

A Critical Evaluation of *Smara Sādhanā* Concepts in The *Lontar Kama Tattwa* for Strengthening Premarital Education

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aims to critically evaluate the concept of *Smara Sādhanā* as presented in the *Lontar Kama Tattwa* and to examine its relevance in strengthening premarital education in Denpasar. The research addresses the growing phenomenon of premarital sexual practices and the shifting moral values reflected in the discourse of “*sing beling sing nganten*,” which indicate a process of desacralization of marriage and sexuality.

Methodology: This research employs a qualitative approach with a critical–interpretative design. Primary data are derived from classical Balinese Hindu texts categorized under *Kama Tattwa*. Secondary data are collected from scholarly literature and relevant studies.

Main Findings: The findings reveal that *Smara Sādhanā* conceptualizes sexuality as a sacred and conscious practice that integrates physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions, grounded in *dharma* and realized within the institution of marriage. The study also finds that contemporary social phenomena, such as the normalization of premarital sex and gender bias, reflect a disconnection between traditional ethical teachings and modern practices.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This study offers a novel contribution by bridging classical Hindu philosophical texts with contemporary educational and social issues. It reconstructs premarital education through the lens of *Smara Sādhanā*, positioning sexuality as a form of spiritual discipline rather than merely a biological or social act. Furthermore, this research introduces a culturally rooted and philosophically grounded framework that addresses both moral challenges and gender issues in modern Balinese society, thereby enriching the discourse on sexuality education within religious and cultural contexts.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Studies on sexuality have, to this day, remained relatively underexplored among researchers, particularly when viewed from a philosophical perspective. Existing studies on sexuality have largely been conducted by scholars in the fields of medicine, reproduction, and health sciences, with primary attention given to its biological and physical dimensions. Meanwhile, other aspects such as sexual behavior, psychosocial dynamics, and cultural contexts remain insufficiently addressed [1]. This condition opens up a significant space

for philosophical inquiry to further explore and uncover the deeper meanings of sexual activity, which is still often regarded as taboo, inappropriate to discuss, sinful to examine, and unsuitable for open and public discourse.

In fact, as stated by Suwantana, sexuality represents one of the most sensitive domains of human life because it touches upon the most intimate aspects of identity and interpersonal relationships. As an integral part of human existence, sexuality encompasses not only biological needs but also emotional, psychological, and social dimensions [2]. Every individual requires space to express their sexuality freely and authentically, as it plays a crucial role in the formation of self-identity and interpersonal relationships. However, this very sensitivity often renders sexuality a difficult topic to discuss openly, even among close individuals. In this sense, prevailing social ethics frequently position sexuality as a taboo subject, regulated by strict moral and cultural norms. Open discussions about sexuality are often perceived as inappropriate or even unethical [3].

Discourse on sexuality has, in fact, existed since the earliest stages of human life. This is because, from birth, biological distinctions between male and female are already evident [4]. These differences subsequently form the basis for various social norms and expectations assigned to males and females. Gender roles begin to be instilled from an early age, where boys and girls are directed to behave in accordance with societal expectations. In the modern context, however, discussions on sexuality have become increasingly complex with the emergence of new understandings of gender identity and sexual orientation [5]. Advances in science and technology have transformed the ways in which sexuality is understood, spanning biological to psychological dimensions. Discussions of sexuality are no longer limited to physical differences between males and females but now also include issues such as reproductive rights, sexual health, and gender justice [6].

Discussions on sexuality within society often generate both support and opposition; this phenomenon is not only contemporary but has existed for thousands of years. Sexuality is a fundamental biological need that is natural to human beings [7]. Various perspectives on sexuality have developed and flourished, gradually shaping different ways of thinking. On one hand, sexuality is perceived merely as a form of recreation, while on the other hand, it is understood as a creative force related to procreation and lineage. This duality of perspectives can lead individuals toward two different paths of action: one oriented toward sexual fulfillment for the purpose of reproduction, and the other opening the possibility for free sex and deviant sexual behavior [8].

Furthermore, as explained by Widnya in Suwantana, prohibitions surrounding sexuality do not provide a significant solution, as there is nothing inherently frightening about sex [2]. Discussing sexuality is not sinful, as sexual needs are as essential as the human need for food to sustain life. What becomes problematic is not sexuality itself, but the improper or unethical ways in which it is treated [9]. Nature and God have endowed humans with knowledge of sexuality so that they may experience happiness in union and throughout the process of creation. Sexuality is a symbol of life and existence. It is a profound force that completes human existence. Moreover, an individual who experiences “*kamananda*” (sexual satisfaction) is believed to be directly connected to *Brahmananda* (the bliss of realizing *Brahman*) [10].

Sexuality is a natural need inherent in human beings. When sexual relations are conducted ethically, they give rise to two essential outcomes: pleasure (*kāma*) and offspring (*putra*). The pursuit of pleasure, however, must be grounded in *dharma* (righteousness or truth). The material manifestation of *dharma* within the framework of *kāma* is the marriage ceremony (*pawiwahan*). Through this institution, individuals who have been legitimized as husband and wife are granted the freedom to engage in sexual relations, to experience pleasure (*kāma*), and to produce offspring [11]. Therefore, texts that discuss matters of sexuality are categorized as *Kāma Tattwa* texts.

The study of sexuality, particularly as found in classical Balinese texts, constitutes an important area for further exploration. In the contemporary era, sexuality is often regarded as a taboo subject, making it difficult to discuss openly [12]. However, phenomena such as sexual harassment remain widespread, especially within the educational sector. This condition highlights the urgent need for efforts to reframe sexuality as a positive and ethical aspect of human life, which is appropriately expressed within the bounds of marriage. Sexuality should be understood as something sacred and, therefore, ought to be practiced in sacred ways. Consequently, sex education becomes essential in providing constructive and ethical understanding of sexuality. Through the study of *Kāma Tattwa* texts, it is expected that a more comprehensive insight can be developed regarding sexuality, sexual ethics, and the understanding of sexual activity as a sacred practice [13].

In the Hindu tradition, sexuality is not merely understood as a biological function but as an integral component of human life that is deeply embedded within the framework of *dharma* (righteousness), *kāma* (desire or pleasure), and *mokṣa* (liberation). Within this paradigm, sexual activity is considered meaningful and legitimate when it is aligned with ethical and spiritual principles [14]. Classical Balinese texts, particularly the *Lontar Kāma Tattwa*, offer rich insights into the philosophical, ethical, and spiritual dimensions of sexuality. These texts conceptualize sexuality as a sacred practice that integrates the physical (*śarīra*), psychological (*citta*), and spiritual (*ātman*) dimensions of human existence [15]. One of the central concepts found in this tradition is *Smara Sādhanā*, which frames sexual union not merely as physical gratification but as a disciplined spiritual practice oriented toward harmony, balance, and transcendence. However, the relevance of these

traditional concepts in contemporary contexts, particularly in premarital education, remains insufficiently examined. In modern society, the increasing prevalence of sexual misconduct, including harassment and risky sexual behavior among young people, indicates a gap in effective sexual education. In Denpasar, as an urban center experiencing rapid socio-cultural transformation, this issue becomes even more pressing. Premarital education programs often focus on legal, health, and social aspects of marriage, yet they rarely incorporate philosophical and ethical teachings derived from local wisdom traditions. As a result, there is a missed opportunity to provide a more holistic and culturally grounded understanding of sexuality.

