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INTEGRATION OF *PUTRIKA* AND *SENTANA RAJEG* IN BALINESE CUSTOMARY INHERITANCE LAW: A GENDER EQUALITY PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This article explores the intersection of the putrikā provision in Hindu law and the sentana rajeg practice in Balinese customary law through the lens of gender equality in inheritance. Putrikā, as articulated in the Manava Dharmasastra, legitimizes the appointment of daughters as heirs in the absence of sons, preserving both lineage (gotra) and religious duties. Likewise, sentana rajeg enables daughters to assume hereditary roles within Balinese adat, including through nyentana marriages. This study applies a normative legal methodology incorporating conceptual, historical, and statutory approaches. It finds that both legal traditions, despite their patriarchal foundations, contain adaptive mechanisms that acknowledge female inheritance under certain conditions. These mechanisms reflect a legal pragmatism oriented toward maintaining familial and spiritual obligations. From a modern human rights perspective, these customary norms require reinterpretation to align with principles of substantive gender equality. Strengthening women's inheritance rights not only promotes justice within traditional societies but also reinforces the legitimacy and adaptability of customary law in a globalized context. The article argues for collaborative legal reform involving customary authorities, state institutions, scholars, and civil society to create inclusive, equitable inheritance frameworks that respect both tradition and contemporary gender norms.

Keywords: Hindu Law, Balinese Customary Law, Inheritance Practices, Putrikā, Sentana Rajeg, Gender Equality

I. INTRODUCTION

Hinduism and the customary law communities in Bali are deeply intertwined across various aspects of life. Hinduism, as the predominant religion among Bali's customary law communities, profoundly influences the Balinese customary legal system. The influence of Hinduism on Balinese customary law is evident in the formulation of *awig-awig* (village customary regulations), where Hindu philosophical principles such as *Tri Hita Karana* serve as the foundation for drafting these regulations. Balinese customary law governs multiple dimensions of communal life based on the concept of *Tri Hita Karana*, which emphasizes the harmonious relationship between humans and God (*parahyangan*), humans and fellow humans (*pawongan*), and humans and the natural environment (*palemahan*) (Pemerintah Provinsi Bali, 2023).

Within this framework, customary inheritance law in Bali is categorized under the *pawongan* aspect, as it regulates social relations and kinship structures, particularly concerning the transfer of inheritance rights among family members. *Pawongan* is conceptually defined as the social relations among individuals within the customary community, aimed at preserving the balance and continuity of familial values based on customary norms transmitted across generations (Suwitra, 2024).

In this context, Balinese customary inheritance law addresses the mechanisms of succession and the status of children (*sentana*), particularly as regulated in the *tata sukerta pawongan* section of village *awig-awig*. The Balinese inheritance system follows a patrilineal descent model—later further elaborated based on dissertation findings—which closely correlates with the types of marriages entered into by heirs. The *kapurusa* system of inheritance, or patrilineal succession, prioritizes male descendants, with sons designated as primary heirs within the family lineage.

However, Balinese customary inheritance law also allows daughters to inherit, under specific conditions. A daughter can become an heir if she is formally designated as a *sentana rajeg* and engages in a *nyentana* marriage. In a *nyentana* marriage, the husband joins the wife's

family lineage, relinquishing his inheritance rights and obligations in his family of origin. In this arrangement, the wife assumes the role of *purusa* (heir) and the husband becomes *pradana* (non-heir), reinforcing the patrilineal principle where inheritance follows the male or paternal line.

According to Hindu law, as codified in the *Manava Dharmasastra*, daughters may inherit when a father has no sons or when a daughter has no brothers. This provision is articulated in *Manava Dharmasastra*, Slokas IX.130–132, which stipulate that a daughter formally designated as *putrikā* assumes the full rights and obligations of a son in matters of inheritance, thereby ensuring the continuity of the family lineage (*gotra*).

