



# Managing Diversity: Religious Community-Based Tourism Development of Antaboga

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**Abstract.** The tourism sector in Banyuwangi, Central Java, Indonesia is rapidly growing. The available tourism resources are not necessarily natural, cultural, and educational tourism, but also religious tourisms. One of them is Antaboga religious tourism, which was initially a place of worship for Hindus. However, this tourist site was later developed into a spiritual tour that is open to the public and even known as a symbol of tolerance. This is because there are houses of worship of 6 religions built inside the area. Interestingly, the management also involves interfaith leaders, who are from different religions. This article interrogates how the development of Antaboga religious tourism is established upon interfaith communities. This study employed qualitative methods such as observation, interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and literature reviews. The data obtained was analyzed reiteratively through three stages: reduction, display, and conclusion. The results showed, the interfaith leaders jointly governed the development of Antaboga tourism. Even though Hindu religious leaders takes a lead of the management, they still cooperate with other religious leaders harmoniously. This aims for accommodating the interests of various religious communities and strengthen the potential of Antaboga as a tourism of tolerance. The collaboration between interfaith leaders is expected to reinforce inter-religious harmony. By managing religious diversity, Antaboga tourism promotes tolerance and becomes a medium for strengthening social capital among religious communities.

**Keywords:** Diversity, Religious Tourism Management, Symbol of Tolerance.

## 1 Introduction

Tourism is a vital aspect of development in Indonesia [1]. Apart from being a medium for promoting the identity and resourceful potential of the country worldwide, tourism also functions as a driver of economic growth [2]. The tourism sector contributed 172 trillion or 11.3% of the total gross domestic product (GDP) in 2017 [2]. The data further confirms that tourism destinations are a significant source of income for the Indonesian economy. Of the many tourist destinations in Indonesia, religious tourism has great potential to earn regional income [3]. Religious tourism is the activity of frequenting several places that are deemed to have have spiritual elements to fulfil religious needs

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A. Mustofa et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the International Joint Conference on Arts and Humanities 2023 (IJCAH 2023)*, Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research 785,

[https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-152-4\\_178](https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-152-4_178)

[4]. In addition, religious tourists recently find interests in such e destinations to enjoy some spiritual experiences in it sites [5].

In Banyuwangi, Central Java, tourism is a significant regional economic development pillar [6]. As an area with natural wealth and resources, the economic development goal of Banyuwangi Regency also depends on the tourist destinations. Referring to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) of Banyuwangi Regency, domestic or foreign tourists have leveled up significantly in the past four years. In 2015, tourists in Banyuwangi reached 1.77 million. Meanwhile, in 2016 the number of tourists increased to 4.09 million. The increase in visiting tourists also occurred the following year; 4.71 million in 2017, 5.32 million in 2018, and 5.40 million in 2019 [6].

However, the development of Banyuwangi tourism is still focused on culture and natural tourism, namely Ijen Crater, Alas Purwo, and Sukamade or “the diamond triangle” [3]. Even though many potential tours in Banyuwangi are engaged in cultural aspects and festival tourism. Banyuwangi first held a festival in 2012 with a total of 10 events. These cultural festivals include the Geridhogan Festival, the Dandang Sewu Festival, the Pencak Sumping Festival, etc [7].

Unlike nature-based tourism, the development of the religious tourism sector in Banyuwangi has yet to be fully developed by the local government [3]. Many tourism potentials of sacred sites are not well maintained. So, they are damaged by themselves or due to destruction by the surrounding community. Even if this potential is utilized optimally, it will significantly impact empowering the community around the religious site [3]. Antaboga is one of 17 spiritual tourism potentials to be developed in Banyuwangi. This site is a symbol of community tolerance. This is because, in this tourist area, six places of worship were constructed to accommodate interfaith religious activities. However, this tourism potential has yet to be fully utilized, rendering less impactful interaction in the tourism development in Indonesia.

In developing tourist areas, practical and innovative tourism management can boost the number of tourists, which has implications for significant revenues. Therefore, planning, implementing, and developing tourism is essential to pay attention to [8]. This is due to the fact that the needs and trends of tourists are dynamic along with the changing times [8]. There are many interests and goals that tourists want to achieve when visiting religious tourism destinations. Tourism managers must be adaptive and accommodating to these various destinations.