The concept of *Smara Sādhanā* within the *Lontar Kāma Tattwa* has the potential to contribute significantly to strengthening premarital education by offering a framework that integrates ethical discipline, spiritual awareness, and responsible sexual conduct. Rather than viewing sexuality as a taboo or purely biological necessity, this perspective repositions it as a sacred and meaningful practice that requires knowledge, self-control, and moral responsibility. Such an approach is particularly relevant in addressing contemporary challenges, as it aligns sexual behavior with values of respect, commitment, and spiritual purpose. Despite its potential, there has been limited critical evaluation of how *Smara Sādhanā* concepts can be contextualized, interpreted, and implemented within modern educational frameworks. Previous studies have largely focused on descriptive analyses of classical texts without systematically assessing their applicability and effectiveness in contemporary educational settings. Therefore, a critical evaluation is necessary to examine not only the philosophical depth of these teachings but also their practical relevance and transformative potential in strengthening premarital education.

This study aims to critically evaluate the concepts of *Smara Sādhanā* in the *Lontar Kāma Tattwa* and to assess their relevance for strengthening premarital education in Denpasar. By bridging classical Hindu philosophical teachings with contemporary educational needs, this research seeks to contribute to the development of a more holistic, culturally rooted, and ethically grounded model of premarital education. Ultimately, this study aspires to reframe sexuality as a sacred, responsible, and meaningful dimension of human life, thereby fostering healthier and more harmonious relationships within society.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design with a critical–interpretative approach to examine the relevance and reconstruction of *Smara Sādhanā* concepts within the *Lontar Kama Tattwa* for strengthening premarital education in Denpasar. The qualitative paradigm is chosen to enable an in-depth exploration of meanings, values, and philosophical dimensions embedded in classical texts, as well as their interaction with contemporary social realities [16]. The critical perspective is utilized to uncover underlying ideologies, power relations, and socio-cultural dynamics particularly those related to the normalization of premarital sexual practices and gender bias while the interpretative approach allows for a contextual understanding of the text within Hindu philosophical traditions.

The primary data sources in this research consist of classical Balinese Hindu texts categorized under *Kama Tattwa*, especially the *Lontar Pamedas Smara, Rahasya Sanggama*, and other related lontars that discuss sexual ethics, sacred sexuality, and marital relations. Secondary data are obtained from academic literature, journal articles, previous research findings, and relevant policy documents on premarital education, sexuality, and cultural practices in Bali. These informants are selected based on their knowledge, experience, and involvement in premarital education and Hindu religious practices. Data collection techniques include document analysis, in-depth interviews, and limited participant observation [17]. Document analysis is conducted to systematically examine the philosophical and ethical content of the *Kama Tattwa* texts. The data analysis process follows an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The analysis is conducted using thematic and critical discourse analysis. Thematic analysis is used to identify key concepts and patterns related to *Smara Sādhanā*, sexual ethics, and educational practices. Critical discourse analysis is employed to examine how discourses such as “*sing beling sing nganten*” are constructed, reproduced, and normalized within Balinese society, and how they influence public perception and behavior regarding sexuality and marriage.

Triangulation of data sources and methods is applied to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings [18]. Finally, this study adopts a philosophical-hermeneutic framework to interpret the texts and contextualize their meanings within contemporary social conditions. This approach enables the researcher to bridge classical teachings with present-day challenges, thereby formulating a reconstructed model of premarital education grounded in *Smara Sādhanā* values. Through this methodology, the study aims not only to analyze but also to offer a constructive contribution toward developing a more ethical, holistic, and culturally rooted approach to premarital education in Denpasar.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Critique of Myths and the Phenomenon of Extramarital Sexuality in Denpasar

Premarital education primarily aims to equip prospective couples with the knowledge, values, and skills necessary to build a healthy, harmonious, and sustainable family life [19]. However, in Denpasar, the understanding of this objective remains relatively low. Many prospective brides and grooms, along with their families, tend to perceive premarital education merely as an administrative requirement prior to marriage, rather than as an essential component of mental, emotional, and spiritual preparation for married life. This perception, which reduces premarital education to a mere formality, has led to low enthusiasm and limited participant engagement. Programs organized by the government and religious institutions are often attended passively, without genuine awareness of their long-term benefits. Topics such as marital communication, family financial planning, gender equality, and parenting are frequently considered irrelevant, even though these issues are often the primary sources of conflict within households [20].

This condition is further exacerbated by the lack of effective socialization by institutions responsible for premarital education. The information disseminated to the public is often normative and fails to address the real challenges faced by modern young couples [21]. As a result, many couples enter married life without adequate emotional readiness and practical knowledge, which may ultimately lead to tension, early divorce, or domestic violence. Therefore, enhancing public understanding of the importance of premarital education is highly urgent. A more communicative, participatory, and contextual approach is required so that prospective couples can view premarital education as a long-term investment in building a family. Synergy among religious leaders, traditional institutions, local government, and the media is crucial to fostering collective awareness that premarital education is not merely an obligation, but a fundamental necessity for creating high-quality families amid contemporary challenges [19].

A Critique of the Jaratkaru Myth in Marriage in Denpasar

The birth of a child is one of the greatest aspirations for every married couple. The presence of a child is not only understood as the continuation of lineage but also as a symbol of life continuity and family honor [22]. In traditions and teachings passed down through generations, the meaning of childbirth is often expressed through stories or mythologies rich in spiritual and moral values. One such narrative that illustrates the importance of children in religious and cultural contexts is the *Carita Jaratkaru* [23].

The *Carita Jaratkaru* tells the story of a child who possesses the power to liberate ancestral souls (*ātman*) from suffering in the afterlife. This story emphasizes that the existence of a child is not only significant for worldly life but also for the spiritual salvation of the family. The narrative appears in the fifth chapter of the first *parwa* among the eighteen *parwa* collectively known as the *Astadasaparwa*. These *parwa* are prose adaptations derived from sections of Sanskrit epics that contain profound philosophical teachings and life values. The eighteen *parwa* form part of the great epic *Mahabharata*, one of the most monumental literary works in Indian culture, which has had a wide influence across the Indonesian archipelago. From this epic, various versions and adaptations have emerged, including the *Carita Jaratkaru*, later developed into an independent work entitled *Putru Astika Carita* compiled by Sri Reshi Anandakusuma [24].

