

***Rasi* (Cassava Rice) as an Authentic Product of Cireundeu in Supporting Gastronomic Tourism**

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Abstract: This study aims to identify how *Rasi* (Cassava Rice) as an authentic product for Cireundeu Traditional Village can strengthen aspects of gastronomic tourism. The people of Cireundeu Traditional Village, located in Cimahi City, have a habit of consuming *Rasi* hereditary. Until now the habit is still ongoing even though not all people can continue this habit. A qualitative approach was taken in this study to explore besides *Rasi* as a product of the local community as well as to know from the viewpoint of local wisdom values. During its development, *Rasi* is not only made as a substitute for rice but is also used in making diversification of other food products such as cakes that can be consumed by the wider community. It is hoped that this research will educate visiting tourists that Cireundeu not only offers nature, arts and culture, but can introduce *Rasi* as part of gastronomic cultural identity.

1 INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has a diversity of cultures as a result of the diversity of ethnic groups that inhabit this region. The culture includes traditional technological systems, customs, and so on. Among the diversity, one interesting cultural outcome is the diversity of food types. In this context, matters relating to food ingredients and processing cannot be separated from belief systems and social cultural systems.

Food is not merely a living organic product with biochemical qualities, but food can be seen as a cultural phenomenon. Cultural symptoms of food are formed due to various views of life of the people. In general, the staple food of most Indonesian people is rice. It is different with indigenous peoples in Cireundeu. Cireundeu, one of Indonesia's traditional villages, was chosen since one of its uniqueness is its people's staple food namely *Rasi*, a type of food made of cassava.

Cireundeu is a traditional village in Cimahi, a suburb of Bandung, West Java. Located in the valley of Mount Kuci, Mount Cimenteng and Mount Gajahlangu. Most of the villagers adhere to a traditional belief called Sunda Wiwitan.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Tourism Village

There are several views that food and culture are inseparable from human life. The presence of local food is a reinforcement in developing gastronomic tourism which is currently being developed by the Government of Indonesia. Based on the data of The Indonesia Tourism Ministry, 2016) distribution of Indonesia's national tourism products, there is natural potential (35%), Culture (60%) and Man-made or special interests as much as 5% (Indonesian Tourism Ministry, 2019)

Concerning on cultural aspects there are types of historical tourism, local cultural traditions (40%), culinary and spa tours (25%) and City and Village tours (35%). This shows that culinary makes an important contribution in the development of national tourism.

With the diversity of tribes and customs in Indonesia, then the diversity of local food is important to be presented in a series of gastronomic tourism in Indonesia. This also reinforces the concept of a tourist village with its own unique value.

Conceptually, tourism village is a rural area that offers the whole atmosphere of village authenticity including its social-economy life, socio cultural life,

daily life, and having local potentials to be develop as tourism component such as attraction, culinary, accommodation, and other tourism needs. The requirement to be a tourism village should imply the following condition: (1) good accessibility, (2) having interesting object of tourism, (3) acceptance from host society and government (4) guaranteed security, (5) Availability of accommodation, telecommunication facilities, and human resource (6) having a good climate , (7) interconnected with other tourist objects and well known by the people (Priasukmana and Mulayadin, 2001). In addition, a tourism village is a rural area that offers authenticity in terms of social, cultural, customs, daily life, traditional architecture, village spatial structure presented in a form of integration of the tourism component, such as, attractions, accommodation, and supporting facilities others (Zakaria and Suprihardjo, 2014). Traditional food is another aspect that that cannot be separated in tourism in the development of the tourism village. Moreover, traditional cuisine reflects the history and culture of the area and can be used as an attraction for many tourists (Agoes et al., 2016).

2.2 Food and Gastronomy

Perspective view of food culture is not something that is seen solely associated with physiological and biological aspects of humans but thoroughly absorbed in a system of food culture (Fadhilah, 2014). Food is one of the important things in the cultural life of certain destination. From the economic perspective, eating, culinary is a psychological economic necessity, where almost 100% travelers spending money for meals where they go for vacation or travel (Yurtseven et al., 2011).

Food culture system includes production, distribution, and consumption of food in which the implied primary fulfillment of human needs, social culture as well as in order to sustain life and improve the well-being of self, family, community and are exposed to natural environmental resources (Sabana, 2007)

Gastronomy is the relationship between culture and food in studying the cultural component with food as its center (culinary arts). The scope does not only look at food in terms of cultural understanding and assets for the region (Nurwitasi, 2015). The Local food research becomes very important in gastronomic tourism because food will be a strengthening of local culture (Kartika and Harahap, 2019)

Meanwhile food is not just something that can be eaten. In the social environment food has the value of

other functions and meanings (Danesi, 2011). This value is seen from the economic aspects, collective values, health values and cultural values. Related to the study of Rasi, of course these aspects can be violated in the discussion points.

