

**Research Article**

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**Folklore Tourism in Jepara**

Siswo Harsono

*Department of English, Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University, Semarang 50275,  
Indonesia*

**Abstract**

Jepara folklore is potential to develop to be folklore tourism. This research aims at investigating Jepara folklore, particularly the legend of Teluk Awur, the legend of Bandengan, Pesta Lomban (Lomban Festival) and Perang Obor (Torch War). The theories used in this research are folklore and tourism. This research uses library and field work methods. The legends and ritual ceremonies can be developed into a package of folklore tourism in Jepara. Both legends relate to ecotourism; and Both of the traditional ceremonies relate thanksgiving (*selametan*) and rejecting danger (*tolak bala*) done by the local communities. Jepara folklore is the base of folklore tourism in Jepara.

**Keywords: Jepara Folklore; Legend; Ritual tradition; Folklore tourism.**

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**1. Introduction**

It is usual to classify folklore as a part of cultural tourism that consists of traditional rituals, religious rituals, popular art or cultural – folklore events” (The World-Wide Tourism Organization p. 57).[1] Then it is explained that cultural tourism relates to folklore such as folklore holidays, festivals, folklore performances, and traditional customs of a community (p. 58). The explanation shows folklore closely relates to tourism; and such a relation is called folklore tourism. According to Satheesh, folklore tourism is comparatively a new term in this field. It is quite different from the term cultural tourism (p. 1759).[2] He defines folklore tourism as follows.

Folklore tourism is a purposeful travel to primary context of folklore performances to see and understand a particular folk, taking care not to interrupt the folk’s daily life. Here, foreign/native tourists are hosted as paying guests with the local people. The house owner or his close relative works as tourist guides (p. 1761).

Ebadi explains that folklore tourism relates to traditional pilgrimage, consists of:

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(a) Elements of the natural and geographical environment such as mountains, rivers, springs, trees, caves, lakes, islands, groves or even animals. (b) Religious edifices such as churches, cathedrals, mosques, sites of revelations or the activities of the religious founders, temples, synagogue or shrines. (c) General venue for religious and spiritual activities, ritual or festivals (p.69).[3]

This paper concerns with folklore tourism in Jepara. There are four folklores of Jepara that can be classified into legend and ritual tradition: the legend of Teluk Awur beach, the legend of Bandengan beach, ritual tradition of Lomban Festival, and ritual tradition of Torch War. The legends of Teluk Awur and Bandengan can be classified into local legends. The ritual traditions of Lomban Party and Torch War can be classified into religious legends.

## **2. Methods**

The methods applied in this research are library research and fieldwork. Referring to Braga, Soares, and Brito (2013), the method adopted is based on literature review and text analyses and fieldwork in the main sites (p.72).[4] Library research is done to investigate previous studies of Jepara folklore. Fieldwork is done to investigate the existence of the folklore in Jepara community. It can be said that library research is done to study the textual aspects of the folklore; and fieldwork is done to study the contextual aspects of the folklore. The contextual aspects focus on the contexts of Jepara folklore in Jepara tourism.

By doing library research on Jepara folklore, the previous studies focused on the inventory and conservation of the folklore. There is no research on the relation of Jepara folklore with Jepara tourism. The situation gives a chance to do a research on folklore tourism in Jepara. Then the library research focuses on two legends and two ritual traditions of Jepara folklore that are potential to develop into folklore tourism in Jepara.

After doing the library research, the fieldwork method is applied to investigate the context of Jepara folklore in Jepara community and tourism. This method is conducted by doing focus group discussion with several key respondents such as the staffs of Jepara tourism and culture agency, the staffs of Jepara communication and information agency, the staffs of Jepara tourism information center, the staffs of Jepara local government, tourism entrepreneurs, and local tourism artists.

