

# Reinforcing Post-Disaster Place Identity through Historical Tourism Grounded in the Sense of Place Framework: A Case Study of Gampong Pande

Penguatan Identitas Tempat Pascabencana melalui Wisata Sejarah Berbasis *Sense of Place*: Studi Kasus Gampong Pande

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**Abstract:** Gampong Pande, a historically significant toponym marking the origin of the port city of the Aceh Darussalam Sultanate and the foundation of Banda Aceh city, possesses substantial potential for development as a historical tourism destination. However, in the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, a critical paradox has emerged: while physical reconstruction efforts have successfully restored the tangible fabric of the area, they have simultaneously diminished its intangible heritage, including cultural memory and symbolic meaning. This study addresses that gap by identifying the constituent elements of sense of place that can inform the revitalisation of Gampong Pande's identity as a post-disaster heritage site. The research employs a qualitative methodology, drawing on field observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentary analysis of planning instruments. The analytical framework integrates the triadic model of sense of place comprising form (physical setting), activity (social practices), and meaning (symbolic and cultural associations) with the evaluative dimensions of the Project for Public Spaces (1998). The findings reveal that Gampong Pande retains a rich constellation of historical, symbolic, and ecological assets. However, these assets remain underutilised due to fragmented management, insufficient interpretive infrastructure, the absence of designed public spaces to support community participation, and the lack of a coherent visual and spatial narrative. In response, the study proposes a set of multi-dimensional development principles grounded in place-based theory, encompassing spatial, socio-cultural, and symbolic dimensions. These principles are operationalised through context-sensitive design criteria and modular guidelines aimed at guiding future revitalisation initiatives. The study contributes to the academic discourse on heritage-based tourism planning and offers an applicable model for the sustainable redevelopment of disaster-impacted historic environments.

*Keywords:* Gampong Pande, historical tourism, post-disaster, sense of place

**Abstrak:** Gampong Pande, sebuah toponim bersejarah yang menandai asal mula kota pelabuhan Kesultanan Aceh Darussalam sekaligus cikal bakal Kota Banda Aceh, memiliki potensi besar untuk dikembangkan sebagai destinasi wisata sejarah. Namun, pascabencana tsunami Samudra Hindia tahun 2004, muncul sebuah paradoks penting: meskipun upaya rekonstruksi fisik berhasil memulihkan wujud kawasan secara nyata, proses tersebut justru turut mengurangi warisan takbenda yang dimiliki, termasuk memori budaya dan makna simbolik kawasan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi unsur-unsur pembentuk *sense of place* yang dapat mendukung revitalisasi identitas Gampong Pande sebagai kawasan warisan

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*pascabencana. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif melalui observasi lapangan, wawancara semi-terstruktur, serta analisis dokumen perencanaan. Kerangka analisis mengintegrasikan model triadik sense of place yang terdiri atas bentuk (form), aktivitas (activity), dan makna (meaning) dengan dimensi evaluatif dari Project for Public Spaces (1998). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Gampong Pande masih memiliki kekayaan aset historis, simbolik, dan ekologis yang kuat. Namun, potensi tersebut belum dimanfaatkan secara optimal akibat pengelolaan yang terfragmentasi, minimnya infrastruktur interpretatif, belum tersedianya ruang publik yang dirancang untuk mendukung partisipasi masyarakat, serta ketiadaan narasi visual dan spasial yang terpadu. Sebagai respons, penelitian ini menawarkan seperangkat prinsip pengembangan multidimensional berbasis teori tempat (place-based theory) yang mencakup dimensi spasial, sosial-budaya, dan simbolik. Prinsip-prinsip tersebut kemudian dioperasionalkan ke dalam kriteria desain yang kontekstual dan panduan modular guna mendukung upaya revitalisasi di masa mendatang. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan kajian perencanaan pariwisata berbasis warisan budaya serta menawarkan model yang dapat diterapkan untuk pembangunan kembali kawasan bersejarah terdampak bencana secara berkelanjutan.*

*Kata Kunci: Gampong Pande, wisata sejarah, pascabencana, sense of place*

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of sense of place has increasingly been recognised as a critical framework in the preservation and development of historically significant sites. By uncovering and accentuating the unique attributes of a location, this approach facilitates the articulation of a distinct regional identity. Originally conceptualised within social science and humanistic geography (Tuan, 1977), the notion has since been integrated into architecture, design, and urban planning as a theoretical and methodological tool to address the intricate relationship between people and their environments. Terms such as place attachment, place identity, genius loci, and topophilia are often used to describe the emotional and symbolic bonds formed between individuals and specific locales (Cross, 2015; Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1975).

