

INVESTIGATING THE HISTORY OF EAST SAKERTA VILLAGE AS A POPULAR TOURIST DESTINATION IN WEST JAVA

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Abstract: *The tourism industry is one of the primary needs for the life of modern society today. Because of these factors, it makes the need for recreation or tourism increases. East Sakerta Tourism Village is one of the leading tourist destinations in the Kuningan Regency. This village has a long history and interesting community culture, but not many people know about it. This study aims to investigate the history of the East Sakerta Village as a popular tourist destination in West Java. The research method used is a qualitative method. This data collection method is carried out using the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) method. Primary data collection was carried out directly and purposive sampling by interviewing key people, namely the village government apparatus, tourism community leaders (kompepar), and the community. FGD method used to find out about the history, legends, and culture of the East Sakerta Village. The results of FGD findings consist of the religion, the history of village, the local culture, the historical sites, the myths and legend, and the philosophy of Sakerta Timur Village. The philosophy concept is "Tumaritis" which is a village in the Sundanese and Javanese puppet which has a philosophy of mutual protection, security, and prosperity.*

Keywords: *East Sakerta, Focus Group Discussion, History, Tourism Village, Tourism Destination*

Abstrak: Industri pariwisata merupakan salah satu kebutuhan primer bagi kehidupan masyarakat modern saat ini. Karena faktor-faktor tersebut membuat kebutuhan akan rekreasi atau pariwisata semakin meningkat. Desa Wisata Sakerta Timur merupakan salah satu destinasi wisata unggulan di Kabupaten Kuningan. Desa ini memiliki sejarah panjang dan budaya masyarakat yang menarik, namun belum banyak yang mengetahuinya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui sejarah Desa Sakerta Timur sebagai destinasi wisata populer di Jawa Barat. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah metode kualitatif. Metode pengumpulan data ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Pengumpulan data primer dilakukan secara langsung dan purposive sampling dengan mewawancarai orang-orang kunci yaitu aparatur pemerintah desa, tokoh masyarakat pariwisata (kompepar), dan masyarakat. Metode FGD digunakan untuk mengetahui sejarah, legenda, dan budaya Desa Sakerta Timur. Hasil temuan FGD terdiri dari agama, sejarah desa, budaya lokal, situs sejarah, mitos dan legenda, dan filosofi Desa Sakerta Timur. Konsep filosofinya adalah "Tumaritis" yang merupakan desa dalam



pewayangan Sunda dan Jawa yang memiliki filosofi saling melindungi, keamanan, dan kemakmuran.

Kata kunci: Sakerta Timur, Focus Group Discussion, Sejarah, Desa Wisata, Destinasi Wisata

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an activity of traveling both individuals and groups from a place to stay to a interesting place to get experience outside of their daily activities (work, school, take care of the household, and other) in a temporary time. Based on the understanding of these tourism activities, it is seen that several important components make the process happen. These components are residence, travel, tour operators, and destination. Tourism is a whole of related elements which consists of tourists, tourist destinations, travel, industry, and so on which constitute tourism activities (Devy, 2017). While tourism is a travel activity carried out by a person or group of people by visiting a certain place for recreational purposes, personal development, or learning the uniqueness of the tourist attraction that is visited in a temporary period. Tourism is an activities mainly related to economic activities directly related to the entry, occupancy, and movement of people in and out of a city or region and country (Schularad in Bavo, 2017). Holden in Adriani et al. (2016) states that tourism has indeed proven successful as a catalyst for economic development because tourism is able to bring financial benefits to the local community, regional and state governments. This economic benefit can be seen from how many (a) the number of tourist arrivals; (b) total expenditure from tourists; (c) length of tourist visits; and (d) world tourism market share.

Rural areas are contain scattered settlements such as farm, hamlet, village and small towns, and also characterised by low overall population densities. East Sakerta is a rural area under the foot of Mount Ciremai, which has huge potential to become a popular tourist destination. Desa Sakerta Timur, on the 5th-anniversary commemoration, has declared itself as a "Tourism Village" by utilizing the natural green potential, the presence of the Darma Reservoir, as well as the rich culture and traditions of the local community.

