



Lekesan: Interdisciplinary Journal of Asia Pacific Arts

Journal homepage <http://jurnal.isi-dps.ac.id/index.php/lekesan>

BARIS KLEMAT DANCE IN MENEGA TEMPLE, SESEH TRADITIONAL VILLAGE, BADUNG, BALI

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This research aims to reveal the origin and form of Baris Klemat dance in Bali as an integral part of sacred art and religious tradition. Baris Klemat dance is one of the sacred dances in Bali that has spiritual value and is closely related to the life of coastal communities. The research used a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through participant observation and in-depth interviews with traditional leaders, choreographers, composers, and people directly involved. The results showed that the Baris Klemat dance originated from the life of Balinese coastal communities, especially fishermen, as a form of expression of gratitude for the sea catch and protection from the sea gods. This dance is performed through dynamic movements and traditional tools such as *klemat*, *kancuh*, and *pancer*, representing fishermen's daily lives and strengthening their spiritual values. This dance plays an important role as a cultural ritual that reflects the identity of Balinese coastal communities and is part of a belief system passed down from generation to generation. This research makes an important contribution to strengthening the understanding of the cultural and spiritual richness of Baris Klemat dance. In addition, the results of this research are expected to encourage cultural sustainability and preservation of the identity of Balinese coastal communities so that the Baris Klemat dance remains alive and thriving as a valuable cultural heritage for future generations.

Keywords: Baris Klemat, Bali, Sacred Art, Cultural Sustainability, Identity Preservation

Received August 31, 2024; Accepted December 10, 2024; Published April 5, 2025
<https://doi.org/10.31091/lksn.v8i1.3040>

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INTRODUCTION

Hindu activities in Bali are closely related to religious rituals. Every religious ceremony uses offerings as a means of ceremony and art as an accompaniment to the ceremony. Without art, the ceremony is considered incomplete. Yudabakti and Watra (2007) state that religion is art, and art is religion. This opinion reflects the habits of the Hindu community in Bali, always using sacred art as a manifestation of gratitude to Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa. This sacred art is generally one part of the heritage of cultural traditions, which includes various types of art that are considered sacred and even sacred because they are considered to have spiritual power by the supporting community (Parmajaya, 2020). In the Balinese cultural environment, sacred art has a critical position in the life of Balinese Hindu society (Bandem & DeBoer, 1981). Sacred art is a medium that functions as an expression of inner totality, an expression of artistic expression, and serves as an expression of the embodiment of imagination (Aryasa, 1996). Sacred art includes various expressions considered sacred and have sacred value in certain cultures and beliefs. Sacred dance, or guardian dance for the Hindu community, is a dance that is highly sanctified or respected for its existence (Sumertayasa et al., 2023). Sacred dance is performed in line with religious activities in Bali, which are generally organized and developed by communities that have customs in them (Rianta et al., 2019). This includes sacred dances such as the Baris Dance in Bali, which is explicitly used in religious ceremonies to honour and offer dedication to the gods. This dance is a form of respect and a means to maintain and pass on spiritual values, and local wisdom passed down from generation to generation in Balinese Hindu society.

Baris dance is one of the dances that complement religious activities or rituals in the local area. Some regions in Bali have more than one type of Baris dance in religious ceremonies. Baris dance symbolizes soldiering and is often interpreted as an army dance danced by male dancers, often in groups of 8 to 40 dancers. In its performance, Baris dance uses marching, rows, and rows (Usadhi, 2019). Baris dance in Bali has various types, including Baris Gede, Baris Tombak, Baris Bedil, Baris Cina, Baris Dadap, Baris Tamiang, Baris Jangkang, Baris Buntal, Baris Jojor, Baris Bajra, Baris Klemat, and many more. Baris dance is always identical with weapons such as spears, daggers, arrows, shields, etc. There are also Baris dances that only carry prayer equipment, such as Baris Pendet. Moreover, Baris dances reflect the community in an area because of the history associated with the area, such as the Baris Klemat dance.

Baris Klemat dance is in Menega Temple, Seseh Traditional Village, Cemagi Village, Mengwi District, Badung Regency. Klemat is a fisherman's equipment as a two-pointed paddle (like a *limbung* weapon). This dance is thought to have originated in the XVII century and was used in the Dewa Yadnya ceremony. The interesting thing about the Baris Klemat dance is the weapon used. Baris dance, in general, usually uses a spear. In contrast, the Baris Klemat dance uses *klemat* weapons (rowing tools), *kancuh* (tools to throw water in the boat), and *pancer* (tools to determine the direction of the boat). The dancers carry weapons such as paddles with movements that depict people riding a canoe at sea while catching fish (Dibia, 1999). Baris Klemat dance performances usually occur annually during *Pujawali* Purnama Sasih Kapat, a *piodalan* at Menega Temple, Seseh Traditional Village.

