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ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC PERCEPTION ON THE LAUNCH OF THE CISAAR-JATIGEDE VALLEY GEOPARK, SUMEDANG

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Abstract:
 Indonesia has geological conditions at the meeting of three tectonic plates, which results in geological diversity. So that it can be developed into an earth park (geopark) in the development of the tourism industry. The Sumedang Regency Government in 2024 launched the Cisaar-Jatigede Valley Geopark Sumedang with the branding The Kingdom of Stegodon, based on the phenomenal discovery of ivory and Stegodon skeletons in the Cisaar Valley. This study was conducted to analyze public perception of the launch of the geopark. The method used in this study is a qualitative method with descriptive analysis to determine and assess how the perception of the community represented by selected informants. The results of the study show that Sumedang Regency has the potential to develop a geopark based on the geodiversity, biodiversity, and cultural diversity profiles in Sumedang. The community views the development of a geopark as being able to increase the attractiveness of tourism in Sumedang. It is expected to be able to improve the welfare of the Sumedang community, especially for people in the Cisaar Valley Geopark area to Jatigede. Community welfare can be realized by involving the community in geopark tourism activities, improving facilities, and supporting tourism infrastructure.

Keywords: Biodiversity, Cultural Diversity, Ecotourism, Geopark, Geotourism, Community Welfare.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has geological conditions at the meeting of three tectonic plates, namely the Indo-Australian Plate, the Eurasian Plate and the Pacific Plate. It results in geological diversity (Geodiversity) and geological heritage value (Geoheritage). It is closely related to biodiversity (Biodiversity) and cultural diversity (Cultural Diversity) so it can be developed into a geopark in tourism development. In the tourism industry, these various potentials can be developed into geological tourism businesses (Geotourism), ecological tourism (Ecotourism), nature tourism (Natural Tourism), and cultural tourism (Cultural Tourism). The Indonesian government is targeting to obtain 12 global geoparks by 2024. By 2023, it has reached 10 global geoparks, which continue to be improved for sustainable development goals in order to realize community welfare (Pardede, 2023). Indonesia, the largest archipelagic country in the world, has extraordinary biodiversity and rich natural resources. Indonesia also has a wealth of flora and fauna diversity, culture, tradition, art, geology, history, and unique and interesting views that have beauty and appeal that can be developed (Rahma, 2020). The potential of natural resources, complete with their attributes, can be developed into an attraction for tourists visiting Indonesia.

Every tourism potential in Indonesia must be explored, developed, preserved, and maintained so that tourism activities continue to be sustainable and have positive benefits for the welfare of the


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community (Febrianto et al., 2022). Tourism potential is expected to be socially and economically beneficial, natural resources are utilized optimally, the environment is preserved, and it is expected to have a positive impact on the community (Liu et al., 2014). Tourism that is currently being intensively explored and developed in Indonesia is geotourism (geological tourism) in the geopark area (earth park). Currently, most of Indonesia's geological natural resources are exploited by mining, which has an impact on the destruction of the natural ecosystem itself (Hermawan & Ghani, 2018).

