

KAMPOENG POERBA TOURISM COMMUNITY: PRESERVING THE PREHISTORIC ELEPHANT HERITAGE AT THE BUMIAYU SITE

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| Article Info | Abstract |
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| <p>Keywords: community-based tourism, geotourism, pokdarwis</p> <p>Received: January 02, 2026</p> <p>Approved: January 26, 2026</p> <p>Published: January 31, 2026</p> | <p>This study aims to explore the history of ancient elephants at the Bumiayu Site and examine the role of the Pokdarwis Kampoeng Poerba in preserving and developing the potential of ancient heritage as educational and cultural tourism. Pokdarwis Kampoeng Poerba, located in Galuh Timur Village, Tonjong District, Brebes Regency, is a tourism organization at the Bumiayu Site. Through a historical approach with archaeological and anthropological approaches, this study traces the role of the local community in promoting the historical and cultural value of the site through the formation of Pokdarwis. This research applied the historical method. Data collection was carried out through heuristics, including archival and literature research, while data analysis involved source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The results of the study show that Pokdarwis plays a strategic role in reintroducing prehistoric heritage to the community through educational activities, tourism promotion based on local wisdom, and conservation efforts. These efforts not only strengthen the cultural identity of the local community but also open up opportunities for creative economy based on cultural heritage. This study recommends cross-institutional collaboration between the government, academics, and local communities to strengthen conservation strategies and the development of educational tourism at the Bumiayu Site.</p> |

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism in Indonesia has various classifications, one of which is history-based educational tourism, which has been growing in recent years. The increasing number of museums and destinations with historical and cultural themes shows a change in perspective towards Indonesia's local potential, including archaeological tourism (Puspitasari et al., 2025). Archaeology refers to relics from the past, including artifacts, fossils, and sites, that possess historical and educational value. Archaeological sites are now national and international tourist attractions, such as the Sangiran Site, recognized as one of the centers for early human research in Asia, and the Leang-Leang Archaeological Park, renowned for its prehistoric paintings featuring handprints and fauna (Mulyantari, 2018). As research develops, many prehistoric studies have reemerged after a long period of neglect, such as Song Terus in Pacitan and Semedo in Tegal (Ichsan, 2021). In this case, attention has also turned to the Bumiayu Site, known as one of the oldest prehistoric sites in Indonesia.

The Bumiayu Site is located in three subdistricts in Brebes Regency, Central Java, namely Bumiayu Subdistrict, Tonjong Subdistrict, and Bantarkawung Subdistrict. The Bumiayu Site is located approximately 50 km south of the Brebes regency administrative center and 40 km northwest of Purwokerto City, Banyumas. The Bumiayu Site is located southwest of the Semedo Site (Tegal) and northeast of the Cijolang Site (Majalengka). Based on the mapping of fossil findings up to 2019, the area of the Bumiayu Site is estimated to reach 67.825 km².

The Bumiayu Site is one of the important archaeological sites in Indonesia that preserves traces of ancient life. Harry Widiyanto, in his work *Poros Bumiayu-Prupuk-Semedo Migrasi Fauna dan Manusia Purba Tertua di Pulau Jawa (The Bumiayu-Prupuk-Semedo Axis: Migration of the Oldest Ancient Fauna and Humans on the Island of Java)*, states that the Bumiayu Site is the easternmost part of western Java (Widiyanto, 2019). Around 2.4 million years ago, Java Island tilted towards the east. At that time, West Java had become land, while Central and East Java were still oceans. This was due to tectonic activity and volcanic processes that have been ongoing since prehistoric times to the present, which have gradually led to the formation of land on Java Island.

The iconic discovery at the Bumiayu Site belongs to the ancient elephant generation. *Stegodon* and *Elephas* are ancient elephant species that are often found at several archaeological sites. However, as the oldest archaeological site in Indonesia today, the Bumiayu Site certainly has interesting findings in the development of the ancient elephant generation in Indonesia. Research on ancient elephant fossils at the Bumiayu Site is not only scientifically valuable from an archaeological perspective, but also encompasses the context of local cultural history. These findings provide concrete evidence that the Brebes region played an important role in the evolution and migration of fauna in the archipelago. Many archaeological sites in Indonesia face similar problems, namely a lack of community involvement in the preservation, management, and utilization of historical sites as sources of learning and tourism.