Seseh Traditional Village has dance arts that are a part of daily life and an important role in various traditional and religious ceremonies. Based on Bandem's book entitled *The Evolution of Balinese Dance* (1996), the arts in the Seseh Traditional Village can be grouped based on their functions, including: 1) Wali Dance is a sacred dance that is only performed during religious ceremonies, the place cannot be arbitrary, wali dance is performed in temples or places related to religious ceremonies such as Rejang Dewa, Baris Klemat, and Sandar dances. 2) Bebal Dance is a dance used as an accompaniment to ceremonies inside or outside the temple, which generally uses plays such as the art of *Pewayangan*, Mask, and others. 3)

Balih-Balihan Dance is a dance that is only a spectacle and entertaining, such as Sekar Jagat, Oleg, Cendrawasih, and others.

Baris Klemat dance is often a part of community activities in the Seseh Traditional Village, but efforts to conduct in-depth research on it are still limited. However, as an integral part of Bali's rich cultural heritage, it is important to conduct comprehensive research on this dance. Through such research, a deeper understanding of the form and origin of Baris Klemat dance in the cultural and spiritual context of Balinese Hindu society will be obtained. Moreover, the results of this research are expected to be the basis for efforts to preserve and develop the Baris Klemat dance tradition in the cultural and spiritual context of Balinese Hindu society. The lack of in-depth academic studies on Baris Klemat dance is the reason for the importance of this research as an effort to preserve the sacred art of Balinese coastal communities. With this research, the community will increasingly understand the noble values contained in it and encourage the sustainability of this tradition for future generations.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method that aims to describe the phenomenon of Baris Klemat dance in the cultural context of Balinese coastal communities. This method is suitable for comprehensively describing the actual situation and is often used in applied disciplines ([Colorafi & Evans, 2016](#)). In addition, descriptive qualitative methods provide researchers with core skills to conduct various qualitative analyses ([Vaismoradi et al., 2013](#)). Data were collected through participatory observation and in-depth interviews, then analysed thematically to find patterns, themes, and meanings that emerged from the data. Primary data sources come from live performances of the Baris Klemat dance and interviews with informants who are involved and understand the performance. Secondary data sources were obtained from literature studies in the form of books, journals, articles, and other literature sources relevant to the research topic. Data collection was carried out through participant observation, in which the researcher was directly involved in following the implementation process of the Baris Klemat dance. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with informants selected using a purposive sampling technique. The criteria for selecting informants include traditional leaders, *perbekel*, *bendesa*, traditional village officials, choreographers, composers, and people who understand this dance's origin, meaning, and implementation process.

Data analysis was carried out thematically with the stages of reducing data, compiling categories, and finding patterns or main themes from the data obtained, such as implementation patterns, spiritual values, and cultural meanings contained in the Baris Klemat dance. The data that has been analyzed is then interpreted to gain an in-depth understanding of this dance as part of the sacred art of Balinese coastal communities. In this research process, researchers pay attention to ethical aspects, such as obtaining informed consent from informants before the interview and guaranteeing the confidentiality of participants' identities by mutual agreements. This was done to maintain research ethics and respect the privacy of the informants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The notion of history contains three meanings, namely, (1) several changes, events, and events in the reality around us, (2) stories about changes, events, and events that constitute that reality, (3) the science that is tasked with investigating changes, events, and events that constitute that reality ([Ali, 2005](#)). The origin of a phenomenon can be understood through a series of events observed from the changes or signs that occur. Stories and evidence of these changes help explain the origin of things. In the context of Baris Klemat dance, the origin of its appearance will be described, starting from its initial formation and development until now, which is still maintained and preserved.



Figure 1. Baris Klemat dance at Menega Temple in Seseh Traditional Village, Cemagi Village, Mengwi District, Badung Regency.

(Documentation: Putri Laksmi, 2025)

The beginning of the Baris Klemat dance is rooted in the life of Balinese coastal communities, especially in Seseh Traditional Village, where the majority are fishermen or *menega*. This dance is an expression of art and a form of gratitude to the fishermen for their catch from the sea. In its dynamic and energetic movements, the Baris Klemat dance reflects the joy and gratitude for the safety of the sea gods and the abundant produce from the sea that is their source of life. The use of attributes such as *klemat* (a type of double-edged oar), *kancuh* (a tool for removing water from the boat), and *pancer* (a tool for determining the direction of the boat) in this dance strengthens the bond between the dance and the daily lives of fishermen. Thus, the Baris Klemat dance is not only part of religious ceremonies and cultural heritage but also a potent symbol of cultural identity for Balinese coastal communities that reflect their gratitude and spiritual wealth as part of a life that depends on the ocean.