Given this, it is both relevant and compelling to examine the connection between the concept of *putrikā* in Hindu law and the practice of *sentana rajeg* in Balinese customary inheritance law. Therefore, this paper addresses the following research question: How is the relationship between *putrikā* in Hindu law and *sentana rajeg* in Balinese customary inheritance law conceptualized from the perspective of gender equality in inheritance practices?

II. METHOD

This study employs a normative legal research method, which examines the law as a system of written norms (*law in books*) through both a conceptual and a statutory approach. The research analyzes classical Hindu legal provisions contained within the *Manava Dharmasastra*, Balinese customary law documents, and national regulations related to inheritance rights and gender equality.

According to Peter Mahmud Marzuki (2005), normative legal research is defined as “research aimed at examining the law as a positive norm, whether written or unwritten, by employing a doctrinal approach” (p. 133). Within this framework, the study critically explores the correlation between the Hindu concept of *putrikā* and the Balinese customary concept of *sentana rajeg*, while evaluating both from the perspective of gender equality principles grounded in international human

rights standards.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Analysis of the Concept of *Putrikā* in the *Manava Dharmasastra*

In Hindu doctrine, particularly as codified in the *Manava Dharmasastra*, *inheritance is concerned not merely with the distribution of material wealth but also closely linked to the continuity of the family lineage (gotra). Lineage holds sacred value, as it is intrinsically connected to the perpetuation of family religious rites, especially the performance of śraddha and pitr yajña (ancestral worship rituals), which traditionally require the presence of a male heir to fulfill these spiritual obligations (Subagiasta, 2004). One of Hindu law's notable legal innovations in addressing the absence of a male heir is the concept of putrikā. In Manava Dharmasastra, Slokas IX.130–132 provide that a father who has no sons may designate his daughter as a putrikā, thereby granting her equivalent rights and obligations to a son concerning inheritance and spiritual duties. This designation is not merely discretionary but constitutes a formal legal mechanism to ensure the social and spiritual continuity of the family.*

Sloka IX.130 states:

“A daughter, declared to be a *putrikā* by her father, shall assume the position of a son; in all matters relating to rituals and inheritance, she shall possess rights and duties identical to those of a son.” (*Manava Dharmasastra*, IX.130).

Furthermore, Slokas IX.131 and IX.132 affirm that a daughter designated as *putrikā* must be fully recognized in inheritance rights and familial responsibilities. These provisions demonstrate that classical Hindu law incorporated adaptive legal solutions to demographic challenges, ensuring not only the economic interests of the family but, more importantly, the continuity of family dharma.

As Peter Mahmud Marzuki (2005) asserts: “The concept of *putrikā* reflects Hindu law's flexibility in recognizing women as legal subjects of inheritance under certain conditions” (p. 156).

This observation reinforces the argument that Hindu legal tradition, even in its classical form,

contained elements that accommodated gender roles more equitably within specific contexts—long before modern notions of gender equality emerged.

In contemporary contexts, Balinese customary law has similarly adopted analogous principles through the institution of *sentana rajeg*. According to Suartha (2018), *sentana rajeg* in Bali represents a cultural adaptation aimed at preserving the continuity of the family line when no male offspring is available. Daughters may assume this role, either personally or by incorporating a male spouse (*nyentana*) into the maternal family line to continue the family's religious and social duties. From the perspective of gender equality, the concepts of *putrikā* and *sentana rajeg* are highly significant. They indicate that traditional social and legal systems in both ancient India and Bali were not rigidly gender-exclusive but demonstrated pragmatic accommodations to preserve essential familial and spiritual functions (Nurfadilah, 2020).

Within Balinese customary law, the appointment of daughters as primary heirs—albeit sometimes restricted by local customary norms—reflects a dynamic social acceptance of evolving gender roles within the family. As Sudharta and Wirawan (2021) observe:

“The evolution of Balinese customary law demonstrates a dynamic acceptance of women's roles in sustaining the social and spiritual functions of the family through inheritance mechanisms.”

