



Sustainable Ecology: The Role of Local Communities in Achieving Sustainable Tourism Village

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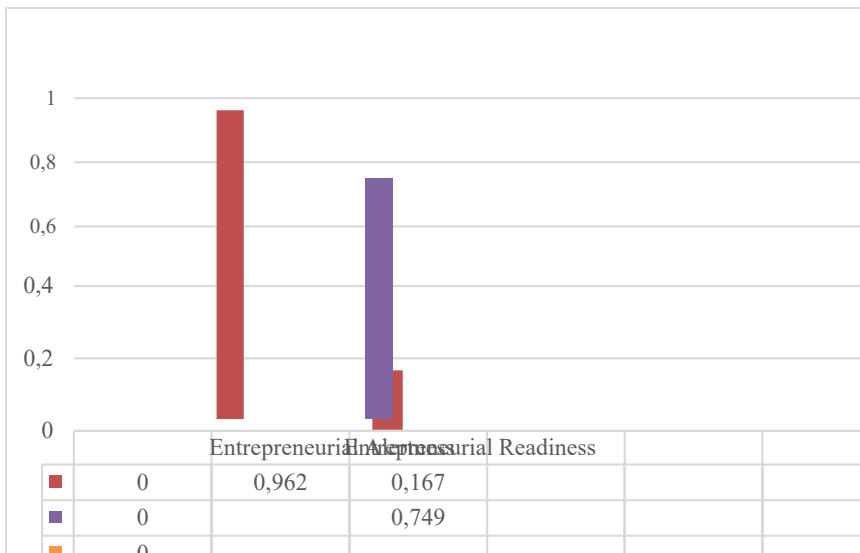
Abstract. Economic conditions in the urban areas tend to be more developed than in the rural areas, which make a significant income gap between the two areas. An appropriate solution is required to overcome this problem. One of the efforts required is to observe the economic development evenly, not only in urban but also in rural areas. Today the government emphasizes the tourism sector development as one of the priorities. This sector has the potential to stimulate the economic growth directly and indirectly. Tourism also plays a role in creating jobs and increasing income, especially when tourism development is conducted in an area. This provides opportunities for the local communities to be involved in the tourism industry and utilize the existing potential. The concept of community-based tourism is the right choice to strengthen how to improve the economy in rural areas through active community participation in managing the tourist villages. This research aims at analyzing and evaluating the implementation of tourist village development with a local community empowerment approach and its relationship to sustainable environmental maintenance. This is a combination of quantitative and qualitative research, which uses the primary data taken with observation techniques and Focus Group Discussions. This research used the Delphi method and qualitative descriptive as the analysis. Qualitative analysis is used to provide a clear picture of how community empowerment may contribute to the development of tourist villages. The results of research found a model that explains the role of local communities in realizing the sustainability of tourist villages in Central Java. The community's active involvement in the management and utilization of tourist villages has provided empirical evidence of the local community's role in improving the economic performance of tourist villages through the concept of sustainable ecology.

Keywords: Local Communities, Rural Area, Sustainable Tourism Village

1 Introduction

Viewed from various perspectives, urban areas have more advantages than rural areas. This leads to differences in economic development between the two areas (1). This difference has clear impact on the economic disparity between urban and rural areas. The economic gap between the two regions is strengthened by the poverty rate data that

shows significant disparities between rural and urban areas. This can be seen visually in Figure 1 as follows.



Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (2023)

Figure 1. Number of Poor People in Urban, Rural and All Urban and Rural Ar

The data in Figure 1 comparing poverty rate between rural and urban areas in Indonesia in 2016 - 2022 shows that the poverty rate in rural areas always exceeds the one in urban areas despite a gradual decline in poverty rate year by year. During this period, the poverty rate in rural areas was consistently higher than in urban areas each year. In early 2016, there were 17.89 million poor people in rural areas while in urban areas there were 10.62 million poor people. In 2022, although the number of poor people in urban areas decreased to 11.86 millions, in rural areas it remained high at 14.64 million people. These data confirm that the economic gap between urban and rural areas is still significant, and it certainly requires urgent handling.