The community around the Bumiayu Site, particularly in Galuh Timur Village, Tonjong Subdistrict, Brebes Regency, through the Kampoeng Poerba tourism awareness group

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(Pokdarwis), is one of the local actors that has revived the historical value of the Bumiayu Site and the culture of the Galuh Timur Village community. Previous studies on the Bumiayu Site have mainly focused on site boundaries and general fossil findings, without explicitly discussing the discovery and historical significance of prehistoric elephant generations at the site (Fadhilillah, 2021). Specific studies on prehistoric elephants are more commonly associated with the nearby Semedo Site (Siswanto & Noerwidi, 2014). In addition, existing research on the cultural potential of the Bumiayu Site remains limited, as it predominantly examines batik development and does not comprehensively address the role of Pokdarwis Kampung Purba or other cultural elements such as folklore, traditional dances, local cuisine, and community-based practices (Zulfiningrum et al., 2024).

This Pokdarwis promotes the concept of community-based tourism, where the community is the main subject in the preservation and utilization of cultural heritage. The development carried out by Pokdarwis Kampoeng Poerba is an effort to create a tourist village that can benefit both tourists and the local community. A tourist village is a rural area with unique natural, cultural, social, or traditional attractions that can be used as tourist attractions, with the direct involvement of the community as the main actors and beneficiaries (Sudibya, 2018).

The role of Pokdarwis Kampoeng Poerba also demonstrates its concern for local attractions and the development of cultural potential that is in line with archaeological findings, such as the development of batik motifs, digul dance, and so on. The concept of tourism is evolving from a medium of recreation to a medium for disseminating knowledge and preserving local identity. This model is in line with the concept of heritage tourism, which emphasizes a balance between historical, cultural, and economic values. These conditions emphasize the importance of identifying and interpreting the distinctive historical and archaeological features of the Bumiayu Site, particularly in Galuh Timur Village, to support the development of cultural education tourism.

The purpose of this study is to describe the history of prehistoric elephant discoveries at the Bumiayu Site, explain the establishment of Pokdarwis Kampoeng Poerba as a form of community involvement, and identify the cultural education tourism potential of the site. This study contributes to public archaeology by highlighting the historical role of local communities and the cultural values of archaeological heritage in Indonesia.

METHODS

This study uses the historical method with an archaeological and anthropological approach in the process. The historical or historical method is a way in which a historian approaches the object of his research with structured steps that will facilitate the acquisition of historical data. According to Priyadi (2021), this includes the following steps: (1) Heuristics, (2) Verification, (3) Interpretation, (4) Historiography (Priyadi, 2021).

Heuristics is the initial stage in historical research that focuses on searching for, discovering, and collecting sources relevant to the research topic (Sjamsuddin, 2007). This is followed by verification or source criticism, which is divided into two types, namely external criticism to assess the physical authenticity of a source, and internal criticism to test the

content of the source through the validity of the archives, the mental condition of the source, and other aspects that support the validity of the data (Priyadi, 2021).

The next stage is interpretation, which is the process of interpreting the facts that have been obtained. At this stage, researchers attempt to connect separate pieces of data so that they are arranged logically and systematically. Kuntowijoyo (2001) emphasizes that interpretation must be carried out with a critical and objective attitude so as to produce a complete historical narrative (Kuntowijoyo, 2001). The final stage is historiography or historical writing, which involves compiling a coherent research report to answer the questions that have been formulated. In compiling this report, researchers need to pay attention to the principles of chronology, periodization, serialization, and causality so that the resulting historiographical work is systematic and accountable (Priyadi, 2021).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Historical Background and Presence of Prehistoric Elephants at the Bumiayu Site

