# The Tradition and Communication Culture of the Circundeu Traditional Village Community

Susie Perbawasari<sup>1</sup>, Renata Anisa<sup>2</sup>, Diah Fatma Sjoraida<sup>3</sup>, Priyo Subekti<sup>4</sup> {susie.perbawasari@unpad.ac.id<sup>1</sup>, renata@unpad.ac.id<sup>2</sup>, diah.fatma@unpad.ac.id<sup>3</sup>, priyo.subekti@unpad.ac.id<sup>3</sup>}

Faculty of Communication, Universitas Padjadjaran<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

Abstract. Indonesia possesses various interesting cultures and traditions found in several villages and regions. Traditional communities are considered obedient to the values passed on by their ancestors, where some wedding, birth, and death rituals only apply in the region. Cirendeu Traditional Village are welcoming to guests and tourists interested in learning about their traditions. The purpose of this research was to determine the traditions and culture of the Cirendeu Village community in Cimahi, West Java. This research used a qualitative method with ethnographic studies to describe the traditions and communication culture of Cirendeu Village. The data were collected through literature study, direct observation, and interviews. The Cirendeu Village community adheres to the cultures inherited from their ancestors. Their rituals and ceremonies are selftaught and passed down to the next generation through direct involvement and participation in the rituals to ensure the philosophy is adequately understood. The traditions and culture are not communicated and disseminated to outsiders, but the community is open to people that wish to know and learn about the Cirendeu Traditional Village. The tradition and culture are Saka Sunda New Year or Sura'an and Ngarajah Puncak Salam traditions, the mulah sarah sirah cai ceremony, alongside wedding, pregnancy, and birth rituals.

**Keywords:** Tradition; Culture; Communication Culture; Cirendeu; Traditional Village Community

# 1 Introduction

Indonesia possesses various interesting cultures and traditions found in several villages and regions. They consist of groups that implement certain traditions and cultures believed to have been performed for generations. Traditional communities are considered obedient to the values passed on by their ancestors, where some wedding, birth, and death rituals only apply in the region. As a result of these rituals and ceremonies, these villages have become cultural tourism sites, and at certain times, such as the Sundanese New Year, the traditional community performs various activities at the *Bale* (village hall). Cirendeu Traditional Village is administratively located in the Cirendeu area, Leuwi Gajah, Cimahi, West Java. It is approximately 15 kilometers from Bandung City and takes 20 minutes or about 8 kilometers from Cimahi City. Meanwhile, the Cirendeu Traditional Village was established by this city as a natural and artificial tourism area available to the public.

This village is surrounded by forests and hills adequately guarded by the community and accessible by public transportation. Meanwhile, the residents mostly work as tuber farmers, processing them into various foods, such as cassava rice, *tapai*, *rengginang*, and cassavabased cakes. They do not isolate themselves but interact like other communities and are welcoming to guests and tourists interested in learning about their traditions. Subsequently, a warm reception was provided by the Traditional Village administrators, along with a very detailed explanation about the community. The history, special and processed community foods, activities, culture, tourism, beliefs, customs, taboos, rituals, and ceremonies usually performed in the village were described. Also, the Cirendeu community is recognized as people who love their environment, maintain the customs inherited from their ancestors, and preserve the Sundanese culture, which is known for its friendliness, politeness, and gentleness.

According to data reported by the official website of Cimahi City government, the name "Cirendeu" is derived from the "rendeu tree," which was previously abundant in the area. The Cirendeu Traditional Village spreads across 64 hectares, with 60 dedicated to agriculture and 4 hectares as the residential area. Furthermore, the community is consistent in implementing the teachings and beliefs they hold, as well as maintaining the culture and customs inherited from their ancestors. They have a territorial concept that has been remembered since ancient times and involves dividing the area into three parts. The first is the forbidden forest, where cutting down trees is forbidden because the area serves as a place for community water storage. Second, a reforestation forest which spans two to three hectares, where the trees can be used but require replanting. The third is an agricultural forest for gardening and planting crops, such as corn, peanuts, cassava, and other tubers. Generally, the Cirendeu community is harmonious and mutually helpful, shown through the birth tradition of providing vehicles for those about to deliver and the death tradition by collaborating to dig the soil. They are wellknown for playing the arts of gondang, karinding, and angklung, which are performed during certain rituals or ceremonies. Also, Cirendeu is part of community scattered in various areas of West Java such as Cigugur-Kuningan-Cirebon with the Javanese-Sundanese religion (ADS), Sunda Wiwitan Baduy in Kanekes, Lebak Banten, Kasepuhan in Cipta Gelar Sukabumi, and Naga Village in Tasikmalaya (Cimahi, 2019).