A Hindu foundation from Bali manages Antaboga religious tourism by involving the role of interfaith elites. In Antaboga, management still needs to involve the local community directly [9]. Therefore, much potential can still apply to the community to contribute directly. If the community participates in its management, it will create better community welfare as they obtain financial revenue. It can also increase local tourism potential. One can be done by utilizing social capital (people-centered development) centered on humans or society [10]. In this context, tourism development requires organizational skills and community participation to render and govern potential resources. This tourism development model is Community Based Tourism (CBT), which places the community as the leading actor in tourism development [10].

Religious tourism in Banyuwangi has been the subject of much research. However, several previous studies have focused more on (1) potential mapping [11], (2) management models [3] and (3) the impact of religious tourism in Banyuwangi on local community members [12]. Several articles related to this research highlights the

Antaboga aspect as an icon or symbol of tolerance. In addition, there is also a study of potential conflicts in the development of Antaboga religious tourism [9]. However, there needs to be research that focuses on the management of Antaboga religious tourism based on a based community tourism (CBT) development approach. Therefore, this article discusses how to manage Antaboga tourism using the CBT approach.

This article aims to explain the Antaboga tourism development model, involving the participation of interfaith leaders using Community Based Tourism (CBT) approach, namely tourism management based on social and environmental aspects [13]. In implementing this CBT, the community is actively involved in the planning, management and tourism development aspects. CBT emphasizes environmental, social and cultural sustainability that the community manages for the community itself. It aims to attract tourists and increase their awareness about the community and its local wisdom [14].

## **2 Methods**

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to better understand social phenomena and examine individual understanding of social processes [15]. This approach suits the research objectives, which aims to explain the Antaboga religious tourism development model involving interfaith leaders' participation. Our fieldwork is situated in Antaboga religious tourism, which is in the Perhutani area of Forest Management Unit or *Kesatuan Pengelolaan Hutan* (KPH) West Banyuwangi, Glenmore District, Banyuwangi. The data collection method used, covering the following techniques: (1) observation to understand the natural social setting of society at the level of religious pluralism in the area around Antaboga and the conditions of social processes that affect social reality (2) multiple semi-structured interviews with selected informants using a purposive sampling technique, namely Antaboga religious tourism managers, tourist visitors, and local residents, who are considered capable of providing representative data and are actively involved in the development of tourism and tourism activities, and (3) literature study as a source of secondary data obtained online through search in Google Scholar in the form of documents, reports, and literature as well as management documentation. To support data collection, observation sheets, interview sheets, and other tools needed in the data collection process were used as research instruments. After the data collection stage was fulfilled, it was analyzed using the Miles & Huberman Interactive model to produce a research report with a more comprehensive description of social phenomena/situations. Data were analyzed in three stages, namely: (1) reduction, data was sorted and simplified so that it was relevant to the research focus (2) display, data was arranged in an organized and systematic manner according to rules to make it easier to understand, and (3) conclusions were drawn.

## **3 Result and Discussion**

### **3.1 Antaboga: History and Socio-Cultural Context**

Antaboga is one of the religious tourism destinations in Banyuwangi which is unique compared to other religious tourism. Located in the middle of the Glenmore forest in the West Banyuwangi Forest Management Unit (KPH) area, Antaboga represents a form of religious diversity in Banyuwangi. This tourist site was built on 3 hectares in 2011 under the auspices of the Bhineka Perkasa Foundation from the island of Bali. Antaboga comes from the word '*anta*', which means water, and '*boga*' means food. This is meaningful as a symbol of something vital and can give life to all humans and nature. Etymologically, *antaboga* means food that never runs out. There are various names, such as *Anantaboga*, *Ananthaboga*, and *Anthaboga*, caused by a mispronunciation of the Javanese 'tongue', which is called 'ontology', which in Indonesian translation refers to 'antaboga'. Initially, Antaboga was a sacred Hindu temple that was used as a place of worship and rituals. Antaboga was established based on a *dawuh* (mandating whisper) or a dream that a resident of Denpasar, Bali (Jero Mangku Tiste) must obtain spring (antaboga) in the West Banyuwangi area. The Glenmore forest area is believed to be the place in which spring is sought as it fulfills the dream's criteria, namely (1) *antaboga* (2) haunted, (3) sacred, and (4) still sacred.

