

Preliminary Study: The Potential of the *Nyalawean* Tradition as a Form of Cultural Tourism in The South Coastal Waters of Sukabumi and Banten, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Nyalawean is a tradition carried out by the people of the southern coast of Java, especially in Sukabumi and Banten Regencies. In practice, *nyalawean* is an activity in coastal communities that involves catching young fish around the coast and river estuaries in groups. This fishing activity often attracts local and foreign tourists enjoying the beautiful beaches. This research was conducted as a preliminary study that formulates the potential of the *nyalawean* tradition as a form of cultural tourism around the southern coastal waters of Java, Sukabumi and Banten Regencies. Literature studies and direct interview surveys were finished in April-August 2023. We found that young fish caught in the *nyalawean* procession were generally in the larval and juvenile stages. The results of direct interviews with 887 tourists showed 94.8% of tourists' enthusiasm for the *nyalawean* tradition. Most tourists consider *nyalawean* to be an exciting form of tradition to watch. Some even desired to catch and enjoy the processed fish larvae and juveniles they obtained. These findings show the high potential for the *nyalawean* tradition to be developed as a form of marine tourism on the southern coast of Java, Sukabumi and Banten Regencies

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is the 15th largest country in the world, with an area of more than 1.9 million km² (Saksono, 2013). Through the nomination of the largest archipelagic country in the world, Indonesia is in first place with 17,508 islands (Soemarmi et al., 2019). Apart from that, Indonesia is also known as a country rich in ethnic and cultural diversity (Ananda & Nabila, 2022). The Indonesian Central Statistics Agency, (2023) noted that more than 300 ethnicities originate from 1,340 ethnic groups spread throughout the territory of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Each existing ethnic group has various unique traditions that color Indonesia's rich customs and culture (Acim et al., 2023).

The southern coast of Java is one of several regions in Indonesia that are closely related to traditional traditions, which are shrouded in various legendary stories that circulate among the people (Santoso & Sudiati, 2000). The traditions include traditional ceremonies by fishermen before fishing at sea or what is known as *sedekah laut* (Suryanti, 2017). This ceremony is executed by offering various agricultural and livestock products to the fishing community to the sea goddess, Nyi Roro Kidul, as a form of gratitude (Afriansyah & Sukmayadi, 2022). The offerings are handed over by throwing them into the ocean using a wooden offering container (Suryanti, 2017). This tradition has attracted much attention from local and foreign tourists visiting to enjoy beach tourism in southern Java, which is also quite famous for its natural beauty (Janah et al., 2024). Yuniarto et al., (2022) stated that the tradition of *sedekah laut* has been valued as one of the riches of maritime cultural tourism objects originating from Javanese tribal communities.

Apart from *sedekah laut*, another unique tradition routinely carried out by the people of the southern coast of Java is known as *nyalawean*. This tradition is a form of catching young fish in coastal waters and estuaries by local communities in groups (Baihaqi, 2022). Judging from the word's origin, *nyalawean* comes from the phrase *selawe*, which means 25 in Javanese. This word is taken from the time this tradition is carried out on the 25th of every month in the lunar calendar (Hijriah) (Perangin-angin et al., 2023).

The *nyalawean* tradition is widely practiced in several coastal areas of southern Java. Several researchers say that the highest concentration of this tradition occurs around the south coast of Sukabumi and Banten Regencies. Several researchers found *nyalawean* procession activities in several estuary areas around Palabuhanratu Bay, Sukabumi (Amaliah et al., 2023; Baihaqi et al., 2022; Prabowo et al., 2022; Simanjuntak et al., 2021). *Nyalawean* traditional activities are also found in the outer part of the bay area or to the east in the Cikaso area and to the west in the Cibareno area (Annida et al., 2021; Rachmatika et al., 2002).