Grammatically, *Carita Jaratkaru* can be divided into two components: *Carita* and *Jaratkaru*. The term *Carita* refers to a tale or *satua*, a form of prose narrative closely associated with the oral traditions of Balinese society. Meanwhile, *Jaratkaru* is derived from two elements: *jarat*, meaning downfall or suffering, and *karuna*, meaning compassion or benevolence. Thus, *Jaratkaru* can be understood as a figure of noble character, full of compassion, and deeply concerned with those who are experiencing hardship or suffering [25].

The story of *Carita Jaratkaru* begins with a Brahmana who lives a simple life and is devoted to spiritual practice. Each day, Jaratkaru diligently collects grains of rice to be offered to guests and to the gods as a form of devotion and reverence to the Divine. This act reflects sincerity and purity of heart, characteristic of an ascetic life dedicated to *dharma*. The Brahmana also adheres to the practice of *Nyukla Brahmacari*, a celibate life guided by purity of thought and freedom from worldly desires, particularly those related to relations with the opposite sex. Jaratkaru practices ascetic discipline (*tapa brata*) and self-control as a path toward attaining spiritual intelligence and true knowledge throughout his life [23].

At the peak of his ascetic practice, Jaratkaru receives a sacred blessing that grants him the ability to travel freely wherever he wishes. During his journey, he arrives at a place called *Ayatanastana*, a realm situated between heaven and hell. There, he witnesses a striking and emotional scene: a soul hanging from a bamboo pole, while a mouse continuously gnaws at it, threatening to cause the soul to fall into a deep abyss below. This sight evokes profound compassion within Jaratkaru. He observes that the soul appears frail, worn, and weak, with disheveled white hair reflecting immense suffering. Moved by pity, Jaratkaru approaches the soul and inquires about the reason behind such severe punishment. Their conversation becomes the central point of the narrative, revealing that the soul is his own father, Yayawarabrata, who remains trapped in suffering because his son has not produced offspring to continue the lineage and fulfill familial spiritual obligations.

Upon realizing this, Jaratkaru resolves to atone for this condition by marrying and having children to save his father's soul. After returning to the human world, he marries a woman who also bears the name Jaratkaru, a female serpent known as Nagini Jaratkaru. From this union, a son named Astika is born. The birth of Astika becomes a crucial turning point, as through him, the soul of Yayawarabrata is ultimately freed from suffering and attains a path toward heaven. This narrative symbolizes the profound responsibility of a child toward their ancestors and highlights the importance of spiritual continuity in human life.

The meaning of a child's birth as a liberator of ancestral suffering is also affirmed in several scriptural verses. In *Manusmṛti* IX.137, it is stated that "through a son, one conquers the world; through a grandson, one attains immortality; and through descendants, one reaches the realm of the sun." This teaching illustrates that the existence of children and descendants is not only related to worldly aspects but also to the spiritual journey toward perfection. This view aligns with the *Carita Jaratkaru*, where the birth of Astika serves as a means of liberation for his father's soul, Yayawarabrata, enabling him to attain a higher realm. Similarly, a related teaching is found in *Sarasamuccaya* verse 244, which, when connected to the *Carita Jaratkaru*, emphasizes that children serve as the key to liberation for parents or ancestors on their path toward heaven [26].

A Critique of the "Sing Beling Sing Nganten" Phenomenon in Denpasar

The emergence of controversial forms of marriage has become an inevitable phenomenon in modern society. Modernity is often characterized by the rise of individualistic attitudes that prioritize personal freedom over social and religious values. In this context, religion and tradition which once served as primary guidelines in defining the meaning and procedures of marriage have gradually lost their influence in the public sphere [27]. This shift indicates that marriage is no longer perceived as a sacred spiritual bond, but rather as a personal choice that can be adjusted according to individual needs and desires.

As a consequence of the weakening of these sacred values, the institution of marriage has undergone desacralization, losing its sense of sanctity. One manifestation of this is the increasing prevalence of premarital sexual practices, particularly among adolescents. This reflects a transformation in how marriage is perceived, no longer regarded as a moral and religious prerequisite for engaging in sexual relations [28]. Even after marriage, the sanctity of the marital relationship is often eroded by rising cases of infidelity and divorce. As a result, marriage is no longer understood as a spiritual commitment but merely as a social contract that can be terminated at any time [29].

The phenomenon of premarital sexual relations has become increasingly widespread in various regions of Indonesia, including Bali. A study conducted by Kartika and Budisetyani (in Sukardiasih) involving 65 adolescents aged 17–23 in Denpasar and Badung revealed striking findings: 64.6% of respondents admitted to having engaged in premarital sexual intercourse. The study identified several contributing factors, including uncontrolled libido, partner pressure, lack of parental supervision, limited knowledge about the negative consequences of premarital sex, permissive lifestyles, and easy access to pornographic content [23].

The rise in premarital sexual practices often leads to unintended pregnancies, which in turn has given rise to a local discourse in Balinese society expressed in the phrase *sing beling sing nganten* ("no pregnancy, no marriage"). This expression reflects a shift in the values of marriage within Balinese Hindu culture, implicitly legitimizing sexual relations prior to marriage [30]. Consequently, practices that were once considered taboo are increasingly justified through evolving cultural and social rationalizations.

The discourse surrounding *sing beling sing nganten* has sparked widespread debate within Balinese society. Local mass media have responded by presenting diverse perspectives from academics, religious leaders, customary leaders, NGO activists, and socio-cultural observers. The majority argue that this discourse contradicts religious values and traditional morality [22]. Moreover, it is perceived as a threat to family resilience and as detrimental to women, who are often positioned as objects of "trial" in premarital relationships. This debate highlights the tension between modernity, morality, and sacred values in understanding the meaning of marriage in the contemporary era [31].

The *Nusa Bali* daily newspaper has noted that the discourse of *sing beling sing nganten* reflects a dialectic between pride and moral conflict in Balinese society. On one hand, premarital pregnancy may be seen as a source of pride for prospective in-laws, as it signifies the continuation of lineage and ensures that they will not "lose" a future daughter-in-law (*sing pocol ngelah mantu*) [32]. On the other hand, such behavior is considered contrary to moral values and religious teachings that uphold marriage as a sacred institution. The Bendesa Agung of the Majelis Utama Desa Pakraman of Bali Province explained that the practice of pregnancy preceding marriage has existed since the 1960s, indicating that this phenomenon is deeply rooted in Balinese culture and has gained social legitimacy [33].