A tourism village is a form of a village that has unique characteristics in it, both natural and cultural, and has the opportunity to become a commodity for tourists. The tourist village are form from an object and subject of tourism. As an object, it is a destination for tourism activities, while as a subject is as an organizer, what is produced by the village will be enjoyed by the community directly, and the active role of the community will determine the continuity of the tourist village itself (Soebagyo, 1991). A tourism village is a form of residential environment that is in accordance with the demands of tourists in enjoying, recognizing, and living or learning about the uniqueness of the village and all its attractions. Also, according to the demands of community life activities (including residential activities, social

interaction, local traditional activities, etc.), a harmonious, recreational, and integrated environment is integrated.

East Sakerta Tourism Village hopes to become one of the leading tourist destinations in the Kuningan Regency. The history of the East Sakerta Village is important to introduce to tourists and can also be a part of efforts to increase the interest of tourists to come. According to Wahab in Payangan (2017), in general, tourism offers include those offered by tourism destinations to actual and potential tourists. The offer in tourism shows the realm of natural and man-made tourist attractions, services, and goods that will roughly attract people to visit a certain country. The history of a tourist destination can be a very interesting tourist attraction and a pull factor for tourists to come. With an understanding of the history of a tourist destination, it can also improve the brand and image of the destination. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the history of the East Sakerta Village as a popular tourist destination in West Java.

METHOD

The method used in the study was a qualitative descriptive method with in-depth interviews by a snowball, observation participation, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and literature study (Syahadat, 2017). The descriptive method is a research method that aims to explain or describe a situation, event, object, whether a person or everything related to variables that can be defined either by numbers or words (Setyosari, 2010). The data and information obtained from data collection techniques and information presented descriptively (Syahadat, 2017). Focus group research is among the most common research methods used by marketers, policy analysts, political consultants, and other social scientists to gather information. A focus group involves a group discussion of a topic that is the "focus" of the conversation. The contemporary focus group interview generally involves 8 to 12 individuals who discuss a particular topic under the direction of a professional moderator, who promotes interaction and assures that the discussion remains on the topic of interest (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1998).

The population for this research is residents who live in East Sakerta. The sample for Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is the community, village government officials, and Kompepar in the East Sakerta Village as representatives. Paramita and Kristiana (2013) explained Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is a form of discussion designed to bring up information regarding wants, needs, points of view, desired belief, and experience participant. FGD is one of the internal techniques for collecting qualitative data, where a group of people discusses with the direction of a person facilitator or moderator on a topic. FGD is a qualitative data collection technique designed to get information about the wants, needs, viewpoints, beliefs, and experiences of the participants about a topic, with direction from a person facilitator or moderator. Here are a few things relating to qualitative data collection techniques through FGD. Syahadat et al. (2014) Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted to investigate deeper the

phenomenon that occurred based on the results of in-depth interviews and community survey. FGD is used to draw conclusions about intersubjective meanings that are difficult for researchers to give their own meanings because it was blocked by the encouragement of researcher subjectivity (Kresno et al. in Paramita and Kristiana, 2013). The process of focus groups were tape recorded and there are an assistant moderators that took notes during every focus group discussion session.

The instrument is a list of questions that correlate to find the thematic concept design sign system. Discussion topics are predetermined and arranged sequentially with the variable and sub variable showed in Table 1. The questions are arranged in such a way so that it is understood by the participants of the discussion (Krueger in Paramita and Kristiana, 2013).

Table 1 Variable and sub variable

No.	Variable	Sub Variable
1	History of Sakerta Timur	a. The Religion b. The History of Village c. The Local Culture d. The Historical Sites e. The Myths & Legend f. The Philosophy

The data analysis stage uses a qualitative descriptive method. According to Sugiyono (2011), descriptive research is research conducted to determine the value of an independent variable, either one variable or more (independent), without making comparisons or connecting with other variables. Conclusions are drawn descriptively on the history of East Sakerta Village analysis unit. The results of FGD findings will be consist of the religion, the history of village, the local culture, the historical sites, the myths and legend, and the philosophy.

RESULTS

General information of East Sakerta, the location of East Sakerta Village is in Darma District, Kuningan Regency, West Java, with an area of 276,078 ha. Located at an altitude of 700 meters above sea level with an average temperature of 20-30 ° C, and geographically bordered by Jagara village in the north, Cageur village in the south, Kertayuga village in the East, and Sakerta Barat in the west. The distance from Darma District is 7 km from Kuningan Regency, which is 17 km. Sakerta Timur Village is divided into two hamlets, 2 Rukun Warga (RW) and 12 Rukun Tetangga (RT), and has a population of 2,360 people (1,257 men and 1,103 women) with 703 households.