The discovery of ancient elephant fossils at the Bumiayu Site has made an important contribution to archaeological research in Indonesia. These fossils indicate the existence of large fauna in western Java, as it is believed that the Bumiayu Site is the easternmost part of western Java that began to emerge as land. This research proves that the Bumiayu Site played an important role in the migration of fauna and early humans in Indonesia. This is evidenced by five genus and specimen discoveries in the Kali Glagah Formation, such as *Mastodon* sp and *Tetralophodon bumiayuensis* (elephant), *Hexaprotodon simplex* (water horse), *Cervidae* (deer), and *Geochelone* (giant turtle) during the colonial period or around the 1920s (Widiyanto, 2019).

Hary Widiyanto, a researcher from the Yogyakarta Archaeological Center who is one of the researchers from the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) in Dukuh Maribaya, who has been conducting in-depth research on the Bumiayu Site for 5-7 years, explained that the Bumiayu Site is a rich archaeological site. Its location clearly makes it the first site to appear on the island of Java, making it the oldest archaeological site to date. This richness is evident from the types of findings and also the age of the findings, which are considered older than other sites.

Sinomastodon Bumiayuensis

Sinomastodon is a genus of proboscideans that lived from the late Miocene to the early Pleistocene, or approximately 5.3 to 2 million years ago, in mainland Asia, as found in China, Vietnam and Laos. The skull and molar fossils of *Sinomastodon* found in Yunnan provide evidence that this genus developed in a humid, hilly forest environment before spreading southward through mainland Southeast Asia (Zhang et al., 2017). The presence of *Sinomastodon* at the Bumiayu Site indicates the condition of the Java coastline at that time. In addition, the lower tusks are not permanent or may even be missing, indicating a stage of food adaptation that was not as complex as that of later generations of elephants (Wang et al., 2012).

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In the Indonesian context, the presence of *Sinomastodon* indicates that early generations of large elephants had already entered the Indonesian archipelago and served as the ancestors of further Proboscidea fauna in these islands (Siswanto & Noerwidi, 2014). In several interviews, it was mentioned that *Sinomatodon Bumiajuensis* lived around 1.8–1.5 million years ago in the Kali Glagah formation (soil layer). Fossils of *Sinomastodon Bumiajuensis* are stored at the Bumiayu Archaeological Museum and also at the Bandung Geological Museum.



Figure 1: *Sinomastodon Bumiajuensis* Fossil.
Source: Bumiayu Prehistoric Museum (2025)

Stegodon

Stegodon belongs to the genus *Stegodontidae*, which was significant in the Late Pliocene to Pleistocene fauna of Southeast Asia, including Indonesia. A study of the lower jaw from the Subang region of West Java places the *Stegodon* fossil at “Late Pliocene to Early Pleistocene” age (Wibowo et al., 2018). The estimated age of this type of fossil is approximately 2.6 to 0.9 million years ago. The *Stegodon* genus was the most dominant taxon in South Asia and Southeast Asia. *Stegodon* fossils have been found at many archaeological sites in Indonesia, such as Sangiran, Semedo, Blora, and others. This distribution shows the rapid development of *Stegodon* in the Wallacea region (a group of islands stretching between Asia and Australia), demonstrating its remarkable adaptation to the tropical conditions of Southeast Asia (Louys et al., 2016).



Figure 2: Stegodon Fossil in Bumiayu Site
Source: Bumiayu Prehistoric Museum (2025)

Elephas

Elephas falls within the scope of modern elephants with transitional records from the Pleistocene to the Holocene (Basilia et al., 2023). Fossils of *Elephas namadicus* have been found in the Narmada River plains of India, as well as in several regions of Southeast Asia, the Malay Peninsula (Malaysia), and the Sunda Islands (Indonesia) (Tze Tshen, 2013). *Elephas* represents the final evolutionary framework of the large elephant lineage and the beginning of the elephant fauna that still exists today (Keerthipriya & Vidya, 2019). The Bumiayu site is part of the Sunda Islands, as the island of Java rose from the west, and Bumiayu is the easternmost coast of western Java. The absolute age of the *Elephas* discovery at the Bumiayu site was determined based on an interview with a staff member of the Bumiayu Archaeological Museum, who stated it was 13,110 years ago. The discovery at the Bumiayu site, which was more of a chance find, made the absolute dating process challenging.



