

# Lontar Leaves Webbing Craft as Element of Sustainable Cultural Tourism

## Case Study on Sasando House in Oebelo Village, Kupang Regency

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**Abstract**—This This study aims to identify lontar leaves webbing products as a cultural attraction at the Sasando House and to analyze the role of lontar leaves webbing crafts into Sustainable Cultural Tourism at the Sasando House. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method. The informants were the Sasando House owner, webbing craftsmen, Head of Oebelo village, and visitors who were determined based on the purposive sampling technique. Data collection techniques were carried out by observation, in-depth interviews, literature study, documentation, and using triangulation. The results of this study show that some products of lontar leaves webbing that maintain the meaning and value of local culture as cultural attraction at the Sasando House are sasando, ti'i langga hat, and betel bucket. By applying the concept of sustainable tourism to the webbing of lontar leaves as a cultural attraction at Sasando House provides benefits. From economic dimension, it provides financial income so that it meets the necessities of owners and workers' life from an economic perspective at Sasando House. From social dimension, the lontar leaves webbing crafts preserve local culture and introducing it to the wider community. From environmental dimension, the lontar leaves webbing crafts are very environmentally friendly because it is made of natural materials. But there is the lack of attention to the maintenance of lontar trees.

**Keywords**—culture; cultural attraction; sustainable tourism

### I. INTRODUCTION

Lontar leaves webbing is a traditional craft from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) which is part of Indonesian culture. Lontar trees that are available in the environment around where they live are used and processed to produce cultural products. One of the processed natural materials is webbing. Webbing craft has become an activity carried out for generations by the people of East Nusa Tenggara. Since ancient

times, the people of NTT have used lontar leaves to make webbing. It is made in accordance with the wisdom values of the local community. Weaving is made to meet the needs of traditional ceremonies and household utensils. Until now, the work of the community's weaving is known to the world through various international events and has been exported abroad.

The lontar leaves webbing craft is also one of the elements of the cultural tourism at the Sasando House. Webbing is made from natural fibers here. The products of lontar leaves webbing are also very varied such as hats, betel holders, mats, baskets, and so on. Webbing crafts are not only made as souvenirs and complementary accessories to traditional clothing, but these also have philosophy and cultural values that reflect the wisdom of the local community.

These lontar leaves webbing products use environmentally friendly materials. If it is no longer used, it can decompose in nature. Besides that, webbing can also be packaged as a source of income for local community in tourism because it is also in great demand by tourists [1]. However, people's interest in preserving this webbing culture has diminished nowadays. This can be seen from the decrease in webbing craftsmen. People think this activity is boring, not modern, and they don't have skills in webbing.

In the context of tourism, the development of lontar leaves webbing at the Sasando House as a cultural attraction needs to pay attention to the concept of sustainability from environmental, social, and economic aspects. However, the concept of sustainability has not been implemented optimally. Whereas, webbing crafts can provide benefits for the survival of the local community and preserve the

natural environment and culture. During the corona virus disease 19 pandemic, webbing crafts can be an alternative business to bring income.

Based on the description above, the problems that have been identified are: (1) what are the lontar leaves webbing products as a cultural attraction at the Sasando House? (2) what is the role of lontar leaves webbing crafts into sustainable cultural tourism at the Sasando House? The aims of this study are: (1) to identify lontar leaves webbing products as a cultural attraction at the Sasando House and (2) to analyze the role of lontar leaves webbing crafts into Sustainable Cultural Tourism at the Sasando House.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### 2.1 Tourist Attraction

Everything that becomes tourists target and purpose to visit and enjoy the uniqueness, beauty, and value of the diversity of nature, culture, and human creations, is said to be a tourist attraction [2]. Tourist attraction is everything given by nature, culture, and also man-made; that is interesting and unique so that it attracts people to enjoy it [3]. There are 3 tourist attraction forms, namely natural tourist attraction, cultural tourist attraction, and man-made tourist Attraction. Tourists have expectations when they are in tourist destinations can fulfill their travel needs there [4], namely: (1) something to see, where tourists can see, enjoy, watch something unique and attractive, (2) something to do, where there is something tourists can do in the form of entertaining and fun activities, and (3) something to buy, means something that can be bought as a souvenir in the form of a product typical of the area and easy to pack.

