

**LOCAL COMMUNITY AND ITS EXISTENCE:
THE ENVIRONMENTAL WISDOM OF *KASEPUHAN* COMMUNITY AT
KAMPONG CENGKUK, SUKABUMI DISTRICT, WEST JAVA**

Ary Sulistyio

Program Studi Manajemen Perhotelan dan Pariwisata
Fakultas Bisnis dan Ilmu Sosial, International University Liaison Indonesia
ary.sulistyio@iuli.ac.id

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini membahas tentang kelestarian lingkungan pada kampung adat Sunda kawasan Gunung Halimun Selatan. Kampung adat Cengkuk adalah salah satu kampung pengikut yang mengikuti tradisi atau Kasepuhan Ciptagelar dalam pengelolaan lingkungan. Faktor dari dalam dan luar kampung menyebabkan deforestasi hutan alam rata-rata sekitar 6-8% per tahun. Pertambahan penduduk kampung mencapai rata-rata 5,35% per tahun dikategorikan sangat padat. Dengan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dan wawancara, menunjukkan bahwa tradisi atau adat Kasepuhan masih dianut warga kampung dengan menjaga hutan tutupan (*leuweung tutupan*) di sebelah selatan Kampung hanya untuk kegiatan subsistensi. Perubahan sosio-kultur terjadi pada masyarakat dengan tidak melakukan kegiatan berladang di hutan (*outer island agriculture*) tetapi lebih kepada kegiatan bertani di sawah (*wet rice cultivation*). Pengurangan pada proses dan kegiatan upacara, yang semula delapan upacara daur ladang menjadi lima upacara daur sawah. Kegiatan yang profan lebih banyak pada pengembangan komoditas tanaman ekonomi di kebun-talun. Pola keruangan dalam aspek kelestarian lingkungan juga masih menempatkan posisi; gunung-pemukiman-sungai; kampung inti-kampung pengikut. Kampung yang secara geografis lebih tinggi memiliki tradisi yang lebih ketat dibandingkan dengan kampung yang lebih rendah.

Kata kunci: Kampung, komunitas, lingkungan, hutan, tradisi

ABSTRACT

This research focused on the eternality of environment of indigenous Sunda Village of Kasepuhan Ciptagelar at Southern Halimun Mountain. The indigenous of Cengkuk Village was one compose of several cluster villages who still follow the tradition or Kasepuhan Ciptagelar in environmental management. There were internal factors and external factors led to deforestation of natural forests on average around 6-8% per year. The growth of population which was rise up until 5.35% per year was categorized as extremely dense. With descriptive qualitative research and interview showed that Kasepuhan indigenous tradition in people at the south of the village is still practicing by protecting forestland (*leuweung tutupan*) only for their subsistence. Socialculture changes were occurring in the community with no agricultural activities in the forest (*outer island agriculture*), but agricultural activities in the field (*wet rice cultivation*). Reduction in process and ceremonial activities also happened, which was originally held eight ceremonial outer island agriculture rituals into five ceremonial of wet rice cultivation. More profane activities were developing economic crops in kebun-talun. The spatial pattern in environmental aspect was still having position; mountain-settlement-river; the main indigenous village of Kasepuhan—and include of several cluster villages. Indigenous villages that were geographically higher usually have more stricted tradition than the lower one.

Keywords: Kampung, community, environment, forest, tradition

BACKGROUND

Indonesia has 10% remain left of the world's tropical forests to support the hydrology and biodiversity. In 2010's the coverland of Java stayed 4%. Annual deforestation is 1,3 million Ha (1.2%). In the 16th Century, natural forest in Java was still about 9 million Ha. In the late 1980's natural forest in Java only stayed 0.97 million Ha or 7% of the total area on the island of Java (Hidayat, 2008: 88).

*Kampung*¹ Cengkuk which is administratively located in Margalaksana Village, Cikakak, Sukabumi District, West Java, Indonesia is one of the *Kampung* that out of bonds and close to Halimun-Salak Mountains National Park at the section of Zone II of Halimun Mountain Cibodas Resort, Sukabumi District (Bodas Mountain Resort, 2010). Forest cover in this *Kampung* has a rate of deforestation an average 6-8% per year (Yatap, 2008: 52). However the local community still practicing the tradition of *Sunda Wivitan*, a sundanese tradition before Hinduism and Islam acculturated with local community beliefs which is based on respect to the ancestors for the way of life.