The controversy surrounding this discourse cannot be separated from the Balinese Hindu perspective on the importance of having children (*sentana*) within the family. In Balinese culture, having children especially sons carries not only social but also religious significance. The story of Jaratkaru in Hindu teachings conveys that a son (*sentana purusa*) holds spiritual responsibility for assisting ancestral souls (*ātman*) in the afterlife [3].

This belief forms the basis for the perception that the birth of a male child is a moral and spiritual obligation for married couples.

The mystification of narratives concerning the importance of *sentana purusa* reinforces patriarchal patterns of thought in Balinese culture, where male offspring are prioritized. However, Balinese tradition also provides socio-religious mechanisms to address the absence of male heirs, such as the practice of *meras sentana* for childless families, or marriage systems like *nyentana* and *pada gelahang* for families with only daughters [34]. This demonstrates that despite the persistence of patriarchal myths, Balinese culture retains a degree of flexibility in adapting to social conditions without entirely abandoning its customary and spiritual values.

The ideological emphasis on the importance of having children gives rise to complex gender issues within the patriarchal culture of Balinese society. Within this value system, women are often positioned as primarily responsible for reproduction, as biologically they are the ones who conceive and give birth. Consequently, the social pressure to bear children is disproportionately placed on women. Research by Demartoto indicates that in many cases of infertility, women are frequently blamed, bearing significant psychological and social burdens related to their roles as wives and mothers [23].

Preliminary findings of this study suggest that Balinese women who are unable to bear children often experience verbal abuse within the family environment. This ranges from subtle insinuations to harsh ridicule, such as being labeled *bangkung jubeng* (a barren sow). This term reflects a perspective that places sole responsibility on women when a family lacks offspring. Such treatment reveals deeply rooted gender inequality within the patriarchal structure of Balinese society, where women are symbolically and culturally subordinated without consideration of other medical or biological factors influencing infertility [35].

Blaming women exclusively for infertility is clearly irrational and reflects strong gender bias. This perspective ignores the fact that infertility may result from various factors, including male health conditions or external influences. Therefore, a shift in societal perspective is necessary to foster a more just and reflective understanding of fertility issues. Eliminating stigma against women is not only a matter of gender equality but also part of building a more humane and rational social awareness regarding family and reproduction [36].

Theoretically, the gender injustice experienced by Balinese women within the discourse of *sing beling sing nganten* can be explained through the perspective of Dewi, who argue that discourse is always dialectically related to power and ideology [37]. In this case, the social construction that positions women as solely responsible for reproduction represents a manifestation of patriarchal ideology embedded in cultural practices and language. In reality, reproductive health research shows that infertility can be caused by both male and female factors. Dewi found that male infertility (>40%) may result from sperm disorders or obstruction of reproductive channels due to infections, while female infertility (>45%) may be caused by issues in the vagina, cervix, uterus, fallopian tubes, ovaries, or peritoneum. Thus, blaming women alone constitutes a culturally distorted perspective that is not only gender-biased but also intellectually and morally flawed [22].

Medically, the success of a married couple in having children depends on the reproductive health of both partners. Therefore, efforts to maintain and improve reproductive health should be a shared responsibility. One recommended measure is premarital screening, which can help detect potential reproductive issues early. However, the implementation of this policy in Bali remains relatively low. Based on data from the Electronic Ready for Marriage and Pregnancy system (Elsimil), out of 2,733 prospective couples, only 1,038 (40%) underwent premarital screening, with the majority coming from non-Hindu communities. This data indicates a gap between medical awareness and social realities influenced by customs and cultural norms [23].

The Head of BKKBN RI noted that the low implementation of premarital screening in Bali is influenced by customary practices that prioritize tradition over reproductive health. This is supported by the statement of the Regional Secretary of Bali Province, who explained that prospective couples typically only report their marriage plans to customary leaders (*bendesa adat* or *klian banjar*) without consulting marriage counselors or health professionals [36]. This reality demonstrates that traditional socio-cultural systems still dominate the marriage process in Bali, resulting in the marginalization of premarital health considerations, including infertility and gender inequality.

Beyond its intellectual and moral shortcomings, premarital sexual practices also have various negative consequences, particularly for women. Several studies indicate that women are more vulnerable to serious impacts compared to men. As noted by Sarwono and Krismonika et al, these impacts include: (a) psychological effects such as anger, fear, anxiety, depression, guilt, low self-esteem, and loss of dignity; (b) physiological effects such as early pregnancy, often leading to abortion in cases of unwanted pregnancy or lack of partner responsibility, as well as risks of complications such as obstructed labor and obstetric fistula due to physical immaturity; (c) social impacts such as exclusion and stigmatization; and (d) health risks such as sexually transmitted infections, often transmitted from male partners [38].

Despite the greater risks borne by women, the discourse of *sing beling sing nganten* in Balinese marriage culture appears to legitimize such practices. Many Balinese women seem unable to refuse premarital sexual advances, especially when promised marriage in the event of pregnancy. In this context, premarital sexual relations are often perceived as a form of “fertility testing” for women. This interpretation demonstrates how

patriarchal ideology continues to regulate women's bodies and morality through the normalization of practices that are, in fact, detrimental to them [39].

This phenomenon is further reinforced by social acceptance within Balinese society, where premarital pregnancy is not always regarded as shameful. In some cases, families even feel proud and pleased, perceiving the pregnancy as a sign of the prospective daughter-in-law's ability to ensure lineage continuity. This perspective reflects a shift in moral values and the sacredness of marriage toward a purely social and biological concern. Consequently, women are once again objectified within a cultural system that values them not for their dignity and humanity, but for their reproductive capacity [40].

Public acceptance of premarital pregnancy indicates a transformation in the meaning of marriage within Balinese culture, particularly with the rise of the *sing beling sing nganten* discourse. Referring to Abdullah, this phenomenon illustrates a shift from generic cultural meanings toward differential ones. Culture is no longer understood solely as a system of shared values but has evolved into lived social practices embedded in everyday life. In this context, *sing beling sing nganten* is no longer merely a discourse but has become a culturally legitimized social practice within the Balinese marriage system. This shift has normalized premarital pregnancy followed by marriage within the framework of local culture [41].

The phenomenon of premarital sex leading to pregnancy and subsequent marriage is not unique to Bali but is also found across Southeast Asia, each shaped by different cultural contexts. Its uniqueness lies in how it is interpreted through specific cultural lenses. For example, among the Kreung ethnic group in Cambodia, girls as young as 13 are permitted to engage in premarital sexual relations in "love huts" built by their parents as a means of selecting a future husband. This tradition illustrates how moral and social values within a particular culture can normalize behaviors that may be considered taboo in other contexts [23].

