

The Sustainable Rural Tourism Asset Development Process Based on Natural and Cultural Conservation

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Abstract—Sustainable rural tourism as one of the ways to improve economic condition particularly for the local community. This study aims to analyze the rural tourism development process in two rural tourism areas, which have different natural and cultural backgrounds, but both can develop and survive as sustainable rural tourism. The research theory of this study is the use of 4As (Attraction, Accessibility, Amenity, Ancillary) components as tourism asset for the rural tourism development process. This qualitative research utilizes the Penglipuran and Kertayasa rural tourism areas as a case. The study shows that the natural and cultural conservations (NCC) are the triggers to sustain and develop 4As components on the sustainable rural tourism development process. The local community has been aware that the NCC is essential to ensure harmony and life balance. The findings reveal that the local community in Penglipuran and Kertayasa has a deep understanding and awareness about a clear vision of how to realize the sustaining natural and culture of rural tourism for the best possible future of the region. These findings may help provide information for planning rural and regional communities development and facilitate the management of the process of developing and growing the rural area as sustainable rural tourism. This successful experience is worth learning and studying in-depth NCC for sustaining rural tourism.

Keywords—sustainable rural tourism, development process, Natural and Cultural Conservation (NCC)

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become a strategic sector to improve national economic conditions, and to grow the economy of a region, including being able to enhance the economic growth of local communities where rural tourism developed [1-4]. The rural tourism development is generally supposed to raise economic viability of the village inhabitant, and such approach usually caters for pro-poor tourism or poverty reduction [5-7]. Tourism development in rural tourism contributes positively towards poverty alleviation, employment, income-generating, and has improved a tourist attraction, accessibility, amenity, and tourism ancillary [8],[7],[10]. While on another side, the increasing numbers of tourists tend to ultimately destroy the exotic culture [9],[7],[10].

Sustainable tourism development is seen as one of the ways to improve the socio-economic situation in lagging behind rural areas as the rural tourism destination, while at

the same time maintains high natural and cultural values and attractiveness [1], [2]. The development of sustainable rural tourism is also believed to be able to increase economic growth (pro-growth) in the area concerned, reduce poverty (pro-poor), and be able to expand employment opportunities (pro-jobs) for local communities [5], [6] including those that occur in Indonesia[7]. The sustainability of rural tourism includes sustaining nature, local cultures, infrastructures, accommodation, food and beverage, recreation, entertainment and various services for local development [2], [11]. However, the positive role of tourism in nature conservation has been demonstrated in theory but rarely verified in practice [1].

The number of tourist visits tends to increase from year to year and this also occurs in Malaysia [20]. also in Indonesia [10] because among other things there is an increase in the quality of the presentation of natural and cultural attractions, and heritage [20]. It is generally accepted that massive tourism and a vibrant indigenous culture are mutually exclusive. The development of rural tourism can also have a positive or negative effect on the natural environment and the local cultural community [1], [21], [22]. Generally, the increasing numbers of tourists tend to ultimately destroy the exotic culture, nevertheless tourism in Bali island, and in Kertayasa Village, West Java Indonesia has so far proven to be an exception to this rule on sustainable tourism, where the increasing numbers of tourists have not led to a corresponding increase in the rate of destruction of Balinese and Sundanese culture in West Java [9], [22].

Penglipuran Village as one of the tourism destinations in Bali Island and Kertayasa Village in West Java has been growing and sustaining as rural tourism area well, while the increasing number of tourist has not destroyed their nature and culture. However, how does exactly local community sustain Penglipuran and Kertayasa rural tourism? This study focuses on the effort of Penglipuran and Kertayasa local communities in sustaining their rural tourism. It is important to describe and analyze the process of rural tourism development in Penglipuran and Kertayasa villages as two different rural tourism areas, with different natural and cultural backgrounds, but both can develop and survive as sustainable rural tourism. How is the process of developing rural tourism to be sustainable?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The development of rural tourism can have a positive or negative impact on the natural environment and the local cultural community, economic, and poverty reduction [1], [5], [21], [12]. The relevant development of rural tourism should be done gradually based on ecotourism principles and concepts, without causing any harmful impact on the natural and cultural environment [11], [12].

It should be based on sustainable use of resources on revitalizing local economies, the integration of the local population and on a planned and controlled growth that does not lead to the appearance of a mass phenomenon that has a low impact and is sustainable [1]. The essence of sustainable rural development in terms of rural tourism is complex, as it unites two spheres: agricultural production and tourist activity [13], while on the other side it essentially involves balancing the requirements of conservation of rural economic, environmental, social and cultural of the country on the one hand and modernization trend of rural life on the other [14].