## **3. Results**

It is found that the previous studies on Jepara folklore concern with the inventory and conservation. To find out the relation of Jepara folklore and Jepara tourism, this research focuses on the legend of Teluk Awur, the legend of Bandengan, the ritual tradition of Lomban Festival, and the ritual tradition of torch war in Jepara as a case study.

### *3.1. The Legend of Teluk Awur*

At the time of the mass fighting, the king had said that he had given up but his shout

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had no effect, he was still beaten to death. And as the death approached the king had time to say, "I am your king, I have said *TELUK*...but you are still *ngAWUR*." The king's words became the name of the beach where he was formerly violated and persecuted, "Teluk Awur". His body is buried next to Den Ayu Roro Kuning's grave, while Syeh Abdul Aziz is buried in Jondang Village, so known as Syeh Jondang (par. 6).[5]



**Figure 1.** Teluk Awur Beach

Teluk Awur Beach is located in the village of Teluk Awur, Tahunan District, 4 km from downtown Jeparu. The number of mangrove trees characterize the beach and serve as a shade and an abrasion holder. Every year on this beach held a traditional ceremony of Lomban Festival. The beach has facilities such as Kano, Duck Buoy, Donuts Buoy, Room Rinse, Food Stalls, Hotel, and Home stay.[6]

### 3.2. *The Legend of Bandengan*

Meanwhile, it is told that Bandengan Beach has a connection with the legend of Karimunjawa Islands. In the legend mentioned that because driven by the sense of concern for the behavior of his son is naughty and stubborn, then Sunan Muria ordered his son Amir Hasan went north to an island that appears "kremun-kremun" from the peak of Mount Muria. The aim of this departure was to deepen and develop the science of religion. Later the intended island was called Karimunjawa Island. On the way came Amir Hasan on the beach there were many *paya-paya* and *bandeng* (milkfish), and he named it *bandengan*. Then he called the place, Bandengan Village and Bandengan Beach. In the colonial era the beach was also named *Klein Scheveningen* by Kartini and Ovink Soer. In the independence era it is called Pantai Tirta Samudra (par. 6 dan 8).[7]



**Figure 2.** Bandengan Beach

Tirto Samudro Beach or known as Bandengan Beach is located 7 km northern of central city of Jepara. The clear water and white sandy beach are the right place to enjoy the time with family. Most of tourists who come to the beach enjoy playing there. They are kids, teenagers and foreigners. Best time to enjoy the beach is in the morning and afternoon to see the beautiful sunrise and sunset.[8]

### 3.3. *The Ritual Tradition of Lomban Festival*

The *Lomban* festival has lasted more than one century ago. This news comes from a writing about the festival in *Kalawarti* a Malay-language Magazine called *Slomporet Melayu* published in Semarang in the second half of the XIX edition of 12 and 17 August 1893 which described the situation of the festival at that time, and it was not unlike what has done by Jepara society now. It was told in the news that the center of the crowd at that time took place in Jepara bay and ended in Kelor Island. Kelor Island is now Kartini Beach that was then still separated from the mainland in Jepara. Because of silting, then the long run between Kelor Island and Jepara land united into one.

Kelor Island was once the residence of a Malay named Encik Lanang. The island was lent by the Government of the East Indies to him for his services in helping the Dutch East Indies in the war in Bali. *Lomban* festival at that time was an exciting time for the fishermen community in Jepara. This party began in the morning as the sun began to show its light on the earth, the residents of *Lomban* participants had awakened and headed their boats. They prepared ammunition to use in the "Jepara Bay War", in the form of *ketupat*, *lepet* and *kolang-kaling*. The festival used the fireworks so that the atmosphere was like a real war. The departure of this fleet of boats was accompanied by the *Kebogiro gamelan*. The sound of a deafening firecracker and the launch of "bullets" weighing and *lepet* from one boat to another boat. When the "Bay War" takes place enlivened with *Kebogiro gamelan*.