As a form of routine tradition considered attractive to several tourists, *nyalawean* also has excellent potential as an object of cultural tourism wealth for marine tourism on the southern coast of Java. This research was conducted as a preliminary study that describes the potential of the *nyalawean* tradition as a rich cultural heritage that can become a marine cultural tourist attraction around the southern coast of Java, especially in Sukabumi and Banten Regencies. The results of this research can formulate long-term potential and challenges in the

management and development of the *nyalawean* tradition as a form of marine cultural tourism wealth on the southern coast of Java.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marine tourism

Marine tourism is a tourist activity that involves geographical conditions around coastal waters to the open sea (Nugroho et al., 2022). Various tourist activities are included in this group, such as snorkeling, diving, sailing, surfing, fishing, observing mammals, birds, and other coastal biota, and beach tourism in general (Wiarti, 2017). Marine tourism also often involves education in the exploration of marine resources, natural research, environmental protection activities, and sustainable management (Supriyanto, 2022). In general, marine tourism strengthens tourists' attraction in terms of natural beauty (Ferdinandus & Suryasih, 2014). However, the culture of each maritime tourism destination often becomes a unique attraction that also creates value that can be enjoyed by tourists (Junaid, 2018).

Natural tourism

In the context of marine tourism, nature tourism generally refers to activities primarily focused on the marine environment, coastal waters, and small islands (Sani & Suni, 2019). The concept of natural tourism within marine tourism covers exploration and experience in underwater and coastal natural environments (Junaid, 2018). Natural tourism in marine tourism aims to educate and instill in every tourist a vision to support preserving the marine environment, which is essential for the global ecosystem (Sani & Suni, 2019).

Cultural tourism

Cultural tourism also always goes hand in hand with natural tourism, one of the other attractions in marine tourism (Heryati, 2019). Cultural tourism in marine tourism takes the form of activities that provide experience and exploration of local culture related to the lives of communities around coastal waters (Mertha et al., 2017). The various aspects of cultural life in question include traditions, art, music, culinary delights, and even beliefs related to the ocean (Sutanto, 2024).

Nyalawean tradition

Nyalawean is a routine tradition carried out by coastal communities in southern Java, especially in Sukabumi and Banten Regencies, Indonesia. Judging from the word's origin, *nyalawean* comes from the phrase *selawe*, which means 25 in Javanese. This is related to the time this tradition is executed. *Nyalawean* is generally carried out every month on the 25th of the lunar calendar (Hijri). This tradition involves catching young fish in coastal and estuary areas in groups (Baihaqi, 2022). Several researchers found *nyalawean* procession activities in several estuary areas around Palabuhanratu Bay, Sukabumi (Amaliah et al., 2023; Baihaqi et al., 2022; Prabowo et al., 2022; Simanjuntak et al., 2021). *Nyalawean* traditional activities are also found in the outer part of the bay area or to the east in the Cikaso area and to the west in the Cibareno area (Annida et al., 2021; Rachmatika et al., 2002).

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted through literature studies and direct interview surveys. The interview survey was conducted in April-August 2023 with an incidental sampling method determined in determining sources. Interview sources were assigned to each tourist obtained along the coastal and estuary tourist areas of the southern coast of Java, Sukabumi and Banten Regencies. The study area coverage in the south of coastal waters of Sukabumi Regency includes Cikaso, Cibuyaya, Ujung Genteng, Ombak Tujuh, Citepus, Karanghawu, Cimaja, and Cisolok Beachs. The study area in the southern coastal waters of Banten Regency consists of the beaches and estuaries of Cibareno and Bayah (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Map of Research Location

RESEARCH RESULT

Study area

There are several coastal and estuary areas on the southern coast of Java, Sukabumi and Banten Regencies where *nyalawean* activity has been found. Several regions of the south of the coastal waters of Sukabumi Regency include Cikaso, Cibuaya, Ujung Genteng, Ombak Tujuh, Citepus, Karanghawu, Cimaja, and Cisolok beaches. The study area in the southern coastal waters of Banten Regency consists of the beaches and estuaries of Cibareno and Bayah. The entire region has several differences in the typology and structure of existing beaches and estuaries. Ujung Genteng, Cibuaya, Citepus, and Bayah have beach and estuary conditions dominated by delicate sandy substrates. Cimaja, Cisolok, and Cibareno have coastal estuaries that have rocky sand substrate types. Meanwhile, Karanghawu, Ujung Genteng, and Ombak Tujuh have beaches with a coral sand substrate (Figure 2).