Sumedang Regency, one of the regions in West Java Province, has conducted a study for the design of a geopark based on geological, biological, and cultural uniqueness. A phenomenal finding in Sumedang in November 2019, namely historical traces, is the fossil of the elephant tusk of *stegodon trigonocephalus*. This elephant tusk fossil was found crisscrossing when excavated. However, the tusk is interpreted to still come from the same individual. Based on the similarity of mineral color and surface texture. Although this type of *stegodon* elephant is found in abundance on the island of Java, the *stegodon* from Jembarwangi, Sumedang, has a relatively old geological age, namely the Early Pleistocene (2.58-0.77 million years ago). The second finding in June 2022 was a turtle shell fossil found upside down in a layer of sandstone inserted between claystones. The relatively intact shape of the shell indicates that its deposition was not too far from the location where the individual died. The relatively oval shape of the carapace or shell roof, with a dome that is not too high, indicates a type of giant *Geoemydidae*, which usually lives in swampy areas or transitions between land and sea. The discovery of geological diversity was then complemented by the discovery of a species of buffalo in Marongge whose body is like a buffalo in general but has the uniqueness of a smaller body so that its movements are agile and strong. The discovery of biodiversity was complemented by the discovery of a type of peacock in Tomo. The Tomo Peacock is smaller than the peacock in general but the beauty of its tail when it expands is more beautiful so that it has its uniqueness. These two biodiversities are the capital of biodiversity in Sumedang. Then, the next step of the study was the discovery of cultural diversity with the discovery of a dance called the Umbul Dance, which women perform during the welcoming ceremony. Another cultural diversity is the Kudarenggong dance, which is a dance performed by horses ridden by adults or children during local cultural and traditional ceremonies. The remains of the present day also stand the Kujang Sapasang Tower on the east side of the Jatigede Dam. Kujang is a symbol of Sundanese culture with nine holes. Philosophically, Sundanese describes it as the peak of the human thinking process so that it has achieved its wisdom. The Kujang Sapasang tower consists of two tall kujangs and two other lower kujangs.

Based on the findings of geodiversity, biodiversity and cultural diversity in the Cisaar Valley and Jatigede Dam areas, the Sumedang Regency Government 2024 launched the Cisaar-Jatigede Valley Geopark Sumedang with the branding The Kingdom of *Stegodon*. The phrase that follows the branding is "Read nature, build knowledge for the progress and welfare of society, and the preservation of nature as part of the grand framework of Sumedang, The City of Knowledge." Sumedang The City of Knowledge itself is a City Branding which was also launched at the launch of the Geopark.

The Sumedang Government in 2019 declared its district as a Tourism District. To support and realize Sumedang as a Tourism District, the Regent of Sumedang declared that every agency is a tourism agency according to its field, every place is a tourist destination, and every citizen is a tour guide (Munir, 2022). It is expected that in realizing Sumedang as a Tourism Regency, Sabilulungan or cooperation, cross-sectoral work, togetherness, helping and supporting each other are expected.



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The support and concern of the community in developing tourist attractions are very important because the interaction between tourists and the community cannot be avoided, so the negative impacts of tourism can be minimized (Astawa & Sudibia, 2021). It encourages the tourism industry to face various sustainability challenges to realize community welfare, improve education, improve health, and increase community happiness in Sumedang Regency.

One of the Visions of Sumedang Regency is to strengthen the regional economy that is competitive regionally, nationally and internationally, based on efforts to develop comparative, competitive and cooperative advantages in utilizing the potential of agribusiness, tourism and industry. Meanwhile, one of its missions is to realize a strong and sustainable regional economy based on agribusiness, tourism and industry. The Sumedang Regency regional government is aware of the potential, especially from the tourism sector, so it has succeeded in realizing it in the form of regional regulations to improve the regional economy and create a prosperous and prosperous society. The Sumedang regional government has made a policy related to tourism, namely Regulation Number 10 of 2020, concerning the Sumedang Regency Tourism Development Master Plan for 2021-2025. It is supported by the operation of the Cisumdawu Toll Ro, ad as presented in Figure 1.

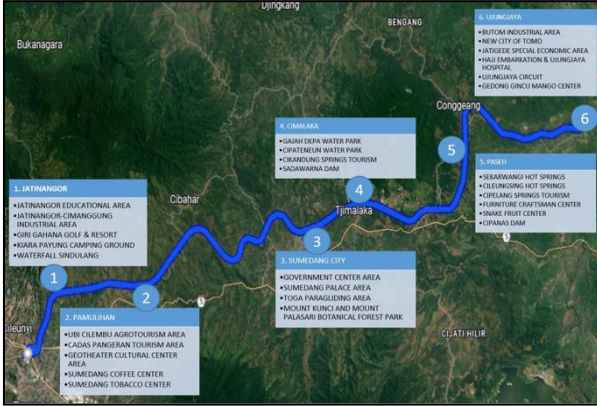


Figure 1. Tourist Destinations at Six Cisumdawu Toll Gates, Sumedang Regency (Bappeda, 2024)