After the battle, the participants of the *Lomban* festival landed together to Kelor Island to eat their lunch. In addition, the situation in Kelor Island was crowded by traders who also sold food and beverages and other necessities. The fishermen participating in the *Lomban* festival did not forget to visit the tomb of Encik Lanang buried in Kelor Island. Before the afternoon, the *Lomban* festival ended; the audience and the participants returned to their homes (par 7).[9]



**Figure 3.** Lomban Festival

### *3.4. The Ritual Tradition of Torch War*

Kyai Babadan found out the reason why his cattle became weak and sick. It was because Ki Gemblong liked to catch some fish and shrimps to be cooked and eaten more than looked after those animals. Kyai Babadan was so angry. Finding Ki Gemblong cooked the fish, Kyai Babadan hit him with a torch made of dry coconut leaves. Ki Gemblong also took the same torch to face Kyai Babadan. The torch war finally began. The fire from the torch spread every where and burnt up stubble next to the stable. The fire made the buffalo and cows run away and unexpectedly the sick animals healed even could stand upright and ate in the field.[10]



**Figure 3.** Torch War

## **4. Discussion**

Based on the results above Jepara folklore closely relate to Jepara tourism. It can be said that Jepara tourism is based on Jepara folklore. Such a tourism can be called folklore tourism. Folklore tourism in Jepara also relates to tourism pilgrimage. The tombs of ancestors of Jepara people like Syeh Jondang, Sunan Nyamplungan, Encik Lanang, and Kyai Babadan become the objects of tourism pilgrimage. The tourists visit Syeh Jondang and Sunan Nyamplungan tombs relate to religious pilgrimage. The tourists visit Encik Lanang and Kyai Babadan relate to cultural pilgrimage.

The legend of Teluk Awur also relates to a folklore performance in Jepara, called *kentrung*. The folk art perform the legend of Syeh Jondang. The ritual tradition of torch war has often been performed in cultural events such as Borobudur International Festival and Folk Festival in 2017. Lomban Festival does not only perform the ritual tradition, but also perform leather puppets, culinary festival, and others.

In *Sawalan* folklore holidays, many native and foreign tourists visit Teluk Awur Beach, Bandengan Beach, Lomban Festival. The tourist visit in *Sawalan* folklore holidays 2017 is presented as follows:

**Table 1.** Tourist visit in *Sawalan* folklore holidays 2017

	<b>Native tourists</b>	<b>Foreign tourists</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Teluk Awur</b>	36.173	241	36.414
<b>Bandengan</b>	109.780	560	110.340
<b>Lomban</b>	76.724	211	76,935
<b>Perang Obor</b>	-	-	data <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is no official data from Jepara Culture and Tourism Agency

The findings and their implications of folklore tourism in Jepara should be discussed in the broadest context possible. Future research directions on folklore tourism in Jepara can be applied to other places in Indonesia. The applied research on folklore in Indonesia can develop Indonesian tourism in the future.

## **5. Conclusions**

Tourism in Jepara has close relation to Jepara folklore which is dominated by legends. Local legends relate to tourism sites like Teluk Awur Beach and Bandengan Beach. Religious legends relate to ritual traditions like *Lomban* Festival and Torch War. *Lomban* Festival is a tanksgiving (*selamatan*) done by the people of Ujung Watu Village, Jepara District, Jepara Regency. Torch War is a ritual tradition of rejecting danger (*tolak bala*) done by the pople of Tegal Sambi Village, Tahunan District, Jepara Regency. Teluk Awur Beach relates to the legend of Teluk Awur and the tourism pilgrimage of Syeh Jondang and his wife, Den Ayu Roro Kuning. Bandengan Beach relates to the legend of Amir Hasan and the tourism pilgrimage of Sunan Nyamplungan in Karimunjawa islands. *Lomban* Festival relates to Kelor Island (Kartini Beach) and the tourism pilgrimage of Encik Lanang. Torch War relates to the tourism pilgrimage of Kyai Babadan in Tegal Sambi.

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