Figure 2. Beach and Estuary Conditions:

(A) Cikaso, (B) Cibuaya, (C) Ujung Genteng, (D) Ombak Tujuh, (E) Citepus, (F) Karanghawa, (G) Cimaja, (H) Cisolok, (I) Cibareno, (J) Bayah.

Source: Personal Documentation and <https://Wisato.id>

Nyalawean activities

Nyalawean is conducted by the southern coastal communities of Java, especially by coastal communities in Sukabumi and Banten Regencies. This activity involves the broader community from various ages, from children to teenagers to adults (Figure 3). Catching young fish in the *nyalawean* tradition is generally done in the morning and evening. In the morning, arrests are made between 03.00 - 05.00 AM or when the sun starts to rise. In the afternoon, it is done from 03.00 - 06.00 PM or when the sun begins to set. For the people of the southern coast of Java, *nyalawean* is a routine tradition carried out every month. This monthly tradition also often becomes a forum for people to gather and chat with each other. The community explained that the peak of more massive fishing activities was executed in the transition seasons from the dry season to the rainy season in July and August or from the rainy season to the dry season in December, January, and February.



Figure 3. Documentation of *Nyalawean* Activities
Source: Personal Documentation

Fishing gear construction

Fish-catching activities in the *nyalawean* tradition generally use a rectangular lift net or a triangular scope net. The mesh size of the net used is between 0.2 and 0.48 mm. In direct observation activities, we found that rectangular lift net fishing gear was more dominant during the *nyalawean* tradition (Figure 4).

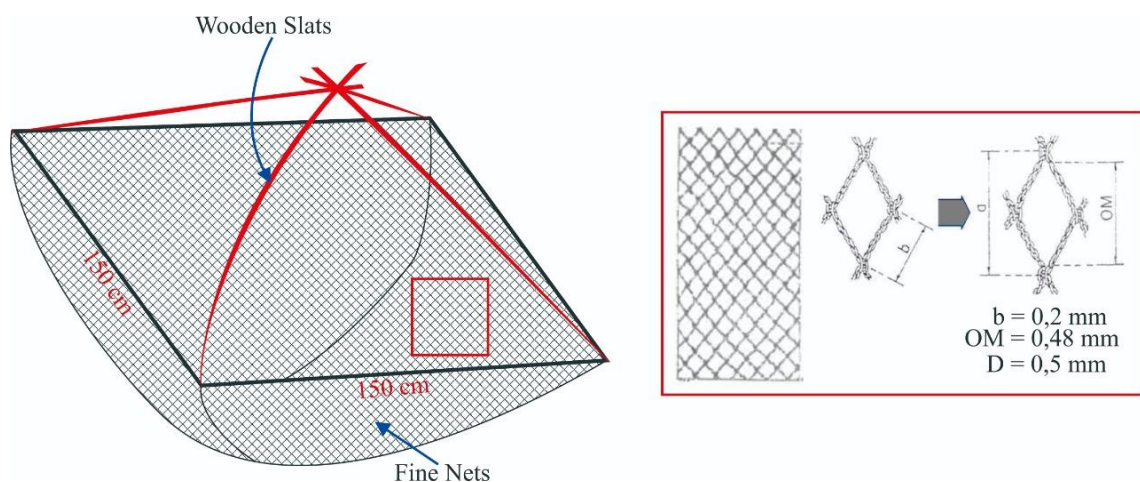


Figure 4. Construction of a Rectangular Lift Net Fishing Tool
Source: (Annida et al., 2021)

Young-fish catches

We found that the results of *nyalawean* activities were various species of young estuarine and coastal fish in the larval and juvenile stages. *Impun* is a local term from coastal communities for all larvae and juvenile fish caught from the

nyalawean tradition. The eel commodity (*Anguilla* spp.) in the glass eels stage is one of the main catch targets. However, larval and juvenile fish from the Gobiidae and Eleotridae families have the most dominant gross composition of all existing catches (Figure 5).