The rural tourism development is based on the concept of sustainability, which integrates environmental, economic, political, cultural and social considerations [14]. There is a recognition which should be sustainable, the preservation of the natural environment must be grounded in the communities and societies, which exploit and depend upon it [15]. The concept of sustainable tourism, where rural tourism is very well defined, covers preserving the natural environment, traditions, customs, culture, and the satisfaction or fulfillment for the tourist town full of sophisticated services and hotels [14]. They are called as 4As rural tourism components: Attraction, Accessibility, Amenity, Ancillary [16].

Rural development area and planning problem is one of the most complex contemporary themes, as it essentially involves balancing the requirement of conservation of rural economic, environmental, social and cultural of the country on the one hand and modernization trend of the rural life on the other [14]. Rural tourism can be developed based on Natural and Cultural Conservation (NCC), which is the innovative way to combine tourism, NCC, generate income, and poverty reduction [1], [12]. All members of the local population must have the awareness, information, and opportunities to participate and choose from to make decisions about their livelihoods in the area of tourism development based on NCC principles and concepts [1], [17]. This initiative and effort is the best choice of decision for protecting areas, on the provision of benefits from protected areas, and a common means of providing such benefits is tourism development, economic benefit, to support conservation, and it remains to be seen where it will take them in the long run [17], [18].

Some studies show that not all the tourist attractions area in the countrysides or villages can be developed as rural tourism, as Sugiama [12] studied in Cipatujah village, West Java Indonesia, and other studies [19]. about tourism components identification and measure of rural tourism components. Further study is needed to identify and measure the components of the rural tourism potential available in the area of tourism development. Four tourism components are

called 4As: Attraction, Accessibility, Amenities, and Ancillary [16], [22], [7], [12].

Based on a research in Darling Down Queensland, that the diversification of effort was impacting on the communities in both positive and negative ways, with local leaders identifying three key challenges associated with growth management: the desire to preserve heritage and culture, impacts of an aging population and the growing pressure on local infrastructure [23]. Local community leaders also should be described how preserving local heritage and culture was profoundly important to their community, not only to sustain the lifestyle that residents treasure, but to also realize the full potential of the development of the tourism industry [24].

Rural tourism development can be sustainable, if the local community is able to maintain the quality of the natural environment and local culture, also maintain and improve the quality of tourist attraction assets (attractions), transportation (accessibility), accommodation (amenity), and the quality of service management (ancillary) of the rural tourism [2], [11], [10].

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research focuses on how the process of developing rural tourism by residents are based on their attention to nature and culture in the villages of Penglipuran and Kertayasa as a sustainable rural tourism. The study was a descriptive study which described and analyzed the rural tourism development process in Penglipuran and Kertayasa as two rural tourism areas. The two villages have different natural and cultural backgrounds. However, they both have been developing and surviving as the villages of sustainable rural tourism.

In line with this research aim, the literature review is conducted to clarify the underlying concepts of 4As (Attraction, Accessibility, Amenity, Ancillary) as tourism asset of rural tourism components on sustainable rural tourism development in these areas. The primary data were collected by observation and in-depth interview with the tribal chief, rural tourism operator, and local people in Penglipuran and Kertayasa villages.

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

A. *Natural and Cultural Conservation (NCC)*

Penglipuran and Kertayasa are two rural tourism areas, that are developed based on different natural and cultural characteristics. Penglipuran is at the foot of Mount Kintamani in Bali Island, while Kertayasa in the coastal of Pangandaran, Java Island. Penglipuran is developed in the environment of the society amid the mountainous nature and culture of Balinese, while Kertayasa thrives in the environment of natural life and coastal Sundanese culture.

Penglipuran and Kertayasa have similar physical tropical environment characteristics. These villages have become the destinations of domestic and international tourists. The areas consist of the hills, bamboo forests, green open spaces, traditional agriculture landscape, and a variety of countryside public facilities. The local people mostly work as a farmer on traditional agriculture in their countryside. The communities

live in the rural forest area. As there is no industrial development around the area, all the condition of the forest is well maintained by natural conservation program as well as by the lifestyle of local communities.

The local people in Penglipuran and Kertayasa villagers are aware that they have to preserve the natural environment for their life. Traditionally, local communities must comply with the rules of the local community. For example, in Penglipuran to be able to cut down bamboo trees villagers must obtain permission from the local community leaders. Although Penglipuran is adjacent to the highway, motor vehicles are not allowed in Penglipuran residential areas. They have a philosophy that this concept can preserve natural and cultural diversity and the environment in the middle of the globalization invasion.