Figure 3: *Elephas* Fossil in Bumiayu Site
Source: Bumiayu Prehistoric Museum (2025)

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Stegoloxodon

Stegoloxodon is one of the prehistoric elephant species identified by researchers in relation to the Bumiayu Site, with ongoing studies contributing to the understanding of Indonesia's prehistoric heritage and its educational value. In the work of Georgi N. Markov & Haruo Saegusa, "On the validity of *Stegoloxodon Kretzoi*, 1950," it is stated that *Stegoloxodon* does not belong to the genus *Elephas*, and it is confirmed that *Stegoloxodon* has its own distinct species (Markov & Saegusa, 2008).

Findings from several Indonesian sites, including Bumiayu and the Walanae Valley, indicate the presence of diverse prehistoric elephant species, reflecting the richness of Indonesia's prehistoric heritage and its value for educational interpretation. For example, isotope studies in Sulawesi show that *Stegoloxodon celebensis* and *Stegodon sompoensis* lived in close proximity to each other in the fauna sequence (Puspaningrum et al., 2021). However, in that research "Fosil Proboscidea dari Situs Semedo: Hubungannya dengan Biostratigrafi dan Kehadiran Manusia di Jawa" *Sinomastodon* or *Sinomastodon bumiayuensis* appeared earlier in Java along with other early Pleistocene fauna (Siswanto & Noerwidi, 2014). This indicates that *Stegoloxodon* represents part of the diversity of prehistoric elephants in Indonesia and continues to be an important subject in understanding the country's prehistoric heritage.

The main controversy associated with *Stegoloxodon* involves its taxonomic validity and the sequence of its appearance relative to other species. Because the fossil material for *Stegoloxodon indonesicus* is very limited, many researchers question whether it truly represents a distinct species or merely a local variant of other types such as *Elephas* or *Palaeoloxodon* (Markov & Saegusa, 2008). The discovery of *Stegoloxodon* remains at the Bumiayu Site highlights the significance of the site in understanding the diversity of prehistoric elephants in Indonesia. This finding strengthens the educational value of the Bumiayu Site as part of Indonesia's prehistoric heritage and supports its potential development as a cultural education tourism destination.



Figure 4: Stegoloxodon Fossil in Bumiayu Site
Source: Bumiayu Prehistoric Museum (2025)

The Founding History of Pokdarwis Kampoeng Poerba

Pokdarwis is a community organization that operates at the village level in areas with tourism potential. This organization or group acts as a catalyst for raising community awareness in developing tourism potential in villages. Its role includes promoting the values of safety, order, cleanliness, comfort, hospitality, and memorable experiences, commonly referred to as *Sapta Pesona*, as a form of community-based tourism destination management (Putrawan et al., 2019). Through this group, the tourism potential of the village is incorporated into regional tourism mapping, destination management, and the empowerment of local communities to enhance tourism development in social and cultural aspects (Arifin, 2020).

The initial formation of Pokdarwis Kampoeng Poerba arose from the awareness of the community of Dukuh Tengah Hamlet, Galuh Timur Village, Tonjong Subdistrict, Brebes Regency, who discovered fossilized bones on their land and around their agricultural gardens. Although they had little knowledge about fossils, their interest in the visual appearance of the discovery led to the idea of keeping them as a private collection. Before the emergence of Pokdarwis, the fossil discoverers had already joined the Bumiayu Site fossil preservation organization, with members from three subdistricts within the site's scope. However, with encouragement from the local government and awareness among the communities around the site, especially Galuh Timur Village, the idea of forming Pokdarwis Kampoeng Poerba emerged to help preserve and promote ancient tourism at the Bumiayu Site. The Bumiayu Site is rich in fossils and has potential for the development of educational tourism and cultural heritage, both from fossils and the local culture around it. The collaboration between local residents, the local government, and academics in the process of identifying, securing, and developing the Bumiayu Site proves that this area has potential for the development of educational tourism and cultural heritage. Collaboration in the development of geology/heritage-based tourism is one of the efforts in the form of community empowerment (Mustovia, 2025).