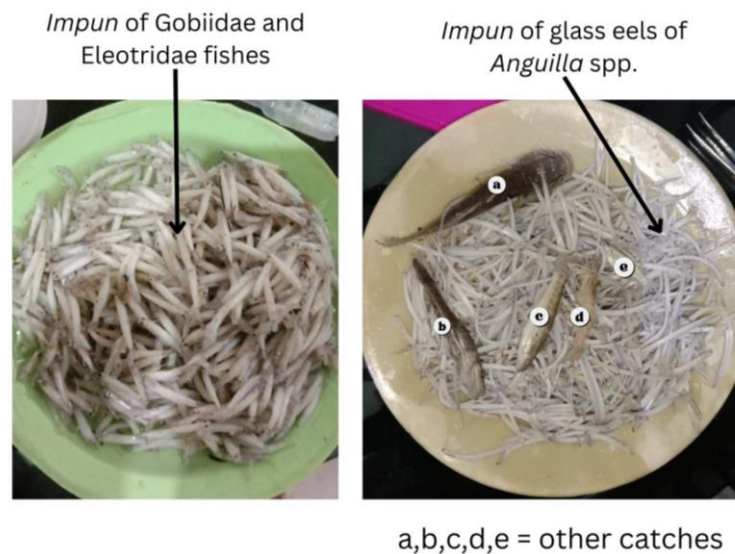


Figure 5. *Impun* of Catches from *Nyalawean* Activities

Enthusiastic of tourists

We selected 887 tourists from across the study area as respondents. The results of direct interviews showed that 94.8% of tourists expressed high enthusiasm due to curiosity about the *nyalawean* tradition (Figure 5). Many of them expressed their desire to be involved in catching young fish during the *nyalawean*. Others also expressed their willingness to try to enjoy the taste of processed baby fish obtained from this tradition.

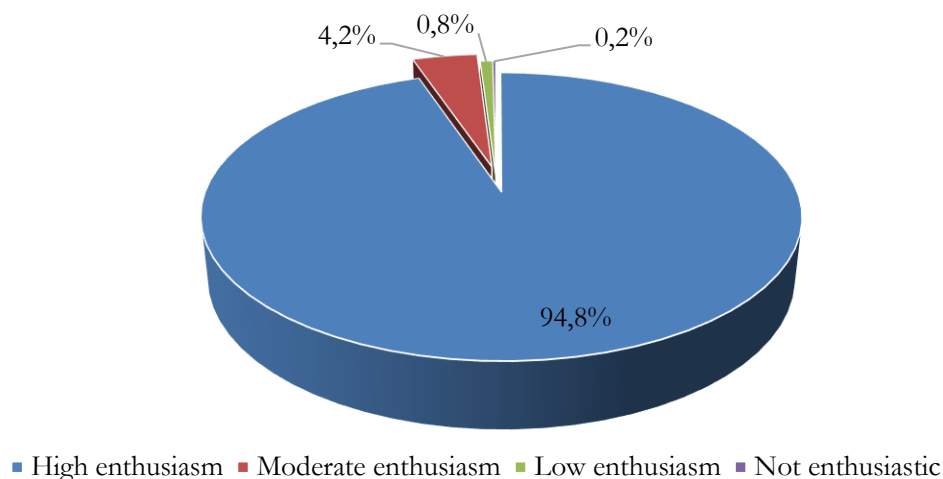


Figure 5. Composition of Tourists' Level of Enthusiasm for The *Nyalawean*

DISCUSSION

Indonesia is the largest archipelagic country in the world, with 17,508 islands (Soemarmi et al., 2019). Its coastline is 81,290 km, making it the second country with the longest coastline after Canada. This condition provides excellent potential for Indonesia, mainly marine tourism (Oktaviani & Iqbal, 2023).