### 2.2 Culture

Taylor defines culture as a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, abilities or other habits acquired by members of a society [5]. As rational beings, humans shape culture and are also shaped by culture itself. With culture, humans are able to define themselves individually or in groups, realize their shortcomings, and show their own success. Therefore, humans can overcome their shortcomings with their potential. Koentjaraningrat explains that culture consists of seven elements, namely language, knowledge systems, social systems or social organizations, tools of life and technology, music and art, livelihood systems, and religious systems [6]. Banden argues that when viewed in terms of form, culture has three main aspects [5], namely: (1) ideas, an abstract complex of idea, value, norm, which is in the minds of cultured people. Another term for this form is customs or habits, (2) behavior is a complex pattern of humans' activities and actions in society, and (3) form as objects made by humans in society.

### 2.3 Sustainable Tourism

United Nations World Tourism Organization defines sustainable tourism as tourism that takes into account the current and future benefits of economic, social and environmental impacts [7]. The aim of sustainable tourism in general is to improve the tourist experiences, to improve the quality of local communities' life, and to support the environmental resources that are the basis of the tourism system.

Furthermore, the Charter for Sustainable Tourism explains that tourism must be based on sustainable criteria, which is tourism development must be ecologically supported in the long term, economically feasible, and fair ethically and socially to the local communities [8]. In relation to cultural products which are one of the important elements of the tourism industry, it is necessary to have a balance between using and maintaining these products. By applying the concept of sustainability to cultural tourism, it can bring sustainable benefits for the culture itself, local communities, government, and the private sectors [9]. The concept of sustainable development includes three components that are interconnected with one another. The first, environmental sustainability means conserving and controlling resources, especially non-renewable resources or the most important resources in human life. This includes actions to minimize air, soil and water pollution, as well as the preservation of biodiversity and cultural heritage. Second, social sustainability is responsible for human rights and equal opportunities for all people. This requires equitable distribution of benefits with a focus on poverty alleviation, emphasis on local communities, maintaining and strengthening their life support systems, recognizing and respecting culture and avoiding all forms of exploitation. Third, economy sustainability assumes that to provide welfare to different levels of society and overcome cost effectiveness in all economic activities. This sector is very important especially for the survival, activities, and the company's ability to survive in the long term.

## III. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method. Its results better interpret the data found in the field and analyze it more qualitatively [10]. People taken to provide actual information related to the existence of the research object, are determined using a purposive sampling technique. It means determination of informants with certain considerations. The informants interviewed related to this research were the Sasando House owner, webbing craftsmen, Head of Oebelo village, and visitors. To obtain valid research data, data were collected using several techniques, namely observation, in-depth interviews with sources, literature studies, and documentation. From each of these techniques, data triangulation is carried out so that the data obtained is

validity. The data were analyzed with the stages of data collection, data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Sasando House is a traditional musical instrument of Sasando making business. It is located on Timor Raya Street kilometer 22, Oebelo Village, Kupang Regency, East Nusa Tenggara. Beside to producing sasando musical instruments, they also make webbings from lontar leaves. The role of craftsmen creativity is important in the production of them. Cultural background is also an important aspect to produce creative and varied webbings that have economic value in the tourism industry and cultural preservation. The house of Sasando contributes continuously to preserve and increase the existence of lontar leaves webbing as East Nusa Tenggara culture.

Lontar leaves webbings are used as useable items and souvenirs at the Sasando House. In the tourism industry, webbing product is a tourist attraction that preserves cultural values. It also increases the existence and appreciation of the community for the handicrafts that describes the nation's culture from generation to generation.