In the span of 20 years, from 1990 to 2010 there has been natural forest depreciation approximately 10.48 Ha which the total area of *Kampung* is 1987.25 Ha, and forest ratio in 1990 decreased from 0.5% to 0.00% in 2010 (Data Profil Desa Tahun 2006). The depreciation of natural forest is closely related to population growth, affect the extension production land (rice field and garden) and other man-made environment. Kampung Cengkuk annually population rate is 5.35% categorized very dense.

Forrest depreciation also caused the forfeit of biodiversity and one of them due to socio-economic of local communities including demographic changes, social poverty and inequality, government policies, markets and politics role, changes in macroeconomic and social development (Wood, *et al.*, 2000: 13). Moreover, social urbanization, landuse acreage, settlement expansion, income level, accessibility to natural resources, the values of forrest resource, education and gender equality (compiled from various sources by Yatap, 2008: 6).

REASERCH METHOD

The study formulates the values of the social environment (environmental wisdom) of Kampung Cengkuk as followers of traditions and customs of *Kasepuhan Ciptagelar* the indigenous Sundaness communities. The research questions are:

¹ *Kampung* (English: Village) probably derived from Portuegese '*campo*' means campground. In several places in Indonesia called Gampong (Aceh), *Kampung* (Minang), and *Kampung* (Papua). Kampung is an area, where there are few houses of families lived there (rural) and opposite with the city (urban).

- 1) What practices of traditions that stand in the context of environmental sustainability?
- 2) How traditions or customs that stand to changes in population, depleted of natural forests, and their subsistence activities other that in accordance with the principles of environmental sustainability by Kasepuhan customs and traditions?

The research method is qualitative with descriptive approaches. The qualitative data are text, writing, phrases, or symbol which illustrate or represent human, activities or events in social life (Neuman, 1997: 418). The qualitative research conducted for determine community perception. In addition the descriptive intended for meticulous measurement to particular social phenomena (Singarimbun and Effendi, 1989:4). The descriptive carried out to notice completely fenomenan that occur in Cengkuk traditional *kampung*. The collection of data obtained from the literatures, surveys, observations, participants, and in-depth interviews. Interview method used is structured interview. Data processing is done after data collected and analyzed then it's generalize the findings. The interpretations is done by drawing conclusions from the patterns that visible in integrated data which explain the phenomenon in the context of environmental preservation.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Literatures Review

The development and environmental issues can be seen in a unity (Salim, 1997); the unitary relationship between the natural environment, social environment and man-made environment. One of the issues in the context of social Indonesia which has an area of tropical rain forest and rural studies in the worlds second largest is the environmental degradation surrounding area of the forest due to population pressures and economic intervention.

Human Ecology

Human ecologically is an integral part their living environment. Human is formed by their environment and *vice versa* shaping his environment. The survival of humanity depends on the environmental integrity of his life (Soemarwoto, 2007: 35). Human through their culture, which is a tool to interact with physical and biotic environment. In every culture, there are usually elements of culture likes: language, knowledge system, social organization, systems and technology of equipment life, livelihood system, religion, and arts. The concept of *environmental probalilism* emphasized in this study. It is based on the the abilitly of communities with their social-culture to changes the environment. The environmental probalilism be appropriate to pre-industrial societies.

Rural Tourism

In West Java region, around 12 Sundanese *Kampung* there are Kampung Adat Baduy, Kampung Kasepuhan, Kampung Mahmud, Kampung Cikondang, Kampung Kuta, Kampung Naga, Kampung Dukuh, Kampung Pulo, Kampung Urug, Kampung Tonggoh, Kampung Cigendang, and Kampung Palastra. Those *kampongs* still practicing the traditional wisdom which protecting their forest. Today those *Kampongs* set and promoted by local government as DTW (*Daerah Tujuan Wisata* or 'Tourism Destination Area') as a sample of sustainable development including ecotourism (Yunas, 2007) as well as rural tourism, natural tourism, and cultural tourism (Nugroho, 2011: 15). Some of the reasons why must develop the Sundanese kampongs as tourism destinations and attraction they are living monument or heritage not dead monuments (temples, statues, etc), the same characteristics of value system and socio-cultural system which is protecting the forest (*leuweung*), and same ecoregion in West Java covered by lowland tropical rain forest which has rich biodiversity.