The sociology dictionary defines tradition as a belief in a hereditary activity that can be maintained (Soekanto, 1993). Funk and Wagnalls also argued that the term denotes knowledge, doctrine, habits, etcetera, and the method of their delivery, which are understood to be passed on over generations (Sumartias et al., 2020); (A.G., 2001). Hence, traditions are habits inherited by ancestors and are performed continuously by a certain group of people.

Porter and Samovar explained that culture manifests in language patterns, activities, and behaviors. These practices serve as models for adaptive actions and communication styles and enable the community to live in a given geographic environment at a certain level of technical development and at a particular time. According to Edward T. Hall, culture is communication and vice versa, meaning both are two inseparable sides of a coin. Porter and Samovar also explained that culture is a complex, abstract, and external comprehensive pattern of life. Meanwhile, many aspects of culture determine communicative behavior. Intercultural communication will be better understood as cultural differences in perceiving social objects and events, which complicate small problems in communication. Three socio-cultural elements with a major and direct effect on the constructed meanings are belief systems, values, attitudes, alongside world view, and social organization (Mulyana D., 2010).

In addition, Edward Burnett Tylor stated that culture is a complex of all knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, and other capabilities and habits possessed by humans as members of the community (Alo Liliweri, 2011). Meanwhile, Koentjaraningrat, in the book *Pengantar* 

Antropologi (Introduction to Anthropology), defined culture as the whole system of ideas, actions, and the results of human work in the community life context obtained by learning (Koentjaraningrat, 2009). Culture exists because it is learned, and one way is by being passed on from ancestors to the next generation (Sumartias et al., 2019).

Generally, communication denotes the process of delivering messages from the sender (communicator) to the recipient (communicant) through certain channels. It consists of communicators, messages, channels, and communicants. Some models include the stimulus-response (S-R), the most basic, which is influenced by psychology and describes a simple action-reaction process. Conversely, Laswell is the most well-known model that determines the appropriateness of the communication process to answer the questions who, says what, in which channel, to whom, with what effect, according to the context. Laswell defined communication s the process of delivering messages from communicators to the communicant using certain channels to produce a certain effect or feedback. Who is a communicator that sends the message, says what is the content, in which channel is a particular medium or channel used in conveyance, to whom is the communicant or recipient, and with what effect is the result (Mulyana D., 2007). Communication is also defined as a series of messages conveyed through certain media from the sender to the recipient with a response. Consequently, effective communication is expected to inform, educate, and change the opinions, attitudes, and behavior of the recipient.

Everett M. Rogers stated that communication is the process of an idea transfer from the source of information (communicator) to either one or more recipients (communicants) to produce changed behavior. According to Willian I. Curtain, communication has four functions, namely social, expressive, ritual, and instrumental. Social communication is needed for self-actualization, building self-concept, survival, attaining happiness, entertainment, and forming relationships. Expressive communication conveys feelings, such as joy, care, sadness, sympathy, and concern, through words and nonverbal messages or behavior. The ritual function is made collectively during birth, birthdays, engagements, weddings, and death ceremonies. Here, the participants reaffirm their commitment to family traditions, ethnicity, nation, state, ideology, or religion. Conversely, instrumental communication aims to persuade by informing, teaching, encouraging, entertaining, or changing attitudes, beliefs, or behavior. Although these functions can be distinguished, they often overlap, with one form predominating (Mulyana D., 2007). Therefore, the purpose of this research was to determine the traditions and culture of the Cirendeu Village community in Cimahi, West Java.

### 2 Methodology

This research used a qualitative method with ethnographic studies to describe the traditions and communication culture of Cirendeu Village. The data were collected through literature study, direct observation, and interviews. Meanwhile, the interviews were conducted with the village administrators to determine the traditions, rituals, ceremonies, habits, and culture of communication within the community. The processes were emphasized to signify more than quantity, frequency, or intensity, which can be measured mathematically. However, descriptive statistics using frequency distributions or percentages are also useful to complete the data analysis (Mulyana D. &., 2007).