Its high marine and coastal biodiversity also supports Indonesia's marine tourism potential (Tegar R & Gurning, 2018). This is also supported by Indonesia's geographical location in the equatorial region and being a biodiversity hotspot (Napitupulu et al., 2022). Many marine tourism spots are enjoyed and well-known by foreign tourists in Indonesia. One of the famous tourist areas is in the southern coastal waters of Java, especially around Pelabuhanratu Bay, which is included in the administrative area of Sukabumi and Banten Regencies. Several marine tourism points around Pelabuhanratu Bay, which are famous for their panoramic views of the beauty of natural beach tourism, are Cikaso, Cibuaya, Ujung Genteng, Ombak Tujuh, Citepus, Karanghawu, Cimaja, Cisolok, Cibareno, and Bayah. Each of these areas has beautiful coastal landscapes with crashing waves, which many tourists enjoy, especially those who enjoy water sports such as surfing (Dasman et al., 2020; Dietri Leonita et al., 2018; Giovani et al., 2018; Jessica & Winata, 2023; Santosa & Wahyu, 2024; Setiono et al., 2023).

Apart from the beautiful panorama and natural landscape that are tourist attractions, the unique traditions and culture of the surrounding community also add to the attraction for tourists. Various traditional and cultural traditions have always been another attraction for tourists, especially those related to music, cuisine, clothing, and architecture, as well as legends and routine habits of local communities. One of the routine traditions of local communities often found along Pelabuhanratu Bay is *nyalawean* (Baihaqi et al., 2022; Simanjuntak et al., 2021). *Nyalawean* is a routine tradition carried out by coastal communities every month on the 25th of the lunar calendar (Hijrah) (Amaliah et al., 2023; Baihaqi et al., 2022). In practice, *nyalawean* is catching young fish together in coastal waters and estuaries (Baihaqi, 2022).

Nyalawean activities involve all levels of society, both men and women and people of all ages, from children to teenagers to adults. *Nyalawean* is also often used as a routine schedule for people to gather together. Many people also bring their extended families to participate in this tradition. They not only catch young fish but also bring mats and cooking equipment to process the catch; they can make it into food and eat it with their family (Baihaqi, 2022).

This unique activity is undoubtedly an attraction that attracts high enthusiasm among tourists, including foreign tourists. The results of the direct interview survey showed that 94.8% of tourists had high enthusiasm for the *nyalawean* tradition. Many are even willing to pay to rent rectangular lift net fishing equipment to participate in catching juvenile fish along the coast and estuary. Some tourists even expressed their desire to taste the fish dishes they get with special spices prepared by the local community. The high enthusiasm of tourists shows the great potential for the *nyalawean* tradition to be developed and

maintained as a valuable cultural heritage of the southern coastal communities of Java, especially in Sukabumi and Banten Regencies. *Nyalawean* can be one of the strengths of Indonesia's rich culture, which is another promising attraction in marine tourism.

Previously, other traditions, such as *sedekah laut*, have also been widely known by local and foreign tourists as a form of culture on the southern coast of Java that is interesting to witness (Suryanti, 2017). Coupled with the mystical story attached to it relating to the queen of the south seas of Java, sea alms have been transformed into a cultural treasure that is widely known as a valuable cultural tourism destination (Janah et al., 2024; Nur Fajar Rizkia & Siswanta, 2024; Yuniarto et al., 2022). Through the development and packaging of good tourism promotions, the *nyalawean* tradition can become part of a tradition that is also valuable as a marine cultural tourism attraction in addition to *sedekah laut* from the southern coast of Java, especially in Sukabumi and Banten Regencies, Indonesia.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The *nyalawean* tradition, which is routinely carried out by the communities of the southern coast of Java, Sukabumi and Banten Regencies, has promising potential to be developed as a valuable cultural heritage for marine tourism. Development and packaging of cultural tourism promotions are needed to brand this tradition as part of a cultural tourism attraction that can increase tourist attraction in coastal and estuary tourism in the southern part of Sukabumi and Banten, Indonesia.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Further research on governance management, promotion, branding strategies, and tourism improvement assessment is needed to strengthen marine tourism activities along the southern coast and estuaries of Sukabumi and Banten Regencies, Indonesia. A scientific basis for tourist attraction management can accelerate the achievement of long-term profits from sustainable marine tourism.

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