The incorporation of sense of place into spatial planning frameworks reflects the growing recognition of local identity as a foundation for sustainable regional development (Hague & Jenkins, 2004; Kolodziejewski, 2014). In the context of historical tourism, this paradigm offers critical insights into how individuals perceive, experience, and engage with meaningful environments. Its identification is fundamental to reinforcing place integrity (Zlender & Gemin, 2020) and serves as a conceptual foundation for conservation strategies (Pawitro, 2015). Moreover, the sense of place framework enables the integration of tangible and intangible heritage dimensions, providing a sustainable pathway for areas facing environmental or socio-cultural disruption (Dameria et al., 2020).

Previous studies (Najafi et al., 2011; Acedo et al., 2018; Campelo et al., 2014; Jarratt et al., 2019) have demonstrated that a strong sense of place significantly influences visitors' engagement and emotional attachment to destinations. Visitors are typically drawn to environments that combine visual aesthetics, accessibility, safety, comfort, and opportunities for social interaction. Conversely, disorganised spatial structures and the absence of meaningful activities reduce the vibrancy and appeal of a place. While this literature provides a solid theoretical foundation, it tends to focus on general tourism contexts, leaving post-disaster settings largely underexplored.

In disaster-affected environments, particularly where socio-spatial identities have been fragmented, the sense of place framework offers a valuable means of reconstituting emotional, cultural, and spatial continuity (Spennemann, 2022). In this regard, Gampong Pande in Banda Aceh serves as a compelling case. Once part of the historical core of the Aceh Darussalam Sultanate, the area was profoundly transformed by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, which altered its physical landscape, social structure, and cultural expressions.

Despite its rich archaeological heritage and symbolic significance, Gampong Pande remains underdeveloped as a historical tourism site. Strengthening its sense of place is thus not only a cultural imperative but also a strategic opportunity to reconnect collective memory, heritage, and identity within the broader post-disaster recovery framework.

The intersection of sense of place and historical tourism is particularly salient in three key respects: fostering emotional attachment between visitors and destinations, communicating the distinctiveness of heritage sites, and curating engaging experiences that strengthen destination authenticity (AlMasri & Ababneh, 2021; Csurgó & Smith, 2022). However, the current state of research still lacks a systematic application of sense of place as a planning and design framework for post-disaster heritage environments. Addressing this gap is crucial for advancing both theoretical understanding and practical implementation in heritage-based development.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine how the sense of place framework can be operationalised to revitalise Gampong Pande as a post-disaster historical tourism destination. Specifically, it seeks to (1) identify spatial and socio-cultural potentials that shape the area's sense of place, and (2) formulate development principles that integrate form, activity, and meaning dimensions to reinforce local identity and historical continuity. The rationale for selecting Gampong Pande lies in its dual significance: as a heritage landscape deeply rooted in Aceh's Islamic and maritime history, and as a post-disaster site symbolising resilience and cultural recovery. Its underutilised potential as a historical tourism destination, combined with its symbolic position in Aceh's collective memory, makes it an ideal context for testing how sense of place can guide heritage-led regeneration.

The novelty of this research lies in its integrative methodological approach, which synthesises the form–activity–meaning triad of sense of place with the evaluative criteria of “What Makes a Great Place” (Project for Public Spaces, 1998). This synthesis enables a holistic spatial, social, and symbolic analysis, producing context-sensitive development principles applicable not only to Gampong Pande but also to other heritage sites undergoing disruption. The findings contribute to the broader academic discourse on place-based development while offering practical insights for policymakers and planners engaged in culturally grounded, post-disaster revitalisation. Ultimately, this study positions historical tourism not merely as an economic mechanism but as a transformative medium for restoring identity, reinforcing collective memory, and cultivating participatory stewardship of heritage landscapes.