#### 3 Results and Discussion

The Cirendeu traditional community has 300 residents from 66 families that still adhere to the local customs and traditions. There are also over 380 residents in the Kampung Pojok outside of the elders' policy that are allowed but not obligated to use and follow the existing customs, traditions, rituals, and ceremonies. Cirendeu adheres to Sunda Wiwitan and is obedient to their traditions. Sunda Wiwitan is an old belief involving the worship of natural forces and ancestral spirits and is embraced by the Sundanese community. According to the Traditional Village administrator, the religion and beliefs of the community still follow the views recognized by the government for population administration. Some traditional communities have also embraced a certain religion because of marriage. The location of the Cirendeu Traditional Village is Leuwi Gajah, Cimahi City, and is very accessible.



**Fig.1.** Cirendeu Traditional Village Source: Author documentation, 2020

The village entrance gate or monument reads "Wilujeung Sumping in Cirendeu Village Rukun Warga 10," meaning welcome to Cirendeu Village Hamlet 10. It also has a monument with the writing, Wangsit Siliwangi, namely 1) Honest, 2) Brave, 3) Defending the little people, 4) Loving others, and 5) Maintaining authority. Cirendeu Traditional Village's special staple food is cassava that has been consumed for more than 100 years, as the community does not consume rice like West Java. Cassava is converted into flour, made into dough, and steamed to resemble rice, while processed foods made from the plant are jerky and fried rice. Also, a cooperative is managed with the whole community to sell these food products, and persons that want to consume rice are required to have a strong reason and perform a traditional ceremony with a special song. There are many reasons the community may not consume cassava, such as marrying someone outside the village, precluding them from eating the plant, or moving to other areas for certain reasons. Conversely, a reason this village consumes cassava is the belief that power does not only come from rice but also other sources.

According to an article published in *Jurnal Etnika* titled *Ketahanan Hidup Masyarakat Kampung Adat Cirendeu dalam Perspektif Antorpologis* (Survival of the Cirendeu Traditional Village Community from an Anthropological Perspective), the community initially consumed rice as a staple food. Then, they switched to cassava for an indefinite period during the Dutch colonization due to the lack of food, especially rice. Cirendeu is a Sundanese traditional

community that can maintain and preserve customs that have been conveyed over generations and are not externally influenced. The community is full of peace and harmony and follow the saying "silih asah, silih asih, silih asuh, tata, titi, duduga peryoga." Also, they adhere to the adage from their ancestors interpreted as follows, "it's okay not to have a field but have rice, it's okay not to have rice but can cook rice, it's okay if you can't cook rice but can eat, it's okay even if you can't eat but still be alive." The adage is an ancestral heritage and a form of a great sense of belonging to the earth. Cirendeu respects their ancestors by not eating or depending on rice and replacing it with cassava as the community's staple food. Hence, dynamics related to rice, such as rising prices or scarcity of supply, will not impact their lives considerably. This Traditional Village is thereby often used as a pilot for food security and diversification in West Java and Indonesia (Jabbaril, 2018).

The ancestral traditions teach the community to live independently, grow and produce their food from their gardens and land, as well as avoid depending on the availability of rice stocks outside the area. Hence, this village can become a food-independent village in the future. Cirendeu needs to be preserved amidst the rapidly growing property industry in various regions, including the Cimahi area, which possesses much new housing and real estate developments. Maintaining this village requires a strong commitment and support from local and central governments and is not driven by the interests of various parties that oppose the preservation of local culture. According to the village manager, the community has various annual traditions and rituals, including seren taun, consisting of a series of events, art shows, and rites, alongside wedding, birth, and death ceremonies. A downhill and rocky road leads to the Cirendeu Traditional Village, with a community settlement where the houses are very near each other. There are many Bale (village halls) close to the settlement, commonly used for meetings, rituals, ceremonies, and puppet shows to express gratitude and thanksgiving to God. Also, the village has space that has been equipped with traditional musical instruments and suitable décoration for conducting cultural performances and displaying attractions for local and foreign tourists. Besides farming and gardening, the Cirendeu community develops the domestic industry by selling various processed cassava products and local souvenirs and merchandise.



