

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter, elements of *Ruwatan Sukerta* are discussed with the action needed in the ritual. The elements involved like the participants, the offerings, and the procession that are needed to perform.

#### 4.1 *Ruwatan Sukerta* ritual

Before I discuss the elements involved in *Ruwatan Sukerta* ritual, I define the meaning of the word *Ruwatan*. *Ruwatan* comes from the stem word of “*Ruwat*” and affix *-an*. *Ruwat* comes from the term *Ngaruati* which means to guard against accidents of *Batara*. The definition above is supported by the interview with Mr. Ki Cermo Sutedjo, one of the puppeteers in the *ruwatan* ritual, who confirmed the word *ruwat*. He explained that the meaning of *ruwat* is throwing away, “*jadi apa arti kata ruwat sesungguhnya?*” *Arti kata ruwat itu adalah membuang. Lebih tepatnya membuang. Jadi misalkan ngruwat, terus nyingkirke, terus nyiwake, tapi kalo tepatnya ya membuang*” [so what is *Ruwatan*? The word *ruwat* means throwing away. For example *ngruwat*/free, *nyingkirke*/eschew, *nyiwake*/9 days of the death, but the word exact meaning is throwing away.] (Interview with Mr. Ki Cermo Sutedjo on September 8, 2020). In this case, throwing away is about bad luck, accidents, and other supernatural things.

## 4.2 The elements involved in *Ruwatan Sukerta* ritual

There are some elements that people needed to take, such as the kinds of offerings, procedures, and participants of the *Ruwatan Sukerta* ritual.

### 4.2.1 The offerings (*sesajian*)

Offerings are important elements of ritual performance. This is statement is also supported by Koentjaraningrat (as cited in Hariyanto, 2017) which informs that *bersaji* is one of the elements of ceremony or ritual as a mystical symbolism. There are several offerings required in the performance of *Ruwatan* ritual according to Soetarno (1995). They are *Tuwuhan* (consists of bananas and leaves), fire and charcoal, Mori textile, *Gawang Kelir* (the top of bamboo wood), kinds of rice, kinds of *jenang*, traditional snacks, etc. The list of the offerings can be organized in table below:

Table 1 List of *Ruwatan* offerings

No.	Offering's name	Explanation
1.	<i>Tuwuhan, sapipake pisang, tibu and cingkir.</i>	all kinds of plants: rice, banana, sugar cane, etc.
2.	<i>Pari rong gedheng</i>	Two bunches of paddies.
3.	<i>Cikal rong iji</i>	Two coconut shoots.
4.	<i>Pitik rong iji lanang wadong, cicanang kiwatingin.</i>	Two chicks (male, female) are tied together and placed on the right-left.
5.	<i>Tumping warna sanga:</i> a. <i>Tumping migana isi panganan.</i> b. <i>Tumping migana isi iwak pitik.</i> c. <i>Tumping pucuk indhog.</i>	9 kinds of Yellow cone-shaped rice: a. Yellow rice <i>Megana</i> filled with meals, b. Yellow rice <i>Megana</i> filled with chicken. c. Yellow rice with an egg on top. d. Yellow rice with needles.

	d. <i>Tumping Rajig Dom.</i>	e. Yellow rice with red chilies.
	e. <i>Tumping Pucuk Lombok abang.</i>	f. Yellow-spotted rice.
	f. <i>Tumping Tutul.</i>	g. White tumpeng with a yellow belt,
	g. <i>Tumping Kendhit.</i>	h. Regular tumpeng, and
	h. <i>Tumping Lugas.</i>	i. Sprayed white and yellow rice.
	i. <i>Tumping SImbur.</i>	

Source: *Redisuta IV, 1954* (as cited in Harpawati, 2017)

The list above is the types of offerings that are usually used in the *ruwatan* ritual. All of the offerings were prepared by the organizer based on the puppeteer's request and it's a requirement as a ritual implementation. In Harpawati's research, she wrote that there were puppeteers who did not require the offerings to be presented completely. Ki Demang Edy Sulistiono, a *Sudhamala Ruwat* puppeteer, often prepared complete offerings without the side dishes of animal slaughter. This because it's considered that alive animals are used for offerings similar to a public ceremony that still believes in animism and dynamism.