With active support from the village and regional governments, Pokdarwis Kampoeng Poerba was formed as a community institution focused on developing community-based cultural tourism and archaeological education. Pokdarwis also gives the local community a role as managers and partners in the development of cultural tourism. Galuh Timur, already known as the “Ancient Tourism Village” due to the discovery of fossils and artifacts in the area, has not stopped developing this potential by simply displaying bones, but has also begun to venture into the world of ancient motif batik art. This human resource development is proof of the local ancient potential with the community becoming an active subject in its development (Zulfiningrum et al., 2024).

The initial stage of forming Pokdarwis Kampoeng Poerba cannot be separated from the role of the Tourism Office, which provides a legal framework and institution for the Galuh Timur Village community group. The legality and institutionality of a tourism development organization such as Pokdarwis is an important aspect of an organization as an indicator of formality. The legality of Pokdarwis through a decree from the tourism office provides access to databases, HR training, and recognition as a tourism manager (Hidayati & Oktalina, 2020).

The government believes that community groups concerned with the preservation of ancient sites and local potential need to obtain legal status in order to work in a structured manner. The following is the management structure of Pokdarwis Kampoeng Poerba, which was established on August 18, 2018, based on the decree of its establishment:

Table 1: Organizational Structure of Kampoeng Poerba Community-Based Tourism Group

| No | Name | Position |
|----|--|--|
| 1 | Kepala DINPUBDAR Kab. Brebes | Chairman of the Board of Trustees |
| 2 | Kabid Pariwisata DINPUBDAR Kab. Brebes | Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees |
| 3 | Kepala Desa Galuh Timur | Chairman of the Advisory Board |
| 4 | Ahmad Baedowi A.Ma | Staff of the Advisory Board |
| 5 | Jubaedi | Staff of the Advisory Board |
| 6 | H. Rafli Rizal | Staff of the Advisory Board |
| 7 | Saefulloh | Staff of the Advisory Board |
| 8 | Muhajir | Staff of the Advisory Board |
| 9 | Ali Mahfuri | Head of Management |
| 10 | Ahmad Rodik | Deputy Head of Management |
| 11 | Surismanto | Secretary I |
| 12 | Muhamad Khanafi | Secretary II |
| 13 | Waid | Treasurer I |
| 14 | Topik | Treasurer II |
| 15 | Imam Ghozali S.Pd | Tourism Human Resources Section |
| 16 | Ahmad Daroji S.Pd | Staff of Tourism Human Resources |
| 17 | Rizatul Maulina | Tourism Promotion Section |
| 18 | Sigit Budi Prasetyo | Staff of Tourism Promotion Section |
| 19 | Wasroni | Archaeological Section |
| 20 | Sobari | Staff of Archaeological Section |
| 21 | Sartono | Staff of Archaeological Section |
| 22 | Nasikin | Staff of Archaeological Section |
| 23 | Gimang | Staff of Archaeological Section |
| 24 | Taslim | Staff of Archaeological Section |
| 25 | Karsono | Staff of Archaeological Section |
| 26 | Sodikin | Staff Archaeological Section |
| 27 | Wildan | Staff of Archaeological Section |
| 28 | Tarno | Staff of Archaeological Section |
| 29 | Suprayitno | Rescue Section |
| 30 | Rizal Pahlevi | Staff of Rescue Section |
| 31 | Muslih | Safety and Security Section |
| 32 | Nur Hamid | Staff of Safety and Security Section |

Source: Pokdarwis Kampoeng Poerba (2018)

With an official institutional structure, Pokdarwis Kampoeng Poerba can systematically implement its tourism development goals, such as creating an organizational vision and mission, developing work programs, assigning tasks to administrators, collaborating with the government, securing funding, and developing the village's cultural potential. Pokdarwis with a formal organizational structure and legal status are considered more capable of implementing group-based tourism village development work programs (Gani et al., 2023). The establishment of institutions also strengthens the position of the local community as the main actor in managing tourism potential in Galuh Timur Village. They are not only spectators and beneficiaries, but also play an active role in partnering with the government and the private sector in its development.

