, 26 April 2014.

<sup>39</sup> I Gusti Ayu Sri Ardhini, pc, 13 April 2014.

<sup>40</sup> Ni Putu Rianasari,trans., *Materi Musyawarah Nasional III*.

depend on their husband financially, but rather use their creative skills to support themselves. These classes include how to make and sell your own products, such as different foods, drinks, banten, and other items. WHDI Province Bali shares their ideas about products within the group as well as attends classes to learn how to make different items and then some of the women travel to the other regencies to share and exchange ideas.<sup>41</sup>

Ibu Prayawati also explained how women in the different regencies make products and WHDI Province puts their label on it and they sell the products to make money for the organization. For example women from the Gianyar regency can make a local product and WHDI Province Bali will take it, package it, place a label on it and then sell it or give it to different institutions such as temples or government officials to promote WHDI. For example there are classes on how to make *loloh* drinks with new ingredients, which changes things up in a modern way but sticks to the benefits of the traditional herbal drink.<sup>42</sup> There are also classes and seminars about advertisement and marketing in order for women to promote their products. I was able to see a few of these products being packaged and the women were very excited about them. I saw some packages of incense as well as “salty eggs”, their specialty! Ibu Prayawati explained that WHDI really supports the use of local products and preserving local foods and traditions. She said that WHDI creates attractive labels for the products that are up to date with other modern products.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Anak Agung Oka Prayawati, pc, 11 April 2014.

<sup>42</sup> Putu Pridadewi ST., pc, 11 April 2014.

<sup>43</sup> Paraphrased from Anak Agung Oka Prayawati, pc, 11 April 2014.

Made Yuliani is one of the general members of the economics department and helps to run many of their events. Ibu Yuliani was very excited to speak with me about the projects that she supports and runs in the WHDI economics department. Ibu Yuliani explained her project teaching women how to make local ice cream as a product to sell to support them selves. She also spoke about her work with disabled people who are unable to walk. She said that she trains about forty people at Yayasan Senang Hati, a non-for-profit organization that assists people living with disabilities. She teaches them a variety of skills including sewing, how to make clothes, how to make sandals, and upcycling which is the process of turning recyclable objects such as plastic bottles into something more useful. Ibu Yuliani also explained how she teaches massage therapy to blind people in Bali. Ibu Yuliani's projects are a very good example of how the women of WHDI are directly helping and impacting those outside of the organization.<sup>44</sup>

### **Social Department**

Head of the social department in WHDI Province Bali is Putu Pridadewi. While speaking with her I could tell that she is very passionate about women's empowerment and the need to make an impact on women's lives in Bali. She said that the social department connects with those in need and provides help and support in the best way they can. For example, WHDI Province Bali members will visit those who are sick in hospitals as well as visit and help those with disabilities. Ibu Pridadewi provided an example of a WHDI project that involved a four-year-old boy with HIV. His parents had passed away from HIV and the boy needed support. WHDI was contacted and brought

---

<sup>44</sup> Paraphrased from Made Yuliani, pc, 16 April 2014

him to the hospital and publicized their concerns in order to receive donations for his health.<sup>45</sup>

A main goal of the social department is to try and help reduce poverty in Indonesia. Try to give others what they need to support them selves, whether it be supplies, skills or guidance. They also try to act as a support system for those in need. A recent example of this type of act was WHDI helped to support a family in Klungkung regency who did not have a suitable home. They lived in a shack-like home that did not have electricity. Due to this the family could not carry out daily duties and the children were unable to study at night. They were only able to study in the mornings when the sun rose and then they would have to go to school and because of this there grades were not as high as they could be if they had more time to study. WHDI reached out their support for this family in need.<sup>46</sup>

Another aspect of the social program is health and family planning. Health seminars include those discussing issues including drugs, alcohol, and health awareness such as HIV and AIDs prevention. They provide seminars for younger women about pregnancy and how to have a healthy birthing process. They discuss how to care for ones children and support their family's needs. They also have seminars about preparing women for marriage and the economic, social and mental aspects to be aware of during the process of starting a family.<sup>47</sup> During my stay with WHDI province Bali, the women were preparing for a seminar about marriage preparation that I was later able to attend. A

---

<sup>45</sup> Paraphrased from Putu Pridadewi ST., pc, 11 April 2014.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Ni Putu Rianasari,trans., *Materi Musyawarah Nasional III.*

lot of hard work went into the event as they planned the materials and handouts as well as the speakers. During the event they discussed childbirth, safe sex and the importance of getting married in their culture and religion.