The following are the *Ruwatan Sukerta's* ritual offerings, which I saw were used in Yogyakarta's ritual (see Figure 1). There are all kinds of plants, two coconut shoots, two chicks, eight kinds of Yellow cone-shaped, alive animal-like two of chickens and birds, any traditional and modern snacks. Although in old times there should be nine kinds of *Tumpeng*, As time went by, some puppeteers did not require the offerings to be presented completely in the ritual. In *Ruwatan Sukerta* ritual Yogyakarta "*sajen*" or offerings needs to be prepared. Based on the researcher's observation and the interview with the informants Mr.

Ki Cermo Sutedjo, he said that “*Yang jelas mutlak adalah sesaji itu. Jadi sesaji itu serupa tapi tak sama*”. [What is clear is the offering. The offerings are similar but aren't the same]. Depending on the number of the *Sukerta* concerned. [Misalkan nanti kalo Pandawa Lima itu tambah ini, terus misalkan Gedhini itu pakai ini, tinggal nanti di kurangi ini nya]. (For example, *Pandawa Lima* adds this, *Gedhini* uses this, so we just reduce this later).



Figure 1 Ruwatan Sukert's offering Yogyakarta  
(Doc: Katarina Cahyorini, 2018)

Another informant, Mr. Drs. Kanjeng Raden Tumanggung Prasesowinoto explained that the offerings at the *Ruwatan Sukerta* ritual in Yogyakarta are a form of cultural development. The religions that come to Indonesia enhance cultural values so that in *Ruwatan Sukerta* ritual, the organizers try to combine culture and

religion with the type of offerings used. “*Apa makna sesaji yang berada di depan*” [what is the meaning of the offering ahead?]. “*Nenek moyang kita dahulu belum bisa membuat “ingkung” tapi sudah mengenal darah*”. (In the past, our ancestors were unable to make “*ingkung*” but they already knew blood). The animal offered at the ritual will be slaughtered and the blood as immolation includes those from fowl, goat, and cow. [*Darah itu merah, merah itu subur, bersih. Kalau Eropa, merah itu berani. Kalau orang Jawa merah itu subur, bersih*]. (Blood color is red, red symbolizes fertility and cleanness. In the European mind, red is symbolized as brave. For the Javanese people, red is symbolized as Fertility and cleanliness). (Interview, September 2018).

#### **4.2.2 The participants (*Sukerta*)**

In each region or city, there are different criteria for the type of *Sukerta*. Based on sources of books, journals, web articles, and other sources the researcher read, there are various criteria for *Sukerta*. Soetarno, (1995, p. 16) mentioned in his book “*Ruwatan di Daerah Surakarta*” that there are 60 types of *sukerta*. According to Harpawati, (2017) it is mentioned that *Serat Centhini* has 19 types of *sukerta*, in *Manikmaya* book there are 60 *sukerta*, *Serat Sarasilah Wayang Purwa* written by S. Padmosoekatja, says there are 22 *sukerta*, and in *Murwakala* book written by Raden Mas Citrakusuma says there were 147 *sukerta*.

Table 2 List of Sukerta

No.	Name	Explanation
1.	<i>Ontang-anting</i>	One son.
2.	<i>Unting-unting</i>	One daughter.
3.	<i>Uger-uger lawang</i>	Two brothers.
4.	<i>Kembang sepasang</i>	Two daughters.
5.	<i>Gedhana-gedhini</i>	Two children, one brother, and one daughter.

Source: Redisuta, IV 1954 ( as cited in Harpawati, 2017)

Each of the *sukerta*'s name have a different meaning and symbol. *Ontang-anting* and *Unting-unting* have a similarity meaning. It represents for Javanese parents only have a one child could be a son or a daughter means if he/she died the family suffered a sad bereavement. The word "*lawang*" is a symbol of the two upright logs that make up the door of the house. It represents the character of two tough boys who can uphold the dignity of their parents (Siswoyo, 2017). Meanwhile, the word "*kembang*" is keeping two flowers. It represents a blooming flower in the garden and parents will take care of them. Therefore, they can avoid unwanted things that happened to their children (Agussiswoyo, 2012). *Gedhana-gedhini* means in Javanese family they have two children consist of one son and one daughter. According to the interview with Mr. Prasessowinoto, two or more children in a family could be feared that there will be a conflict between siblings. To ain't conflict, it's necessary to do a *Ruwatan* ritual to remain harmonious in living together. (interviewed on September 23, 2018).