After the location was founded, a place of worship for Hindus was completed, followed by places of worship for people of other religions, such as Islam, Confucianism, Christianity, Catholicism and Buddhism, as a complex form of tolerance in one location. The construction of places of worship, the placement of statue ornaments, and *pelinggih* stones (stone for seating) are carried out by the instructions handed down so that they have the proper position and are carried out in stages. There are three sacred rituals (*Trimurti*): the Dewi Gangga spring, the Dewi Uma spring, and the Bedawang Nale spring. At the same time, the existing ornaments include a temple symbol of Hindus, a statue of Dewi Kwan Im, a symbol of Buddhism and Confucianism, a statue of Jesus and the Virgin Mary a symbol of Christians and Catholics, a prayer room a symbol of Muslims, a statue of Nyi Roro Kidul as a Javanese belief, and a *Pelinggih*. The *Pelinggih* stones include the *Padmasana* used to place offerings, which are intermediaries for Hindus when worshipping Sang Hyang Widhi. Antaboga is managed as a community by the Bhineka Perkasa Bali Foundation by collaborating interfaith leaders. This collaboration is crucial as every religious elite is accountable for uniting a pluralistic society to create harmony between them. Each religious elite plays role to accommodate and serve the needs of the people through a regular coordination and communication in tourism management.

Glenmore District, located in Banyuwangi Regency, has two dominant cultures that put its people in a transitional position in their pattern of social life. Religion (belief) is an important cultural element and is always present in the social life of society [16]. The plurality of the people of Banyuwangi is indicated by differences ranging from the social hierarchy, economy, race, ethnicity, culture, and complex religion. Hinduism began to enter Banyuwangi in the 9<sup>th</sup> century due to the surrender of the Mataram government center to East Java by Mpu Sendok, in which community members and religious leaders participated and moved and migrated. In 1965, there was a massive Hinduizing event in Sumbergondo Village due to the Gestok/Gestapu incident or *Gerakan Tiga Puluh September 1965* (a retaliative movement against Soekarno presidential regime). Meanwhile, the spread of Islam began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Sultan Agung, the king of the Mataram Sultanate. In 1949, in Sumbergondo Village, most of the people were *Kejawen* Muslims, who still adhered to spiritual practices such as

offerings. According to their group, the Islamic groups at that time were divided into *Santri* (Islamic pious groups), *Abangan* (non-pious groups), and *Priyayi* (groups of noblemen). Christianity in Banyuwangi began after the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to several factors, such as political, social, religious, and economic reasons. In addition, Christianization was also prompted and emerged successfully. It is more acceptable among *abangan* group. Back then, *abangan* was the victims of violent acts perpetrated by Nahdatul Ulama (NU) community. The following is the population data on sub-district residents and their religions in Banyuwangi Regency in 2022:

Kecamatan Subdistrict	Islam	Protestan Protestant	Katolik Catholic	Hindu	Budha Buddha	Konghucu Konghucu	Lainnya Others
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Pesanggaran	50 566	1 553	86	2 356	905	6	5
Siliragung	44 197	1 993	77	3 981	15	5	12
Bangorejo	63 368	746	234	2 954	11	4	-
Purwoharjo	64 910	950	772	4 116	156	7	2
Tegalalimo	62 295	931	117	4 575	321	-	-
Muncar	135 156	908	363	2 039	45	13	6
Cluring	78 870	500	78	438	76	6	10
Gambiran	64 980	1 740	330	44	1 168	1	38
Tegalsari	50 457	263	22	2 190	3	1	13
Glenmore	75 844	1 007	195	500	33	12	-
Kalibaru	66 189	205	51	32	21	6	2
Genteng	92 578	1 392	385	565	267	13	14
Srono	98 393	410	114	299	54	20	5
Rogojampi	56 053	683	286	50	268	12	1
Blimbingsari	54 447	86	4	1 869	16	11	1
Kabat	65 061	93	25	33	4	5	-
Singojuruh	52 481	147	32	9	7	6	-
Sempu	84 603	634	135	336	42	4	-
Songgon	58 581	173	23	187	10	-	-
Glagah	36 879	225	93	42	19	-	-
Licin	30 440	31	13	12	7	2	-
Banyuwangi	115 116	2 584	936	382	530	24	1
Giri	30 755	371	155	68	49	-	-
Kalipuro	83 920	713	218	203	47	12	-
Wongsorejo	78 591	194	58	38	28	9	-
<b>Banyuwangi</b>	<b>1 694 730</b>	<b>18 532</b>	<b>4 802</b>	<b>27 318</b>	<b>4 102</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>110</b>