WHDI Gianyar regency explained how through social connection they team up with other organizations such as Dharma Wanita (wives of civil servants) and also Dharma Pertiwi (wives of Police and Army) for social programs. Different women teaming up with different group objectives can be interesting and attract more women to events and activities.<sup>48</sup>

### **Culture Department**

The Head of the culture department is Ida Ayu Ratha Wesawati. She explained how the culture department focuses on preserving the traditions of the Hindu Religion as well as Balinese culture. She explained that there are many different areas within the culture department and one of the main ones is education. Other areas include preservation through the arts such as dance, music and song.<sup>49</sup>

Ni Luh Yulie Astini, one of the members of the culture department in WHDI Province Bali and an active member of the education program explained the culture department's events in more detail. She explained how the culture department works very hard to maintain national as well as local culture and traditions. She described how there are music and art activities such as dance, gamelan, and traditional singing that are combined with those in the religion department.

---

<sup>48</sup> Dra. Anak Agung Rae, pc, 24 April 2014.

<sup>49</sup> Ida Ayu Ratha Wesawati, pc, 13 April 2014.

Ibu Yuli explained that the culture department focuses on promoting home industry in order to preserve local culture and tradition. They support economic programs and promote traditional home industry including the selling of local products such as offerings, home made clothes, art pieces, and traditional foods. They also support local beauty salons that focus on traditional hair and make up styles.<sup>50</sup>

The culture department promotes the use of traditional clothes, makeup and hairstyles by holding different classes to discuss and teach these skills. This includes doing the hair with “Sanggul” for married women and “Pusung Gonjer” for girls.<sup>51</sup> During my time with the WHDI organization, I was able to attend one of these events focusing on traditional makeup and hair. The event was held in Gianyar and some of the members of WHDI Province Bali ran the event, including Ibu Bintang. During the event they focused on three different hairstyles including traditional Balinese hair with a hair attachment and without a hair attachment as well as the traditional hair of Denpasar. I was fortunate enough to be one of the models for the event to try on the traditional Balinese hair and makeup. As I got my hair done, the designer did not use a hair attachment. Many of the women were stunned and excited to go home and try out the new style. At the event they sold makeup and hair products and some of the profit went to WHDI for their future events and classes. I believe the event was very successful and many of the women had questions about the different styles, which helped to promote the longevity of this tradition. I found this event to be a great way for women to work together to preserve a part of their culture that they care about in new and exciting ways.

---

<sup>50</sup> Ni Luh Yulie Astini, pc, 23 April 2014.

<sup>51</sup> Dra. Anak Agung Rae, pc, 24 April 2014.

Ibu Yuli said that WHDI holds discussions about etiquette and manners. The mission and vision statements for WHDI indicate that they support women with good manners and etiquette. According to Ibu Yuli, this is something they try to remind each other of as well as others such as their children. Examples of good manners include not putting your feet up on the table because that is considered inappropriate and disrespectful in their culture and religion. Another example is using people's names while speaking to them to show a sign of respect and friendly nature.<sup>52</sup> While staying with the women of WHDI Province Bali, they were always reminding me of these good manners if they saw someone else doing something wrong or if they saw that I could improve my manners as well. When I met Ibu Bintang she made sure I said "Om Swastiastu" to each person I met as well as "Suksma", the Balinese word for "Thank you". I found this was very helpful and that I was able to show others more respect with these greetings and phrases.

Ibu Yuli said how WHDI members try to focus on helping their environment. She explained how this is a hard task and it is difficult to convince others to join in so they have not been able to get much done. They really try to start with the members of the group and discuss with each other about issues such as climate change and keeping their city clean.<sup>53</sup> Ibu Yuliani included the idea that as individuals they do their best to be environmentally friendly but each member is different and has different passions that they enjoy to spend their time on.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> Ni Luh Yulie Astini, pc, 23 April 2014.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Made Yuliani, pc, 16 April 2014.



The education programs within the culture department support the PAUD program, which is a preschool program for children three to five years old. In this program they offer guidance and provide lessons about Hindu culture in order to start influencing the children at a young age.<sup>55</sup>

### **Preserving Culture and Tradition in Every day Life**

After hearing about the culture department I asked what the women of WHDI thought about preserving culture and tradition in the modern world. Ibu Suartini expressed how WHDI has exercise seminars where women can make traditional food, and classes that promote the arts and traditional dress.<sup>56</sup> The women agree that WHDI does a good job at preserving culture and tradition but there is always room for improvement in Bali. Ibu Prayawati explained how it is a “very simple theory!” She feels that in her own life she is able to promote culture and tradition well and she believes that everyone can do it too. For example, she wears traditional clothes each day as opposed to other trends. She said, “it is very easy to do you just have to stick with it.”<sup>57</sup> Ibu Bintang believes that culture and tradition and the modern world go quite nicely together, you just need to remember what the original traditions and culture are. She states how time goes by and things seem to get simpler. For example the offerings are not as complex as they used to be and there is always the opportunity to buy them. You just must remember the philosophies behind everything you are doing and then it will still come from your heart and still mean something. Ibu Bintang claims, “It is our

---

<sup>55</sup> Ni Luh Yulie Astini, pc, 23 April 2014.