One of the important elements in the implementation of the *Ruwatan* ritual is participation (*sukerta*). For the Javanese people, children who are born with *sukerta* must be treated or cleaned to avoid misfortune.

In my observation of the ritual held at The Cultural Preservation Center in Yogyakarta (BPNB), the 2018 *Ruwatan Sukerta* had 28 criteria of *sukerta* and 5 external character of *sukerta*. Those 5 external character of *sukerta* means a character of *sukerta* outside of date birth like when someone is cooking rice, suddenly the boiler (*Dandang*) fall without no reason. So, those human and the thing are included in the category of *sukerta* that must be treated. It is not only a human being but an object as well.

The alteration in the function of ritual in the era of globalization does not change the behavior of Javanese, especially Yogyakarta society who still implement and believe in *Ruwatan* ritual as a form of eliminating bad luck. Some modern Javanese perform *Ruwatan* rituals to eliminate bad luck by praying toward their respective beliefs. Pamungkas (2008, p. 84) mentioned in his book that Islam in Javanese society has *Ruqyah* as a form of cleansing itself and a supernatural impact.

Meanwhile, in a Christian group, through the Sacrament of Baptism, we have also been cleansed from all sins however, since *ruwatan* is part of our culture, we are not prohibited from taking part in it. In Christian groups have the term inculturation appears, which is used in Christian understanding which combines culture with elements of spirituality. The Javanese Catholic group implements it in various ways, there are masses and the method of baptism such as in Figure 2 the participants was immersed in water three times by the priest. Father Vincentius Karjito, a presbytery Muntilan, often performs *ruwatan* in a mass intention. This becomes an example of the *Ruwatan* ritual that combines culture and religion.



Figure 2 Ruwatan Christian at Quest House Semarang

(Doc: Dimas Bagus, 2020)

With regards to modern ritual for *Ruwatan*, Mr. Ki Cermo Sutedjo as the puppeteer of *Ruwatan* in Yogyakarta, commented “*Itukan tergantung sugesti masing-masing dan kepercayaan masing-masing antepi pikiran lan ati*”. [It depends on each suggestion and the beliefs of each other]. “*Keterpanggilan hati nurani itu biar untuk mereka mereka, padahal sampean percaya tidak ning di ruwat pak tedjo. Yen ora percoyo ya ora opo-opo. Jadi ini masalah kepercayaan atau masalah sugesti atau masalah naluri kemantapan percaya atau tidak. Ya kalo tidak, jangan dilaksanakan. Kalo percaya, okelah mari apapun tuntunannya dan patokan atau pageran ruwatan ya kita jalankan. Kalau tidak, buat apa*”. [Let them be called to their conscience, even though you don't believe if it's in the *ruwat* by Mr. Tedjo. If you don't believe this, it's ok. So, this is a matter of belief, suggestion, or instinct,



whether to believe it or not. If you don't believe it, just don't do it. If you believe, okay, let's do whatever the guidance and benchmark of *Ruwatan* tells us to do. If you don't believe it, then why should do it].

This is proven with the result of my interview with a *Sukerta's* parents, who still believes in doing it. One of the examples is Mrs. Pudji, who is an *Ontang-anting's* parents, she said the reason for joining the ritual was “*kemarin itu neneknya bilang suruh ikut ruwatan karena anaknya kan cuman satu supaya kedepannya lebih lancar, harapan kami sebagai orang Jawa*”. [Her grandmother told me to join the *ruwatan* because there is only one child. So, hopefully, this is our Javanese wishes].

In the interview, I also asked about the impact of doing the *ruwatan* ritual, and Mrs. Pudji explained “*ya dampaknya lebih baik. Anak saya kan ada spesial. Dia untuk bersosialisasi itu sulit, ya tapi bersyukurlah setelah itu ibarate jadi lebih enak menjalaninya*”. [Well the impact is better. My child has special a condition.