As well as Balinese customary law, Penglipuran communities apply *awig-awig*. The *awig-awig* is the customary law that has been applied for generations. This law binds all residents in the village area. It implements prohibitions and punishments on the Penglipuran local people. The penalties for violation of *awig-awig* are ranging from doing such as janitor works, land confiscation, or be eliminated from their society.

The traditional lifestyle of Penglipuran and Kertayasa communities also apply cultural and traditional protection and preservation of the natural environment. The local people who mostly work as traditional farmers own their unique cultures, houses, and traditional lifestyle. Looking at this fact, it can be concluded that their type of tourism development in this village is applied in the ecotourism principles [25], [11], [21].

Kertayasa local people aware that they have to keep up and conserve their river on natural condition. Many of Kertayasa's inhabitants depend on river life. Many Kertayasa inhabitants rely on river life, as they become managers, instructors, and sellers of various tourist services on body rafting equipment at the Kertayasa river. The local people in Kertayasa have a culture that calls as *ngamumule alam* that means to take care of nature, which means to choose nature and the environment wholeheartedly for their life.

The culture conservation in Penglipuran and Kertayasa has been running through generations. The conservation of culture is based on the efforts of local people. This is an important factor in the success of local culture conservation programs. So, the cultural heritage carried out continuously and deeply rooted in the local community is to ensure the preservation of the local people culture in their village.

The natural conservation is based on the traditional lifestyle. The green patches, plants, trees can have a positive effect on the well-being of the urban population. People are psychologically benefited by just viewing water bodies or greenery [26]. Thus, the customary law became a major source of natural and cultural sustainability in Penglipuran conservation as well as through their lifestyle.

B. 4As Tourism Component Development

Penglipuran and Kertayasa have 4As (Attraction, Accessibility, Amenity, Ancillary) assets as a tourism component. The most attractive and popular attractions in Penglipuran are the culture and bamboo forest, while the

main attractions in Kertayasa are a natural landscape and body rafting around 3 hours on the Cukang Taneuh Cijulang river. Balinese traditions and culture, as well as Penglipuran village, serves as one of the most favorite tourist attractions in term of the traditional culture of the local people. All of the physical design of rural roads, houses, and each residential social facilities in the region of Penglipuran were designed based on traditional and amazing Balinese culture. Every physical facility referring to Balinese culture, for examples house appearance was constructed based on Balinese cultural housing, and the surface of rural roads was made from natural stone. Commonly, the entrance of the rural road to each house was designed with the same shape. All houses were designed with almost similar appearance, which applied the concept of a traditional Balinese house. Each house has a separate part of the houses. Every house must have a mini temple as a place for each family member to pray. The rules and customary law have been effective for the local people to preserve their Balinese culture. Balinese dances in Penglipuran village local community has cultural and religious meaning. At certain times in the rural tourism area, tourists can watch the dances in which the dancers are dressed in local customs and are accompanied by the traditional music of Balinese.

The uniqueness of nature and culture in the countryside can be developed as a tourist attraction. The uniqueness of cultural potentials like the model of building architecture, traditional daily life local people, the beautiful nature and environment with cool temperature makes this Penglipuran countryside an ideal place for developing a rural tourism area.

The residents in Kertayasa have Sundanese culture and the customs in Sundanese that are open to receiving guests, full of courtesy and hospitality towards guests. The local residents always maintain the natural environment, arts, and local culture.

Penglipuran and Kertayasa have high accessibility. Both of these rural tourism is located on the edge of the national road. Penglipuran only located about 45 kilometers from the center of Denpasar city as a capital city of Bali Island province, while Kertayasa is about 31 km from the city of Pangandaran as a tourist destination.

All of tourist accommodation needs for staying overnight in Penglipuran and Kertayasa can be served by the local people including gastronomic foods and beverages, lodging, and local guide around the rural tourism areas. There are more than enough homestays in Penglipuran with the homestay architecture was designed based on the Balinese culture house. However, the number of homestays in Kertayasa is still very limited, and its physical homestay architecture is not based on the local Sundanese culture.

The management of tourism in Penglipuran and Kertayasa is carried out by the local people and fully supported by their local government. Both tour operators, tour guides, and other tour providers are provided by the local people as tourism communities. Tourism marketing is done through internet support and travel agents, both for marketing for local tourists, domestic and international tourists. The two villages develop rural tourism based on local communities, then supported by the local government.