The development of the Cisaar-Jatigede Valley Geopark in Sumedang received many responses from various groups of people in its launch; this is related to their understanding of parks, tourism, ecotourism, cultural tourism, sports tourism, and related matters. Understanding of the role of geoparks needs to be further improved because most people generally only pay attention to the formation process but do not understand how to preserve the earth by preserving all the relics and contents in it. Socialization of the potential of geoparks is needed to improve human resources and provide understanding among the community who will become important implementing cadres in tourism development in the future. Suppose the community, especially in Sumedang, can have geopark literacy. In that case, this can be shared with the general public, especially through social media, so that it can encourage the active role of all components in supporting the realization of Sumedang as a Tourism Regency. Thus, the formulation of the problems to be studied are:

1. How is the planning of the Cisaar-Jatigede Valley Geopark Sumedang,
2. How is the launching process of the Cisaar-Jatigede Valley Geopark Sumedang,
3. What is the public's perception of the launch of the Cisaar-Jatigede Valley Geopark Sumedang?

METHODS

The approach method that will be used to solve the research problem is the case study method, where an in-depth exploration of the launch of the Cisaar-Jatigede Sumedang Valley Geopark is carried out. This case study is a qualitative research method based on the understanding and behavior of the community based on differences in values, beliefs, and scientific theory. This case study research method is used to find out in depth the community's understanding and perception of the launch of the Cisaar-Jatigede Sumedang Valley Geopark. This research focuses intensively on one particular object to find out in-depth about a process or event. This research aims to gain a deep understanding of human and social problems; in qualitative research, researchers interpret how subjects obtain meaning from the surrounding environment and how that meaning affects their behavior. The research was conducted naturally (naturalistic) not the result of treatment or manipulation of the variables used.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Design of Cisaar-Jatigede Valley Geopark Sumedang. The Sumedang Regency Government has long dreamed of launching the Sumedang geopark, namely since 2000 through discussions between Mr. Herman PJ Regent of Sumedang in 2024 with Mr. Misbah Regent at that time. This dream has grown stronger with various findings of geological remains in the Cisaar Valley, Jembarwangi Village, since 2004, which ended with the creation of a Site Museum to accommodate fossils of geological remains in one of the Jembarwangi Village office rooms, which was inaugurated in August 2023. Furthermore, in early 2024, the Cisaar-Jatigede Valley Geopark Design Team was formed.

Observation of the Launch of the Cisaar-Jatigede Valley Geopark Sumedang. The Sumedang Regency Government carried out the Launching of the City Branding Sumedang (Sumedang The City of Knowledge) and the Cisaar-Jatigede Valley Geopark Sumedang (The Kingdom of Stegodon) on March 21, 2024, at the Tampomas Room, 3rd Floor, Sumedang Regency Government Center, Jl. Prabu Gajah Agung No. 09, North Sumedang District. This launch was attended by invitees consisting of all ranks of the Sumedang Regency Forkopimda, 61 Heads of Sumedang Regency SKPD, 9 Sub-district Heads, 21 community elements, 9 Heads of APDESI Districts, 5 Company Leaders, and 11 media elements.

Public Perception of the Launch of the Cisaar Valley-Jatigede Sumedang Geopark. The launch of the Geopark was motivated by the establishment of the Cisaar Valley Site Museum in Jembarwangi Village, Tomo District, Sumedang Regency, West Java Province. The Cisaar Valley Museum Site occupies one of the rooms in the Jembarwangi Village office with an area of 37 m². Jembarwangi Village has abundant geological wealth as a result of geological processes for hundreds of thousands to millions of years. Some of them are Fossils, Rocks, and Artifacts. The Cisaar Valley Museum Site stores a small part of these findings (Syafuruddin et al., 2022). The construction of the Cisaar Valley Museum Site is a collaboration between the Geological Museum, the Geological Agency of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources and the Jembarwangi Village Government.