Figure 3 Mrs. Pudji Sukerta's parents

(Doc: Katarina Cahyorini, 2020)

She continued to explain that it is very difficult for him to socialize. Thankfully after the *ruwatan*, it became more comfortable for him to live life]. (Interview with Mrs. Pudji on September 8, 2020).



Figure 4 Mr. Sunaryo Sukerta's parents  
(Doc: Mr. Sunaryo, 2018)

Another interviewee is, Mr. Sunaryo who is an Unting-untingparent. He explained the reason for joining the *Ruwatan Sukerta* ritual is because he was suggested by his friend and he knew that his intention was good, therefore Mr. Sunaryo registered his daughter which is categorized as a *sukerta*. He added the other reason for his daughter to be called to do it is to be accepted to a good school (university), and get a good job. [*“alasan supaya, mbo menawi mungkin ada titah-titah supaya anak saya ki dipanggil ke sekolah, sesuk dapat pekerjaan yang bagus. Terus saya di oyak-oyak sama teman-teman saya karna yang minat saya dan pak Ambar namanya. Kebetulan putrane 2, diruwat kok kebetulan nasibe bagus, setelah diruwat nasibe bagus, terus piyambake putrane dapat sekolah yang bagus di STAN. Terus kan pak Ambar teman saya, terus saya tak piker-pikir alangkah baiknya mbo*

*menawa kabeh istilaha nenyuwun awake dewe lah kan wong Jowo”]. (Then, I was chased by my friends to join the ruwatan ritual. Incidentally, Mr. Ambar had 2 sons, he did ruwat, and had good luck and got a good school at STAN. I thought about and figured it would be nice as a Javanese to be nyeyuwun/asking for it).*

Mr. Sunaryo also confirmed the good impact of the Ruwatan he said, “*Anak saya sekarang sudah kuliah. Masuk angkatan yang sekarang. Ndelalah ada manfaate juga. Sekarang masuk perguruan tinggi tahun ini. Kebetulan anak saya di terima di UGM dan UNY”*. (My daughter is now in college. Enter this current semester. There was an advantage afterall. She is in university this year. My daughter was accepted at UGM (*Gadjah Mada University*) and UNY (*Yogyakarta State University*). (Interview with Mr. Sunaryo on October, 2020).

Different from the other two interviewees, Mrs. Tyas Harto was as a *sukerta Pancuran Kapit Sendang’s* parent, she had performed *Ruwatan* ritual as an expression of gratitude. She said it was “*Sebagai ungkapan terima kasih kepada para leluhur yang telah mengingatkan penerusnya untuk melaksanakan ritual kejawen. Nguri uri budaya jawa. Ini sangat penting bagi saya”*. [As an expression of gratitude to the ancestors who have reminded their successors to carry out the *javanism* ritual].



**Figure 5 Mrs. Tyas Harto Pancuran Kapit Sendhang parents**

**(Doc: Mrs. Tyas, 2018)**

Mrs. Tyas Harto thought the effects of the rituals were so-so/neither very good nor very bad. “*Kebetulan anak saya sudah dewasa semua bar diruwat yang kecil menikah, itu sudah pacaran lama, yang satu belum. Jadi ya biasa saja*”. [Incidentally, all of my children are grown up. After the *Ruwatan*, my 3<sup>rd</sup> child got married, but as a couple, they have been dating for a long time. The other one has not got married. So, the effect of the *Ruwatan* was just common]. (Interviewed on October 26, 2020).

### 4.2.3 The processions

The procession or implementation of *Ruwatan* rituals in ancient times was carried out by *wong cilik* (minority), and the type common type practiced was the *Sukerta* (Ekawati, 2015, p. 5). Niels Mulder mentioned in his book that in the past when a family held a *Ruwatan* ceremony for their child it was done secretly, they do not even invite neighbors and relatives (Mulder, 1970, p. 95). Nowadays, however, as exemplified by the BPNB, the *Ruwatan* is made for the public to attend in mass. Not only tens but hundreds of *sukerta* can join in a *Ruwatan* ceremony. Because it is organized for a big by the group, instead of by just one family. Calling on a puppeteer to perform a puppet show is costly, as there are many people involved. Not only is there the puppeteer or *Dhalang*, but there are also the singer and gamelan music players. A large area to put it on the show is also needed, so it helps when a *Ruwatan* ceremony is organized for many people as the cost will be borne by the many *Ruwatan* participants.