Rural development must be adjusted to the challenges and potentials existing in each region. Therefore, it is necessary to identify potential as a basis for village development. The tourism industry can be an economic driver in the non-oil-and-gas sector. Villages have a variety of profitable business potentials, which can be utilized commercially with proper management to develop tourist villages (2).

The tourism industry plays an important role in social and economic development. Through strategic investments adjusted to the local context, tourism may contribute significantly to the sustainable growth (3). Tourism also helps increase employment opportunities and income (4) (5). When tourism development is conducted in an area, it may encourage job creation for local communities because of the business potential that also develops in accordance with the tourism development. With these jobs, the

income of the people around the tourism development may increase. This is also supported by Nizar's research (2015) in Indonesia that analyzes the impact of the number of tourists and tourism expenditure on economic growth, which shows that tourism has an effect on the economic growth (6).

According to Teodoro et al. (2017), rural tourism is considered as an important regional development strategy. Tourism is an activity that has a direct impact, involves community participation, and has various different impacts on local communities (7). In tourism development, the importance of participation from all levels of society, including local communities, is regulated in Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 50 of 2011 concerning the National Tourism Development Master Plan for the period of 2010-2025. This regulation clearly states that community empowerment is an effort to increase awareness, capacity, action, and role of the community, both individually and in groups, in improving the quality of life, independence, and welfare through tourism activities (Chapter I, Article 1, No.13).

Local community involvement in decision-making, empowerment, and knowledge of tourism has an impact on the sustainability of rural tourism development (8). The purpose of tourism development is to create community welfare in tourism areas. Tourism development has three main functions: improving the economy, preserving national identity and the function and quality of the environment, and fostering a sense of love for the homeland and nation. The process of development itself cannot be separated from the impact of changes that occur, which is supported by Hasanah's (2004) view that community readiness for change will occur (9). This can be observed through the attitude of accepting or rejecting tourism development.

Central Java is one of the provinces in Indonesia with high tourism potential. This province has a variety of distinctive and unique tourism diversity, and shows aspects of the availability of tourism facilities and infrastructure such as adequate transportation, including airports, ports, railways, and many accomodation facilities spread over various regions. Table 1 shows several tourism indicators in Central Java Province, such as the number of attractions, the number of tourist visits, the average length of stay of tourists, and the number of tourist villages in Central Java. These indicators describe the tourism situation in the province.

Table 1. Number of Attractions, Tourist Visits, Average Length of Stay of Tourists, and Number of Tourist Villages in Central Java Province in 2018 2022

| Year | Number of Attractions | Number of Tourist Visits (Millions) | Average Length of Stay (Days) | Number of Tourist Villages |
|------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| 2018 | 641 | 40.89 | 1.26 | 182 |
| 2019 | 750 | 49.62 | 1.25 | 229 |
| 2020 | 917 | 58.59 | 1.19 | 353 |

| | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|------|-----|
| 2021 | 1,069 | 22.70 | 1.18 | 528 |
| 2022 | 1,063 | 21.33 | 1.41 | 717 |

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (2023)

Central Java is one of the tourist destinations in Indonesia that is rich in interesting natural, cultural, and artificial tourist attractions. From the data above (Table 1), it is clear that the number of tourist attractions from 2018 to 2022 continues to increase every year. In 2022 there were 1,063 tourist attraction locations in Central Java, spread over 35 districts, supported by cultural richness that gives special colors to Central Java tourism. Likewise, the number of tourist villages in Central Java Province continues to increase year by year. Government policies support the establishment of tourist villages regency/city, as proven by the significant increase in the number of tourist villages in the last six years. In 2018 there were 182 tourist villages in Central Java, and continued to increase every year to 717 tourist villages in 2022.