The main agriculture products are cassava and cassava and five types of home industries such as the small food industry, mushrooms, and palm sugar. The development of the village of East Sakerta into a tourism village has been started since March 2017. The tourism sector was chosen to be a promising sector due to the beautiful natural conditions of the village

under the foot of Mount Ciremai with its natural potential in the form of rice fields, plantations, and forests (Figure 1.a),. East Sakerta Tourism Village is surrounded by several well-known tourist destinations and is visited by many local and foreign tourists. The nearest tourist attraction is the Darma Reservoir (Figure 1.b), which is only about 15 minutes from the village of Sakerta Timur. Darma Reservoir is very crowded, both on weekdays and holidays. Darma Reservoir is visited by many because it is surrounded by hills, valleys, rice fields and beautiful scenery with cool air.



Figure 1 Natural potential in the form of rice fields (a) and the view of the Darma Reservoir (b)

Type of activities of rural tourism are health related activities, sport and adventure pursuits, tourism that involves travelling through the landscape in a variety different ways and tourism based participating in a rural way of life. Tourist is attracted into Rural tourism because of by their climate, natural features, landscape quality, and rural way of life. Traditional agriculture in the rural area creates the landscape and sustains the way of life local people. There is a very delicate relationship between tourism and agriculture in East Sakerta Tourism Village.

Focused-group discussion with the community, the Village Government apparatus, and Kompepar in the East Sakerta Village, Sakerta's history began with the arrival of the "sanghyang kerita" figure, a Hindu religious figure from the East. Initially, coming to "pesantren" (the current term) used to be like a community learning center located in Cipasir Gunung Batu. At that time, he taught using Old Javanese Sanskrit. When it

was still being spread by the "Sanghiyang Kirita" there came someone from Cirebon who spread Islam religion. Therefore, then there was a shift in the spread of religion from Hinduism to Islam religion. Then when "Sanghiyang Kirita" said goodbye and he disappeared without a trace precisely near Mount Batu. Since then, it became a legend, and the place where the character disappears known as Sanghiyang. East Sakerta Village is dominated by the people who follow Islam until today.

The history of village name the name Sakerta comes from the word "Sanghiyang Kirita". "Sanghiyang Kirita" is an ascetic priest from "Tatar Wetan" who teaches Hindu teachings whose place is known as Mount Batu now. Because of that, Sakerta is used as the name of the village as a tribute to the ascetic priest who first came to this place. The history of the origin of East Sakerta Village began in the heyday of Mbah Kuwu Jago Singadiparana. In ancient times the village area encompassed Ciceuri, which is now the West Sakerta, and East Sakerta known as the old village and the central of government covering Ciceuri, Sibengang changed its name to Sukarasa Village and Cageur Village, whose names have not changed. Mbah Buit Gede's figure pioneered the existence of a place to farm or known as "calling found" under Mount Batu Cijoho. It is also known as "saebah" or "sebe house." This house was the grow plants for farming. But now, this area has been turned into settlements. Then the village power was held by Singadiparana in the form of a kingdom that expanded its territory to become Babakan Villages, Jagara Villages, Cageur Villages, Sibengang Villages, and Sukarasa Village. The exact time when the founding of the community claimed not to mention precisely. But if you count from the government of Mbah Kuwu Jago Singadiparana, it must have been hundreds of years. Subsequently, Sakerta Timur developed into a Tourism Village, initially declared around 2013 and 2014 in the Kuwu Cucu Sudrajat government. East Sakerta was re-declared as a "tourist village" officially on March 27, 2017 with an MOU with the Trisakti School of Tourism as academic representative, The Kuningan Regency Tourism Office, and the Kuningan Regency Government as government representative.