Forest and Communities

The function of forests for local communities of indigenous Sunda villages have significance meaning in subsistence activities. Forest for Sundanese called *leuweung*; have types and utilization patterns were different in every villages and region. For example, in the village of Kampung Baduy, Ciboleger, South Banten have old forest/primary forest located in hilltop every village. Whereas, secondary forest located on a ridge or slope between hillside and hilltop (Permana, 2006: 62). The utilization of forest of indigenous village is closely related to subsistence. Community rely on forest products. Baduy community use forest for shifting cultivation, which divided into three forests; primary forests (*leuweung kolot*), village/ *kampung* forest (*leuweung lembur*) and intensive cultivation forest (*huma*) (Iskandar, 1992 in Fawnia, *et al.*, 2004: 2). As well as the indigenous community of Kasepuhan in Sukabumi District divided the forests into three, namely old-forest (*leuweung kolot*), secondary forest (*leuweung tutupan*), and intensive cultivation forest (*huma* or *leuweung sampalan*).

The pattern of Kasepuhan *Kampongs* nearby forest typically associated with eco-religion of rice. Hill or mountain is a place that has very important meaning. There is a linkage between the mountains with local belief that the spirits dwell in the mountain. Sacred values of the mountain are also still practiced by the traditional Sundaness *Kampung*. In the *Kampung* usually borders the sacred places or ancestor as protector of the *Kampung* and surrounded by flowing river as symbol of fertility. The orientation of *Kampung* also refers to the sunrise-

sunset direction. Beside the relationship between the layout of the houses and barns (*lenit*) which has west-east direction (Wessing, 2003:521-523).

Indigenous communities or indigenous peoples are a community who their ancestors as beginner, stay in particular, used local resources as livelihood. They united by similarities of their descendents, history, customs, language, law, lifestyle inherited from the the wisdom of their ancestors (ILO Convention No. 169, June 27th 1989, on Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Community).

The Kasepuhan tradional *Kampong* of Cengkuk value systems still follow the conception of covering forest (or secondary forest) in the form of unwritten customary rules (*pikukuh*) of the forest landuse practices. The processes and practical activities are sacred ceremonies of agricultural cycle which symbolizing the fertility (the Goddess of *Dewi Sri/ Nyi Pohaci*) related directly with conservation of forest landuse. In addition, there also profane activities which directly conserve the forests with add surplus value of forest landuse for homegarden (*kebun talun*).