## **METHODS**

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative methodology aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the spatial potentials and challenges of Gampong Pande as a post-disaster historical tourism destination. This approach was chosen for its capacity to reveal the underlying components of sense of place, which are critical in reconstructing and rearticulating local identity following spatial and socio-cultural disruption. The study employs an integrative analytical framework grounded in sense of place theory, encompassing three interrelated dimensions: form (physical configuration), activity (patterns of use and social interaction), and meaning (symbolic and affective associations). To evaluate spatial quality, the study also applies the “What Makes a Great Place” framework (Project for Public Spaces, 1998) as a diagnostic tool to assess the site's capacity to foster place attachment and narrative coherence.

The combination of field observation, stakeholder interviews, and document analysis was designed to capture both the tangible and intangible dimensions of Gampong Pande. Field observations offered empirical insight into spatial and morphological conditions; interviews elicited socio-cultural and affective meanings associated with place; and document analysis contextualised these findings within existing planning and policy frameworks. Together, these methods ensured triangulation and analytical depth, enabling

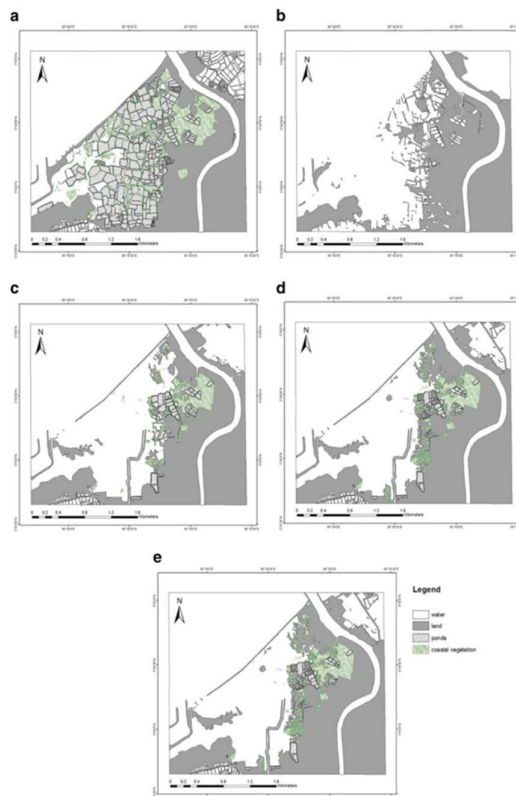
the research to comprehensively address its aim of reconstructing sense of place in a post-disaster context.

A total of twelve key stakeholders were interviewed, including community leaders, local government representatives, heritage activists, and tourism practitioners. They were identified through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in the planning, management, and cultural interpretation of the area. The interview data were analysed thematically: transcripts were manually coded to identify recurring patterns, spatial narratives, and symbolic associations, which were then synthesised with findings from field observations and document review. This analytical integration informed the derivation of contextualised design principles aligned with the socio-cultural and ecological fabric of Gampong Pande.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Gampong Pande, located along the northern coastline of Banda Aceh, was among the most severely affected zones during the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami. The disaster led to the destruction of nearly 70 percent of the population, with only a single house remaining intact (Setyawan et al., 2024). Local livelihoods, primarily reliant on fish and shrimp aquaculture, were significantly disrupted (Ismail et al., 2018). These events have resulted in a profound disorientation of community identity, marked by the loss of traditional built environments, the displacement of residents, and the absence of a coherent system for interpreting the site's historical significance. Such conditions have contributed to the weakening of place attachment, both for local inhabitants and for visitors.

In post-disaster contexts, the sense of place approach provides a valuable framework for reconstituting fragmented identities by linking spatial, cultural, and symbolic dimensions. For example, Raymond et al. (2021) discuss how after disasters, communities renegotiate meaning and attachment through material-semiotic relations; Dickinson (2019) documents how physical disruption in Christchurch earthquake changed residents' sense of belonging and identity; and De Jesús, Olivos-Jara & Navarro (2022) show that traumatic experiences such as wildfires deeply affect emotional and symbolic ties residents have with place, necessitating recovery processes that reconnect meaning, memories, and space. The redevelopment of Gampong Pande as a historical tourism destination thus requires an approach that extends beyond visual aesthetics and economic potential, foregrounding emotional resonance and cultural significance. Situated at the southern edge of Banda Aceh, Gampong Pande lies near the estuarine confluence of the Krueng Aceh River and the Indian Ocean, an area historically recognised as part of the early settlement core of the Aceh Sultanate. The site is characterised by a mix of coastal lowland and archaeological remnants, including ancient gravestones (nisan Aceh), mosque foundations, and fragments of colonial-era infrastructure that survived the 2004 tsunami. Archival records and cartographic sources (BPCB Aceh, 2018; Bappeda Banda Aceh, 2020) indicate that the area once functioned as a royal burial complex and maritime gateway, positioning it as a locus of both historical memory and spiritual symbolism. To provide an empirical spatial illustration, Figure 2 presents the coastal morphological transformation of the Gampong Pande area between 2004 and 2011. The comparison highlights the extent of shoreline retreat and vegetation loss following the 2004 tsunami, as well as the gradual recovery of coastal forms over time.