Nonetheless, challenges persist. Women's rights to inheritance are often constrained by entrenched patriarchal traditions prioritizing male lineage (Astuti, 2022). In this regard, the existence of the *putrikā* concept provides a normative foundation for strengthening women's inheritance rights within customary communities, both culturally and legally. The concepts of *putrikā* and *sentana rajeg* may thus be viewed as early forms of inclusivity in inheritance practices, affording women legal standing as heirs under certain conditions. As Wijaya (2023) asserts:

“The appointment of daughters as principal heirs in Hindu and Balinese customary law constitutes a cultural response to social

dynamics and an early reflection of gender equality principles in inheritance practices.”

This is particularly significant in light of the global development agenda, where women’s inheritance rights are recognized as fundamental human rights. The United Nations, through the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), has emphasized the importance of protecting women’s rights, including in matters of inheritance. Recent empirical research by Paramita (2024) found that in approximately 60% of Balinese customary communities, daughters without brothers are automatically recognized as primary successors, including in the management of family temples and customary rites. This demonstrates a progressive evolution in the interpretation of *putrikā* and *sentana rajeg* practices within contemporary Balinese society. Moreover, current customary legal practices are gradually shifting from rigid patriarchal systems toward principles of justice based on familial needs and the sustainability of customary obligations. This development aligns with Lawrence Friedman’s (2001) theory of legal transformation, which asserts:

“Law does not merely reflect society; it also directs social change by adapting to emerging values” (p. 8).

Thus, the integration of the *putrikā* concept into Balinese customary inheritance practices carries strategic significance: it solidifies the role of women as vital actors within traditional legal systems and responds to the demands of customary law modernization in an increasingly globalized world.

Reflecting upon the principle of substantive justice, it is crucial for customary communities to redefine inheritance not merely on the basis of male bloodlines but also on actual contributions to the preservation of customary values and family traditions. Consequently, women’s rights in inheritance systems should be understood not as a substitute measure in the absence of male heirs, but as an affirmative recognition of their essential roles. In conclusion, the *putrikā* concept as formulated in the Manava Dharmasastra demonstrates that Hinduism, as a religious legal system, had anticipated social challenges and provided

normative solutions to potential gender-based injustices. Simultaneously, Balinese customary law, through the institution of *sentana rajeg*, showcases remarkable flexibility in adopting these principles into local customary practices.

As Dewi (2023) asserts:

“Inheritance practices grounded in gender equality within customary communities not only safeguard cultural continuity but also serve as pathways toward sustainable social justice” (p. 57).

Therefore, strengthening women’s rights within customary inheritance frameworks, based on the principles of *putrikā* and *sentana rajeg*, must continue to be promoted as part of broader efforts to reform customary law in a manner that honors the values of justice, equality, and human rights.

3.2 Analysis of the Concept of *Sentana Rajeg* in Balinese Customary Law

Within the framework of Balinese customary law, the concept of *sentana rajeg* refers to the designation of a permanent heir within a family to ensure the continuation of religious and customary obligations. *Sentana rajeg* serves as a traditional institution of inheritance that functions to preserve the family lineage (*gotra*), maintain the family shrine (*sanggah*), and ensure the ongoing performance of religious ceremonies (*yadnya*) as part of the family’s *dharma*. The social and spiritual functions of *sentana rajeg* are central to the structure of customary life in Bali, as the role of descendants extends beyond preserving the family name to safeguarding ritual obligations and ancestral duties.

Importantly, a *sentana rajeg* need not always originate from a biological male descendant. Women, too, can be appointed as *sentana rajeg* through specific customary mechanisms, including formal customary adoption (*anak angkat adat*) or through the incorporation of a male spouse into the wife’s family via *nyentana* marriage. Thus, the inheritance of family obligations within Balinese customary communities exhibits a degree of flexibility, adapting to concrete familial circumstances and the need to sustain the family line. According to Suartha (2018),

sentana rajeg is defined as:

“A mechanism within Balinese customary law aimed at preserving lineage continuity by appointing an individual as a permanent successor in families without male offspring” (p. 84).