##### 4.1 Lontar Leaves Webbing Products as Form of Culture

Webbing crafts are part of the arts. Lontar leaves webbing has been carried out for generations by East Nusa Tenggara people and has become an inherent culture for its community. The lontar leaves webbing also have cultural value in their life. Some of lontar leaves webbings made by the Sasando House that have cultural values and become cultural attraction are:

1) *Sasando*: It is a traditional musical instrument from the culture of Rote in East Nusa Tenggara. Sasando comes from the Rote language "Sasandu" which means to vibrate or sound. There are several folklore versions about the history of this instrument creation. Long time ago, sasando was created from a young man who loved the king's daughter on the Rote Island. The king gave a condition if he wanted to marry his daughter. He had to make a musical instrument that was different from other musical instruments [11]. Sasando consists of several parts as an instrumental music. The main part of sasando is a long tube made of bamboo stems. This bamboo tube is attached to some string supports which are called "senda". Senda are arranged from top to bottom of the bamboo according to the number of strings that serve to set the scales on each plucked string. The bamboo tube will be placed in a container made of lontar leaves webbing as a resonance place for the notes produced by the strings. This container made of lontar

leaves is called "haik". Figur 1 shows the types of sasando consist of traditional sasando and electric sasando. In the traditional type of sasando, haik is webbing from a big lontar leaf in a semi-circle shape. The electric type of sasando, its haik uses lontar leaves that are cut to the same size and arranged like a fan. Sasando has a variety of sounds so that it can be played for different music genres. The number of strings on each sasando is also different which distinguishes the sound. Sasando is often played to accompany dances, songs, poetry, welcoming guests, and other entertainment events.



Fig. 1. Types of sasando

2) *Ti'i Langga Hat*: To The ti'i langga hat also depicts the culture of the Rote people. Ti'i langga hat has a wide brim and an antenna on the top of it. Each part of this hat has a philosophy for the life of Rote people. In general, ti'i langga hat means strength and honor for a Rote man. Wearing this hat can highlight leadership traits that unite, respect, keep secrets and protect the people of Rote. Ti'i langga hat is webbingr from young lontar leaves. This traditional hat has several different types according to the region such as the smooth-leaved and broad-leaved ti'i langga. Figur 2 shows ti'i langga hat with broad-leaved. It is a complement to the traditional Rote men's clothing. This hat is worn at marriage proposal, welcoming guests, funerals, and other traditional events.



Fig. 2. Broad-leaved ti'i langga

3) *Betel Bucket*: It Betel bucket is a webbing craft from lontar leaves. It has variety shapes in layers

which can be seen example of hexagon and round shaped betel bucket in the figur 3. The motifs of this bucket are plain and colorful. This bucket is used to store betel, nut, and lime for betel nut eating activities which means togetherness and kinship. Most areas in East Nusa Tenggara provide betel places at every event such as welcoming guests, marriage proposal, wedding events, and other traditional events. Each region has different local names for this bucket.



Fig. 3. Hexagon and round shaped betel bucket

#### 4.2 The Role of Lontar Leaves Webbing in Sustainable Cultural Tourism

Tourism can maintain environmental and cultural and improve the quality of local community life if tourism is managed sustainably. Development of tourist destination must pay attention to the level of the economy, the impact on the socio-cultural and environmental as well as the local community for both current and future generations. The concept of sustainable tourism can be applied to all forms of tourism because the principle of sustainability includes a balance of environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects. Sasando House is one of the places always visited by both foreign tourists and local tourists before and during the corona virus disease 19 pandemic. The purpose of tourists coming to Sasando House is to see, know, learn, and buy lontar leaves webbing products. These lontar leaves webbing products are in the form of usable items and souvenirs.