Catatan/Note: ...  
 Sumber/Source: Dinas Kependudukan dan Pencatatan Sipil Kabupaten Banyuwangi / Service of Population and Civil Records of Banyuwangi Regency

**Fig. 1.** Total Population of Banyuwangi Regency by Religion

Data source: Banyuwangi Regency in Figures 2022

The data demonstrates the diversity of the people of Banyuwangi, especially around Antaboga, including the Glenmore District. Even so, this diversity does not prevent the creation of harmony and peaceful neighborhood among them. The government views religious plurality as an essential aspect of achieving stability in supporting development and national integration. Even though they consist of various religions, the people of Sumbergondo Village adhere to their ancestral beliefs to respect differences and fosters tolerance. This was manifested in an interfaith dialogue forum at Natarsari Wadung Temple, where there are temples, GKJW (Gereja Kristen Java or Javanese Christian Church), and mosques at this location. The plural society of Sumbergondo Village lives side by side with one another as in the celebration of Christian holidays assisted by the Hindu-Islamic community, and vice versa. Therefore, a religious paradigm necessitates tolerance, interaction, and cooperation between interfaith groups [17]. A plural society needs something that can accommodate dialogue between its adherents to create harmony, such as religious tourism. Antaboga can maintain religious harmony. Antaboga is religious tourism that is open and friendly to

various religious beliefs and promotes people's tolerance. The Sumbergondo area is inhabited by ethnic Javanese and Madurese. The Glenmore forest area is mainly inhabited by the Madurese people, called the Persil people [16]. However, the government of Banyuwangi (GoB) merely concentrates its local development on ecotourism-based tourism and sustainable development as most of these tourist objects are located in natural and conservation areas [18].

### **3.2 Management of Antaboga Religious Tourism**

The management of Antaboga religious tourism is an initiative to promote and preserve religious traditions to strengthen inter-religious tolerance. This is accounted by prioritizing the principles of dialogue, respect, and mutual learning among religions. Tourists can be invited to participate in various activities that promote understanding and respect for different religious traditions. In the management of Antaboga religious tourism, several primary aspects are accessibility, accommodation, Attraction, activities, and amenities.

The accessibility refers to road access to Antaboga tourism, which is relatively difficult because the path is in the form of macadam stones or rocky dirt roads that have not been paved. In addition, because Antaboga tourism is located in the middle of the Glenmore forest, the area is relatively remote and far from the city center. Admittedly minimum public transportation facilities for Antaboga tourism makes the access to Antaboga even more difficult. Tourists must use private vehicles to reach the venue. The road conditions are in the form of a macadam route, so the trip to Antaboga tourism requires endurance and advanced driving skills, particularly when passing through rocky roads. This makes large and luxurious vehicles less suitable to go there. Even though road access to Antaboga tourism remainstricky, the unique charm and spiritual experience offered by this tour is a particular motivation for tourists. For visitors looking for adventure and wanting to dive into natural riches and authentic religious traditions, Antaboga tourism can be a fascinating and memorable destination. However, to maintain environmental sustainability and visitor comfort, managers need to improve accessibility, and facilities may be required to support the development of Antaboga religious tourism in Banyuwangi.

Accommodation can be interpreted as lodging in a tourist attraction. In general, accommodation being widely known to the public is lodging. The Antaboga religious tourism has lodging facilities. It is socalled Bale Panjang in which visitors can use to rest or stay overnight. Antaboga does not have unique accommodations with complete facilities like a hotel. There are only cloth coverings for men and women in Bale Panjang for lighting. As for the Glenmore District area has various accommodations, such as Hotel Minak Jinggo, Margo Utomo Eco Resort, New Surya, and many more. Tccommodation in the area around tourist objects is a vital component to support tourism activities.