**Figure 2. Coastal morphological changes in the Gampong Pande area before and after the 2004 tsunami. Dark grey indicates land area, while green represents coastal vegetation: (a) 2004 (pre-tsunami), (b) 2005 (post-tsunami), (c) 2009, (d) 2010, and (e) 2011. Source: Syamsidik et al. (2014)**

The theoretical foundation of this research is grounded in the sense of place framework, which comprises three interrelated dimensions: setting (physical form), activity (patterns of use and interaction), and meaning (symbolic and cultural value). These dimensions align closely with the evaluative criteria of the “What Makes a Great Place?” framework developed by the Project for Public Spaces (1998). In terms of setting, the availability of open land, vegetated landscapes, and the potential integration of cultural symbols present opportunities to shape a distinct spatial identity. However, field observations indicate that the existing spatial infrastructure remains insufficiently developed. The absence of pedestrian pathways, limited street furniture, and inadequate public lighting collectively diminish the experiential quality of the area, thereby impeding the formation of strong emotional bonds between people and place.

With respect to the activity dimension, public spaces have yet to be activated as platforms for social, cultural, and educational engagement. The lack of functional zoning, absence of interactive tourism programming, and disconnection between key sites result in underutilized space and a static urban atmosphere. This condition undermines the dynamism essential to vibrant public realms. From the perspective of meaning, the symbolic capital of Gampong Pande, rooted in the legacy of the Aceh Sultanate and the sacred value of ancestral tombs, holds strong potential to serve as the basis for identity construction. However, limitations in interpretive infrastructure, such as a lack of signage, narrative content, and programming that animates local culture, hinder effective communication of these symbolic meanings. Consequently, the area risks being perceived as disjointed and detached, thus diminishing its value as a living heritage site.

To address these interrelated challenges, this study formulated a set of development principles for post-disaster historical tourism, drawing from three key theoretical sources:

(1) sense of place theory (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977; Montgomery, 1998; Carmona, 2021); (2) a synthesis of literature and precedent studies that identify place-forming elements; and (3) a critical analysis of the current conditions, potentials, and constraints of Gampong Pande. The result is a development framework grounded in sense of place theory and translated into operational principles and spatial criteria. These principles are further articulated through implementable technical and visual design guidelines aimed at structuring the Gampong Pande heritage landscape. The proposed design approach emphasizes place-based design, where each spatial intervention serves both a functional and narrative purpose, enhancing usability while simultaneously reinforcing cultural identity and spiritual continuity. This dual function is central to transforming the area not only into a preserved physical site, but into a meaningful and immersive historical environment. Ultimately, the reactivation of Gampong Pande as a heritage destination must prioritize the co-production of spatial experiences that elicit emotional engagement, foster cultural continuity, and support community resilience.

### **Form (The Physical Setting)**

Within the sense of place framework, the form-based approach positions physical elements not merely as infrastructural components or visual embellishments, but as critical media for enhancing spatial legibility, facilitating narrative orientation, and reinforcing regional identity. In the case of Gampong Pande, a post-disaster historical landscape, the physical form plays a strategic role in communicating the legacy of the Aceh Darussalam Sultanate, expressing local cultural character, and cultivating emotional attachment between visitors and the site.

Empirical findings derived from systematic field observations ( $n = 25$  points) and stakeholder interviews ( $n = 12$  participants) indicate that many physical components within Gampong Pande are not yet functioning effectively as enablers of historical experience. Observations show that pedestrian movement remains constrained by the absence of continuous walkways and poor circulation design, which often results in conflicts between vehicles and visitors. Several respondents, including local guides and community leaders, noted that the limited presence of interpretive signage and poor lighting reduce the sense of safety and make navigation across the site confusing.