In practice, Balinese customary communities display a notable adaptability in addressing gendered dimensions of inheritance. In families lacking male children, daughters may independently fulfill the role of lineage successor, or alternatively, appoint their husbands as *sentana rajeg* through *nyentana* arrangements. This mechanism provides both social and religious legitimacy for women to remain within their natal lineage and to continue fulfilling their ancestral obligations.

Recent empirical research by Suardana (2022) found that in several customary villages in southern Bali, over 65% of families without male offspring opted to designate their daughters as *sentana rajeg* or to incorporate sons-in-law through *nyentana* marriage as lineage successors. This finding reflects a practical transformation in the application of customary law, wherein women’s roles in maintaining familial religious and social responsibilities are increasingly recognized.

Nonetheless, despite the pathways opened by *sentana rajeg* and *nyentana* practices, significant cultural barriers remain. Patriarchal traditions that prioritize male descendants continue to be a major impediment to the full social acceptance of women as principal heirs. As Astiti (2022) observes:

“The appointment of women as *sentana rajeg* is often perceived as a last resort, rather than as a primary choice within the customary inheritance system” (p. 117).

This suggests that, although the legal mechanisms for female succession exist within customary law, strong gender biases persist in social practice, limiting the full realization of women’s inheritance rights. Normatively, the appointment of women as *sentana rajeg* aligns with the fundamental principle of dynamism (*desa adat yang hidup*) in Balinese customary law. This principle is further supported by Article 18B(2) of the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia, which recognizes and respects

customary law communities along with their traditional rights, so long as they remain viable and consistent with national principles.

At the international level, the recognition of women’s inheritance rights aligns with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979), ratified by Indonesia through Law No. 7 of 1984. Article 16 of CEDAW obliges states to ensure that women enjoy equal rights with men in all matters relating to marriage and family relations, including inheritance rights.

In a comparative study conducted by Dewi (2023), it was found that customary families that adopted female-centered *sentana rajeg* succession models experienced a strengthening of family functions in preserving traditions and enhancing women’s positions within the public sphere of customary villages. Dewi notes: “The appointment of women as *sentana rajeg* not only safeguards the continuity of the family shrine and traditions but also reinforces women’s roles within Balinese customary institutions” (p. 52).

This development signals a positive trend toward gender-inclusive inheritance practices within Balinese customary communities, although such transformations remain gradual and uneven across different regions. From a socio-legal perspective, this change is consistent with Eugen Ehrlich’s (1913) theory of *living law* (*das lebende Recht*), which posits that the law that truly governs society is often more progressive than formal legal codes. In Bali, customary inheritance law is undergoing an evolutionary process toward more adaptive and gender-responsive principles. Nonetheless, systematic efforts are still required to reinforce the formal legitimacy of women as *sentana rajeg*. One proposed strategy is the revision of *awig-awig* (customary village regulations) to explicitly accommodate the appointment of women as principal heirs, independent of the absence of male descendants. As Paramita (2024) suggests:

“The modernization of *awig-awig* in Balinese customary villages must affirmatively recognize women’s rights in inheritance systems as part of a gender-just revitalization of customary law” (p. 37).

Implementing such reforms could accelerate social transformation in Bali, positioning customary law as a proactive instrument for both cultural preservation and women's empowerment. Initiatives such as the *Gender-Responsive Awig-Awig Guidelines* drafted by Lembaga Perempuan Bali Adil (2023) represent early steps toward this goal and should be expanded across the island.

The concept of *sentana rajeg* in Balinese customary law thus provides both a normative and practical basis for the recognition of women's inheritance rights. If interpreted progressively, *sentana rajeg* has the potential to bridge traditional values with modern principles of gender justice. As Wijaya (2023) notes: "The development of female-centered *sentana rajeg* practices in Bali demonstrates that customary law has the capacity to evolve into an adaptive, equitable, and sustainable legal system" (p. 74).

Therefore, strengthening the role of women within the inheritance system by recognizing them as *sentana rajeg* is not only a fulfillment of social justice demands but also an essential step in ensuring the continued relevance of Balinese customary law in a rapidly changing world.