In the *Ruwatan Sukerta* process, there is usually a role of popular art, named *wayang kulit* with *lakon* / character *Murwakala*, *Sudhamala*, or *Kunjukarno*. *Sudhamala* roleplay is a ritual by *Sadewa* (one of the character's name). When *Bhatara Guru* entered into *Sadewa*'s body, he was able to treat *Dewi Durga*. Some puppeteers have still followed the original version based on *Sudhamala* story text. *Sudhamala* performances art is also used circumcision and marriage ceremony. *Ruwatan Sukerta* by BPNB Yogyakarta in 2018, used *Murwakala* roleplay as a *wayang kulit* performance. *Murwakala* consists of two words *purwa/murwa* (beginning), and *kala* (catastrophe, disaster) which means the beginning of a

disaster. *Wayang kulit* art performances with the character *Sudhamala* and *Murwakala* differ in terms of the offerings provided and mantras spoken. Unlike *Murwakala's* character, the *Sudhamala* is a character in a shadow puppet show that is free from *Istana* (The Palace) touches. *Murwakala* characters ranging from the criteria of the puppeteer to the spell determined by The Palace.

As a researcher, I asked the differences between the *Ruwatan* ritual in Yogyakarta and other area, Ki Cermo Sutedjo explained that “*yang jelas kalo di Taman Siswa peraturan dari panitia yang bersangkutan. Karena terbatas dananya, maka jika mendatakan orang yang tidak bersangkutan, dana menjadi membengkak konsumsi juga membengkak. Jadi sudah di hitung*”. [In Taman Siswa, the regulations of the committee is the one being followed. Due to limited funds, if you list a person who is not registered. The funds and the number of snacks given will be increased. So it will be difficult to calculate]. From the information, every *Ruwatan* in each region would probably have a different implementation. All mass rituals are, therefore not open to the public as though at *TMII* Jakarta, Saturday (25/10/2014). Mr. Kanjeng Raden Tumanggung Prasesowinoto said “*ini sudah dibuat akademis. Dulu mestinya hanya memohon kepada orang tua untuk di doakan. Sekarang cara implementasinya harus nyembah pada 'orang' tadi. Itu kemajuan budaya. Lalu berpakaian etnis* (see Figure 7). *Dulu hanya kain diubetkan seperti ini*”. [This has been made academic. In the past, we should only ask parents to pray for us. Now, we have to worship the "person". These are cultural advances. They are also dressing up in connection to their ethnic]. As time goes by, in the era of modernization, the Yogyakarta Cultural Preservation Center held a *Ruwatan*

*Sukerta* ritual to preserve cultural values, especially Javanese rituals by combining cultural and religious , so that they are more academic. Where it is not only between praying to parents, but there are other processes that need to be done and the ritual performed more sacred. Figure 6 is a documentary of the massive *Ruwatan* ritual, and Figure 7 is the kind of Java ethnic dressing up they for the parade. The parade was queue up phase for the participants to do just before the *Sukerta* were showered by the *Ruwatan* leader. From here, guests can see just how many people will be blessed by the *Ruwatan* ceremony.



Figure 6 Siraman procession in Ruwatan Sukerta Yogyakarta

(Doc: Mrs. Rini, 2020)



Figure 7 Arak-arakan in Ruwatan Sukerta Yogyakarta

(Doc: Katarina Cahyorini, 2018)

In Javanese society, *Ruwat* rituals are divided into three major groups. They are *Ruwat* ritual for oneself, *Ruwat* ritual for the environment, and *Ruwat* ritual for the region. The *Ruwatan Sukerta* held by BPNB at Taman Siswa Yogyakarta, according to Ki Cermo Sutedjo as interviewed on 8 September 2020, was a mass ritual.