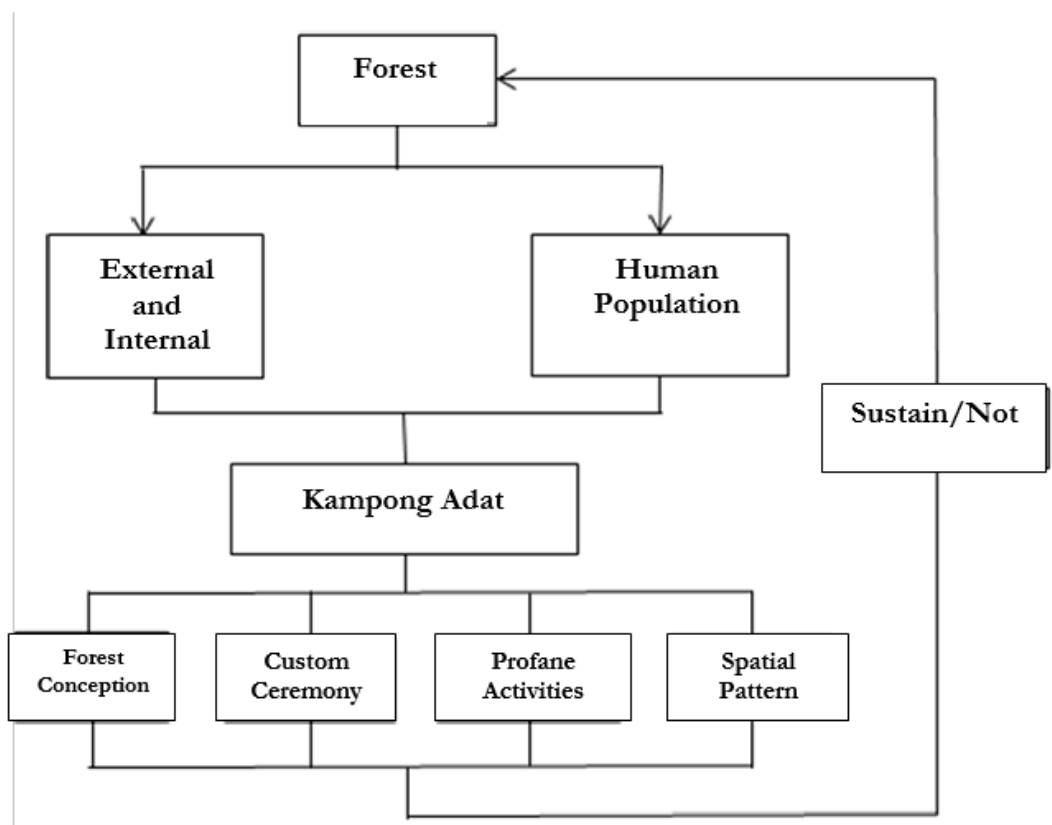


Figure 3. Research's Conceptual Framework

DISCUSSION

The history of Kasepuhan's Community

The Kasepuhan communities currently dispersed in the area of South Banten, Bogor, Sukabumi, and Lebak. More than 500 years ago, the traditional community as the last descendent of Sundanese Hindu Kingdom in West Java, which centered in Pajajaran, Bogor. They lived now in the region of Halimun-Salak Mountains National Park. They fled to the mountainous area to avoid the assault troops of Banten Kingdom (Islam Kingdom). Although they are dispersed, they still follow the same customs which is referred to as “Kesatuan Banten Kidul” or “South Banten Unity” or “Kasepuhan” which is oriented in the direction of “Kampung Gede” as community center namely Kampung Ciptarasa and Kampung Citagelar. The community customs (*adat istiadat*) generation by generation traditionally led by “Abah” or “Father” in relationship that is patron-client or paternalistic (Adimihardja, 1992 in Nugraheni and Winata, 2002: 11).



Figure 4. Structure of Adat Kasepuhan Banten Kidul

In general, the Kasepuhan communities and Kampung Cengkuk notably are Moslem, but they still practiced the traditions of their ancestors (*kokolot*) of *Sunda Wiwitan*. *Sunda Wiwitan* or *Urang Girang* or *Kolot* is the teaching (*pikukuh*) which states that the living place need to be properly maintained by communities due to it was centre of the earth or center of universe which made prosperity. The Sundanese communities or groups like this based on cultural system and social structures as well as Old Sundanese, long before Hinduism culture came and influenced to West Java or in prehistoric time (Garna, 2008: 79).

Environmental Setting

Geographical location

Kampung Cengkuk is geographically located at an altitude 382-415 meters above sea level and astronomically 6°53' South Latitude and 108°28' East Longitude. Kampong Cengkuk administratively located at Margalaksana Village, Cikakak Subdistrict, Sukabumi District, West Java Province.