The main attraction of Antaboga religious tourism is the uniqueness of beliefs and ceremonies involving antaboga as an essential part of the religious practice and spirituality of the people of Banyuwangi. Every year, tourists from various regions in Indonesia and even foreign countries come to Antaboga to observe and participate in religious ceremonies. Antaboga, located in the middle of a forest, has attractions such

as the physical nature and beauty of the area itself because the atmosphere is wonderful and natural, giving rise to a feeling of serenity. Antaboga is dominated by tall pine trees with beautiful flower plants lining every corner.



**Fig. 2.** Petirtaan Site in Antaboga  
Source: Research Documentation

Viewed from the aspect of activities, Antaboga tourism in Banyuwangi offers a variety of activities and events for visitors, rendering it an attractive tourist destination for various groups. Some people come to Antaboga tours to worship and carry out a series of religious ceremonies. Antaboga is a holy place that is very meaningful for the local community, and pilgrims come to contemplate, pray, and explore the spiritual values inherent in religious traditions. In addition, many tourists are interested in traveling and enjoying the beauty of nature, breathing fresh air, and witnessing the diverse ecosystems in the middle of the Glenmore forest. Several visitors also come with a particular purpose, for instances, taking water from Antaboga sources, which are believed to be able to fulfill all one's needs or wishes. The water in this Pondok (spiritual hut) is believed to have magical powers and is a place of worship for some people. The visitors come with faith and hope, pray and take the spring water as part of their religious rituals. Through various activities, Antaboga religious tourism combines spirituality, ecotourism, and cultural uniqueness that is attractive to anyone who visits. Good and integrated management in Antaboga tourism shall help maintain cultural values and the surrounding environment and provide a memorable experience.

The facilities include everything that enhances the comfort and convenience of tourists during their visit to Antaboga. Antaboga tourism in Banyuwangi has provided adequate facilities for visitors. Currently, Antaboga tourism is equipped with several

clean and comfortable toilets. In addition, there is also a ample parking area available, so tourists can conveniently park around the location with affordable parking rates. To ensure the safety and comfort of visitors, especially at night, lighting has been installed at the Antaboga location. The lighting is electrified with a generator to maintain the ecosystem and environment around the tourist sites. With the provision of lighting at night, visitors will enjoy the magical and spiritual atmosphere of Antaboga tourism more safely and comfortably.

Around the parking area, tourists can also find Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Units (MSMEs) in the form of stalls, offering a variety of food and drinks for visitors who want to travel or carry out religious rituals. With these facilities, Antaboga tourism can provide a memorable experience for visitors. The reasonable and sustainable management efforts prove a commitment to maintain and improve the quality of Antaboga religious tourism and provide positive benefits for the local community and tourists who come to visit.

With careful management in the aspects of accessibility, accommodation, attraction, activities, and amenities, Antaboga religious tourism in Banyuwangi is expected to be an attractive and sustainable destination. Through a responsible ecotourism approach and the active participation of the local community, Antaboga religious tourism can provide economic, social, and cultural benefits for the Banyuwangi region and. It will simultaneously increase the awareness of the importance of cultural and environmental preservation.

### **3.3 Development of Antaboga Religious Tourism in the Perspective of Community-Based Tourism (CBT)**

The development of Antaboga religious tourism requires organizational skills and community participation in managing resources. The management of Antaboga religious tourism is protected by the Bhineka Perkasa Foundation using the Community Based Tourism (CBT) development concept by involving interfaith leaders. In the CBT concept, the community is placed as the leading actor in tourism development [19]. The use of the CBT concept in the Antaboga management system can increase community mobilization to actively participate in developing tourism with the aim of socio-economic empowerment [20]. This concept emphasizes the impact of tourism on the environment because it carries the principles of a real populist economy [21]. Using the CBT concept in Antaboga by adhering to social assets owned by local communities has a positive impact on environmental and cultural preservation and strengthens local community institutions as tourism managers. In the community-based tourism management model, Antaboga has the potential to become a symbol of tolerance with the aim of interfaith dialogue and increasing local communities' capabilities and competencies. This community empowerment aims to strengthen empowering groups of people who are powerless [22]. Based on its management, Antaboga applies several basic principles of CBT; recognizing, supporting, and promoting its tourism potential; involving the community or community members in every aspect of tourism; improving the quality of life of the community; prioritizing environmental conditions and resources; implementing local social values; and mutual respect for pluralism in their



environment [23]. The use of the CBT concept in Antaboga management requires the community to be fully involved in religious tourism activities.