The local culture babarit comes from the word "Babar" in Sundanese which means birth. So that Babarit is the same as the birthday or anniversary of the East Sakerta Village. Babarit began to be held during the reign of Grandmother Kuwu Jago Singadiparana. At that time, Sakerta Village was in a golden period with the condition of the village being fertile, prosperous, peaceful, the people healthy, with sufficient clothing and food. One of the interesting events of the East Sakerta Tourism Village is because of the uniqueness of Babarit. Babarit is an event like salvation or thanksgiving in overseas. The Babarit culture marks the annual celebration of thanksgiving. Initially done because of the lack of progress or lack of development of the village and then usually carried out after the harvest. On the final Jumadil, before the month of Rajab, peoples celebrate Babarit as an expression of gratitude. The activities include recitations or reciting to ancestors. Reciting Yasin in the ancestors' graves is usually accompanied

by a yellow rice cone. They typically conduct congregational prayer in the morning by bringing food such as yellow rice cones. The residents exchange these foods with each other. This "Babarit" or "Tayuban" is usually held at the Village Hall accompanied by recitations and in ancient times accompanied by the cutting of goats. Additional entertainment on "Babarit" shows can be anything like puppets and more. The ancient culture known as Sababat or Tatalu was in the form of souvenirs to figures who played an important role in the development of the village, usually given slings and accompanied by wine. Since the 80s, there is no more. The development of the village has been rapid, starting from buildings and roads. Starting from the motivation of education has been significantly developed. "Babarit" series of events are usually accompanied by other entertainments until the afternoon around 4 o'clock and then continued with Golewang. Figure 2.a showing the pilgrimage process to the graves of the ancestors and Figure 2.b showing the parade around the village on Babarit annual event.



Figure 2 Pilgrimage to the graves of the ancestors (a) parade around the village (b)
(Source: <https://kuningankab.go.id/>, 2019)

Golewang after Abah Kujang was born, "Tayuban" art or Kliningan accompanied by dances or known as ronggeng using the customs called Golewang. Golewang is a form of dances accompanied by seven songs. The residents served yellow rice cone offerings before the songs and dances performance. Each song that accompanies the dances have its meaning. "Golewang" means we must always look back for the sake of our

lives going forward and we should be happy. When a disaster came, we must surrender to God (Allah SWT). Since all favors and calamities are His wills. "Titipati" means we must realize that all human beings surely will die. So, we have to remember that God creates us, and we will return to Him. "Goyong-goyong" means we must live in harmony in a united brotherhood, and pray for each other blessings. "Silih Asih" means we must love each other unconditionally without prejudice and discrimination. "Engko" means we must be modest, humble, and live as a decent people. We must avoid luxury living. "Rembong Buyut" means we must remember our ancestors or our parents. They have made us exist, now. "Raja Balik" means returning. We must remember our past parents; even though we cannot see it, we must believe in the unseen. It is an introductory song for our ancestors who attended this Babarit event.

Every song and dance is always accompanied by "saweran". Saweran is an event where someone gives some money to the singers and dancers. In ancient times, someone who provides some money (saweran) must be a public figure or community leader called "Ponggawa". Right now, anyone can do saweran. In the old days, the implementation of "Golewang" was always at dusk, but now it has changed. It is always done in the evening (after Isya prayer time). These two fascinating and religious cultural events are still strongly preserved and maintained. East Sakerta Village is dominated by Sundanese people.

Historical sites began to be found in East Sakerta, namely from the development of the Hindu-Islamic religion called Mount Batu. It is named Mount Batu because there are stone shapes in the "Buku" (sections), namely the Buku Parut and Buku Kaca, and the Batu Korsi. Batu Korsi looks like a chair when viewed from Cirebon beach. There are ancestral graves in the village of East Sakerta, but there are not many of them. In addition to these sites, there are also sites called Tomb Panjang, Batu Kancah, Batu Karut, Batu Asepun, and Batu Singkah which are located quite close to Mount Batu and Batu Korsi. At the Batu Kancah site, on Friday Keliwon, there is water that can be used to treat children who often wet the bed. There is the tomb of the 7th Kuwu ancestor called Candrawinata, his tomb is in Cageur Village. This proves that in the past, the villages were united between Cageur and East Sakerta. The Kramat tomb which is located in East Sakerta is only the Singadiparana Tomb or known as the Tomb of Mbah Kuwu Singadiparana. After the search, it turns out that there are 23 historical sites in East Sakerta Village. Including the cultural heritage that is sacred near the circuit, namely the tomb of Mbah Hulu Jago Panglima.