<sup>56</sup> Putu Suartini, pc, 13 April 2014.

<sup>57</sup> Anak Agung Oka Prayawati, pc, 11 April 2014.

responsibility to preserve our culture and it is not hard to do because we really love our culture even in these modern times with western influences.”<sup>58</sup> The women of WHDI Province Bali show a love for their culture and traditions each and everyday and they believe that overtime it is something Bali will not loose because it is too special.

---

<sup>58</sup> I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, S.E., M.Si, pc, 8 April 2014.

## **WHDI Province Bali: Thoughts on Empowering Women**

After speaking with each of the women about their positions in all of the departments I asked them how they felt they were helping women in Bali and Indonesia and promoting women's empowerment. I spoke with Ibu Bintang about how WHDI is able to make a big impact on women's lives while steering clear from argument and confrontation about gender roles and equality issues between men and women. She explained how WHDI is doing something different. WHDI is going out into the field and trying to support women. She stated that WHDI is not trying to persuade women into thinking a certain way but is instead supporting them to support themselves by providing them with skills that can help them.<sup>59</sup>

WHDI has a mission to help women support themselves and for them not to just rely on their husbands. Ibu Yuliani states, "I believe that everything would be a lot better if women in Bali fought for their rights. We do not do it enough. WHDI must work hard for women to support them in their struggles. We do not try to persuade women to fight for their rights but instead try to make them believe that they are stronger than they might think."<sup>60</sup> WHDI works to build confidence, strength and awareness about how they can, as women, empower themselves and others. Some of the women in the group explained how many people outside of Bali state that being a Balinese woman is hard. Ibu Karthi explained how these comments begin to impact the younger generations of girls who then complain that it appears tough and that they are not excited for their future. She said that they state how they don't want to be a housewife because there is too much to do but

---

<sup>59</sup> I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, S.E., M.Si, pc, 8 April 2014.

<sup>60</sup> Made Yuliani, pc, 16 April 2014.

instead they should be proud of the roles that they will soon have. She indicates how it can then be hard to convince others to believe this way.<sup>61</sup>

Many other women in the group agree that it is hard to empower other women. Ibu Bintang explained that although the women of Bali have many roles, they generally enjoy all of them. She states that, “It is hard to empower women to speak up about any inequalities because they are enjoying their life just as it is. They do not like to speak up because they feel there is no need to.” She indicated that many women have differing points of view on this topic and some believe higher education is vital for women while others believe staying at home is the best option. She stated that it is a personal question, but WHDI is here to support women to preserve their greatness and hopefully make a difference in some women’s lives in Bali.<sup>62</sup>

I spoke with Ibu Pridadewi about empowering Hindu women in Bali and she had a very interesting view due to her position in politics. She agreed with Ibu Bintang that it is a personal question when it comes women who just want to stay at home and think this is the best option and she decided to share her personal opinion. She said, “Personally I believe that all women know about their rights but there are just some women who want to forget about them and some women that want to struggle and fight for them.” She explained the term *ngekoh*, meaning unwilling and no determination to do something and used this term to describe some women in Bali. She said that if they are happy with their life as it is then there is nothing much they can do. She further explained, “They think there is no need to be successful. For many Balinese Hindu women, they believe that there is no need to be different or unique. They don’t think it matters at all. They do not

---

<sup>61</sup> Wayan Karthi, pc, 9 April 2014.

<sup>62</sup> I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, S.E., M.Si, pc, 8 April 2014.

want to take the risk to be unique.” I asked her if she could fix one issue regarding women in Bali or Indonesia what would it be and she stated,

I hope that one day all women in Bali will be proud to be women! That we can fill the 30% percent quota with good representatives that can empower women. Instead of staying at home and waiting for the men to make the changes! And that all women will give back to the beautiful island they live on and do something for their country instead of just being a housewife. We are much more than that and we must show that in the government and in the elections.<sup>63</sup>

This statement was very intriguing and I enjoyed discussing this topic with a woman who is involved in women representation issues in the government. Ibu Pridadewi told me that WHDI helps teach women skills to be a successful and that includes being a good housewife. She said that there is no need for women to sit around, but I had to keep in mind that this statement was coming from a naturally organized and busy woman!

Ibu Yuli and I discussed the issue of women who want to be self-supporting and gain high positions in terms of their careers but their husbands do not support them and tell them they cannot or that they must stay at home. She explained that this is a problem for many women but she hopes that WHDI can be a safe space for them. She said that it is a shame that many women want to speak out but feel that they cannot.<sup>64</sup> This is a hard problem to fix but women must start by bringing awareness to these issues and through discussion is often a wonderful way. Many women explained that WHDI is a great place for discussion about certain empowerment topics. Ibu Rusni indicated that WHDI has discussions about politics, human rights between men and women, and the environment. She claims, “WHDI supplies a safe space to talk about these topics and often many

---

<sup>63</sup> Putu Pridadewi ST., pc, 11 April 2014.