To overcome the disparity between urban and rural areas, developing the potential of tourist villages is one that can be used to improve the economy of rural areas. Improving the economy of rural communities can be done by actively involving the community in managing the tourist villages by utilizing the existing potential, so that the concept of community-based tourism is very suitable to apply (10). The theory of social capital states that the relationships that occur and are connected through trust, mutual understanding, and shared values bind the group members to create the ability to act efficiently and effectively in general (11) (12). Social capital may refer to norms or networks that allow individuals to take collective action. Social capital is the number of actual or potential resources that are connected together to create a sustainable network that is mutually beneficial.

Community-Based Tourism Development has been proven to be an effort to improve the rural economy (13). A number of research have been conducted on community-based tourism (14)(15), including research on the success of Community-Based Tourism (16)(17)(18). The concept and research related to sustainable tourism development have become the focus of a number of researchers.

2 Method

This research is a combination of quantitative and qualitative research, which uses primary data collected using observation techniques and Focus Group Discussion. The source of data information in this research comes from the key person information. The key person selection is based on the selection of people involved in the tourism development. Key Person in this research is the Head of Central Java Tourist Village Association, tourist village managers, government officials, community representatives, tourists, and academics. Key person's competence in FGD activities is described in detail in the following table.

Table 2. Competence of Key Person in Research

| No | Key Person | Competence |
|----|--|---|
| 1 | Head of Central Java Tourist Village Association | Information of the condition of the existing tourist villages in Central Java and the plan of activities. |
| 2 | Tourist Village Managers | Information of the condition of tourist villages, the potentials and obstacles they have. |
| 3 | Government | Policies of tourist village development. |
| 4 | Community | Information of the impact of tourist villages. |

The analysis used in this research are the Delphi method and qualitative descriptive. Qualitative analysis is used in this research because it can provide a clear picture of how tourism development can be achieved with a community-based tourism approach. Various information obtained from the key person is presented in a flowchart model that explains the model application.

The research also used the Delphi method to study the conditions and life of, with, and by the rural community. The Delphi technique was developed by Dalkey and Helmer at the Rand Corporation in the 1950s. The Delphi method is a process carried out in groups to survey and collect the experts' opinions on a particular topic (20). The Delphi method is useful for structuring the communication process in groups involving interaction between researchers and a group of experts on a particular topic. In this research, the Delphi approach method allows the rural community to share, improve, and analyze their knowledge about the rural conditions and life, to plan and act (21). The basic concept is an approach that emphasizes the community involvement in all activities. So this method is believed to be able to present valid information from phenomena occurring in the research object environment.

3 Result and Analysis

The Regional Government prioritizes the concept of community empowerment in order to facilitate and implement tourist village development efforts. Community empowerment is carried out with community groups in a coordinated and integrated manner with the principles of transparency, participation, and accountability and it reflects the socio-cultural values that exist and develop in the community.

In general, the strategy of community-based tourist village development can utilize the village potential such as nature, culture, and artificial or creative products from the community. This potential can be packaged into an attraction that can be sold to the

general public. Activities to utilize potential and commercialization efforts can certainly be carried out with the community's active role. The following is a figure of a strategy of empowerment-based tourist village development.