The traditional lifestyle and rules of nature and culture's conservation have been proved more realistically and effectively to maintain the natural and cultural environment as well. The local people and communities can be directed and nurtured to achieve good harmony in their life in preserving and conservating the nature and culture in their village.

They believe that the strengths and opportunities of natural, and cultural in their village can be presented as a tourist attraction. They hoped the rural tourism development can drive the high benefit of their lives. That means the existence of nature and culture's preservation and conservation can be a trigger for sustainable rural tourism development and management.

C. Sustainable Rural Tourism Development Process

Research has proved that Penglipuran and Kertayasa local community clearly understand and are aware that nature and rural culture should be maintained and conserved for their better quality of life. The local community awareness of the natural environment and cultural conservation ensure that the lives of people have been proved as well. They recognize that their magnificent nature and culture can be proved as a tourist attraction. The availability of roadways for transportation to the village can be accessed for rural tourism component. The local people who have gastronomic skills and serve the guests can be utilized for the amenities, and the habits of managing the environment in their village can handle a tourism business management and organization can be considered as the rural tourism ancillary component. All these components have already well conducted in their village and they have been packaged in service to serve tourists. Apart from that, the local people traditions, lifestyles, and rules of nature and culture conservation have been recognized to be the foundation for ensuring the sustainability of their rural tourism development.

Based on these research results, there is a set of systematic phases that need to be done to develop sustainable rural tourism as expressed in Figure 1. The first phase of developing rural tourism is a general measurement of the overall potential of tourism components in the village. According to the study shows, not all countrysides or villages can be developed as rural tourism [19], [12].

Second, measuring the uniqueness of natural and cultural attraction is the main or core attractions. Third, arranging NCC should be based on community efforts and regulation as well as the rules and customary law in the village. As Richard and Hall stated that to be sustainable, the preservation of the natural environment must be grounded in the communities and societies, which exploit and depend upon it [15].

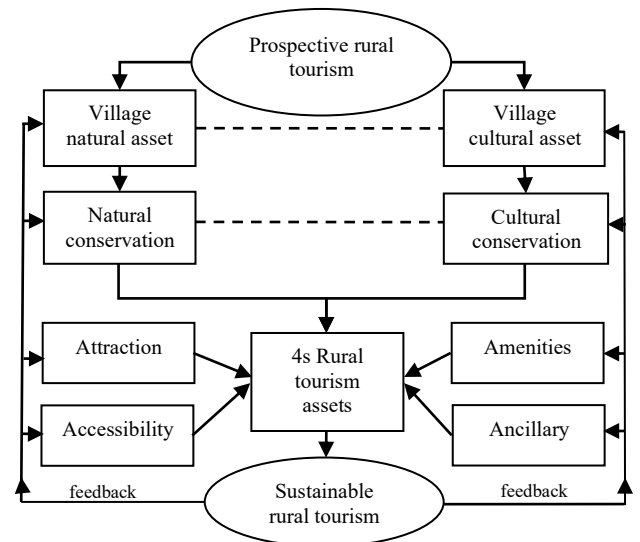


Fig.1. The sustainable rural tourism development.

Fourth, developing rural tourism assets should include 4As: Attraction, Accessibilities, Amenities, and Ancillaries [16], [22], [7], [12]. Fifth, controlling new rural tourism should cover all the effects and impacts of rural tourism development programs [16], [7].

V. CONCLUSION

Sustainable rural tourism can be developed based on natural and cultural conservation (NCC). The NCC would be effective if all the local people comply with the rules and customary law of natural and cultural conservation of rural tourism. The local community has a deep understanding and awareness of how to realize the sustaining natural and cultural on rural tourism as much as possible for their best future. The clear understanding and awareness of the local people are essential to ensure the sustainability of rural tourism.

To sustain rural tourism, in the long run, all tourism components (4As: Attraction, Accessibilities, Amenities, and Ancillaries) assets must be developed and controlled by all local community people themselves and their local government. The local people and the local community should play as the main actors in all activities of the rural tourism development and control. Whereas sustaining tourism, in the long run, the local people as the service provider should serve as the main actors to provide rural tourism components services for tourist attraction operators, accessibility especially for local transport and transfer services, amenities for accommodation services, and the main actor within the rural tourism organization. Also, further study should be conducted to find out the effects and impacts of sustainable rural tourism on socio-economic, especially the effect on local people income, poverty alleviation, and the welfare of the local communities.

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