This research shows that the Baris Klemat dance is an important part of a sacred ritual representing Balinese coastal communities' cultural identity. Its existence becomes a medium of spiritual expression while emphasizing the traditional values maintained by the community. Even so, this research has limitations in the number of informants and limited observation time. In addition, there are no in-depth academic studies on the Baris Klemat dance, so this research is the first step in documenting and analyzing the existence of this sacred dance. To clarify the understanding of this dance, the Baris Klemat dance performance will be described, including the dance form, the number of dancers, the variety of movements, makeup and clothing, and the accompanying accompaniment.

Everything can be said to be beautiful if it contains aesthetic elements. In line with that, Djelantik (1999, p. 7) reveals that aesthetics is a science that studies everything related to beauty, studying everything related to what we call beauty. All objects or art events can be said to be beautiful if they contain three fundamental aspects, namely:

- (1) Form or appearance includes form or essential elements and structure.
- (2) Weight or content (substance), which includes atmosphere (mood), idea (idea), and message (message)
- (3) Appearance and presentation include talent, skill, and media.

Appearance is a reality that appears concretely (meaning that it is perceived with the eyes or ears) as well as a reality that does not appear concretely, which is abstract and can only be imagined like something told or read ([Djelantik, 1999, p. 19](#)). In this Baris Klemat dance, the form can be seen clearly by the five senses, including the number of dancers, dance movements, makeup, fashion, and musical accompaniment. The abstract form in question emphasizes balance.

Baris Klemat dance consists of 13 male dancers. They are divided into two equal rows, each with six dancers who step forward while carrying the *klemat* property. Between the two lines, there is one dancer who carries the *kancuh* and *pancer* properties.

Movement in a choreography is a language formed into patterns of motion by a truly inhuman dancer ([Hadi, 2017, p. 10](#)). The movements in Baris Klemat's dance illustrate fishermen's activities while taking holy water in the middle of the sea. This movement has a variety of movements such as *agem*, *nayog*, *tanjek*, *nengkleng*, *nyakup dada*, *nungked bangkiang*, *nyogroh*, *milpil*, and so on.

The makeup applied to the Baris Klemat dance is simple but deeply meaningful. *Colek pamor* is a key element in this makeup. It is placed on parts of the dancer's face, such as the forehead, temples, nose, cheeks, and chin. Special symbols, such as *tapak dara* and *gecek telu*, are used in this *colek pamor*.

Arini ([2011](#)) states that fashion in a dance work is one of the supporting factors that can communicate the meaning, content, and meaning of the characters raised by the story idea of the dance work itself. The clothing used in the Baris Klemat dance consists of long white pants, a white long-sleeved shirt, *semayut*, *keris*, *kamen*, *prada belt*, *saput*, *lamak*, *simping*, *selendang rembang*, *badong*, and *gelungan*. The properties used consist of *klemat* (rowing tool), *kancuh* (water disposal tool), and *pancer* (direction-determining tool).

Murgianto ([1992, p. 49](#)) states that dance and music come from the same source: the impulse of human rhythmic instincts. The relationship between a dance and its gamelan accompaniment can occur in form, style, rhythm, atmosphere or a combination of these aspects. The choice of musical accompaniment is based on consideration of rhythm, atmosphere, form and the idea of the expected dance. The Baris Klemat dance performance is accompanied by Gong Kebyar gamelan, played by Sekaa Gong of Seseh Traditional Village. Gong Kebyar is a gamelan group used to accompany dances and is physically the development of Gong Gede with the reduction of some of its instruments ([Dibia, 1999, p. 127](#)).

Balance in Baris Klemat dance is reflected through even movements, such as left *agem* and right *agem*, and balanced dancer composition to avoid imbalance. In addition, balance is also seen in the regulation of energy when dancing, where dancers must release energy at the right time while at other times they must move gently. The harmony between dancers and gamelan players is also important to create harmony during the performance.

The content or weight of an art object or event is not only what can be seen but also includes what can be felt or lived as the meaning of the art form. The weight of art can be seen from three aspects: mood, idea, and message. Baris Klemat's dance as a guardian art certainly contains these three aspects. This can be seen from the journey of reconstructing this dance until it is danced as a ceremonial organizer.