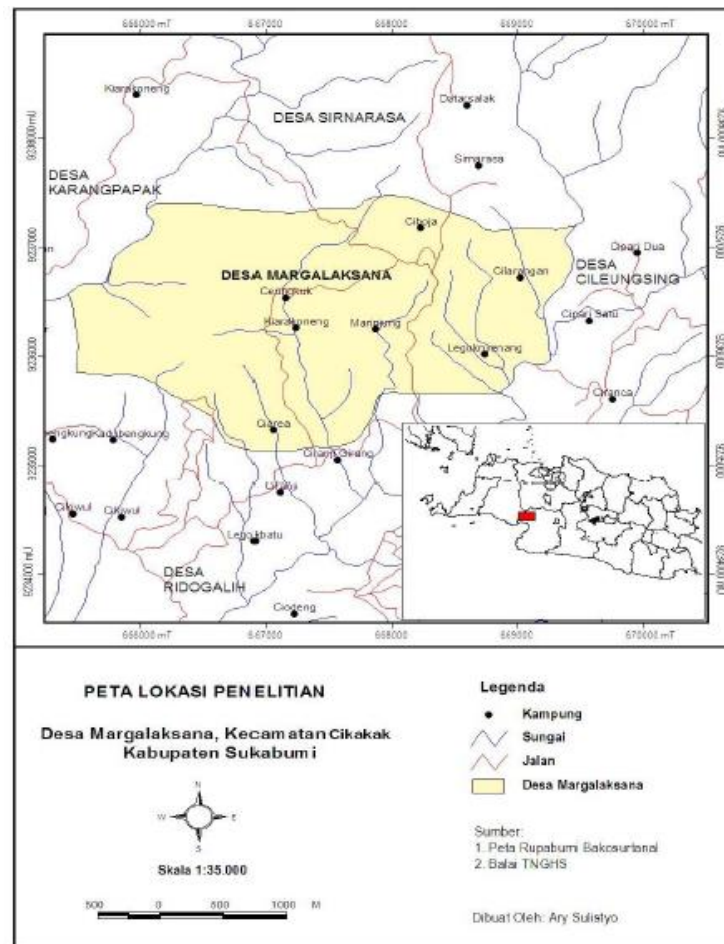


Figure 5. Map of Margalaksana Village and Kampong Cengkuk

Geology

According to Van Bemmelen (1970), the physiographic region included in series of southern mountains of West Java. This region is a volcanic hills with declitovous slope and elevation between 500-700 meters above sea level.

Climate

According to Schmidt and Ferguson, the area of Bodas Mountain Resort has climate type B with the ratio of the number of avarege months of dry and wet (Q) is 24.7 and monthly

average temperature 31.8°C (minimum 19.7°C and maximum 33°C). The average humidity is 88% with the average rainfall is 4.000-6.000 mm/year (Resort Gunung Bodas, 2010).

Water Sources

The watershed is an area of land that is bounded by topographic ridges mountain accommodate and store the water for later distribute to the sea through the main river (Asdak, 2004: 1—4). In Kampong Cengkuk and surrounding there are three springs flow across the Kampong toward Cimaja River and Cisukawanyana River until Pelabuhan Ratu estuary.

Community perception

The communities occupation beside in agriculture sector, there are closely linked to agriculture (off-farm) and apart from agriculture (non-farm). Based on the surveys of 50 household with purposive sampling method obtained information that the average of the residents (98%) is off-farm occupation and average income USD 25 per month (in 2009). The tota area of Kampong is 12.5 hectars with land ratio 0.07 hectars every household. The community perception of forestland at Batu Lawang area 47.95% for sources of food security (homegarden) and cultivated land and 46.93% said that forest used as water springs for wet rice cultivation

The practices of traditional environmental preservation

The practices of traditional environmental preservation consist of sacred activities and profane activities. In the Kampong of Cengkuk, a sacred activities include the activities conducting religious aspects in the practice of forest and water sources stewardship (subsistence), particularly in regard to agriculture recycling ceremony (according to calendar calculations) and profane activities include the activities to carry out daily for forest and water resources management practices (surplus value). At customary community of Kampong Cengkuk, the agricultural recycling ceremony not conducted anymore, except in some main Kampongs such as Ciptagelar, Sirnarasa, and Ciptamulya.

Shifting cultivation pattern (outer island agriculture, term in cultivation practices in Indonesia, see Geerts, 1963) in Kampong Cengkuk generally has turned into non-irrigated rice cultivation (wet rice cultivation, term in the practice of rice cultivation in Indonesia, see Geertz 1963) that mix with homegarden (*kebun talun*).

***Seren Taun* Annual Ceremony**

Seren Taun ceremony is the largest annual ceremony that is organized by Kasepuhan communities. The seren taun ceremony was conducted at the end of harvesting period. The ceremony was held to tribute *Nyi Pohaci* or Goddess of Sri who is a protective symbol of

agriculture in Java. In the peak of harvesting (usually every August), the communities came to the center communities of Ciptagelar. They brought kind of 2 bunches of rice (*gedeng*) to be put into the rice community barns (*leuit si jimat*) at the peak of ceremony.