<sup>64</sup> Ni Luh Yulie Astini, pc, 23 April 2014.

people attend discussions.”<sup>65</sup> These discussions empower women and allow them to open up about their opinions about different topics that they may not speak about in public. Ibu Yuli explains that perhaps after she is retired she will try to set up a counseling service for these problems and issues.

---

<sup>65</sup> Ni Wayan Rusni, BA., pc, 9 April 2014.

## **Women helping Women and Beyond**

WHDI is not only a group of women helping other women with a variety of skills and bringing awareness about women's empowerment but they are working to spread these ideas beyond the group to others including their families and children. WHDI has a role to foster intelligent, independent Hindu women who have a duty as mothers to educate their children, and these children will determine the fate of the nation of Indonesia as well as the Hindu religion.<sup>66</sup> Ibu Yuli explained that in WHDI it is first important to be a good mother and to make that the priority of your life as a woman. She indicated that being a mother includes being a friend, a teacher, as well as someone who provides advice and guidance.<sup>67</sup> Ibu Yuliani added that she believes, "the mother is the most important part of the family." She described how mothers must be educated about their culture, religion and traditions in order to teach their children to preserve it.<sup>68</sup> They can teach their children step-by-step parts of their religion and culture along with good manners and etiquette in order to keep the culture and traditions alive. Ibu Sri explained how she has tried to incorporate religion into the lives of her children whenever she has the opportunity. She said that her family prays together each morning and that she has taught her children many prayers and spiritual songs. She explains to them why they are performing these religious activities rather than just telling them to do it in order to make a lasting impact.<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup> "Monotoring dan Evaluasi WHDI Provinsi Bali di KabupatenBadung," Accessed April 13, 2014, [http://www.badungkab.go.id/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=5085&Itemid=27](http://www.badungkab.go.id/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5085&Itemid=27)

<sup>67</sup> Ni Luh Yulie Astini, pc, 23 April 2014.

<sup>68</sup> Made Yuliani, pc, 16 April 2014.

<sup>69</sup> I Gusti Ayu Sri Ardhini, pc, 13 April 2014.

The women of WHDI also said that they try to teach the younger generation how to be a good citizen. Ibu Yuli and Ibu Yuliana both described how they try to teach others to care for the environment. Ibu Yuliani explained how it is easy to teach children to split their garbage into organic and inorganic rubbish as long as you start at a young age.<sup>70</sup>

Ibu Yuli indicated that as women they all must empower their children. She states, “you must tell your children to believe in their dreams and really try for them! But tell them to always remember where they were born and where they came from.”<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup> Made Yuliani, pc, 16 April 2014.

<sup>71</sup> Ni Luh Yulie Astini, pc, 23 April 2014.



## **Balancing the Many Roles of a Hindu Woman in a Globalization Era**

WHDI is encouraging other women to keep traditions alive and preserve their culture while also displaying a modern way of thinking. This can often be a difficult task to accomplish while balancing all the roles of a Hindu woman, particularly in Bali.

Bapak Suwiwa and I discussed the daily life of Hindu woman in Bali. He stated how he thinks their lives are so busy and I quickly agreed. He stated that in the past men were all farmers and women just supported their husbands job as a farmer. Now, in modern times, many women work their own jobs in order to support themselves and increase their confidence and pride.<sup>72</sup> Ibu Yuli indicated that Hindu women in Bali have many different roles and are “more than just a wife and mother”. She claimed that, “women make each man stronger. They cannot be dependent on only men but must also be independent in order to support themselves. They cannot just be defined as a housewife.” She went on to talk about how women are trained since childhood for the life as a Hindu women and that they all know what responsibilities are coming but often times do not know how to handle them. They may not know how to handle the responsibilities of being a mother as well as being married. She shared this knowledge with me while sweeping the floor of her home and later exclaimed with laughter, “See now I am a servant! While at school today I was the boss! So many different roles in different places but I love them all!”<sup>73</sup>

Women cannot focus on one role or the other, for example only focusing on their career because then their culture and traditions will not be preserved. Challenges such as

---

<sup>72</sup> I Wayan Suwiwa, pc, 23 April 2014.