3.3 Integration of the Concepts of *Putrikā* and *Sentana Rajeg* in Balinese Customary Law from a Gender Equality Perspective

The concepts of *putrikā* in Hindu law and *sentana rajeg* in Balinese customary law share a fundamental objective: ensuring the continuation of the family lineage (*gotra*) in the absence of male heirs. Both concepts emerged as adaptive responses within patrilineal social structures, accommodating social realities that often deviated from idealized norms. In both the *Dharmasastra* tradition and Balinese customary practice, these mechanisms act as bridges between tradition and the practical necessity of familial preservation, encompassing biological, social, and spiritual dimensions.

In the Indian context, *putrikā* legally enables a daughter to perform the functions traditionally assigned to a son. According to *Manava Dharmasastra*, Sloka IX.130:

"If a man has no son, his daughter designated as *putrikā* shall act as a son, obligated to continue the family lineage and fulfill spiritual duties akin to those of a son" (Manu, 2004, trans. Olivelle).

Similarly, within Balinese customary law, *sentana rajeg* refers to the appointment of a successor—whether a biological child, an adopted child, or even a son-in-law—to maintain the family lineage. In practice, women may be designated as *sentana rajeg* either directly or through *nyentana* marriage, wherein a husband joins his wife's lineage to perform the necessary familial and religious functions (Suartha, 2018).

Both concepts signify that the role of women in inheritance practices, although initially framed as an alternative to the absence of male heirs, has gained social and normative legitimacy within traditional legal structures. Despite the patriarchal character of both Hindu and Balinese social systems, these mechanisms created openings for women to become rightful heirs. In this context, inheritance extends beyond the mere transmission of property to encompass moral, spiritual, and social responsibilities.

From a gender equality perspective, the appointment of women as heirs reflects an acknowledgment of their rights to acquire, manage, and transmit family assets while also fulfilling customary and spiritual obligations. Historically marginalized within traditional societies, women's roles in inheritance through *putrikā* and *sentana rajeg* can be interpreted as early signs of inclusivity and progressiveness within religious and customary legal systems.

As Nurfadilah (2020) observes: "Recognition of women as heirs, although limited, reflects the evolution of customary law toward the values of equality and gender justice" (p. 212).

The existence of *putrikā* and *sentana rajeg* demonstrates that traditional legal systems possess inherent flexibility to adapt to changing social dynamics without abandoning their cultural foundations. Nevertheless, legal

recognition does not always translate into widespread social acceptance. In many customary communities, the idea of women as principal heirs remains taboo or is regarded as an exception rather than a norm (Paramita, 2024). In such contexts, the law must function not merely as a regulatory mechanism but also as an instrument for social transformation.

At the national level, the recognition of women's inheritance rights is affirmed by several legal instruments, including Article 28B(1) of the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia, which guarantees:

“Every person shall have the right to form a family and to continue their lineage through lawful marriage, and shall be entitled to the protection and fulfillment of the rights of their children and descendants.”

In the context of inheritance, this provision ensures that both men and women possess equal rights to inherit and transmit familial values, assets, and responsibilities. Furthermore, Indonesia's ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) through Law No. 7 of 1984 strengthens the position of women within family law, including inheritance matters.

According to Dewi (2023), the primary challenge in integrating gender equality principles into customary law lies in the reinterpretation of traditional values to align with modern justice principles without creating cultural dissonance. Dewi notes:

“Gender equality within customary law is not about dismantling tradition but about adapting tradition to more humane and inclusive values” (p. 51).

The adjustment of local norms to equality principles becomes crucial amid the global diffusion of human rights values. Bali, as a region with a vibrant and living customary law system, faces the delicate task of preserving indigenous wisdom while simultaneously responding to the demands of gender equality.

Recent studies by Suardana (2022) indicate a 38% increase over the past two decades in the appointment of women as principal heirs in

Balinese customary communities, either through *nyentana* marriages or direct *sentana rajeg* appointments. Although this remains a minority phenomenon, it signifies a gradual social shift toward more gender-equal inheritance patterns.