In an interview with Ahmad Daroji, a member of the tourism human resources section, he mentioned that after the formation of Pokdarwis Kampoeng Poerba, many programs were participated in, such as joining the Brebes Pokdarwis Forum as a form of active involvement in the regional organization and aiming to learn from the experiences of other Pokdarwis groups, promoting the group by participating in the Creative Economy (Ekraf) competition organized by the Brebes Regency Culture and Tourism Office, a documentary film-based promotion competition representing Brebes Regency at the provincial level, community empowerment by helping to market cassava products, mlinjo crackers, and training in the making of Kampoeng Poerba's signature batik, and various other activities in collaboration with domestic and international parties.

The Potential and Strategic Steps for the Development of Pokdarwis Kampoeng Poerba

The Galuh Timur Village area not only holds fossil discoveries buried within its territory but also possesses potential for developing educational and cultural tourism destinations. Through the development of the Kampoeng Poerba Tourism Development Group, this potential is not merely treated as a passive object but can be transformed into a tourist attraction that narrates the history and culture of the local community. The development of a tourist village does not solely rely on natural landscapes but can also be linked to history and cultural elements that are naturally embedded in the community (Nursetiawan & Supriyanto, 2023). For example, the revelation that Galuh Timur Village was part of the Galuh Kingdom civilization reinforces the argument that local historical roots can be a strategic resource for tourism development (Izzati & Sudaryanto, 2020).

In addition to the archaeological site, there are relics in the form of stone piles that are said to be relics from the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom era. The community around Galuh Timur Village calls it Candi Gagang Golok, but based on historians' studies, these stone piles date back to the Galuh Kingdom era. The existence of these stone structures adds to the archaeological knowledge emerging in Galuh Timur Village and can become a new educational insight into the historical map of Indonesia. Archaeological sites integrated into village tourism development can be a major attraction as well as a tool for learning about the historical map of the surrounding area for the community and visitors (Julita et al., 2023). Thus, the stone piles and interpretations of the past of the Galuh Kingdom in the West Java region can be developed

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into educational tourism with appropriate historical learning routes and can be published as educational media material.

Colonial heritage also entered the area of East Galuh Village, where a bridge was built under the railroad tracks to connect communities due to the swift flow of the river beneath the bridge. Colonial buildings present an increasingly interesting layer of history to the narrative of East Galuh Village. This relic is an interesting attraction because tourists can experience the sensation of standing in the middle of the bridge with trains running above them. Heritage-based tourism development strengthens the sustainability of local tourism by involving historical cross-references and developing folklore. Community empowerment is an important aspect of cultural heritage management, not only in terms of the objects themselves, but also the involvement of local groups or communities in developing tourism and preserving the heritage (Setiawan et al., 2024).

Folktales that have been passed down from generation to generation in every hamlet of Galuh Timur Village are a valuable cultural asset in the development of educational tourism. Oral traditions such as the prohibition of crossing the Kali Baklarang river during circumcision and wedding celebrations, the prohibition of consuming deer meat, and local legends (the story of Gajah Wong and the story of Syeikh Bayanillah eating) are not mere myths. The people of Galuh Timur Village preserve moral and local values, as well as traces of social history that are attractive to tourists seeking meaningful experiences. Studies on folklore and oral traditions confirm that legends and traditional beliefs often serve as valuable sources for interpreting history and culture, making them worthy of inclusion in community-based tourism packages.