The dream of realizing the Sumedang Geopark has existed since the 2000s. The dream began in 2004 when a Stegodon jaw fossil was discovered in the Cisaar Valley by researchers from ITB. Furthermore, a geological investigation was carried out in the same place by the Geological Museum of the Geological Agency of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources in 2017. Then, in 2018,



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the Bandung Archaeological Center (BALAR) conducted research activities on rock layers containing artifacts in the Cisaar Valley. Two elephant tusk fossils were found in the Cisaar Valley during an investigation conducted by the Geological Museum of the Geological Agency of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources in 2019.

Furthermore, in 2022, a Task Force (Satgas) was formed consisting of Jembarwangi Village, the Department of Culture, Tourism, Youth and Sports (Disparbudpora) of Sumedang Regency, the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), and the Geological Museum of the Geological Agency of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources for the excavation of turtle fossils (Christy et al., 2023). Finally, a reconstruction was carried out, and replicas of elephant tusk fossils and turtle fossils, fossil fragments and artifacts were made in Bandung in 2023. Furthermore, the results of the reconstruction were placed at the Cisaar Valley Museum Site located in Jembarwangi Village, Tomo District, Sumedang Regency.

The Cisaar Valley Museum Site occupies one part of the room in the Jembarwangi Village office with an area of 37 m². Jembarwangi Village has abundant geological wealth as a result of geological processes for hundreds of thousands to millions of years. Some of them are Fossils, Rocks, and Artifacts. The Cisaar Valley Museum Site stores a small part of these findings. The construction of the Cisaar Valley Museum Site is a collaboration between the Geological Museum, the Geological Agency of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources and the Jembarwangi Village Government. The Cisaar Valley Museum Site is an exhibition where information on the geology of the Cisaar Valley is disseminated and stores a collection of the results of the Geological Museum's investigations in this area. The Cisaar Valley Museum Site displays material on the history of the Cisaar Valley geology and a collection of findings around this area. Thus, for one aspect of geological diversity as the main element, the Cisaar Valley can be ascertained to have eligibility. However, further research is still needed regarding the elements of biological diversity and cultural diversity, which have uniqueness as the other two main elements in the requirements for a geopark.

The planners of Sumedang Geopark tried to complement the elements of cultural diversity through the excavation of the history of the Sumedang Kingdom, which has the concept of Insun Medal Insun Madangan education. Insun Medal Insun Madangan is a concept from Prabu Tadjimalela. This concept is the basic concept of the thoughts of Sumedang ancestors since the 10th century AD. Sumedang's existence must be light; it must provide illumination for itself and its environment. Having the determination always to contribute the best thoughts and work selflessly for the interests of the environment where it is located and for the progress of the Nation and State. As a district originating from the Sumedang Larang Kingdom, as well as being the successor to the Pajajaran Kingdom, Sumedang is also very rich in culture. It is one of the cultures that has received recognition as an intangible cultural heritage at the national level. Among them are the Umbul Dance and Kuda Renggong. In addition to past cultures, there is also a cultural legacy of the present, namely the Kujang Sapasang Tower, which is a manifestation of the culture that exists today. So, the Kujang Sapasang Tower was built to depict the peak of the human thinking process by having achieved wisdom. Kujang is a symbol of Sundanese glory. The integration between the kujang sapasang, the mosque, and the bridge illustrates the triangular connection of achievement between religion, culture, and technology.

This cultural diversity still requires further research to meet the requirements for national and world geopark designation. Likewise, biological diversity, including the Marongge kobo/munding, is like a buffalo in general but smaller in size, but this animal is more agile. Then there is the Tomo peacock, a peacock that is beautiful when its tail is spread out more beautifully than peacocks from



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other regions. This biological diversity also still requires further research so that it is close to perfect to meet the requirements for national and world geopark designation.