Fig. 2. Bale (Hall) of the Circundeu Traditional Village Source: Author Documentation, 2020

## a) Saka Sunda New Year or Sura'an Tradition

The Cirendeu community usually holds *Saka Sunda* New Year or *Sura'an* events, which have deep meaning and place humans beside plants, animals, environments, water, sea, mountains, wood, sky, and fire to allow them to experience the feelings of other living things. This event is held for a month at homes and the *Bale*, though there was an adjustment during the pandemic due to the lack of permission from the local government. At 1 *Sura*, the residents gather at the *Bale* and pray for God's grace, and in 2 to 9 *Sura* (first month in the Javanese calendar), the event is held in each house with thanksgiving and shared feelings with the surrounding community. At 10 *Sura*, some gather at the *Bale*, with the peak at 20, 21, and 22 *Sura*, where the community conducts the *sungkeman* event by apologizing and asking the elders to pray for the common good.

The peak activity is the *Damar Sewu* procession, where the elders light resin and hand them to four pairs of young families from different directions to ignite other resins installed around the *Bale*. This procession has a message for the community to avoid "*paremeun obor*" or cutting the relationship to ensure good and harmonious relations are established. The next event is Nakol Goong, involving yearly art event presentations held to show external communities that *Cirendeu* Village still exists and preserves their culture. After the elders hit the Gong, they pray with the community and visit their ancestors' tombs. The event is held at 8 p.m. and continues by eating at the meeting hall (*Bale*). *Sura'an* tradition is the largest event conducted by the Cirendeu community because it involves many activities and is held for a month.

Meanwhile, a related article titled *Citra Kampung Adat Cireundeu pada Ritual Sura'an* (The Image of Cireundeu Traditional Village concerning the *Sura'an* Ritual) was published in the *Jurnal Profesi Humas* (Public Relations Professional Journal). According to this publication, the 1 Sura celebration is an ancestral tradition that can be interpreted as a *Karuhun Urang* way based on Sunda Wiwitan beliefs sourced from the *Madrais* or *Cigugur* religious teachings. Also, the results showed that the 1 Sura ritual is a manifestation of the community's gratitude for God's grace and a control tool in action or association with fellow communities. The communication during this ritual includes open behavior, as everyone is allowed to participate and express their feelings. Hence, the Cireundeu community responds to a stimulus, specifically a series of rituals, with action and practice, and communicates according to their needs (Widyaputra, 2019).

# b) Ngarajah Puncak Salam Tradition

Cirendeu Traditional Village is located at the foot of Puncak Salam Mount and takes approximately 45 minutes to reach. This mount is one of the village's attractions often visited by local and foreign tourists. During the weekend, numerous local tourists come to sample the typical food served and climb Puncak Salam, which has beautiful views and fresh air. Furthermore, the community still adopts *Ngarajah* tradition held at Puncak Salam every August 17 at 00.00 in the night, during which they climb the mount, play Balebat songs, and light a fire. This event is a typical character of the village that the general community can follow and currently constitutes cultural tourism without removing its main ritual. The next activity is camping at the top of the mount, which is favored by both local and foreign tourists.

#### c) Mulah Sarah Sirah Cai Tradition

This ceremony is annually held at 5 p.m. by the Cirendeu community at damaged and *kabuyutan* springs that should not be disturbed. The reason for this ceremony is to improve damaged springs, which function as a life source. Many springs, including Caringin and Nyimas Ende, are usually used by the Hindu community to perform *melasti* rituals.

## d) Wedding rituals

At weddings, the Cirendeu community conducts many rituals inherited by generations from ancestors. The first is *Nendeun Carita* (observing family genealogy), where the bride and bridegroom narrate the genealogy or origin of each family to avoid relationships between them. This is followed by *Patalehan* (*Narosan*), in which the bridegroom's family connects with the bride's family to them better. Also, they ask for the prospective bride's willingness to progress to the next stage of life with the potential bridegroom. The tradition is continued with a *nyereuhan* (applying), where the bridegroom's family visits the bride's.

A ceremony is held at the bride's house, which involves giving betel, praying with the family, and weuweuhan. After forty days, the bridegroom's family returns the betel to the bride's family to determine the wedding date. Following an agreement, a procession is held (debriefing) by providing or advising the bride and bridegroom, after which the Ngaras, Siraman, Ngeyeuk Seureuh, and then ikral jatu kerami (solemnization) traditions are implemented. The solemnization procession is different from the general activity and is performed by the bride, while the bridegroom does a prayer ritual. In the end, the marriage is considered legitimate, according to customs. It may be continued with the turun bantaian ceremony (reception), where the bridegroom offers gifts to the bride's family. This wedding reception can be performed at each house or the Bale and may be adjusted to the number of guests. Generally, this activity is similar to that of the community.