3 METHODOLOGY

The researchers use qualitative approach, because the data is in the form of history and values applied in the community. Data was collected by doing interview, observation, and documentation. This study also uses references from several other sources to obtain secondary data. The data is then used by researchers to produce accurate data. In this study, researchers also sought to gather various information related to the consumption of Rasi's special food, as an authentic product for the indigenous people of Cireundeu related to strengthening gastronomic tourism.

4 RESULT

4.1 Location

The location of the study, located in Cireundeu Customary Village, Leuwigajah Village, Cimahi Selatan District, Cimahi City, West Java. Cireundeu village consists of fifty heads of families or around 700 residents who work as cassava or cassava pentani. The center of the Cireundeu Village is located in RT 10. Many traditional activities are carried out in a building called the Paseban or Balai Adat.



Figure 1: Location Map of Cireundeu Village

Source: repository.uinjkt

4.2 History of Cireundeu

The name of the village of Cireundeu is derived from the name of the tree, "Reundeu Tree", formerly the Reundeu Tree has a lot of population in this village but at this time it is getting less because the land is turned into agricultural land. Reundeu tree is a tree for the basic ingredients of herbal medicine. Therefore, the village which is located in Leuwi Gajah Village is called Cireundeu Village.

The people of Cireundeu Village adhere to their own beliefs, by upholding the faith known as *sunda wiwitan*, but the other term is the religion of the life of trust in God the Almighty. They really believe that God has created this nature and nature has given them life with a variety of natural wealth owned, ranging from fruits, vegetables, and tubers to the present. They are always consistent with the nature of carrying out the teachings of belief and continue to preserve the culture and customs that have been passed down from their ancestors.

Initially, the Cireundeu Village Community used rice as its main food. The reason for turning into cassava as a staple food was because during the Dutch colonial period there was a shortage of food especially rice. Therefore, followers of these beliefs are required to fast by replacing rice with cassava rice or what is now known as *rasi* for an unlimited time. The purpose of fasting is to immediately free physically and mentally, test the beliefs of the followers of the flow of belief and they always remember the Almighty God.

They have a principle of life ' *Ngindung Ka Waktu, Mibapak Ka Jaman*' meaning that "Ngindung Ka Waktu" as indigenous peoples have the means, characteristics and beliefs of each. While "Mi Bapak ka Zaman" has the meaning of the Village Community Cireundeu not closed to development today.

Another guideline adopted by the Cireundeu people is "Teu Nyawah Asal Boga Pare, Teu Boga Pare Asal Boga Beas, Teu Boga Beas Asal Bisa Nyangu, Teu Nyangu Asal Dahar, Teu Dahar Asal Kuat." Meaning that "no rice fields as long as you have rice, no rice as long as you can cook rice, no rice as long as you eat, don't eat as long as it's strong"



Figure 2: Guideline of Cireundeu People

Source: KKN STIEPAR, 2019

4.3 History of Rasi (Cassava Rice)

The most distinctive aspect of Cireundeu traditional village is the villagers' habit to make 'rasi' as their staple food, instead of rice. As we know that staple food of most of the Indonesian people is rice, but in this area, it is a taboo to consume rice as a staple food. Furthermore, Rasi also becomes a symbol of the long history of Cireundeu villagers to survive and also to keep their pride as independent citizens (Sharif et al., 2016) reported that this is what attractive about traditional food when it is not merely tradition, but it further becomes a symbol of their heritage, trademark, and sustainable cultural values.

The shift of the staple food of Kampung Cireundeu from rice to cassava began around 1918, on the grounds that they held fast to their ancestral discourses since the Dutch colonial period in 1918. Only a change in the term from what was originally called *sanguen* and now become *rasi* (cassava rice). It is said that in 1924 the elders of Cireundeu Village considered that the *sanguen* name was not rational, so it was changed to Rasi. Actually, the ancestors of Kampung Cireundeu did not reject rice, but they had their own unfortunate history with rice plants.

During the Dutch colonial era, paddy fields planted with rice suddenly dried up, while the supply of rice from the Dutch government at that time was very difficult. In the midst of a very difficult time, the people of Kampung Cireundeu began to think about finding a way out. The people of Cireundeu Village began to accustom themselves to consuming cassava, which was preceded by the issuance of the bible which basically asked the community to postpone consuming rice and switch to tubers until the speech was attached and preserved by the people of Cireundeu Village until now.

Most of the livelihoods of the people of Kampung Cireundeu are cassava farmers and tubers. In addition, in the past, the ancestors of the people of Kampung Cireundeu had predictions about future

conditions or were referred to as "Engke mah Bandung, the heurin ku tangtung." (Later Bandung will be full of buildings), which means the next few years in the city of Bandung, especially rice fields will switch functions into dwellings, offices and other public places. So they look for alternative foods so that their children and grandchildren will not have to experience these difficulties. To anticipate this, the ancestors of Kampung Cireundeu suggested not to depend on rice staples.