Garau explained that a tourist destination must have a good arrangement of history and culture so that aspects of sustainability can be implemented and provide benefits [12]. It is the same with lontar leaves webbing crafts carried out by craftsmen at Sasando's house, where these craft are a cultural tourist attraction. The application of the sustainability aspect of this webbing craft can provide positive benefits for the environment and local communities. Lontar leaves webbing provides opportunities and opportunities for local people to earn income by developing a lontar leaves webbing craft business. With the demand for this craft, on the other hand, it introduces the cultural values of the local community to tourists. That way it can also have an impact on the maintenance of this

plant for cultivation. Local people also feel the benefits of this craft so they want to maintain and preserve it as a culture and preserve the environment with lontar trees which are the basic ingredients of webbing crafts.

This study relates the role of lontar leaves webbing as the application of sustainable cultural tourism at the Sasando House in terms of economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

4) *Economic Dimension:* It The lontar leaves webbing provided at the Sasando House are ordered and purchased by many foreign and local tourists. These webbings become a cultural attraction so that Sasando House is one of the places visited by tourists when they come to Kupang. During the corona virus disease 19 pandemic, there is still the demand for webbing products; and tourist visits are still coming. Some of webbings are also sent overseas. The Sasando house employs 5 local workers. With the demand for these webbings, it brings income for the workers at the Sasando House in addition to income from farming.

5) *Social Dimension:* In addition to getting economic benefits, it also gives cultural value to the webbing. The results of the webbing still depict cultural values combined with the craftsmen creativity. Even during the corona virus disease 19 pandemic, the craftsmen at the Sasando House continue to work as an effort to preserve local wisdom through lontar leaves webbing. Indirectly it encourages people's standard of living through traditional webbing and also introduces local culture to the public. There has been no assistance from the Kupang district government during the corona pandemic. However, one of the academic institutions in Kupang City also paid attention to donations and training for workers at the Sasando House.

6) *Environmental Dimension:* Lontar leaves webbings use natural materials that are environmentally friendly. The webbing crafts that are no longer used will eventually break down into good compost for soil fertility. In addition, the work of webbing crafts at the Sasando House is still done traditionally by hand. The main material used is lontar leaves whose trees grow wild and are commonly found in the East Nusa Tenggara region. Every part of the lontar tree is used in the life of the people here. If there is an increase in demand for woven crafts, the management of Sasando House has dealt with the availability of lontar leaf materials. Where in the location of the Sasando House, palm trees are planted. In addition, for taking lontar leaves are also selected. The shoots are not taken from the lontar leaves. Because the existence of lontar trees grows wild,

people only cuts and uses them without any replanting and maintenance. There has been no attention from the Sasando House, the Kupang Regency Government, or other institutions for the cultivation of lontar trees.

## V. CONCLUSION

The Lontar leaves webbing is a fine art craft that maintains the cultural values of East Nusa Tenggara and is an important part in the tourism industry. Sasando House is a place to make lontar leaves webbing crafts in Kupang Regency. Some products of lontar leaves webbing that maintain the meaning and value of culture as a cultural attraction at the Sasando House are sasando, the ti'i langga hat, and the betel bucket.

The webbing of lontar leaves is one of cultural attractions in East Nusa Tenggara. The concept of sustainable tourism can be applied to the Sasando House in producing lontar leaves crafts which are generalized into 3 dimensions. The economic dimension, craftsmen still earn income from webbing during the corona pandemic. From social dimension, the lontar leaves webbings are still produced with maintaining and preserving cultural values to be known by the public. From ecological dimension, the lontar leaves webbings are very environmentally friendly because it is made of natural materials. But there is the lack of attention to the maintenance of lontar trees.

The lontar leaves webbing craft which is a cultural tourist attraction from Sasando House must be considered and managed by implementing sustainability aspects. The goal is to provide good benefits to the local community, environment, government, and related stakeholders. Therefore, attention and cooperation from every element of society is needed so that this sustainability policy can

continue to be implemented. Future research can find out the development strategy of lontar leaves webbing craft in implementing sustainability aspects so that its implementation as a cultural attraction can be felt now and for future generations.

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