Antaboga is a tourism area with sustainable development where local communities, as managers, are stakeholders responsible for all planning, development and support for tourist destinations [24]. The development of the CBT concept brings significant social change to the area around Antaboga by fulfilling the five aspects of tourism. Antaboga management can provide opportunities for local communities to have active control rights in development management by involving interfaith leaders. The participation of interfaith leaders in the Antaboga tourism is pivotal to prevent social conflicts. In the past there had been an internal conflict due to a lack of transparency in tourism management and community involvement which resulted in social jealousy. Several interfaith figures who participate in managing Antaboga tourism are listed in the organizational structure.

In this context, each religion has a coordinator for the Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB) or Religious Harmony Forum Glenmore District. A cross-religious figure is the actor, who has a high nationalistic spirit and plays a role in sustaining the quality of harmony and religious tolerance, especially in the Glenmore District area. The Bhineka Perkasa Foundation collaborates with interfaith leaders to maintain social trust from the community so that the values of solidarity, social harmony, and mutual cooperation can be strengthened. The collaboration with interfaith leaders plays a role in (1) increasing awareness of religious understanding and serving as role models in the implementation of religious practices or worship procedures, (2) voicing the rights and protection of religious people in anticipating conflicts, (3) facilitating religious dialogue to avoid problems related to the majority minorities acting in the name of religion (4) monitoring religious conditions in society by providing appropriate directions, and (5) holding religious activities with the theme of religious moderation. Given the successful application of the CBT concept, Antaboga management can also be seen from the partnership with Kelompok Sadar Pariwisata (Pokdarwis) or Tourism Awareness Group. The running of all the roles of the actors involved in the management of Antaboga increases the participation of the local community. The partnership aspect makes Antaboga able to become a worthy religious tourism object to be developed.

The dynamics of Antaboga tourism management experienced significant challenges, especially funding issues and land ownership status. Antaboga religious tourism relies its income on financial donations from visitors. The results of the donations collected are allocated for building infrastructure and refurbishing tourism support facilities. The digital promotion for this religious tourism site shall be improved to boost the number of visitors. Most visitors frequenting Antaboga come from Java Island and are only busy on certain public holidays or during in conjunction with religious celebrations. Antaboga's standing in the West Banyuwangi KPH, which has the status of ownership of the Forest Resources Management Unit (SDH) of Perum Perhutani, is also an issue. Antaboga religious tourism is expectedly a sustainable tourism destination in the future and bring a positive impact on the environment, society, and culture in the long term with much greater convergence [25]. In addition, the development of Antaboga religious tourism should be rehabilitated by the government, particularly in the form of infrastructure improvement and human development [13].

## Conclusion

Overall, Antaboga has been able to bridge and become a medium for dialog among religious believers to continuously foster social harmony. Despite the fact that interfaith leaders are joined to govern Antaboga religious tourist site, the sound cooperation between managers of various religions and the community has not succeeded. The unresolved assumption and rumors in the surrounding community call for urgent need to create more active yet cohesive cooperation to declare that Antaboga is not a medium for spreading Hinduism. Even though visitors come from interfaith tourists wanting to travel and perform rituals there, it would be better for the management to be attentive to the social rumors. In addition, the management of Antaboga is mostly controlled by the Bhineka Perkasa Foundation, which is headquartered in Bali. It leads to the prejudice that the management is exclusive or only belonged to Hindus. This condition may trigger conflicts of interest that could derail interfaith peace. The management of tourism aspects including accessibility, accommodation, attraction, activities, and amenities also needs to be improved to support the everyday operation of religious tourism activities for visitors or tourists.

## Acknowledgment

This article is a research publication funded by the Institute for Research and Community Service (LP2M) State University of Malang. Researchers would like to thank for the support and funding assistance for this research. Researchers also thank the Bhineka Perkasa Foundation, Interfaith Leaders, Banyuwangi Government Agencies, and the Local Community who have agreed to become informants in this study. Hopefully this article is useful.

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