So, the launching of the Cisaar-Jatigede Valley Geopark can be said to be too early, it still requires further research until there are unique, rare, and admired findings that have an impact on science that are difficult to find in other countries so that it is worthy of being proposed as a national or global geopark. Although the preparation for the launching of the geopark has received advice from officials who have been involved in all stages of determining several national and world geoparks in Indonesia, it would be better if it was continued with research involving geopark assessors in Indonesia. The uniqueness of geology, biology, and culture will be found to meet the requirements for determining national and world geoparks.

Public perception has been driven by various initial potentials that have been owned in the form of heritage, heritage, and cultural heritage, associated with the understanding, according to (UNESCO, 2023), that a geopark is an area that is not just one point but an area that has open geological elements including archaeological, economic, and cultural values, which are in it where the local community is invited to play a role in protecting and improving the function of natural heritage. Geodiversity, cultural diversity, and biodiversity will not run optimally as a geopark if it is not supported by community empowerment, the role of local government in terms of regulation and infrastructure and how the pillars of education, conservation, and sustainable development support this geopark. The end of this geopark refers to tourism because tourism can improve the community's economy in a multi-sectoral manner. Through the geopark, tourists will get the experience of getting memories of what geo, bio, and culture are in Sumedang Regency. The proposed geopark covers nine sub-districts with an area of 769.75 km². Geopark is very easy to reach in terms of accessibility. The Cisumdawu toll road now crosses Sumedang's strategic position between PKN Jakarta, Bandung, and Cirebon. Then its position is also very close to the Patimban Subang seaport and Kertajati Majalengka Airport. When visiting this geopark area, tourists do not spend more than an hour from centers such as Kertajati or Bandung City. Because tourism is the end, this geopark has also proposed several tour packages that tourists can visit. There is a four-hour package from Kujang Sapasang to Jatigede Dam, then to the Cisaar Valley, there is the Site Museum, then to the Marongge Site, and for example, to the Mangga Gedong Gincu Agrotourism. Then, package one-day, two-day, three-day, and seven-day tour packages (Noveriansyah et al., 2024). It is hoped that these packages can be a trigger to revive/create/revive parks in Sumedang Regency, which in the end can encourage improving the welfare of the people in Sumedang Regency.

Based on the analysis that has been done, public perception agrees that the launch of the geopark can improve the welfare of the Sumedang community, especially those living in the Cisaar-Jatigede Valley Geopark. However, the role of the government is still needed in making regulations and providing facilities that support the implementation and development of the geopark. In developing a geopark, what is important is empowering the community. Community empowerment must be detailed in terms of how. To be able to empower, what must be built is self-confidence, confidence that I can. The government must be able to cooperate with other local governments to bring the potential of the Sumedang community. The government facilitates Sumedang economic actors to appear on the national and international stage. Community empowerment must be accompanied continuously so that they are confident, technical assistants, and technical skills according to the needs and abilities of the community. Its nature is complementary to others so that diversity is created. Officials must facilitate the private sector to



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provide technical assistance to the community in order to empower it. Regional leaders must be able to accompany entrepreneurs to provide guarantees to national and international partners so that entrepreneurs gain the trust of entrepreneurs/other parties. Things that the community can do must be invited and involved. The community is given authority, not just held by the government. So that the ability to play in the community's business increases. The main difficulty of the community is money, the solution must be a triangle collaboration between banks-government-and the community/business actors.

CONCLUSION

The planning of the Cisaar-Jatigede Valley Geopark in Sumedang has been carried out for a long time but has only been carried out intensively in the last few years. The launched geopark still requires a complete study until unique, rare, and admired elements are found that have an impact on science that is difficult to find in other countries, so it is worthy of being proposed as a national or global geopark. Public perception of the launch of the Cisaar-Jatigede Valley Geopark in Sumedang is in accordance with the definition of a geopark from UNESCO, namely an area that is not just one point but an area that has open geological elements including archaeological, economic, and cultural values, which are in it where the local community is invited to play a role in protecting and improving the function of natural heritage. It is hoped that with the launch of the geopark, community welfare will increase, including supporting facilities such as highways.

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