<sup>73</sup> Ni Luh Yulie Astini, pc, 23 April 2014.

globalism and tourism have arisen, which can make this quite difficult. Ibu Yulie indicated that Hindu women must be aware of this era of globalization but at the same time know how to deal with it.<sup>74</sup> Bapak Suwiwa explained that many Balinese women have a hard time gaining top career positions places because they do not have the time or support to focus solely on their career. Often times other women come to Bali who are career driven and take those positions. He believes that WHDI helps to decrease these challenges by providing more resources and skills for women to learn to make things easier.<sup>75</sup>

I asked each of the women that I interviewed how they personally balance their roles as a Balinese Hindu woman as time continues on and their lives keep getting busier and also how WHDI has impacted this. They all laughed with delight at this question. The most popular answer I received was “time management” and that WHDI has helped them to balance all of their roles. Ibu Yuli stated that WHDI helps all the members and other Hindu women learn “great skills to manage their busy lifestyles!”<sup>76</sup> Ibu Anak Agung Rae articulated how Balinese Hindu women must be intelligent in order to manage their time. She discussed with me how many women in Bali are taking other jobs besides being a housewife for additional incomes so they have to make an organized schedule.<sup>77</sup> I observed that this included getting up very early to begin the day. The women explained how family is always the priority and then everything else is sorted out. Ibu Yuliani said that you must enjoy everything you do and that is the key to balancing

---

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> I Wayan Suwiwa, pc, 23 April 2014.

<sup>76</sup> Ni Luh Yulie Astini, pc, 23 April 2014.

<sup>77</sup> Dra. Anak Agung Rae, pc, 24 April 2014.

all of your roles! She exclaimed, “If you devote everything you do to God than it is easy because you will love it. Doing these things with no complaints will bring you good karma. If you do everything from your heart than you will never be tired!”<sup>78</sup> Ibu Bintang agreed with this statement and added that she loves everything she does but it is often quite a lot! She said that Balinese Hindu women are multitalented and always working!<sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Made Yuliani, pc, 16 April 2014.

<sup>79</sup> I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, S.E., M.Si, pc, 8 April 2014.

## **The Unique “Superwomen” of WHDI Province Bali**

After hearing the women of WHDI Province Bali’s thoughts about WHDI Province Bali and how they are able to balance all of their roles in their daily lives, I came to the conclusion that I was speaking and spending time with some unique women, or what I now like to call some of Bali’s very own “superwomen”. The term “superwomen” started out as a small joke during my first interview with Ibu Bintang, as she answered phone calls, signed papers, and spoke with me all at the same time but stayed very calm throughout the entire process. She was the first woman who I had the pleasure of talking with and when I asked her how she balances all of her roles as a Hindu Balinese woman, she said she loves everything she that she does do a lot! She stated, “That is why women in Java and Sumatra say the Balinese Hindu women are superwomen!”<sup>80</sup> I immediately joked and agreed that she was a “superwomen” and many others in the office thought so too. As I spent time with the other members of WHDI Province Bali, I continued to joke with them and they too claimed to be “superwomen” with sarcastic tones and laughs. I found that each of them had a different and unique story to tell. All with differing education background, origins and families lives. All special and unique but fit together very well to create a group of “superwomen”.

Of course I did not take this joke seriously, but instead I used it to compliment all the women on their skills and knowledge. I asked some women in the group if they could explain how they are unique in the group and they were all willing to share some personal stories. I have provided some examples that are related to different topics. These are only a few of the unique stories from these “superwomen” and their stories are what have

---

<sup>80</sup> I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, S.E., M.Si, pc, 8 April 2014.

made my experience so memorable and made me realize how attractive the WHDI organization is.

“Think Globally, Act Locally”

Ibu Yuli lives in Denpasar and has six children all of whom have left home to start their own careers and families. In four months she will retire from her position as the Head Master of SMK3 in Sanur, a vocational school for tourism. She has had two female volunteers from her school stay at her home for long periods of time up to 3 months. She calls them her international “adopted children”. She loves hearing about other parts of the world and believes that there is a reason why she has met everyone she has. She explains how they keep her thinking in a modern way and using one of her favorites mottos, “think globally, act locally”. She likes to be informed about what is going on around the world and in her own nation and city. She explained to me about health information for teenagers and how it is a common subject around the world, especially in America but not here in Indonesia. She said that she created a health information program in her school to inform her students about drugs, alcohol and sex education. She said that her school is one of the very few schools in Denpasar with such a program and how more often than not students thank her for the program. Ibu Yuli expresses a modern way of thinking in all her actions and decisions in life, which includes looking at life through a more global view and open mind.<sup>81</sup>

Style and Money

Ibu Sri, mother of one son and two daughters is fifty years old and a talented journalist. One of the things that first struck me about Ibu Sri was her unique sense of

---

<sup>81</sup> Paraphrased from Ni Luh Yulie Astini, pc, 23 April 2014.

style. Heading into the temple with her fashionable backpack and carefree nature. I was immediately attracted to her bubbly personality and down to earth nature. She explained how she is flattered that I like her style. She explained how she doesn't have as much money as the other women in the group so she did not have many flashy accessories. I told her that this made her unique and she agreed and is proud of her profession and simple life style.<sup>82</sup>