The myths and legends according to the story, in East Sakerta there is an area called "Babarurung" which is currently legally located under the Ministry of Forestry. The area is also known as Bakar Hulu, if anyone who visits the area must be careful and maintain good manners. This is because according to the legend that every cardinal or region has a guard. On the East side is "Ibu Puspitasari", on the South side there is "Maung" or Tiger,

On the West side, there is “Eyang Tempa Macan”, and on the north side is “Eyang Jangkung”.

The philosophy raised from the FGD with the community, the Village Government apparatus, and tourism community leaders (“Kompepar”) in the East Sakerta village was the concept of "Tumaritis Village" which is a "Pewayangan" or Puppets village. Tumaritis philosophizes to the family of Semar so that villagers can "protect" each other, "safe", and "prosperous". Tumaritis itself is in the Sundanese and Javanese puppet, which are a place called Kampung or Negeri. The mythologist who is the residence of the Punakawan, with Ki Lurah Semar as his elders. Tumaritis is an ideal place in which all types of people coexist in harmony. In addition, humans can also coexist with other creatures there without harming each other. "Tumari" means accepting. "Tis" means a good and bad writing point from God (Allah SWT). So, Tumaritis means accepting the goodness and the badness sincerely without any complaints since they come from God (Allah SWT). Figure 3 shows the process of FGD activities carried out twice, in the afternoon with the community and officials of the East Sakerta village apparatus, and at night with tourism community leaders (“Kompepar”) East Sakerta village.



Figure 3 FGD (Focus Group Discussion) in East Sakerta Village

DISCUSSION

A focus group methodology was used to obtain in-depth information describing community leaders' and businesspersons' attitudes and perceptions of the process of tourism development (Agar and McDonald 1995; Milman 1993; Morgan 1988). Wilson et al. (2001) pointed out that the focus group results clearly indicate the importance of the community context

and rural tourism entrepreneurs' role in tourism development and promotion. In line with that, the result of this research also pointed out the importance of history, cultural, and ethnic from local East Sakerta village as a special attractions to tourists which includes of the religion, the history of village, the local culture, the historical sites, the myths and legend, and the philosophy of Sakerta Timur Village. Rural areas have a special appeal to tourists because of the mystique associated with rural areas and their distinct cultural, historic, ethnic, and geographic characteristics (Edgell and Harbaugh, 1993). As a rural areas, East Sakerta village also have a very special local history, cultural, and ethnic. One of the interesting and special culture events of the East Sakerta Tourism Village is "Babarit". Babarit is a village community thanksgiving procession as well as to ask Allah SWT for protection to avoid various problems and disasters. The procession of this annual event that was held began with a pilgrimage to the graves of the ancestors, traditional tayuban entertainment, traditional golewang ceremonies and other entertainment. This local cultural event can be a very interesting tourist attraction for tourists. In line with the research of Wilson et al. (2001) found one of the 10 most important factors for successful development of tourism in rural areas is a complete tour package, one of which works to sponsor special events related to local tourist attractions, historical festivals for cities with historical sites. This special event not only attracts tourists to the area but also helps promote local tourism as a package. With information from the history and cultural events of the East Sakerta tourism village will raise visitors awareness of the history of the place visited, so that they understand its importance and will participate in preserving it.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study conclude that the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) method can help in finding that Islam is a religion that is dominated by the local community, the history of the village of East Sakerta has started since the influence of Hindu-Islam religion came into the Kuningan area; the local culture of the community is Sundanese with the special annual cultural event called "Babarit"; there are a total of 23 pieces historical site; the myths and legends related to the four winds which have guards on each side, so you must be careful and pay attention to manners; and the East Sakerta philosophy that is adopted is "Tumaritis" which is a village in Sundanese and Javanese wayang which has a philosophy of mutual protection, security, and prosperity. From this research clearly indicate the importance of history, cultural, and ethnic from local East Sakerta village as a special attractions to tourists. With the information and understanding to the history of East Sakerta village, the local community with officials of the East Sakerta village apparatus, and tourism community leaders ("kompepar") can create

a complete tourism package to support the village become popular tourist destination in West Java. Also, with the complete information and technical assistance will boosting the tourism development and promotion at East Sakerta village.

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