A similar pattern is observed in parts of East Nusa Tenggara, where premarital pregnancy is used as a strategy to reduce the high *belis* (bride price) required from the male family. When a woman becomes pregnant, the *belis*, which may initially amount to tens or hundreds of millions of rupiah, can be reduced to a few livestock such as horses, cattle, or buffalo. These examples demonstrate that discourses such as *sing beling sing nganten* cannot be understood in isolation but must be analyzed holistically in relation to the cultural, economic, and social dynamics that shape them. Such an approach reveals that similar practices may carry different meanings and social functions across cultural contexts.

It is undeniable that the discourse of *sing beling sing nganten* has developed within the dominance of patriarchal culture in Balinese Hindu society. This expression reflects a social belief that premarital pregnancy serves as proof of a woman's readiness for marriage. The social system supporting this view is closely tied to Balinese marriage customs and a patrilineal kinship system that prioritizes male lineage in inheritance and social status. Additionally, the patrilocal residence system where women are expected to live with the husband's family after marriage reinforces women's subordinate position within the household. In this context, *sing beling sing nganten* becomes a reflection of a social system that subtly yet powerfully restricts women's autonomy.

On one hand, women are implicitly pressured to prove their fertility through premarital sexual relations as an unwritten requirement for marriage. This social pressure creates significant moral and psychological dilemmas, placing women in a difficult position. If they accept premarital relations, they bear moral consequences for violating norms of purity and sacredness. However, if they refuse, they risk losing the relationship or being deemed unsuitable as wives due to perceived reproductive inadequacy. Thus, women lack full autonomy over their bodies and life choices, as decisions are largely governed by patriarchal norms that rigidly define gender roles [42].

Furthermore, if after marriage a woman is unable to bear children, the social consequences can be severe. She may face stigma as a woman who has failed to fulfill her perceived natural role and may experience verbal, physical, or symbolic violence from her husband or his family. This condition illustrates how the discourse of *sing beling sing nganten* operates as part of an ideological system that justifies gender inequality and reinforces patriarchal structures in Balinese society. In this context, the female body becomes not only a site of reproduction but also a site of power, controlled by social values that position women as inferior.

A Critique of Public Affirmation on the Normalization of Extramarital Sexual Phenomena (*Sing Beling Sing Nganten*)

Discourse functions as a medium for transmitting various forms of knowledge, perspectives, and ideologies to society through language. Beyond serving as a tool for conveying information, discourse also possesses the power to shape public perception and opinion. Therefore, the selection of words, phrases, and sentence structures within a discourse is never neutral, but rather reflects particular modes of thinking and ideological positions. In this context, discourse can be understood as a form of "language games," as proposed by Ludwig Wittgenstein, in which language represents and interprets social reality. Likewise, the discourse of *sing beling sing nganten* that has developed within Balinese society can be understood as a form of social representation emerging from linguistic practices. Although this discourse lacks a clear historical or textual foundation, it continues to be articulated and reproduced through everyday social communication. Thus, it is not

merely a spontaneous expression, but part of a social construction that reflects the lived reality of Balinese Hindu society, particularly within the context of customary marriage systems [23].

The phenomenon of *sing beling sing nganten* reflects an evolving social condition, namely the increasing incidence of premarital pregnancy within Balinese customary culture. This discourse emerges as a social response to shifting values and moral norms in society. Although its origin, authorship, and initial context remain unclear, its presence has become part of social conversations that raise public awareness regarding norms and behaviors in communal life. Moreover, the dissemination and popularity of this discourse demonstrate how language can shape collective consciousness. Through everyday conversations, public discussions, and mass media, *sing beling sing nganten* has gained social legitimacy, illustrating how language operates as a subtle yet effective instrument of social control. Consequently, this discourse not only reflects social reality but also actively participates in constructing and maintaining systems of meaning within Balinese society [33].

The phenomenon of marriage preceded by pregnancy is not unique to Bali, but can also be found in various regions of Indonesia. However, the discourse of *sing beling sing nganten* is culturally more specific to Balinese society, as it is articulated in the Balinese language. The expression does not merely reflect a particular social occurrence, but also demonstrates how Balinese people express their social reality through language. In this sense, the discourse represents a distinctive form of cultural articulation, reflecting societal perspectives on morality, responsibility, and social values in marital life [31].

In fact, similar phenomena have long existed within Balinese society. Since the 1980s, representations of social realities aligned with the discourse of *sing beling sing nganten* have appeared in various cultural expressions. This indicates that premarital pregnancy is not a new issue, but rather part of the social dynamics of Balinese society over several decades. Such realities are not only understood as individual events, but also as reflections of broader social and cultural transformations.

One representation of this phenomenon can be found in the song *Korting Duang Bulan*, performed by Ketut Bimbo featuring Alit Ardiari in the 1980s. This song serves as an example of how artistic expression functions as a medium for voicing social realities. The lyrics read as follows:

Bli... Bli... Bli, remember your promise, you said you would marry me when I am pregnant; now look at my belly growing, it can no longer be hidden, so please hurry, hurry and take (marry) me...

These lyrics indicate that, at the time of its release, marriage following pregnancy was already part of Balinese social reality. Similar indications can also be found in other popular cultural works, such as the song *Beling Malunan* performed by Darmini and uploaded by Made Ada in 2025 via YouTube. Beyond music, the theme of premarital pregnancy is also present in performing arts, such as *Wayang Joblar*, as discussed by Pradana [23]. In this narrative, Dewi Trijata, the daughter of King Wibisana of Alengkapura, is depicted as becoming pregnant before marriage, thereby bringing disgrace upon the kingdom. These representations demonstrate that the issue of premarital pregnancy has long been embedded within Balinese cultural narratives, both in traditional and contemporary forms.

The phenomenon of premarital pregnancy aligned with the discourse of *sing beling sing nganten* highlights the significant role of popular culture in shaping collective consciousness. Through music, performances, and other forms of mass cultural expression, social and moral messages can be disseminated rapidly and widely. These works not only reflect social realities but also construct how society interprets morality, honor, and responsibility in gender relations. Thus, popular culture functions as a medium for transmitting values that may reinforce or challenge prevailing social norms.

In line with the perspective of Roland Barthes [23], every form of representation in mass culture contains ideological messages that operate through the mechanism of myth. These myths not only conceal certain ideologies but also naturalize them, making them appear normal and accepted as shared truths. In the context of *sing beling sing nganten*, the myths constructed through songs, performances, and popular media have the potential to generate false consciousness within society, leading people to accept the phenomenon as a normal social reality without recognizing the underlying ideological structures that sustain gender inequality and specific social norms.

The discourse of *sing beling sing nganten* continues to exist and evolve dynamically within Balinese society today. It has become a subject of widespread public discussion in everyday conversations, academic forums, and media coverage. This is evidenced by numerous media reports and scholarly publications addressing the issue from various social, cultural, and moral perspectives. A review of the literature indicates at least ten media reports and academic publications in the past five years focusing on this phenomenon. This suggests that *sing beling sing nganten* is not merely a popular phrase, but a significant social issue that has generated considerable public attention and debate.