The business of choosing staples that can replace rice took six years and for six years they tried all kinds of crops such as beans, sweet potatoes and others until finally cassava was chosen. Because cassava can be planted during the dry season or the rainy season and the nutrient content between rice and cassava is even better.

Since 1918 the ancestors of Cireundeu replaced paddy fields with land that was replaced by land planted with cassava land. Therefore the people of Cireundeu process cassava tubers into constellations and their leaves are processed into vegetables, the community starts consuming cassava and replaces rice as a staple food.

4.4 The Stages of Making Rasi

Rasi is cassava which is processed in such a way that it becomes like rice. Processing through several stages, namely cassava smoothed with a grinder or grated. Then, cassava that has been mashed, then washed and deposited for several days. After that, cassava that has been deposited, dried in the sun for two to three days. Finally cooked cassava, like cooking rice, and become constellations. Constellations have been a staple food for the people of Kampung Cireundeu until now.

The dedication of Abu Omoh as the the founder of the Rasi, which was able to make the people of Cireundeu not dependent on one food, namely rice is highly appreciated. From her ideas until now, the people of Cireundeu Village feel the fruits of the idea of the struggle for independence physically and spiritually born from Abu Omoh, as one of the most influential women in Cireundeu Village. For how to make it, the first thing to make Rasi is to pull out the cassava first after that it is peeled and paruded (a and b) until smooth and washed thoroughly (c) and squeezed (d) after being squeezed in the aci drying until a day after dry, lifted and crushed until powdered and soft after sifting and then made into a dough and steamed until cooked for a maximum of five minutes (e and f)



Figure 3: Process of Making Rasi

Source: KKN STIEPAR 2019

4.5 Rasi as an Authentic Product

Rasi is a local food of the Cireundeu which is sourced from cassava. In terms of meaning, Rasi has meaning of an economic, collective, health and cultural perspective. Economically, Rasi was able to improve the economy of the local community. Society does not only depend on rice alone. In addition to being used as staple food, the people of Cireundeu Village make various kinds of processed cassava with the name "Serba Singkong" or we call multivariance of Cassava.

Serba Singkong is a place for Cireundeu women community to express their talents on cooking creations. "Serba Singkong" was founded since 2010. Another product diversification from cassava are eggroll, cat's tongue, cheese stick, awug, egg noodles, cassava noodles, onion chips, cassava skin jerky and *Cireng*. The most popular product for visitors is eggroll, because this product now has a sweet and savory blend of crispy texture. Those products from cassava are sold through cooperatives and produced individually.

At present the indigenous people deliberately limit the sale of Rasi and its processed products to Cireundeu. The aim is that those who are interested in processed products come directly to Cireundeu and they can learn more about cultural values and see the production process.

In terms of collective values, Rasi is a local wisdom for the people of Cireundeu. Another use is

that the Cireundeu community has built food security and is not dependent on rice. From the health side, Rasi has high protein and lower sugar levels compared to rice (Sunyoto and Yuliana, 2016). It is very well consumed by people who have a medical history of diabetes. Meanwhile from the cultural values, Rasi has built a strong local cultural identity and cannot be found in another place.

Referring to the above description, Rasi as an authentic product of the Cireundeu is very supportive in the effort to develop gastronomic tourism in Indonesia.

5 CONCLUSION

Cireunde as one of traditional village in West Java has some uniqueness in term of of villager's habit in consuming *Rasi* (Cassva Rice). This condition explains that the staple food is not only from rice, but also can use other alternatives, such as Rasi that has been applied by the people of Cireundeu until now. Seeing from its history, that people want to have the independence physically and mentally, because rice at that time was a monopoly from the Netherlands. The indigenous people of Cireundeu consider that along with the times, population growth has increased, causing rice fields to turn into tall buildings. These developments will occur rapidly and will displace the existence of plantation and agricultural land such as rice fields, which produce staples for human consumption. So they took the initiative to preserve and cultivate *Rasi* until the future generations.

By consuming Rasi, in terms of health even better, because the level of glucose is low, thereby reducing the possibility of developing diseases such as diabetes. Rasi is an important food for the indigenous people of Cireundeu because it is a staple food that cannot be replaced, because they want to pass down the noble values of their ancestors. In terms of local wisdom, the people of Cireundeu have characteristics in both staple foods and processed foods that make their identities different from others. Cireundeu also received awards from the central and local governments, regarding food security. So, it is not surprising that Cireundeu Village, due to its unique culture and food security, is an attraction for local and international tourists and makes Rasi an authentic product in supporting gastronomic tourism.

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