#### Housewife

Ibu Muka, mother of four children, and the second of ten children in her own family, is sixty-seven years old and one of the older members in the WHDI Province Bali management group. I asked her about her schooling and she informed where she attended elementary, junior high school and senior high school education. I asked if she attended a University for higher-level education and she explained how she never attended University but instead got married when she was twenty years old. She indicated that she was a housewife but very content with her life. She explained that she loves being involved in WHDI because that is where her talents and personality can shine and she can be independent as she helps lead the organization department.<sup>83</sup>

#### Higher Level Education

Ibu Prayawati has three children and eight siblings. She worked in a telecommunications office but is now retired. She explained that she has no higher-level education record but has worked hard and has enjoyed her job for the years that she has had it. With no higher-level education she was able to have a great career experience and

---

<sup>82</sup> I Gusti Ayu Sri Ardhini, pc, 13 April 2014.

<sup>83</sup> Rai Tantri Muka, pc, 13 April 2014.

an important role helping to lead the economics department of WHDI Province Bali. She told me that the most important thing her parents taught her was discipline and her abilities to stay determined and goal oriented has guided her throughout her successful life!<sup>84</sup>

#### Caring For the Environment

Ibu Yuliani is sixty-seven years old and in the past was a nurse as well as a midwife caring for women for many years. Currently her life is on a different path as she has become an entrepreneur and now owns a spa located in Denpasar. Her spa is one hundred percent natural and holistic, a way of life that she also supports herself. She is part of the Bali Organic Association and from this organization has learned where the true organic farmers are and has been able to connect with them and make good relationships. They are able to make a corporation and she is able to help the farmers by using their materials. She truly cares for and loves the environment. She states, “I opened up a spa to inform others about being organic and what being organic really means.” Ibu Yuliani’s love for all things organic and the environments makes her a very special member of WHDI Province Bali.<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>84</sup> Anak Agung Oka Prayawati, pc, 11 April 2014.

<sup>85</sup> Made Yuliani, pc, 16 April 2014.

## **WHDI: Unity in Diversity**

When asking many of the women about their favorite part about WHDI many of them discussed things related to the members of the group and the unity that exists. They explained how WHDI is unique because of the amount of diversity in terms of the member's backgrounds in the group and the organization as a whole across Indonesia. They believe that their unique backgrounds provide many benefits for the organization.

Ibu Prayawati claimed that having women from differing backgrounds in WHDI is beneficial for filling different roles and positions in each of the departments. She explained how her focus on economics in high school helps her fulfill her position in the economics department and how it is the same for many other departments. She added that it is also a lot about personality. Those who are more social are better at the positions in the social department etc. "Different backgrounds keeps things more interesting! Different personalities' meshing together is wonderful! We love it here!"<sup>86</sup>

Due to their differing backgrounds, the women of WHDI are able to act as a strong support system for one another because of their individual skills. Ibu Yuliani finds it to be very helpful that everyone has differing education and professions because they are able to share new information and skills.<sup>87</sup> Ibu Karthi indicated that the group is very supportive and that "they try to work out their problems and find solutions for one another."<sup>88</sup>

---

<sup>86</sup> Anak Agung Oka Prayawati, pc, 11 April 2014.

<sup>87</sup> Made Yuliani, pc, 16 April 2014.

<sup>88</sup> Wayan Karthi, pc, 9 April 2014.



Many of the women explained that despite all of these differing backgrounds they are all in WHDI for the same reason and that is what unites them. When I asked Ibu Bintang why she is a part of WHDI she explained that each of the members believe in the concept of *ngayah* which unites them. She claims, “It is a community of women who really believe in the mission and vision of WHDI and are all there because they want to be, not because it is their job or they are getting paid. As long as you are Hindu and passionate about helping others you can join the organization.”<sup>89</sup> Many of the women explained how it is so wonderful to spend time with other women performing religious duties and how it makes it even more special and worthwhile. Ibu Muka states that she loves how the Hindu religion binds them together and she finds it to be very powerful when they unite for God to help others.<sup>90</sup>

I found that this component of the organization gave me a unique perspective of WHDI as I joined their family for four weeks. Even though I am not Hindu and I do not live in Bali they wanted to teach me everything they knew about their culture and support me in any way they could. I feel that I now too have a sense of unity within the group.

---

<sup>89</sup> I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, S.E., M.Si, pc, 8 April 2014.

<sup>90</sup>Rai Tantri Muka, pc, 13 April 2014.