The fragmented structure of public spaces was also consistently observed. Key heritage elements such as ancient gravestones (*nisan Aceh*), mosque ruins, and coastal corridors are physically disconnected, lacking clear spatial sequencing. This fragmentation disrupts the visitor's narrative journey and diminishes the continuity necessary to evoke a sense of immersion in the site's historical atmosphere. From the perspective of sense of place, such spatial incoherence weakens the interpretive capacity of the environment, visitors struggle to perceive how individual landmarks relate to the collective memory of the area.

Nevertheless, local design characteristics remain visible in isolated elements. Acehnese visual symbols, including traditional ornaments, Arabic calligraphy, and *bungong jeumpa* motifs, appear sporadically in signage and façades but are not yet integrated into a cohesive design language. Interviews with local stakeholders suggest that these cultural motifs hold emotional and symbolic importance, yet their fragmented application prevents them from functioning as coherent sense markers.

Building upon these empirical insights, eight form-based design principles were developed to reconstruct the physical identity of Gampong Pande through contextual sensitivity, visual coherence, spatial connectivity, and ecological responsiveness. These principles (summarised in Table 1) propose an integrated framework for reconfiguring physical form as an active medium for historical interpretation and emotional resonance.

**Table 1. Principles of Form Element Development in Gampong Pande Historical Tourism Area**

| Evaluative Component          | Development Indicator   | Contribution to Sense of Place   |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Local Cultural Symbols</b> | Acehnese ornaments (motifs such as <i>pucok rebong</i> , <i>ranub</i> , and <i>bungong jeumpa</i> ) integrated into signage, landmarks, and directional markers | Strengthens the visual and symbolic identity of the area                         |
| <b>Public Space Elements</b>  | Design of shelters, benches, and corridors as "living spaces" that support comfort and narrative reflection   | Enhances physical comfort and represents local narratives                        |
| <b>Pedestrian Pathways</b>    | Safe, accessible pedestrian routes that are disability-friendly and connect historical sites  | Improves spatial accessibility and continuity                                    |
| <b>Thematic Lighting</b>      | Lighting system that integrates safety with visual historical narratives at night   | Enhances spatial vitality and reinforces the historical atmosphere               |
| <b>Interpretive Signage</b>   | Wayfinding tools, QR codes, and narrative pedestals provided in two languages   | Promotes spatial legibility and strengthens historical storytelling              |
| <b>Area Landscaping</b>       | Thematic vegetation and heritage trees as ecological and aesthetic connectors   | Reinforces the continuity between the natural environment and historical context |
| <b>Landmarks and Nodes</b>    | Landmarks as orientation points that shape the identity of the place  | Facilitates orientation and emphasizes the unique character of the area          |
| <b>Supporting Features</b>    | Amenities such as seating, small places of worship, and trash bins integrated visually and symbolically   | Enhances the basic functions of space within the context of local culture        |

Source: Author, 2025

In line with these findings, a significant recommendation for strengthening the form dimension of sense of place is the incorporation of interpretive signage and spatial markers that facilitate both orientation and narrative comprehension. The proposed design concept is grounded in three interrelated principles, legibility, local aesthetics, and universal functionality, ensuring that spatial communication is inclusive to both domestic and international visitors. Entrance identifiers, trailhead kiosks, and interpretive nodes are envisioned as integral components of a cohesive spatial-thematic network that connects historical landmarks through walkable sequences. The integration of Acehnese cultural symbols such as *ranub*, *pucok rebong*, and *bungong jeumpa* motifs reinforces the symbolic identity of the area, functioning not merely as ornaments but as sense markers that embody continuity between past heritage and present spatial expression.

The bilingual presentation of information (Bahasa Indonesia and English) further enhances accessibility while upholding cultural authenticity. From a sense of place perspective, these spatial elements operate as cognitive and emotional mediators, guiding visitors through an interpretive experience that merges history, identity, and affective resonance. Rather than functioning in isolation, each component contributes to a collective visual and symbolic narrative that expresses Gampong Pande's layered meanings as both a historical and post-disaster landscape. This approach positions design not only as an aesthetic endeavour but as a communicative process that reanimates memory, reinforces belonging, and materialises cultural identity within the spatial environment.