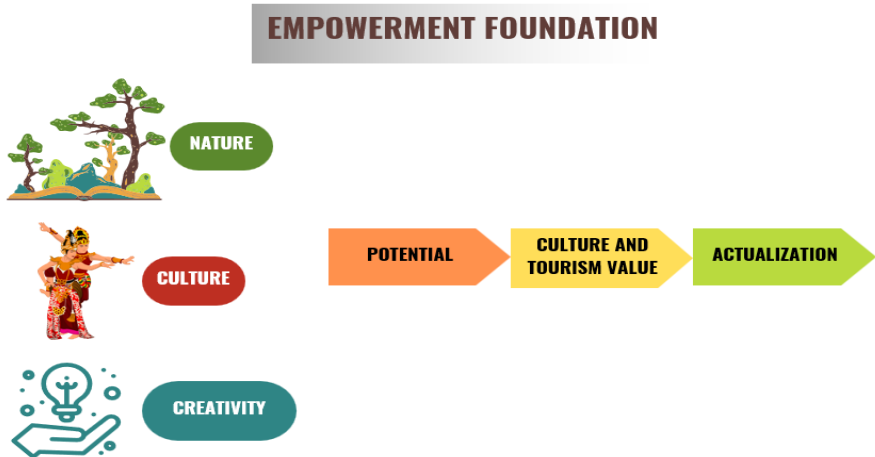


Figure 2. Strategy of Empowerment-Based Tourist Village Development

One of the tourist villages in Central Java that becomes the object of implementing an empowerment-based development strategy is Candirejo Tourist Village, Magelang. This is one of the successful examples of a tourist village in Indonesia that has succeeded in obtaining a sustainable tourist village certificate and becoming an independent tourist village. Candirejo also becomes one of the tourist villages that has successfully utilized the potential of local nature and culture. The implementation of the Community-Based Tourism model has been tested in Candirejo Tourist Village, Magelang, Central Java. The description of the implementation that has been carried out is as follows:

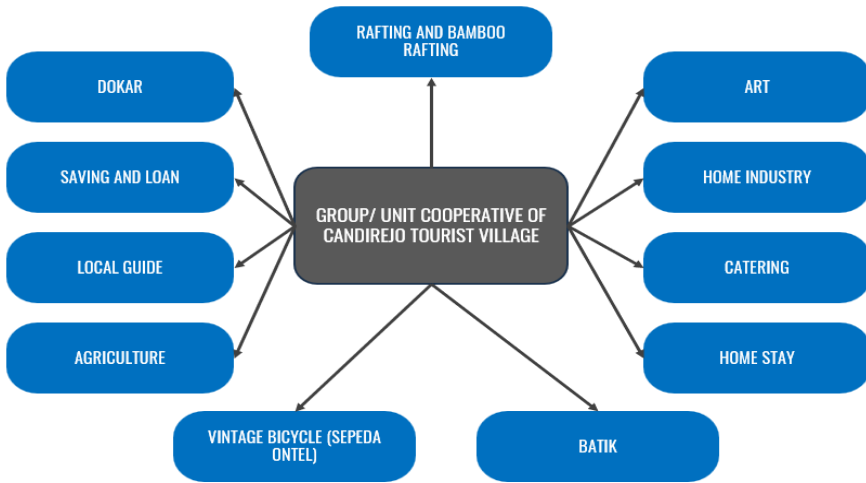


Figure 3. Community Support in Tourist Villages

The success achieved by Candirejo Tourist Village cannot be separated from the support of the local community/people. Support from the local community is one of the crucial things in the development and sustainability of tourist villages. The community/people in Candirejo Village are actively involved in various tourism activities, ranging from accommodation management (homestay), providing food and drink, maintaining cleanliness, and becoming tour guides. The community’s active involvement does not only provide the additional income, but also increases the sense of responsibility for the sustainability of tourist village. The potentials owned by Candirejo Village are developed hand in hand by the communities in Candirejo Village, one of which is the development of rafting tourism and bamboo rafting. The development of rafting tourism is supported by the local community by becoming rafting guides, security personnel on the river, and equipment operators. The Candirejo community has very high awareness of the importance of maintaining the sustainability of the river environment. This makes the local people participate in periodic river cleaning activities.

Other attractions offered are horse-drawn carriages and traditional bicycles. These attractions provide an experience for tourists who want to go traveling around the village in a traditional way. In this case, the community plays an active role in providing and managing these services, also maintaining and ensuring the safety and comfort of the vehicles. In addition to providing a unique experience, horse-drawn carriages and traditional bicycles also support the efforts to preserve traditional transportation culture. The local people’s support in the development of horse-drawn carriages and traditional

bicycles creates an authentic atmosphere and increases the tourist attraction. Other cultural developments and attractions offered by Candirejo Tourist Village are arts and batik. The development of arts and batik is one of the main attractions that may enrich the tourist experience. Batik and arts are the original Indonesian cultural heritages that may attract the foreign tourists. Efforts to preserve traditional arts in Candirejo Tourist Village include dance and music performances. Candirejo Tourist Village also offers a batik-making experience for tourists, which process is guided by the local people. Batik-making is one of the most popular attractions, because it provides direct experience of how to make batik.