# e) Pregnancy and Birth Rituals

The Cirendeu community is obedient and adheres to the ancestral tradition, which comprises restrictions and rituals during pregnancy and birth. Some restrictions include not sitting at the door, napping or coming out at dusk, as well as encourages bringing fire and being accompanied going to the bathroom. Also, their nails should be kept by smearing with a single onion, and they should eat in *Pisin* (small plates) instead of dinner plates to facilitate meal apportioning. This ensures that pregnant women consume small quantities of food more frequently. Furthermore, there are 4 and 7 months (*Tingkeban*) and birth rituals. The 4-month pregnancy ritual, which is not compulsory and is returned to each family, can be accomplished at the house or in *upacarakan*. The 7-month pregnancy ritual should be performed by the Cirendeu community, specifically for the first child, in which the family is required to provide *bubuahan*, *bebeeutian*, and *kanistren* salad.

This ritual begins with the father of the pregnant woman pounding the salad, followed by the in-laws, and finally the mother of the conceived baby. This activity is continued by buying the salad with round tiles in the same order, where both parents agree to determine the price. Then, the pregnant woman is bathed with eels, 7 kinds of flowers, and water coming from 7 springs or wells. The ritual is continued by cleaving ivory coconut, symbolizing the child, and taking it to *Jalan Ngolecer*. This 7-month pregnancy ritual is led by *Panjejerna* or Elders and accompanied by *Ais Pangampi*, with special rituals and songs. For greater 7-month pregnancy

rituals, the *kecapi suling, panjejer, riungan*, and *Wanten Bakakak* arts are included for the ceremony leader. In Cirendeu Traditional Village, the *Panjejerna* is 87-year-old Bah Emen, alongside Bah Widi, and Bah Asep. Following the local customs and traditions, the mother is not allowed to have an ultrasound (USG) while pregnant with the first child, allowing the gender to be observed from the coconut cleaved by the father. This activity is not required by traditional ceremonies for the second child and so on. Meanwhile, the 9-month pregnancy tradition involves *ngapak* and *ngepak* and is a preparation to welcome birth. The series of traditional ceremonies cannot help childbirth and are merely 4 and 7-month pregnancy and birth traditions, while routine checks and delivery are performed by midwives or doctors, according to the government's advice.

After the birth process, the *Indung Beurang (Paraji)*, who leads the ceremony, and the family, prepare the *ngagantian getih* ceremony at the house, where a chicken is cut to prepare various dishes, as a tribute to the mother who struggled during childbirth. The *nenjrag bumi* ceremony is also performed after the birth, in which the baby is placed in a sieve and played with in Hawu (a cooking place using firewood) after returning to the house. This aims to introduce the earth to the baby, so he is not shocked. At the age of 40 days, the *Ngawastu* ritual, comprising *salametan*, *ngageulangan*, and *ngahuripan*, is performed. The mother and baby wear a bracelet from yarn and Curcuma, with the philosophy being round and Curcuma meaning honest, a quality hoped for the baby. Then, the next is the child's birthday, which is not mandatory and is performed by the *tepung tahun* ritual, comprising *ngabubur*, *ngarujak* (coconut salad), and *numpeng* in each house. Generally, Cirendeu still adjusts to the surrounding community while implementing the various traditions and rituals.

## f) Cultural Tourism of Puncak Salam Mount

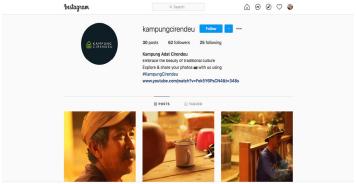
On weekends, tourists visit Cirendeu Village to play, take pictures, eat snacks, go sightseeing, as well as climb and camp on the mount. The community has cultural tour packages consisting of *Kaulianan* (game), *wawayangan*, processing *sampeu* (cassava), traveling to the cassava garden, and art workshops. They also sell cassava fried rice and various snacks from this tuber on weekends. Although this activity is performed daily in normal conditions, it was held only at certain times during the pandemic. Another event in the Cirendeu area involves the Puncak Salam Mount with an altitude of 904 masl, in which tourists walk to the top in only about 45 minutes and enjoy the beauty and natural scenery. There are certain rules when climbing the mount, such as prohibiting footwear and red clothes, forbidding women from visiting certain areas, going to a specific site while menstruating, and climbing the mount at 5 pm. The guard team provides information before the climb begins, and these rules are not to be violated to avoid certain events outside of human abilities, which happen to climbers who violate the rules.