Furthermore, research by Sukardiasih shows that nearly 99% of Balinese people understand the meaning of the expression *sing beling sing nganten*, which literally translates to “[if] not pregnant, [then] not married.” In other words, this expression represents a reversal of normative expectations pregnancy precedes

marriage. Interestingly, many members of society have normalized this meaning and perceive it as a common occurrence in Bali. This indicates that the discourse has moved beyond casual conversation and has deeply influenced social consciousness, shaping public perceptions of moral values and the institution of marriage [23].

From a theoretical perspective, discourse is not merely a collection of ideas or opinions circulating within society, but also a powerful mechanism for creating labels, categories, and particular ways of understanding reality. According to Eriyanto, discourse constructed through words, phrases, and sentences functions as a tool for embedding ideologies that influence patterns of thought and social awareness. Thus, *sing beling sing nganten* not only describes social reality in Bali but also produces new meanings regarding social relations, morality, and marital norms amid cultural transformation [43].

The high level of public engagement in discussing *sing beling sing nganten* demonstrates its strong vitality and broad interpretative space. Some groups consider the discourse to be contradictory to moral order and customary norms, while others view it as a form of adaptation to changing times. This diversity of interpretations indicates that *sing beling sing nganten* is not a monolithic discourse, but rather open to multiple meanings shaped by different social contexts. As emphasized by MacQuillan, discourse fundamentally operates as a form of language games that resists singular interpretation [44]. When a discourse is forced into a fixed and homogeneous meaning, it risks losing its relevance in the public sphere. In this regard, the multiplicity of interpretations surrounding *sing beling sing nganten* demonstrates that it functions as a discursive arena in which Balinese society negotiates between traditional values and emerging social realities. It also reflects the dynamic nature of culture, continuously evolving between tradition, modernity, and the need to reinterpret social norms in response to changing times.

Smara Sādhanā in the Lontar Kama Tattwa as a Foundation of Hindu Sexual Ethics

Hindu ethics in the domain of sexuality encompass various aspects of life, ranging from personal ethics and morality to social norms and conduct. In Hindu teachings, sexuality is not regarded as something taboo, but rather as an integral part of human life that must be lived with awareness. Therefore, sexual expression is situated within an ethical framework that demands self-control, respect for human dignity, and harmony between biological impulses and moral wisdom. Hindu teachings emphasize that sexuality must be regulated by proper ethics, particularly within the context of family formation and the birth of virtuous offspring (*suputra*). Sexual relations are not merely directed toward the fulfillment of desire, but are understood as a sacred process with moral and spiritual consequences. Awareness of the role of sexuality in the creation of life encourages individuals to consider physical and psychological well-being, reproductive health, and the sexual well-being of both partners within the relationship.

Furthermore, the ideal sexual relationship from a Hindu perspective is one that is fully conscious both of one's partner and of the higher purpose of sexual activity itself. This awareness includes mental readiness, emotional responsibility, and a commitment to nurturing a healthy and dignified generation. This is closely related to the Hindu framework that connects sexuality with the concepts of *karma*, *dharma*, and *seva* (service) [45]. Every sexual act is understood to carry karmic consequences and must therefore be grounded in *dharma* as a moral guide. Sexuality is seen as part of human duty and responsibility in life, including as a form of service to life itself. Hence, sexuality should be practiced with awareness, responsibility, and noble intention for the harmony of the individual, family, and society [2].

A key emphasis in Hindu sexual practice is the preservation of the purity of body and mind as an inseparable unity. Sexual relations are understood as a sacred space that requires mutual respect, kindness toward one's partner, and a foundation of love and compassion. In Hindu teachings, sexuality is not limited to interpersonal relations, but also serves as a means of inner reflection that can lead individuals toward higher spiritual awareness. In this sense, sexual union is viewed as a path toward self-harmony and, at a certain level, union with the Divine [46].

Sexuality also embodies fundamental principles of life, including respect for oneself and others. These values serve as the ethical foundation guiding sexual behavior so that it does not transgress the boundaries of *dharma*. Thus, sexuality cannot be separated from moral responsibility, but must be lived as a disciplined practice that fosters personal and social harmony. To achieve a healthy and harmonious sexual life, Hindu teachings emphasize the importance of balance among body, mind, and soul. These three elements must remain in equilibrium so that sexual activity does not result in physical or psychological disharmony. Conscious sexuality requires presence of mind and healthy emotional engagement between partners. In sexual activity (*sanggama*), Hindu teachings describe the union of *kama bang* (sperm) and *kama petak* (ovum) aimed at producing virtuous offspring (*suputra*).

Hindu sexual ethics also affirm that sexual activity should not occur prior to the marriage ceremony. After marriage, a man has the responsibility to protect and care for his wife in order to preserve the purity of lineage. This principle is emphasized in the following sacred text:

“*Svam prasutim caritran ca kulam atmanam eva ca*

*Svam ca dharmam prayatnena
jayam raksan hi raksati*” (Manava Dharmasastra IX.7)

Translation:

“He who carefully protects his wife safeguards the purity of his lineage, his character, his family, himself, and the path of righteousness” [47].

Sexual ethics in Hinduism are understood as a learning process closely related to the husband wife relationship, carried out in accordance with ethical values derived from sacred scriptures. Hindu texts provide a distinctive philosophical and spiritual depth in understanding sexuality. Hinduism offers a comprehensive perspective on human sexual relations, encompassing not only physical aspects but also inner and spiritual dimensions. To explore sexual ethics from a Hindu perspective is to understand sexuality as part of a broader concept of life, connected to life goals, harmony, and sacredness.

Hindu teachings emphasize that sexuality must be guided by ethical principles in building relationships. Awareness of the role of sexuality in marital relations becomes a central principle, including attention to the well-being of one’s partner. Conscious sexual relations do not merely focus on satisfaction, but also position sexuality as a means to strengthen emotional and spiritual bonds within family life. Sexual ethics in Hinduism also function as a guide for building family life based on values derived from sacred texts. The ultimate goal of this ethical framework is to produce *suputra*, a virtuous and morally upright generation [48]. In this context, sexuality is understood as part of parental responsibility in maintaining the moral and spiritual quality of the family.

Education on sexual ethics is essential to be introduced early to younger generations so that they develop a proper understanding and refrain from engaging in sexual relations outside marriage. Hindu teachings acknowledge that sex is a source of pleasure, yet such pleasure must be pursued in accordance with the principles of *dharma*. As explained by Aryana, sexuality can bring happiness, but it may also lead to suffering, disease, and degradation if not practiced with proper awareness and ethics. Numerous Hindu scriptures provide guidance on sexual conduct and marital harmony. The roles of husband and wife in sexual relations must be balanced and complementary. Sexuality can be likened to a tool for achieving family life goals; when used appropriately, it brings benefit, but when misused, it can lead to disharmony [15].