Tourist visits to story points in East Galuh, in addition to their interest in fossils and archaeological sites, reflect a dual attraction between material attractions such as fossils and stone piles left behind by the Ancient Galuh Kingdom and non-material attractions such as folklore, believed myths, and unique celebrations in a place. Research on the development of tourist villages shows that intangible cultural elements can increase the duration of visits, enrich the visitor experience, and open up opportunities for educational activities such as storytelling walks, cultural workshops, and participatory ritual performances designed in collaboration with the community. This can be achieved by mapping story locations such as forbidden places and legendary sites. Pokdarwis can develop tourist routes connecting fossils, archaeological sites, and points of oral heritage (Wicaksono et al., 2023).

Community involvement is key to ensuring that folklore is not merely a commodity for tourism, but also an effort to preserve local identity and historical sources. The Community-Based Tourism (CBT) model emphasizes community participation in planning, storytelling, and service provision. One example of CBT is training local guides to tell stories about the Kali Baklarang tradition, or organizing cultural demonstrations, such as musical dramas or other performances related to the prohibition of eating deer, with an explanation of the origins of the relationship between humans and deer that led to the creation of this prohibition. Community-Based Tourism is one of the breakthroughs in village empowerment by showing that when the community has control over the presentation of their stories, the economic and social benefits tend to be more evenly distributed and sustainable (Surya Wijaya et al., 2019).

In addition to its historical tourism potential, the rudad dance, digul dance, sura torch parade, and cuisine are also part of the appeal of this tourism destination. It should be noted that tourism is divided into several types, namely: (1) pleasure tourism; (2) recreation tourism; (3) culture tourism; (4) sport tourism (sports tourism); (5) business tourism (business tourism); (6) convention tourism (convention tourism) (Brahmanto, 2015). Galuh Timur Village promotes tourism as culture tourism or tourism to introduce culture.

Local cuisine is one of the main attractions in Kampoeng Poerba. Nasi liwet sambal bakar (rice cooked in coconut milk with chili sauce) and coconut palm sap are among the most popular dishes. In addition to these main dishes, Galuh Timur is famous for its cassava and coconut-based snacks. These include *opak*, *slimpring*, *kardin* (short for *lakar bodin*), jeletot, and many others. Coconut trees thrive in this area and are used to make palm sugar (brown sugar) from coconut sap. In addition, there are palm sugar craftsmen who make other products, such as palm sugar, by sprinkling coconut sap with grated coconut so that when the sugar-making process is complete, it looks like an ant nest so this product call *gula semut*. Another souvenir is *emping mlinjo*. Emping is not an unfamiliar food to various communities in Indonesia, but it is certain that emping from Galuh Timur village has a distinctive and more delicious taste because it is not too bitter.

Strategic steps that can be taken by Pokdarwis Kampoeng Poerba in developing this educational cultural tourism include providing educational tour packages, training local communities in tour guiding, introducing the management of mini fossil exhibitions, developing culinary and souvenir products, and promoting the village digitally through social media. These activities can be carried out by participating in training, seminars, and competitions related to tourism villages.

Collaboration with universities, archaeological institutions, and the private sector has opened up opportunities for further research at the Bumiayu Site. The hope is to turn this site into an open learning laboratory. Pokdarwis also strives to maintain a balance between preserving the site's environment and improving the welfare of the surrounding community. One example of this extraordinary collaboration is the Human Origins Heritage (HOH) program, which focuses on archaeological research while also studying the social impact on the communities surrounding the site. The presence of participants from various countries, such as France, India, Japan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, India, China, and several other countries in 2023 and 2024, provides a boost for the people of Galuh Timur Village to improve the tourism sector.

From an educational and research perspective, the integration of folklore into tourism programs opens up opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration: anthropology, archaeology, ethnography, and history education. This approach allows visitors, including students and university students, to learn how social norms (ritual prohibitions), beliefs in legendary creatures or figures (Gajah Wong), and daily practices shape human-environment relations in the past and present. In addition, the documentation of oral stories (audio recordings, story maps, written narratives) becomes useful scientific material for cultural conservation and local teaching.