## **Conclusion**

During my time with WHDI Province Bali with also a visit to WHDI Gianyar Regency, I was able to gain a lot of valuable information in regards to my focus topics and questions. I was able to do a lot of background research as I learned about the vision and mission statements of WHDI, the meaning of their symbol, and the logistics and history of the organization. These areas of study provided me with foundation knowledge of what WHDI was focusing on as well as why the organization began. I was fortunate enough to gain a brief historical overview of the role of women in Hinduism, which provided me with an understanding of how women's roles are different in the practice and theory of Hinduism due to natural habits in everyday life and society as well as impacts such as globalism and tourism. I was able to understand the struggles these women face when trying to preserve their culture and tradition but in the end realized that they truly love all of their roles and they enjoy working hard to preserve all that they have.

I was able to have an in depth look on the activities and objectives of each of the departments of WHDI Province Bali by participating in their events and activities over four weeks time as well as meeting women from each department. I discovered that their events promote women empowerment, the importance of the Hindu religion and they also benefit women as well as others such as the elderly, young teenagers and children. I found out that their departments main focus points include promoting economically independent women who truly understand the philosophies of their Hindu religion and work to preserve their culture and traditions through activities, seminars and events that promote awareness.

When it comes to women empowerment I found that the women of WHDI Province Bali truly care about the future of Hindu women in terms of their independence and self-supporting nature. I discovered that this organization does not push women into politics or arguments to fight for their rights but rather supports them to have a larger role in society by becoming self-sufficient at their own pace.

One of my favorite parts about my study period was being able to hear all of the personal stories of the women whether it was through informal chatting or an interview. This information became very important during my study period because I was able to understand the daily lives of Hindu Women in Bali with different perspectives. I realized how unique this organization is through these personal opinions and stories. All from differing backgrounds and interests but working together for the same cause and for the same God.

## **Recommendations For Further Study**

If I were to suggest recommendations for further study I believe that my first recommendation would be to travel to different regencies in Bali in order to fully grasp WHDI Bali. I was able to speak with women in Denpasar and Gianyar but it would have been interesting to go to regencies in more rural areas and hear their thoughts. It would be interesting to see if things are different because their resources might be less readily available to see how they are unique. With that said, if I were to study WHDI as a whole I would want to travel around Indonesia and talk to women from different provinces.

I found that I was really able to connect with the women and hear more in depth stories when staying at their home so if that is an option during further study I highly recommend it. A certain kind of trust forms when you stay in someone's home for a period of time that allows both of you to share personal stories and ideas in a comfortable setting.

A general note about my study was that I had to be very patient due to the very busy schedules of the women so catching them for an interview whenever I could and being prepared for that was very important! Patience is a very important piece of life in Bali and I definitely learned that during my time with WHDI and I am thankful for that.

## **Personal Communication Contacts and Information**

(Along with informal conversations with other members of WHDI Province Bali)

### **Ni Luh Yulie Astini (Yuli)**

Part of the Culture Department and Education Program in WHDI Province Bali

60 years old

Head Master at SMK 3 Vocational School in Sanur

Class of 1976 at Faculty of Education at IKIP Institution for Education and Teacher Study in Jogjakarta

Mother of six children

Grew up in Singaraja

Lives in Denpasar

### **I Wayan Suwiwa**

Husband of Ibu Yuli

74 years old

Retired since 1996

Studied Agriculture at a University in Java

Was a Government official in the Agriculture Department

Father of six children

Lives in Denpasar

### **I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, S.E., M.Si**

Head of Management of WHDI Province Bali

Four years studying economy at Ngurah Rai University the received Master of Science at Udayana University studying Balinese culture for 2 years.

Civil Servant

46 years old

Mother of one child

Grew up in Penatih, Denpasar

Lives in Denpasar

### **Ni Wayan Rusni, BA.**

Treasurer of WHDI Province Bali

73 years old

Retired

Was the Head Master at SMK 3 Vocational School in Sanur

Attended University in East Java as Part of the Faculty of Education

Born in Gianyar

The First of 12 children

### **Wayan Karthi**

Secretary of Religion of WHDI Province Bali

IKIP PGRI in Denpasar in Education Training Program

Currently involved in Master Degree at Hindu Institute focusing on religion

Civil Servant and Announcer/Presenter in radio and TV. RRI Indonesian public radio station for segment focusing on Balinese Culture and Air I national television.