The local people in Candirejo Tourist Village also play an important role in the development of home industry and catering. The development of this potential is also initiated by the PKK mothers. The local community produces various handicrafts and typical food products that are sold to the tourists. Catering services also offer traditional Javanese cuisine, and provide an authentic traditional culinary experience. The local community is also involved and plays an important role in promoting the attractions in Candirejo Village. Candirejo Tourist Village utilizes its human resources (HR) to become local guides. This also provides additional income to the community, so that the economy in Candirejo continues to run. The youth in Candirejo Tourist Village involved as tour guides also follow various training to support their knowledge of tourist villages. The training given to the youth is able to improve the professionalism and competitiveness of Candirejo Tourist Village, one of which is related to the explanation of the potential of Candirejo Village, typical foods, and foreign language training to support tour guide communication. From the results of research taken from the success story of developing tourist villages in Candirejo, the mechanism for developing a good tourist village can be seen in the following figure.

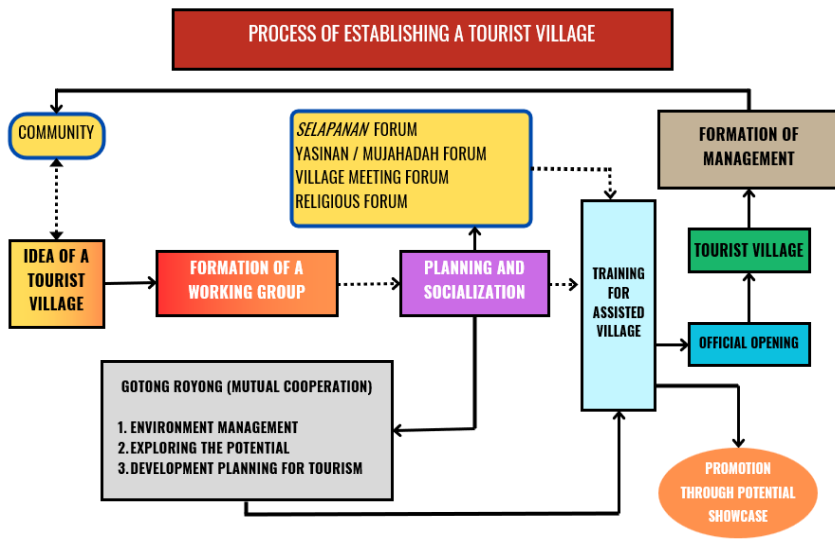


Figure 4. Mechanism of Tourist Village Development

Tourist village development also cannot be separated from the government support. The community can give ideas in realizing the tourist villages, then the formation of a working group, planning, and socialization are carried out. The socialization of tourist villages does not have to be conducted with an official forum, but it can be carried out at events held by the local people, such as the selapanan forum, religious learning (pengajian) forum, hamlet meetings, and so on. The working group teams can conduct socialization and promotion through these forums, in which almost 70% of tourist village actors are women. The planning carried out by Candirejo Tourist Village also includes environmental management, potential exploration, and preparation of tourism development plans. In order to achieve the goal of tourist village development, the government of Candirejo Village also has created a Village Tourism Planning Master Plan (RIPPDes), which was made as an effort to minimize the problems regarding tourist villages and to increase public understanding of tourist village development plans. Tourist village managers are fully responsible for the management and increase of tourism visits in tourist villages. Financial management also requires to be recorded and managed properly. Financial reports such as income and expenses in tourist villages are

also always submitted to the Candirejo Village community. Financial management such as bookkeeping is also assisted by cooperatives. Support from the government, such as attending the inauguration, is also required in promotional efforts to the tourists.

4 Conclusion

The results of research have found a model that explains the role of local communities in realizing the sustainability of tourist villages in Central Java. The community's active involvement in the management and utilization of tourist villages has provided empirical evidence of the local communities's role in improving the economic performance of tourist villages through the concept of sustainable ecology.

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