In Balinese customary law, the practice of appointing women as *sentana rajeg* is gaining wider acceptance, particularly in urbanized areas or villages that have been significantly exposed to modern values. In contrast, rural areas where patriarchal traditions remain dominant continue to present barriers to women's full inheritance rights. As Astiti (2022) highlights, even when women successfully assume familial and spiritual responsibilities, they are often not formally recognized as rightful heirs in customary forums.

Thus, reforming *awig-awig* (customary regulations) becomes critical. Advocacy by organizations such as Lembaga Perempuan Bali Adil (2023) calls for the systematic revision of *awig-awig* to explicitly include provisions affirming women's inheritance rights. They have proposed model *gender-responsive awig-awig* that can be adopted by customary villages across Bali.

From a theoretical standpoint, these developments can be examined through the lens of legal pluralism, which acknowledges the coexistence and interaction of multiple legal systems within a single society. In the Balinese context, state law, religious law, and customary law interact dynamically, and the state bears responsibility for ensuring that customary laws do not violate fundamental human rights.

Friedman (2001) asserts that:

“Law is not a rigid code but a living system that changes with the people it governs” (p. 23).

Accordingly, the integration of the *putrikā* and *sentana rajeg* concepts into contemporary customary law is not merely an act of preserving tradition but an essential element of social transformation toward a more equitable society.

In practice, women designated as *sentana rajeg* are increasingly assuming leadership roles within customary villages, including serving as *bendesa adat* (customary village chiefs), *kelian banjar* (sub-village heads), and religious caretakers (*pengurus sanggah*). This development underscores that strengthening women's inheritance rights directly enhances their public roles within the broader Balinese sociocultural structure (Wijaya, 2023).

This ongoing transformation must be supported through comprehensive strategies, including gender-sensitive legal education, increased women's participation in customary decision-making forums, and systematic documentation of female-centered inheritance practices to solidify their broader social legitimacy.

The growing awareness of gender equality, coupled with social and legal reform efforts, is gradually encouraging Balinese customary communities to rethink and modernize traditional inheritance practices. Although patrilineal kinship systems remain dominant, there is a discernible trend toward accommodating women's rights to inheritance through mechanisms such as *sentana rajeg* and *nyentana* marriage.

Research by Sukadana (2021) illustrates that granting women the status of *sentana rajeg* allows them to inherit family assets and continue family lines—functions previously reserved for male descendants. This adaptation demonstrates that customary law is capable of responding to the demands of gender equality.

Customary institutions play a pivotal role in reforming discriminatory inheritance practices. Through community deliberations and *awig-awig* revisions, customary societies can adopt more inclusive and equitable rules. Furthermore, support from regional and national governments, combined with educational initiatives promoting gender equality in customary law, can accelerate these transformations. For example, the 2010 decision by the *Pesamuhan Agung III* of the *Majelis Utama Desa Pakraman* (MUDP) Bali, which affirmed women's inheritance rights under certain conditions, serves as a foundational step toward changing prevailing paradigms within

Balinese customary communities (Ratmini, 2020).

Despite these advances, challenges persist, including cultural resistance, limited community understanding, and restricted access to legal information and resources for women. To address these challenges, a comprehensive strategy is necessary, including:

1. Education and Awareness Campaigns: Increasing public understanding of the importance of gender equality in customary law;
2. Women's Empowerment Initiatives: Providing training and advocacy support to help women claim and exercise their inheritance rights;
3. Multi-stakeholder Collaboration: Building partnerships between customary institutions, government bodies, academics, and civil society organizations;
4. Monitoring and Evaluation: Systematically assessing the implementation of gender-equitable inheritance policies and refining approaches as needed.

From a theoretical perspective, the interplay between *putrikā* and *sentana rajeg* provides a rich field for exploring the evolution of legal norms within plural legal systems. While both concepts originated from patriarchal structures, their gradual adaptation toward gender inclusivity reflects an internal legal dynamism. This aligns with the theory of legal syncretism, which recognizes how customary and religious laws incorporate external values to maintain relevance without undermining indigenous traditions.