Has 2 Children

Grew up in Sanur

Lives in Denpasar

**Putu Pridadewi ST.**

Management of Social Department in WHDI Province Bali  
Faculty of engineering at Udayana University  
Part of the PDIP and focuses on Women's Programs  
Grew up in Klungkung Regency  
Lives in Denpasar

**Anak Agung Oka Prayawati**

Secretary of economics in WHDI Province Bali  
Retired  
Worked in a telecommunications office  
Attended SMEE Bangli a high school focusing on economics  
No University records  
She has 8 siblings  
Mother of three children  
Grew up in Klungkung Regency  
Lives in Denpasar

**Rai Tantri Muka**

Management of Organization in WHDI Province Bali  
67 years old  
Housewife  
No University record (married at 20 years old)  
She is the second of 10 children  
Mother of 4 children  
Grew up in Denpasar  
Lives in Denpasar

**Putu Suartini**

Assistant secretary of WHDI Province Bali  
Faculty of Economy at Udayana University  
Works at a Child Care Program in Denpasar called Lambanya Perlinguan Anak

**Ida Ayu Ratha Wesawati**

Head of Culture Department in WHDI Province Bali  
Faculty of Communication Science at Udayana University  
Just recently became a Priest  
Grew up in Tabanan  
Lives in Denpasar

**I Gusti Ayu Sri Ardhini**

Head of Outside Relations Program in Organization Department in WHDI Province Bali  
50 years old  
Journalist  
Faculty of Communication in Dwijendra University and Institute Hindu Dharma Indonesia  
Mother of 3 children  
Grew up in Lombok  
Lives in Denpasar

**Made Yuliani**

Member of the Economy Department in WHDI Province Bali

64 years old

Was a nurse and widwife: Teaching nursing and midwifery while working in the hospital till 1999, then in 2000 became an entrepreneur and opened up a Organic and Holistic Spa in Denpasar.

School in Jogjakarta for nursing class of 1973 and School in Jogjakarta for midwifery class of 1974

Lives in Denpasar

**Anak Agung Sri. Wirastuti, SE.**

**Ibu Cok Nindya**

Head of WHDI Gianyar

52 years old

Housewife

Faculty of Economics at Udayana University

Grew up in Denpasar

Lives in Gianyar

**Dra. Anak Agung Rae.**

Vice Head of WHDI Gianyar

64 years old

Retired

Was a PNS

Social and Politics Faculty in Ngurah Rai University

Lives in Gianyar

## References

- Agus Dharma Yoga Pratama, trans. *Tokoh Wanita Bali Di Bidang Sosial Budaya: Biography of I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, SE., M.Si.* Denpasar, Bali.
- Agus Dharma Yoga Pratama, trans. *Senjarah Singjat: Organisasi Wanita Hindu Dharma Indonesia.* Jakarta, Indonesia.
- Anak Agung Oka Prayawati, personal communication, 11 April 2014.
- Anak Agung Sri. Wirastuti, SE., personal communication, 24 April 2014.
- Dra. Anak Agung Rae, personal communication, 24 April 2014.
- Ida Ayu Ratha Wesawati, personal communication, 13 April 2014.
- I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, S.E., M.Si, personal communications, 8 April 2014-28 April 2014.
- I Gusti Ayu Sri Ardhini, personal communication, 13 April 2014.
- I Kadek Suastika, trans. *Rancangan Ketentuan Atribut: Wanita Hindu Dharma Indonesia.* Jakarta, Indonesia. 2011.
- I Wayan Suwiwa, personal communications, 22 April 2014, and 23 April 2014.
- Made Yuliani, personal communication, 16 April 2014.
- “Monotoring dan Evaluasi WHDI Provinsi Bali di KabupatenBadung.” Accessed April 13, 2014.  
[http://www.badungkab.go.id/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=5085&Itemid=27](http://www.badungkab.go.id/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5085&Itemid=27)
- Ni Nyoman Krisna Kumalayani, trans. *Anggaran Dasar & Anggaran Rumah Tangga: Wanita Hindu Dharma Indonesia.* Jakarta, Indonesia. 2012.
- Ni Putu Rianasari,trans. *Materi Musyawarah Nasional III: Wanita Hindu Dharma Indonesia.* Jakarta, Indonesia. 2011.
- Ni Luh Yulie Astini, personal communications, 7 April 2014, 22 April 2014, and 23 April 2014.
- Ni Wayan Rusni, BA., personal communication, 9 April 2014.
- Putu Pridadewi ST., personal communication, 11 April 2014.



Putu Suartini, personal communication, 13 April 2014.

Rai Tantri Muka, personal communication, 13 April 2014.

Raka, Anak Agung, lecture on “Cultural Tourism”, 6 March 2014, Program Center, Bedulu.

Suryakusuma, Julia I. "State Ibuism." In *Sex, power, and nation: an anthology of writings, 1979-2003*. Jakarta, Indonesia: Metafor Pub., 2004.

The Voice of Women in Bali. “Hut WHDI Bali; ‘Tingkatkan citra diri perempuan dan amanat sebagai Ibu.’” Accessed April 13, 2014. <http://www.balisruti.or.id/hut-whdi-bali-%E2%80%9Ctingkatkan-citra-diri-perempuan-dan-amanat-sebagai-ibu%E2%80%9D.html>

Wayan Karthi, personal communication, 9 April 2014.