Profane Activities of *Forest Management*

Profane activities means customary activities that are ordinary or not sacred activities. The activities that come from the communities based on the awareness of the importance of forest and water sources. The activities may include planting trees on homegarden (*kebun talun*) in addition to the subsistence. This activities is intended as addition food but also meet the surplus value. Basically, profane kampongs are more open to changes and abonding related traditions with subsistence (ceremonies related to agricultural cycle) even the official religion is Islam. *Kebun talun* is a form of cultivation system that resembles in homegarden, but generally in outside of the Kampongs and mostly annual crops. The homegarden itself identified as the landuse system around homes and generally planted various types of plants and poultry and fishes. And upland (*tegalan*) generally used for cultivation of cassava, banana, and other types of plants especially to meet need of household consumption itself (Soemarwoto, 1983 in Suhardjito, 2002: 184).

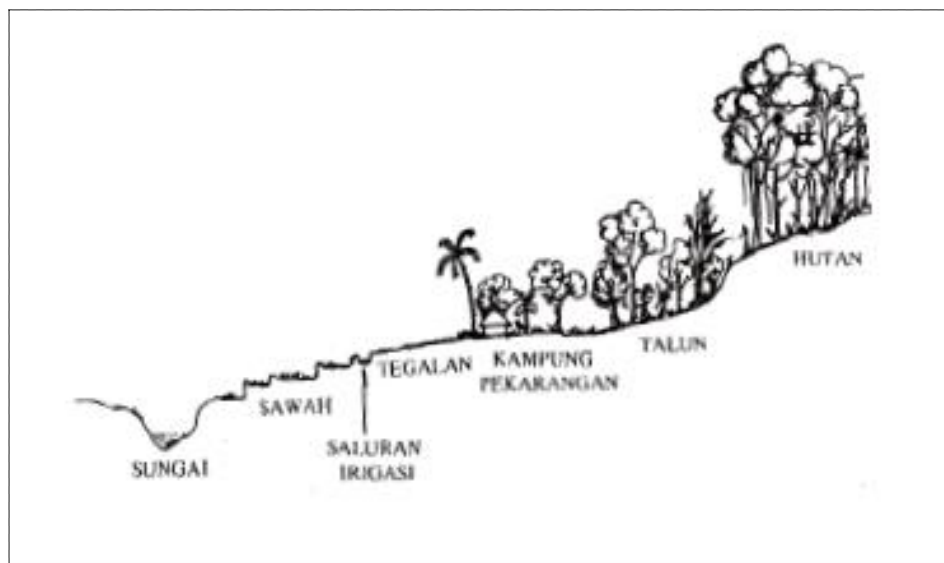


Figure 6. Cross-Section Landuse of the Kampong

Based on observation in 2006, mostly food crops and commodities planted in Margalaksana Village and Kampong Cengkuk are banana and rice. Paddy rice basically can not be traded just for family consumption.