Such interventions affirm that physical transformation should not be limited to aesthetic enhancement or functional optimisation. Rather, it involves embedding symbolic and affective meanings within spatial form, enabling the environment to act as a medium through which memory, identity, and belonging are continuously reinterpreted. This finding aligns with recent scholarship emphasizing that post-disaster reconstruction must integrate local cultural identity to restore spatial meaning and belonging (Berroeta et al., 2021; Spennemann, 2022). Collectively, these principles form the foundation for

reimagining Gampong Pande as a legible, meaningful, and resilient historical tourism destination that embodies both its cultural heritage and post-disaster identity.

### **Activity (The Lived Experience)**

Within the sense of place framework, the activity dimension represents the lived and performative aspect of spatial experience, the way people inhabit, move through, and interact with their environment. It captures how space is animated through social practices, daily routines, and cultural rituals that give physical settings their vitality and meaning. In the context of Gampong Pande, the activity dimension reflects not only patterns of use, but also the rhythms of memory, belief, and adaptation that have evolved in response to post-disaster transformation.

Empirical evidence gathered through systematic field observations and interviews reveals that social activities within Gampong Pande are sporadic and event-based rather than continuous. Regular daily use of the site remains minimal, with observable peaks only during religious and commemorative events such as haul, tahlilan, and doa bersama. Outside these occasions, most spaces appear underutilised, serving primarily as passageways, fishing areas, or informal gathering points for nearby residents. The limited diversity and frequency of activities indicate that the site functions more as a memorial and symbolic space than as a dynamic public realm.

Interviews with community members and tourism stakeholders highlight that this inactivity stems from both spatial and institutional constraints. The absence of adequate amenities, such as resting areas, shaded zones, and clear circulation paths, discourages prolonged stays and social engagement. Moreover, the lack of organised programming and interpretive activities prevents visitors from developing a deeper understanding of the site's heritage narrative. Local stakeholders consistently expressed that while the community cherishes Gampong Pande's sacred value, its current spatial condition and management structure do not yet support participatory or educational activities that could revitalise its social function.

These findings underscore a critical disjunction between activity and meaning. Although the site's symbolic significance remains deeply embedded in community memory, the absence of active spatial engagement weakens the continuity between collective identity and lived experience. This gap aligns with observations from post-disaster contexts elsewhere, where heritage landscapes often risk becoming "frozen memories", preserved in symbolism but detached from everyday life (Dickinson, 2019; de Jesús et al., 2022). For Gampong Pande, revitalising activity thus becomes a process of reanimating space: transforming passive remembrance into active participation.

Field evidence also indicates emerging opportunities for reactivating public life through community-driven events. Several stakeholders have expressed interest in reintroducing traditional performances, cultural workshops, and heritage tours that could reconnect younger generations with local history. Such participatory initiatives, if supported by spatial infrastructure and interpretive design, could restore the continuity between physical form, cultural memory, and social use. From a sense of place perspective, this approach repositions activity as both a performative and restorative practice, one that sustains collective meaning through embodied experience.

Accordingly, three strategic directions are proposed for enhancing the activity dimension of Gampong Pande: (1) temporal programming, involving scheduled cultural and educational events that sustain periodic activity throughout the year; (2) spatial facilitation, through the provision of shaded gathering spaces, seating clusters, and walkable routes that encourage social encounters; and (3) interpretive participation, which integrates storytelling, guided tours, and interactive media to connect visitors with the site's layered narratives. These strategies aim to activate Gampong Pande as a living cultural landscape, one that bridges the temporal distance between past and present through ongoing social practice.

Such activation does not merely enhance tourism functionality but restores the experiential continuity between memory and space. By aligning community involvement with spatial design, the activity dimension serves as a mechanism for regenerating the emotional and cultural vitality of place. Ultimately, fostering lived experiences within Gampong Pande transforms it from a site of remembrance into a participatory environment, a landscape where history is not only observed, but continuously lived, shared, and reinterpreted.

### **Meaning (The lived and perceived significance)**

Within the sense of place framework, the meaning dimension represents the symbolic, emotional, and cognitive associations that connect people to place, shaping how they interpret and experience their surroundings. In post-disaster contexts, this dimension becomes especially vital as communities seek to reconstitute fragmented identities through cultural practices, ecological relationships, and shared memory. In the case of Gampong Pande, meaning emerges not only from its physical traces of the Aceh Darussalam Sultanate but also from the lived experiences and collective resilience of its people following the 2004 tsunami.