One of the *Kama Tattwa* texts, namely *Lontar Pamedasmara*, explains that sexuality is a natural aspect of human nature that should not be rejected but respected and managed wisely. This teaching places sexuality within an ethical framework that demands responsibility and moral awareness. Therefore, all forms of unhealthy sexual behavior such as violence, coercion, and abuse are strictly prohibited in Hindu teachings. Furthermore, *Pamedasmara* emphasizes that sexual relations are only appropriate within a legitimate bond, namely between husband and wife according to Hindu law. Sexual relations within marriage are not merely physical, but form part of a sacred union imbued with spiritual meaning. In this context, sexuality must be practiced with love, compassion, and mutual respect as expressions of marital sanctity. In essence, *Pamedasmara* teaches that sexuality is a way of life that must be lived with spiritual awareness and ethical alignment with Hindu teachings, serving as a means to achieve happiness, harmony, and balance in family life [49].

Furthermore, *Pamedasmara* highlights that time influences the quality of sexual relations. Certain days are considered auspicious or inauspicious for sexual activity, based on Hindu calendrical and astrological calculations that recognize the relationship between cosmic forces and human life. Within this framework, sexuality is closely linked to *karma*, *dharma*, and *seva*. *Karma* refers to the law of cause and effect, whereby every action including sexual activity has moral and spiritual consequences. Awareness of *karma* encourages individuals to act responsibly. *Dharma* refers to moral obligations and duties aligned with one’s social and familial roles, guiding sexual relations toward purity and righteousness.

In addition to emphasizing the human divine relationship, *Pamedasmara* also stresses the importance of maintaining harmonious relationships among humans and with the natural world. It highlights values of love and respect in sexual relations, where sexuality practiced with sincerity is seen as a manifestation of *bhakti* devotion to God expressed through human relationships [49]. Hindu sexual ethics are also elaborated in Ayurveda, which provides guidance that if one desires virtuous offspring, sexual relations should be avoided at certain times, such as during the day, at sunset (*sandya kala*), and on sacred days (*purwani*). Additionally, sexual activity should align with *rtu kala*, referring to the appropriate reproductive phase of the woman. Ideal sexual relations are based on mutual consent and shared desire, not coercion. This reflects that Hindu sexual ethics emphasize equality, harmony, and mutual respect within the marital relationship.

Textual foundations for regulating the timing of sexual relations are also found in the *Bhagavata Purana* (3.14.23), which recounts the conception of Dewi Diti. It suggests that the ideal time for intercourse is approximately three hours before sunrise and discourages midnight activity, which is believed to be influenced by negative spiritual forces. The Vedic tradition also teaches that the entry of the *ātman* into the womb occurs at the moment of the union of sperm and ovum, thus requiring spiritual awareness and proper timing (*ala ayuning dewasa*). This ethical framework is further affirmed in *Manava Dharmasastra* III.45:

“Rtu kalabhighami syat svadaraniratah sada
Parvavarjam vrajaicainam tad vrato rati kamyaya.”

Translation:

“A husband should approach his wife at the proper time and remain devoted to her alone; he may engage in intercourse to please her on any day except sacred days (*purwani*)” [50].

This passage emphasizes that sexual relations are not only for procreation but also for maintaining marital harmony and happiness. When conducted at appropriate times and in accordance with ethical guidelines, sexual relations serve to strengthen the marital bond. *Lontar Pamedas Smara* also specifies days that are prohibited for sexual activity, such as *kala ngruda*, *kala mrtyu*, *redite wage*, *anggara paing*, *anggara wage*, *buda kliwon*, *wrāspati pahing*, and *saniscara kliwon* (Tumpek). It also prohibits sexual activity during the daytime, as it is considered a period of unstable energy. Violating these prohibitions is believed to result in negative consequences or misfortune, referred to as *hamaḍa maḍa dewata*. Conversely, auspicious days for sexual activity include *Saniscara Umanis*, *Budha Pon*, and *Sukra Pahing* [49].

Another important text, *Lontar Rahasya Sanggama*, describes various forms of sexual practices believed to enhance mutual pleasure, such as *Purusaprawesa*, *Angguliprawesa*, and *Jihwaprawesa*. It also emphasizes alignment with the *lingga-yoni* principle and mutual consent. Additionally, it suggests that engaging in sexual relations three times a week is considered healthy, while seven times a week reflects marital happiness, provided all activities are based on mutual agreement and free from coercion [51].

Lontar Tikahing Sasrami further discusses marital sexuality through concepts such as *Aji Smaragama*, linking timing of intercourse to the character of offspring, and *Sastra Aji Pangguli*, which addresses methods for conceiving male or female children. Meanwhile, *Lontar Smara Krida Laksana* provides explicit sexual education, including anatomy, ethical practices, prayers, and traditional remedies to support sexual health and harmony [52]. Lastly, *Lontar Rukmini Tatwa* offers a perspective focused on traditional healing and marital harmony, based on the story of Dewi Rukmini, who receives teachings from Dewi Saci. These teachings emphasize the importance of caring for reproductive health through traditional herbal remedies to maintain harmony in marital relationships.

Smara Sāadhanā in the *Lontar Kama Tattwa* as a Guide to Sacred Sexuality

Love, in this context, is not confined merely to the experience of sex, but rather emerges when sex itself has been transcended. As Osho asserts, “love grows when sex is transcended. When sex is experienced with sincerity, love begins to unfold.” When sex no longer imprisons human beings within uncontrolled desire, but is transformed into love, a broader understanding of the self and of life begins to open. Furthermore, the mysteries of nature and the essence of humanity can be understood when individuals undergo a transformation in the quality of their consciousness. Sex, which initially binds and limits the human self, when processed with awareness, evolves into a liberating force of love. At this point, love becomes something essential within human existence not merely a biological reaction, but an expression of consciousness and wholeness [53].

The emergence of love signifies that human beings have reached a higher state beyond attachment to worldly objects. Love elevates individuals from the mere pursuit of pleasure to the experience of meaning. In this condition, relationships are no longer built upon possession or lust, but upon presence, sensitivity, and respect for the existence of others. Therefore, sexuality as presented in the *Kama Tattwa* texts holds profound significance, as it is positioned within a framework of spiritual transformation. Sex becomes the initial symbol of the human journey toward self-understanding, conscious love, and the realization of one’s interconnectedness with the universe. In this sense, sex is not the end, but a pathway toward love as the highest form of human experience.