The legal recognition of daughters as successors through mechanisms like *putrikā* and *sentana rajeg* represents a convergence between traditional duties and modern rights. The significance of this convergence becomes particularly evident when considering the practical roles women now play in maintaining religious rites, organizing communal rituals, and leading familial spiritual obligations—functions that are foundational in Hindu-

Balinese cosmology. Legal systems that fail to recognize this shift risk becoming obsolete within their own communities.

Furthermore, the notion of gender equality in inheritance is not merely a matter of formal legal inclusion, but also of substantive participation. In many Balinese villages, women's contributions are not publicly validated unless formal legal or customary positions explicitly authorize them. This underscores the importance of not only modifying the textual content of *awig-awig*, but also promoting cultural discourse that elevates women's traditional knowledge and roles.

In this regard, scholars such as Okin (1989) argue that justice within the family structure is a prerequisite for achieving gender equality in broader social institutions. Applying this to Balinese inheritance practices, it becomes clear that unless women are acknowledged as core actors in family succession, their social and legal status will remain peripheral, regardless of normative provisions that claim to be inclusive. Customary law reform must therefore go beyond procedural changes. It requires a reimagining of kinship, responsibility, and identity. This includes revising the communal understanding of *purusa* and *pradana* not as rigid gendered roles, but as relational functions that may be held by any capable descendant, regardless of sex. Such a paradigm shift has the potential to redefine the very fabric of inheritance practices in Bali.

Reinforcing these findings, it is necessary to view the integration of *putrikā* and *sentana rajeg* not merely as historical curiosities or cultural exceptions, but as pivotal components in reconstructing a more gender-just customary legal framework. Their institutionalization should be accompanied by education initiatives and formal recognition within state law. This not only ensures legal coherence, but also enhances the cultural legitimacy of inheritance systems rooted in both tradition and gender equality.

IV. CONCLUSION

The *Manava Dharmasastra* provides a legal mechanism for appointing daughters as heirs, granting them equal status to sons in situations

where no male heirs are available. The designation of a daughter as *putrikā* positions her strategically to continue the family lineage and bear the spiritual responsibilities traditionally assigned to sons. Similarly, the institution of *sentana rajeg* in Balinese customary law reflects a cultural adaptation aimed at preserving lineage continuity. Through specific procedures, such as *nyentana* marriage, daughters are enabled to actively assume the role of heirs and continue familial obligations. This demonstrates that Balinese customary law possesses an inherent flexibility in responding to social realities. The correlation between the *putrikā* concept in Hindu legal texts and the *sentana rajeg* practice in Balinese customary law reveals a shared value: the preservation of family continuity through the empowerment of women. Normatively, both concepts create pathways for the recognition of women's inheritance rights, which, from a contemporary perspective, should be interpreted as progressive steps toward gender equality. It is crucial for Balinese customary law to engage in a continuous reinterpretation of inheritance values—not only to maintain cultural continuity but also to respond to the demands of justice and gender equality, as mandated by the national constitution and international human rights norms. Thus, the integration of *putrikā* within Hindu law and *sentana rajeg* within Balinese customary practices represents an early model for constructing a more inclusive, equitable, and socially responsive legal system. The interplay between the *putrikā* concept in Hindu law and the *sentana rajeg* practice in Balinese customary law demonstrates that traditional frameworks contain inherent mechanisms capable of promoting gender equality in inheritance practices. Although challenges in implementation persist, inclusive and gender-just customary law reform efforts offer a critical pathway toward building a more equitable and just society. Collaborative efforts among various stakeholders including customary institutions, governmental bodies, academic communities, and civil society organization and the enhancement of public

awareness are key to realizing this goal. Strengthening women's roles in inheritance not only contributes to social justice but also ensures the continued relevance and resilience of Balinese customary law in an increasingly dynamic and globalized world.

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