CONCLUSION

The potential for cultural and educational tourism arising from the discovery of prehistoric fossils at the Bumiayu Site, particularly in Galuh Timur Village, serves as evidence of the importance of reconstructing the evolutionary history of prehistoric fauna in Indonesia. Discoveries such as those of prehistoric elephants, Cervidae (deer species), and various other fossils make the Bumiayu Site not only recognized as the oldest site but also as one rich in prehistoric fauna. The soil layers, geomorphological conditions, ancient river flows, and other geological evidence indicate that the Bumiayu Site was once a fertile environment that supported the life of megafauna, including prehistoric elephants. The prehistoric elephant, especially *Sinomastodon bumiajuensis*, which has become the icon of the Bumiayu Site, represents one of the most significant examples of complex evolutionary dynamics shaped by climate change, faunal migration, and ecological conditions that occurred hundreds of thousands to millions of years ago.

Beyond its paleontological significance, *Kampoeng Poerba* also preserves other forms of historical and cultural beauty. The awareness of the Galuh Timur community toward the value of cultural heritage has led to preservation efforts in the form of a community movement. The establishment of *Pokdarwis* (Tourism Awareness Group) *Kampoeng Poerba* represents one of the local government's initiatives to create a forum for cultural preservation. The formation of *Pokdarwis Kampoeng Poerba* serves as a manifestation of the community's active participation in managing the cultural and historical potential of Galuh Timur Village. Since its founding, *Pokdarwis* has played a central role in educating residents about fossils, organizing tourism activities, and bridging collaboration between the government, academics, and the local community. This demonstrates that the preservation of prehistoric heritage cannot rely solely on formal institutions, but must also involve local communities as the primary agents in the transmission and safeguarding of cultural values.

Galuh Timur Village holds great potential for the development of culture-based educational tourism, as it preserves valuable scientific insights through the diversity of prehistoric fossils discovered in the area. The village's natural beauty, traditional dances, the creation of batik designs inspired by fossil findings and local flora, as well as its distinctive culinary offerings that may not be found elsewhere, further enhance its cultural richness. This potential can be developed through several strategic steps. First, strengthening educational infrastructure to support informative experiences for visitors, such as creating interactive exhibition spaces or a mini fossil museum that briefly explains geological processes and the evolutionary history of prehistoric elephants. Next is the development of tourism packages within *Kampoeng Poerba*, allowing visitors to enjoy scenic views through river trekking, visits to fossil collections preserved by local caretakers, and tours of other historical sites, such as the remains of ancient stone structures from the Galuh Kingdom, concluding with a local culinary experience. Homestays are also an important component, providing accommodation for tourists who wish to stay longer and participate in additional activities. The final step lies in empowering the local economy through the creation of unique batik products and traditional foods that serve as souvenirs for visitors, symbolizing the growth of community-based economic development. Further development can be achieved through training programs for

tour guides and homestay management, ensuring that facilities and visitor experiences are well-organized, educational, and memorable.

Ultimately, the existence of prehistoric elephants at the Bumiayu Site does not merely record traces of the past but also opens vast opportunities for the future. From fossils buried beneath the earth emerges a gateway to a new awareness one that emphasizes the importance of preserving the planet's heritage, strengthening local identity, and fostering community independence through culture-based educational tourism. *Pokdarwis Kampoeng Poerba* has the potential to grow into a center for prehistoric education and a model for history-based village tourism development in Indonesia. Furthermore, synergy between education, research, and tourism must be strengthened. The Bumiayu Site can serve as a natural laboratory for researchers, students, and scholars who wish to study evolution and ancient culture directly in the field. Through cross-sector collaboration among archaeological institutions, local governments, universities, and community site managers, sustainable heritage management can be achieved. This initiative demonstrates that the past is not merely a memory, but a foundation upon which a more knowledgeable, cultured, and sustainable future can be built.

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