Baris Klemat dance is divided into five parts that form the flow of the performance. This dance symbolically reflects the integrity and cooperation among fishermen, from the initial preparation to the return of holy water to the ceremony site. Each section, from the preparation with *pepeson adeng*, the journey to the sea with *pepeson becat*, the search for *tirta* with *pengawak*, the journey to the coast with *pengecet*, to the return of *tirta* with *pekaad*,

presents a deep spiritual atmosphere and sacrifice. The *pengecet* section, in particular, highlights the devotion and dedication of the dancers to their task. At the same time, the overall structure reflects the dance's relevance to the daily activities of fishermen, making it a unique and meaningful expression of Balinese culture.

In this context, the ideas expressed through Baris Klemat's dance include stories or narratives and contain weight and deep meaning. The reconstruction process of this dance, triggered by various factors such as changes in village structure and recognition as an Intangible Cultural Heritage, brought about various new ideas. Starting from adjusting the number of dancers, changing the structure of the dance, refining dance movements, to developing makeup, fashion and musical accompaniment, all are expressions of ideas that seek to present a dance that is not only aesthetic but also rich in cultural values and meanings.

The message conveyed through Baris Klemat dance includes important aspects in the context of the culture and life of Balinese coastal communities, namely respect for the traditions and cultural heritage of the ancestors, the importance of balance and cooperation in daily life as needed by fishermen at sea, an expression of gratitude for the products of the sea and nature, and the need to maintain a harmonious relationship between humans and nature as the primary source of life for Balinese coastal communities.

Performance is the way in which art is presented to the viewer, the observer, the reader, the audience, or the general public ([Djelantik, 1999, p. 14](#)). The elements that play a role in performance include talent, skills, and media.

If treated seriously, talent or natural ability that is possessed from birth will develop into expertise that is of high value to the individual himself. The same applies to Baris Klemat dance performances, where everyone contributes based on their talents. The dance stylist uses his or her skills to design the movements that make up the dance work in a performance. With their dancing talents, the dancers bring the movements to life beautifully and meaningfully. The composer contributes his meticulous musical technique to compose the music that accompanies the dance. At the same time, the fashion stylist applies his expertise in the design and creation of clothing that fits the theme and aesthetic of the dance.

This entire support team combined their talents harmoniously to create a successful work of art. By utilizing individual talents in their respective fields, they contribute to the overall presentation of Baris Klemat dance that is mesmerizing and meaningful to the audience.

Skill is the result of talent combined with craft, tenacity, earnestness, and perseverance to practice and train oneself to master everything that is done ([Djelantik, 1999, p. 60](#)). In the context of works of art such as Baris Klemat dance, each individual involved pursues their expertise diligently and earnestly to produce works in accordance with their fields. This skill is important in enriching and perfecting Baris Klemat's dance.

Each member of the dance support team develops their skills carefully and attentively. Dance stylists, for example, pay attention to movement technique, expression, and the processing of energy and emotion in their work. The goal is to create an alive piece with emotional depth. By combining their innate talent with the skills they develop through practice and dedication, each individual in the Baris Klemat dance team plays a role in creating harmonious and meaningful work. This not only enriches their own artistic experience but also leaves a lasting impression on the audience.

Baris Klemat's dance uses several important media in its presentation. Balinese *gamelan* music, with the instrument gong kebyar, not only accompanies the dance movements but also determines the atmosphere and mood of the performance. The traditional Balinese

clothing worn by the dancers is not only an outfit but also a visual medium that illustrates the cultural values and social roles in this dance. Properties such as *klemat* (rowing tool), *kancuh* (water disposal tool), and *pancer* (direction-determining tool). Thus, the property is a practical tool in the dance and has a deep symbolic meaning in Balinese life and beliefs.

CONCLUSION

Baris Klemat dance is a sacred expression rich in meaning and a potent symbol for Balinese coastal communities' identity and spiritual wealth. The origins of this dance are closely related to the lives of fishermen as a form of gratitude for the produce of the sea and spiritual protection from the gods of the sea. The use of traditional tools in this dance further strengthens the connection between the daily lives of coastal communities and their religious and cultural values. This research confirms the importance of preserving local culture amid rapid globalization, which can potentially threaten the existence of high-value traditions such as the Baris Klemat dance. Through a deeper understanding of the origin, form and meaning of this dance, Balinese people are expected to be able to maintain their cultural heritage for future generations. Therefore, efforts to preserve and develop the Baris Klemat dance must be continuously supported and promoted as part of Bali's cultural wealth and as a means of strengthening spiritual identity and traditional values in the lives of Balinese coastal communities. Thus, this dance will remain relevant and contribute positively to the sustainability of Balinese culture in the future.

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