The differences in the implementation of *Ruwatan Sukerta* based on *Ruwatan Sukerta* with *Sudhamala* roleplay is based on Harpawati (2017, p.127) research and that done by BPNB of Yogyakarta, on 22 September 2018, which is as follows. From Harpawati's research data and the observation result in *Ruwatan Sukerta* Yogyakarta, it seems that the main procession of the implementation *ruwatan* ritual is the same however the number of sequences isn't similar. Mr. Prasessowinoto confirmed, this because the *Ruwatan Sukerta* Yogyakarta ritual by BPNB is made academically. So, the number of sequence procession has been arranged by the



organizer. The data table shows that the *Siraman* (a splash of water) procession by Ki Manteb Soedharsono was placed at the beginning while *Ruwatan Sukerta* Yogyakarta at the end. Mr. Kanjeng Raden Tumanggung Prasessowinoto confirmed the reason why *Sungkeman* (kneeling) procession *Ruwatan Sukerta* Yogyakarta was in the beginning because everything should be asking permission for a blessing. In *Ruwatan Sukerta* Yogyakarta, they also added a *Arak-arakan* (The parade) procession by walking around the *Pendopo* (Javanese pavilion) to express their wishes and environmental understanding toward *ruwatan* ritual.

Table 3 The Implementation of the *Ruwatan* ritual procession.

<b><i>Ruwatan Sukerta Sudhamala puppet show by Ki Manteb Soedharsono</i></b>	<b>BPNB Yogyakarta (Cultural Preservation)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>Sukerta</i> washes their body with 7 springs sprinkled with <i>Kembang Setaman</i> by the puppeteer.</li> <li>b. Wearing white clothes.</li> <li>c. <i>Sungkeman</i> (kneeling) which is prostrate to ask for blessings from parents.</li> <li>d. The <i>ruwatan</i> puppet show begins, the <i>sukerta</i> sits on the stage watching the puppet show.</li> <li>e. Ki Dalang went down the stage to sprinkle them with water that had received prayer from them.</li> <li>f. Cutting the hair of <i>Sukerta</i>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Registration of participants.</li> <li>b. <i>Sungkeman sukerta</i> (kneeling down) to parents.</li> <li>c. <i>Arak-arakan(kirab)/parade</i> accompanied by parents.</li> <li>d. Opening speech from the committee and Submission of <i>sukerta</i> to the puppeteer.</li> <li>e. Handing over the puppets to the puppeteer.</li> <li>f. Shadow puppet show with the story of <i>Murwakala</i>.</li> <li>g. <i>Sukerta</i> changed into <i>kapohan</i> clothes (Mori textile)</li> <li>h. <i>Kidungan</i>.</li> <li>i. <i>Sukerta's</i> haircutting by the Puppeteer.</li> <li>j. <i>Siraman Sukerta</i>.</li> <li>k. Closing.</li> </ul>

Based on the data analysis shown in Table 3, the elements involved in *Ruwatan Sukerta* D.I. Yogyakarta 2018 there are some differences in the offerings

and what the participants should be doing. In the puppet show performed by Ki Manteb Soedharsono (the *dhalang*), the procession starts with a sprinkling of holy water upon the participants, who are wearing white clothes to represent holiness, for seven times. This is followed by an act of giving respect by kneeling in front of parents in asking for blessing. After the participants have watched the puppet show, the *dhalang*, then cuts off parts of their hair as a symbol of throwing away the bad spirits from the participants.

In the BPNB's procession, participants are asked to be in a parade wearing traditional clothes. After a speech is delivered by the Head of the Committee, the participants are given to the *dhalang* or puppeteer, so participants can see the puppet show, which tells how good spirits can take over bad spirits in order to save the *Sukerta* participants from misery. Once the show is finished the participants then changed into white clothing, so that the puppeteer can then cut off parts of their hair and alter have them bathed as a symbol of throwing away the bad spirits.

Although in the steps there are some differences, both of them have steps to follow in addition to having offerings (plants, two coconut shoots, eight kinds of yellow cone-shaped rice, two live chickens or birds, and traditional and modern snacks) as important elements in the process of *Ruwatan* ritual.

In implementing the *Ruwatan Sukerta* process, it can be seen that the ceremony is an acculturation between religion and culture where traditional practice is combined with modernization, like seen in the differences between what is being carried out by Ki Manteb Soedharsono, and the one by BPNB. As informed, in both ceremonies, the Participants or *Sukerta* are handed over to the Puppeteer. After they

have watched a *Murwakala* shadow puppet show as part of the ritual with a spell recitation inside, at the end of the ritual, the Puppeteer cut their hair and splash water on them as a form of baptism, before they are returned to their parents.