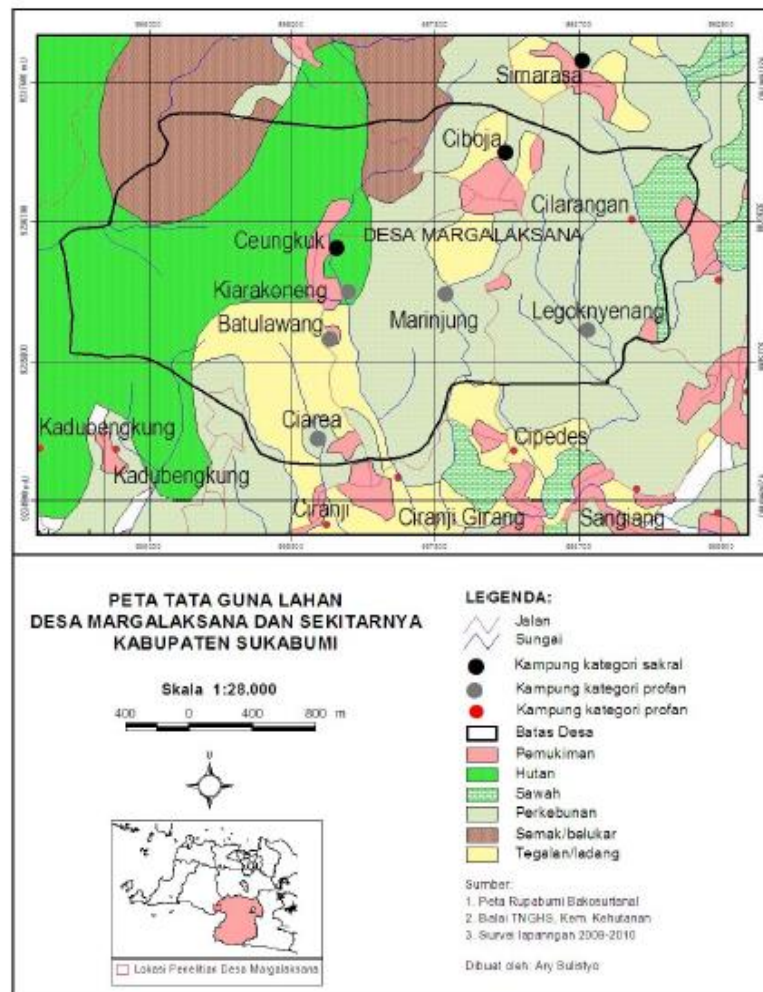


Figure 7. Map of Landuse of Cengkuk Local Community (*Kampung*), Sukabumi District, West Java

The Impact of Forest Depletion and Population Pressure

The communities' adjustment (internal factors) to the depletion of the forest area and the population pressure is that there has been changes the orientation of the subsistence pattern form outer island agriculture into wet-rice cultivation. Changes depend on the extent of physical occupation (hill side and other residential areas) in the lower of hills/forests. Reduced conception in forest cultivation ceremonies that originally existed only three (3), one of them in secondary forest (*lenweung tutupan*) due to maintenance aspects of subsistence.

In the *Kampung* Cengkuk there is only a rice cycling ceremonies only. As results of subsistence changes in wet rice cultivation practices in forestland. The changes is caused the residents in the *Kampung* already developing economic commodities crops (especially food and produced in homegarden/*kebun-talun*) as supporting subsistence of economic valuable. The external factors affects communities leaving the customs and influence on the physical changes of the village, such as housing constructions (from house of stilt to land house).

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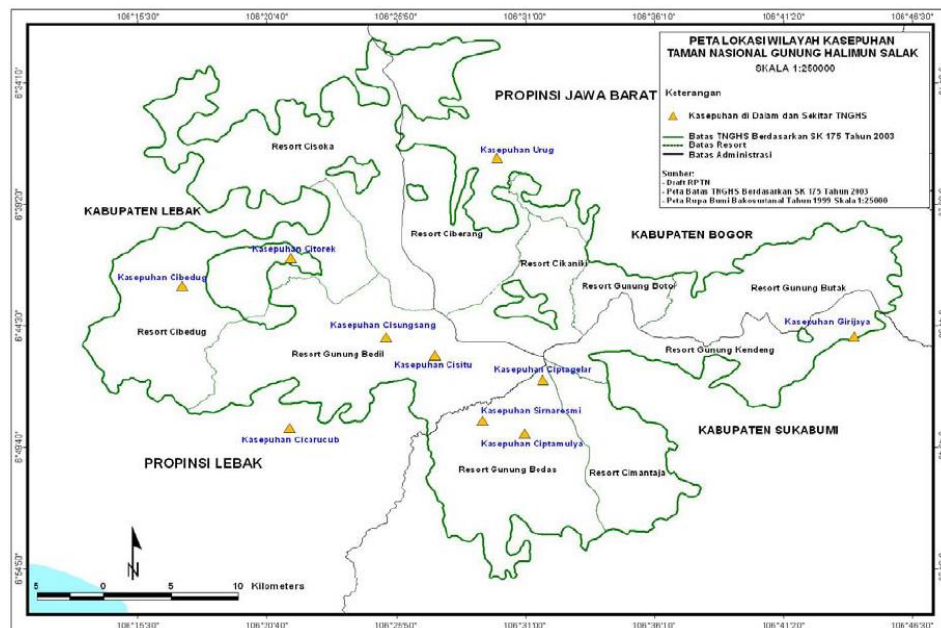
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Maps

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Photos



The Archaeological Site of 'Megalith Culture' at Kampung Cenguk as tourism attractions



The Annual *Seren Taun*'s Ritual Gift to Mother-Earth (*Dewi Sri*) followed by Local Communities and gathering at the Centre of 'Kampung' Gede Kasepuhan Ciptagelar



Rice Paddy Stockpile (*Lenit*) Kampung Cengkuk