Empirical findings from semi-structured interviews (n = 12) and systematic field observations reveal that the emotional and symbolic identity of Gampong Pande is deeply intertwined with ecological traditions, particularly those associated with the nipah palm (*Nypa fruticans*). Interviews with local residents, artisans, and tourism practitioners highlighted that the nipah ecosystem historically functioned as both a livelihood resource and a cultural symbol of harmony between humans and the coastal environment. Although its traditional uses declined after the tsunami, community-led initiatives such as cultural festivals, craft workshops, and eco-based tourism programs have begun to revive the socio-economic and symbolic role of nipah. These activities not only sustain livelihoods but also reactivate collective memory and reinforce local identity, embodying the post-disaster recovery process through cultural continuity (Raymond et al., 2021; de Jesús et al., 2022).

Field observations further document how locally rooted activities, such as traditional crab-catching tours and nipah juice workshops, serve as participatory experiences that connect visitors to Gampong Pande's living heritage. Guided by local practitioners, these interactions allow visitors to learn traditional techniques while engaging with oral narratives about ecology, history, and disaster resilience. In this way, local products and practices operate as storytelling objects (Govers & Go, 2009), embedding layers of historical meaning, spiritual symbolism, and emotional resonance within tangible forms of production and exchange.

Building on these empirical insights, two community-based spatial interventions were conceptualised, the *Balee Nipah* and the *Saweu Nipah* Workshop, as interpretive spaces that materialise the site's symbolic and experiential values. The *Balee Nipah*, designed as a semi-permanent pavilion inspired by the morphology of the nipah palm and coastal vernacular architecture, functions as both a cultural gateway and an exhibition node for locally produced goods. Meanwhile, the *Saweu Nipah* Workshop serves as a participatory learning environment equipped with interpretive signage and workstations, enabling visitors to engage in hands-on activities such as *Peugot Jus Nipah Droë* Gata. Both spaces translate meaning into physical form, bridging ecological symbolism, community memory, and visitor experience.

To elevate nipah-based products from consumables to cultural emblems, symbolic strategies such as serving nipah juice as a welcome ritual are proposed. This approach aligns with place branding theory, in which spatial design, local products, and visitor experience are integrated to communicate a coherent and emotionally resonant identity. However, interview data also revealed a persistent challenge: a deficit of public trust resulting from fragmented development programs and unfulfilled governmental commitments. One

community leader expressed, “We have heard many plans, but few that truly include us.” Addressing this requires transparent, participatory governance that embeds community ownership into the meaning-making process, ensuring that Gampong Pande’s symbolic reconstruction is both inclusive and sustainable.

In summary, the meaning dimension of *Gampong Pande*’s sense of place is embodied in its ecological-cultural relationships, community craftsmanship, and emotionally resonant spatial design. The nipah palm operates not only as a material resource but also as a metaphor for regeneration and resilience, representing how memory, spirituality, and livelihood interweave within the post-disaster landscape. Embedding these meanings within spatial and experiential design allows *Gampong Pande* to evolve from a static heritage site into a living cultural landscape, where collective memory and identity are continuously renewed through participation, storytelling, and shared belonging.

## CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that the sense of place framework, comprising the interrelated dimensions of form, activity, and meaning, offers a robust and operational foundation for post-disaster heritage planning. Through systematic field observations, stakeholder interviews, and document analysis in Gampong Pande, the research revealed how physical form, social practices, and symbolic meanings function as mutually reinforcing elements in reconstructing place identity. The findings show that while spatial fragmentation and limited infrastructure weaken the legibility of the heritage landscape, the persistence of Acehese design motifs and community-led activities underscores the resilience of local identity. Nipah-based traditions, in particular, emerge as ecological and cultural anchors that sustain collective memory and foster emotional attachment to place. The significance of these findings lies in their broader implications for planning and policy: they provide a framework through which local governments can embed cultural identity within spatial development strategies, tourism planners can design narrative-based and participatory visitor experiences, and communities can reclaim agency in co-creating heritage spaces. By reframing sense of place from an affective concept into an actionable planning tool, this study contributes to both theory and practice, advancing a model of heritage-based recovery that is contextually grounded, socially inclusive, and ecologically responsive. Ultimately, the revitalisation of Gampong Pande exemplifies how post-disaster landscapes can evolve from sites of loss into living cultural environments where memory, identity, and resilience converge to sustain long-term urban and cultural continuity.

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