Additionally, the mount climb should be guided by the local guard to inform people of the cultural value and restrictions. Although there is no entrance ticket, visitors are welcome to provide donations for maintaining the cleanliness of the surrounding area. From the mount top, beautiful views of Bandung City and planes that take off and land at Hussein Bandung Airport can be seen. In September 2020, there were over 496 visitors who climbed Puncak Salam Mount within 11 days. Meanwhile, there is a fairly wide field at the mount top that can be used by climbers for camping. According to the Cirendeu Traditional Village administrator, the facilities on Puncak Salam, which is the only mount in the Cimahi City, are currently suboptimal and require improvement to attract more tourists.

During the COVID-19 pandemic period, Cimahi City entered the red zone on several occasions, but the Cirendeu area stayed relatively safe. Subsequently, there were restrictions on community activities to prevent the viral spread. The community allowed farming and gardening only in the village and prohibited the residents from leaving the city. Also, the administrator reduced several programs such as Homestay, Community Service (KKN), and tourists. Meanwhile, Cirendeu Traditional Village has several *Bale* built independently, and one built by the Director-General of Culture, namely *Bale* Julang Ngapak, for various activities, such as traditional ceremonies and arts involving children.

# g) Communication culture

Based on an interview with the village administrator, Kang Jajat, the traditional ceremonies and rituals are not introduced and disseminated outside the community, though the community provides information and explanations as a karuhun cultural heritage. Meanwhile, the village elders are not selected from one generation to another but according to their abilities. For example, Bah Widi and Bah Asep have three-year positions but have remained unchanged for 20 years. This is because no other figures with equivalent knowledge and experience are qualified to lead the Cirendeu Traditional Village. Hence, these elders have an important role in the community, especially in leading the ceremonies and rituals. Cirendeu learns traditions, rituals, and ceremonies individually from the elders by attending various traditional ceremonies and memorizing prayers, and discover the purpose and philosophy by directly following the activity. The community is not allowed to use notes during ceremonies or rituals but is required to memorize every prayer. Also, communication media are not used to inform and spread the traditions and culture. Currently, Cirendeu employs various communication media to provide information about their cultural tourism, namely an Instagram page managed by the Cimahi City Government, and a WhatsApp account "dulur Cirendeu" managed by the village administrator.



**Fig. 3.** The Instagram page of Cirendeu Village Source: Instagram, 2020

The community's Instagram page provides information about the activities, musical instruments, typical and processed foods, traditional ceremonies, and rituals performed. This form of communication is one-way, where the social media manager conveys various information, but no response or feedback is obtained from other users. Also, Cirendeu Traditional Village conducts a homestay program, which allows tourists to interact directly

with them by staying in their houses, eating, and performing activities together. Although this program was successful in attracting tourists that are interested in the culture and traditions, it was unfortunately stopped during the COVID-19 pandemic to prevent the virus spread to this area.

## 4 Conclusion

The Cirendeu Village community adheres to the cultures inherited from their ancestors, including the *Saka Sunda* New Year or *Sura'an* and *Ngarajah Puncak Salam* traditions, the *mulah sarah sirah cai* ceremony, alongside wedding, pregnancy, and birth rituals. Their rituals and ceremonies are self-taught and passed down to the next generation through direct involvement and participation in the rituals to ensure the philosophy is adequately understood. The traditions and culture are not communicated and disseminated to outsiders, but the community is open to people that wish to know and learn about the Cirendeu Traditional Village. Furthermore, the village offers communication media through Instagram and WhatsApp, which are managed by the Cimahi City government and the village administrators, respectively. These social media accounts are used to provide information about the activities, musical instruments, typical and processed foods, as well as ceremonies and rituals performed by the Cirendeu community.

# **Limitation and Study Forward**

Based on research that has been done in Kampung Adat Cirendeu there are several limitations. The first limitation is researchers only can interviewed some of the village administrators because other elders could not be interviewed due to health problems and pandemic conditions. Another limitation is that researchers cannot be directly involved in traditional ceremonies held in Cirendeu due to pandemic. The next research is to determine tradition and culture of other villages community in West Java, Indonesia.

## Acknowledgement

We would like to thank you to The Cirendeu Village community who has provided various information related to the culture, habits, communication culture and welcome us well during the pandemic.

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