Sexual relations that are conducted lawfully and sacredly are encouraged not to remain at the mere physical level, but to transcend the bodily dimension. Within this understanding, sexual union serves two primary purposes: procreation and the attainment of a form of “magical pleasure” [54]; [55]. This “magical pleasure” does not refer merely to sensory enjoyment, but to an inner experience that surpasses worldly boundaries. Such transcendental sexuality occurs when human consciousness is no longer fully bound to the physical body, but becomes open to a deeper sense of unity. In this context, sex becomes a medium for experiencing emotional depth, inner stillness, and a broader connection with spiritual reality.

Sex that transcends the body can thus be understood as a form of *sādhana* or spiritual offering. In this perspective, sexual experience is no longer oriented toward ego satisfaction, but becomes a path toward enlightenment and deeper self-realization. In the framework of the *Kama Tattwa*, sexual union is essentially a form of yoga. The term “yoga” derives from the Sanskrit root *yuj*, meaning “to unite” or “to connect,” thus referring to the process of uniting the human self with the Divine. According to Swami Sivananda, yoga is a divine science that teaches methods for connecting the human spirit with God and purifying the soul from worldly attachments [55].

Swami Sivananda further emphasizes that “Harmony is Yoga. Yoga is oneness with Brahman. Yoga is union with Brahman...,” indicating that yoga represents a state of harmony, unity, and identification with Brahman. In a broader sense, yoga encompasses various paths such as Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Mantra Yoga, and Laya Yoga [55]. Thus, yoga can be understood as a bridge that unites the individual soul with the Absolute and Infinite Divine. When harmony and unity with God are realized, that is where yoga truly manifests [56]. In this context, sexual relations that are carried out with awareness and sacredness are no longer merely biological events, but become spiritual practices that integrate the body, mind, and divinity into a unified whole.

Novelty, this study offers a distinctive contribution by critically examining the concept of *Smara Sādhanā* as articulated in the *Lontar Kama Tattwa*, a traditional Balinese Hindu text that has received limited attention in contemporary academic discourse, particularly in the field of premarital education. Unlike previous studies that tend to approach sexuality from biomedical, psychological, or normative religious perspectives, this research integrates a philosophical and theological lens rooted in Tantrāyāna traditions. The novelty of this study lies in its effort to reinterpret sexuality not merely as a biological or moral domain, but as a sacred spiritual practice that encompasses self-discipline, ethical awareness, and transcendental union. Furthermore, this research bridges classical textual knowledge with modern educational needs, thereby positioning *Smara Sādhanā* as a relevant conceptual framework for holistic premarital education. Implications: The findings of this study have significant implications for the development of premarital education, particularly within Hindu communities in Indonesia. By recontextualizing *Smara Sādhanā* as a form of spiritual praxis, this research encourages a shift from purely procedural or health-oriented premarital programs toward a more integrative model that includes ethical, spiritual, and philosophical dimensions. This approach can foster deeper awareness among prospective couples regarding the sacredness of marital relationships, promoting responsibility, mutual respect, and emotional maturity. Additionally, the study contributes to the broader discourse on religious education by demonstrating how indigenous knowledge systems, such as the *Lontar Kama Tattwa*, can be revitalized and adapted to address contemporary social challenges, including marital instability and the commodification of sexuality.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research is primarily based on textual analysis of the *Lontar Kama Tattwa*, which may limit its applicability in practical or empirical contexts. The absence of field-based data, such as interviews with practitioners, educators, or married couples, restricts the ability to assess how the concept of *Smara Sādhanā* is understood and implemented in real-life settings. Second, the interpretation of Tantrāyāna concepts is inherently complex and may be subject to scholarly bias or differing hermeneutical approaches. Third, this study focuses on a specific cultural and religious context, which may limit its generalizability to other traditions or communities with different socio-cultural backgrounds. Recommendations: Based on these limitations, future research is recommended to adopt a more interdisciplinary and empirical approach by incorporating qualitative or mixed methods, such as ethnographic studies, interviews, or participatory observations, to explore the lived experiences of individuals engaging with *Smara Sādhanā* in premarital or marital contexts. Further studies could also compare the concept with similar frameworks in other religious or cultural traditions to enrich cross-cultural understanding of sacred sexuality. In addition, policymakers and educators are encouraged to integrate the philosophical insights of the *Lontar Kama Tattwa* into premarital education curricula in a contextualized and pedagogically appropriate manner. Such efforts would not only preserve local wisdom but also enhance the relevance and effectiveness of premarital education in fostering resilient and harmonious families.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the concept of *Smara Sādhanā* as articulated in the *Lontar Kama Tattwa* provides a profound philosophical and ethical foundation for reorienting premarital education in Denpasar. Sexuality, within this framework, is not merely understood as a biological necessity, but as a sacred and conscious practice that integrates the physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of human existence. The teachings emphasize that sexual relations must be grounded in *dharmā*, guided by moral responsibility, and actualized within the sanctity of marriage. Thus, *Smara Sādhanā* redefines sexuality as a form of spiritual discipline (*sādhanā*) that aims not only at pleasure (*kāma*) and procreation (*putra*), but also at achieving harmony, self-awareness, and spiritual elevation. Furthermore, this research critically reveals that the contemporary phenomena of premarital sexual practices and the discourse of “*sing beling sing nganten*” in Denpasar reflect a process of desacralization of marriage and a shift in moral values influenced by modernity, individualism, and patriarchal ideology. Such conditions highlight the gap between traditional philosophical teachings and current social practices. The normalization of premarital sex, coupled with gender biases and unequal social pressures on women, indicates the urgent need for a more holistic, ethical, and contextualized approach to sexuality education. In this regard, the values of *Smara Sādhanā* offer a counter-narrative that restores the sacredness of sexuality while promoting gender justice, mutual respect, and moral accountability.

The study concludes that integrating *Smara Sādhanā* into premarital education can significantly contribute to strengthening the quality of marital preparation by embedding ethical awareness, spiritual consciousness, and cultural relevance. Premarital education should no longer be treated as a mere administrative requirement, but as a transformative learning process that equips individuals with comprehensive knowledge of sexuality, relational ethics, reproductive health, and spiritual values. Therefore, a collaborative effort among religious leaders, educational institutions, cultural authorities, and policymakers is essential to reconstruct premarital education in a way that is dialogical, participatory, and responsive to contemporary social challenges. Ultimately, this research affirms that the revitalization of local wisdom, such as the teachings found in the *Lontar Kama Tattwa*, is crucial in addressing the moral and cultural crises surrounding sexuality and marriage in modern society. By repositioning sexuality within a sacred and ethical framework, *Smara Sādhanā* not only offers a philosophical alternative to reductive and permissive views of sex, but also serves as a guiding principle for building harmonious, dignified, and sustainable family life in Denpasar and beyond.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author(s) declare no conflict of interest.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGY

The authors declare that no artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in the generation, analysis, or writing of this manuscript. All aspects of the research, including data collection, interpretation, and manuscript preparation, were carried out entirely by the authors without the assistance of AI-based technologies.

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