



Ecotourism and Women Enterpreuner in Buffer Zone of Karimunjawa National Park

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ABSTRACT

Karimunjawa National Park has the potential to become a major tourism attraction in Central Java. There are numerous potentials for tourism business development in the buffer zone community of Karimunjawa Marine National Park. The point of this study is to examine the obstacles to women entrepreneurship and the potential for women's empowerment in the buffer zone of Karimunjawa Marine National Park. Qualitative data were gathered via in-depth interviews and focus groups with women entrepreneur operating in the homestay, restaurant, and souvenir businesses. This study discovered that women gain significantly from their involvement in the tourism business in the Karimunjawa National Park's buffer zone. They gain access to cash income, personal skills, and confidence, to name a few benefits. This advantage also affects their participation in family decision-making. This study emphasizes the importance of capacity-building programs aimed at increasing women's participation in the tourism business in the Karimunjawa National Park buffer zone community, as well as programs aimed at increasing family and community support for women entrepreneurs in the tourism business.

Keywords: *Ecotourism; Women Enterpreuner; Buffer Zone*

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the main problems in developing countries is nature conservation and poverty alleviation [1]. Most of the poor in developing countries depend on agriculture or rely on natural resources to generate their livelihoods [2]. Thus, poverty is often associated with unsustainable use of natural resources caused by population growth, reduced arable land and limited resources for natural environmental management. On the other hand, conservation policies in developing countries are met with opposition because they often limit agricultural expansion and resource use, especially since natural resources are the main source of income for the poor [1], [3]. However, one of the efforts to curb environmental degradation is the establishment of protected areas. The designation of protected areas has been a widespread practice in parts of the world since the 1990s [4].

Globally, the world's protected areas have increased from 13.4 million km² to 32 million km² [5]. In Indonesia, with its cultural diversity and natural potential, to date 54 National Parks have been established in various provinces. Protected areas are often established in remote areas where poverty rates are often higher [6]. There are many mechanisms to reduce the negative

impacts of protected areas. One is to offer financial compensation, and another is choosing to integrate conservation efforts into global development strategies [7], [8]. Ecotourism development is one of these mechanisms, and is an important part of poverty alleviation efforts in ecotourism areas [9], [10].

Currently the main promotion in the development of ecotourism in protected areas is as a viable strategy to achieve the goals of natural resource conservation and community development [11]–[13]. Existing research often neglects gender and development approaches to achieve change in conservation, resource use and equitable distribution of benefits [14], [15]. In addition, the analysis of local participation in ecotourism and the impact of its empowerment is largely gender-blind [14], [16]. On the other hand, studies on the impact of ecotourism in various countries have been evaluated from the perspective of economic and environmental sustainability [16], [17]. However, the socio-cultural impact due to ecotourism development has received less attention [17]–[19].

In comparison, the number of female workers in the tourism industry is much higher than that of men. Data from the Global Report on Women in Tourism from the

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) released in 2019 noted that the number of female workers in the tourism industry sector was 54 percent. Despite the majority, in fact female workers receive 14.7 percent lower wages than men. Opportunities for women to take advantage of tourism potential are wide open, especially in the provision of tourism supporting businesses. According to Women in Tourism from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), women in the tourism industry are 54 percent, more than men. However, female workers receive 14.7 percent less wages than men [20]. In general, the internal obstacles faced by women are limited skills and business capital. Meanwhile, external obstacles are in the form of community conditions that are still gender biased, lack of intensive coordination and cooperation between related sectors [21]. On the other hand, the negative stigma of women working in the tourism industry makes women work twice as hard to fight the negative stigma. This negative stigma often comes from the family environment, so there needs to be an education and empowerment of local communities.

Globally, the tourism sector is recognized for its role in opening up entrepreneurial opportunities for women. Employment opportunities in tourism are twice as likely as other sectors [20]. It is interesting to see how women in the household are able to take advantage of tourism for business opportunities. There are more women in the household sub-sector than men. This has further prompted an investigation into the opportunities and challenges women face in entering the tourism sector as both entrepreneurs and employees. Several research focuses on women and tourism already exist, but many focus solely on the involvement of women in mountain tourism destinations [22], [23].

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine how ecotourism development can have an impact on

women's empowerment. In particular, this study will examine the benefits and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs and their potential role in empowering women in the Karimunjawa National Park area.

2. METHOD

The research focuses on Karimunjawa Marine National Park in the Java Sea, which has a resident population of nearly 9000 people and has been cited in the literature as an example of a 'successful' Marine Protected Area due to improvements in environmental quality indicators since the Marine Protected Area was designated.

The Karimunjawa Marine National Park is one of the marine conservation areas in Indonesia. It is located on the northern coast of Central Java, in an area of abundant marine biodiversity that must be maintained as a regional and national asset. Karimunjawa Island encompasses 27 islands but Karimunjawa Marine National Park only covers 22 islands [24]. Of the 27 islands, only five islands are inhabited with several Indonesian ethnic groups present including people with ethnic and cultural ties to Java, Bugis, Makassar, Banjar, Buton, Madura, and Bajau. The communities in the islands live in harmony even though they have different ethnicity, religion and social groups [25]. Of the total working population, 47% are fishers while the rest are farmers, industrial workers, traders, construction workers, civil servants, on pensions or occupied in other services [25]. The KNP encompasses four villages which are Karimunjawa, Kemujan, Parang and Nyamuk. The capital of Karimunjawa sub-district is in Karimunjawa village. Most of the government offices, guesthouses, resorts, and ports are situated in Karimunjawa village.

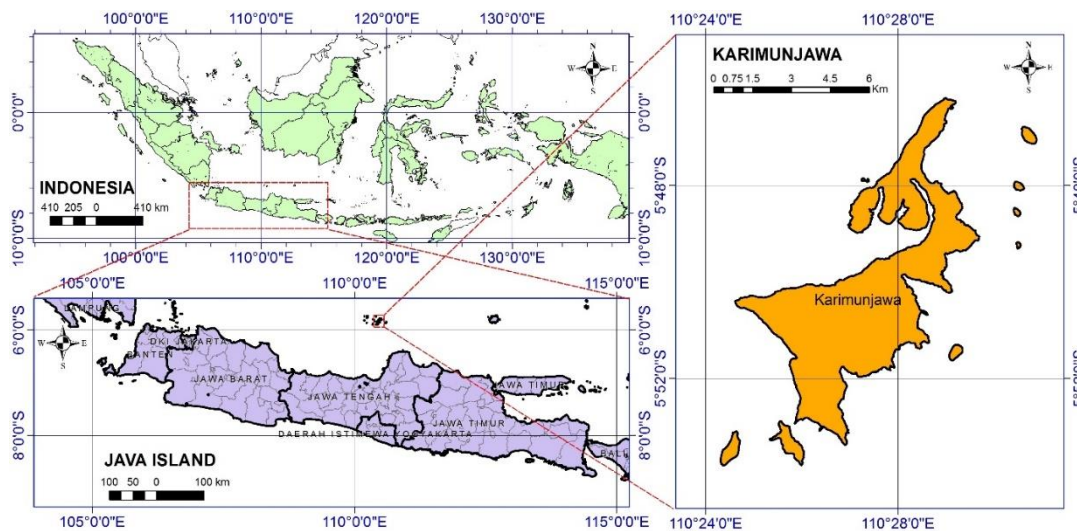


Figure 1 Study Area

Because this is an exploratory study, a qualitative approach is used for data collection and analysis. The qualitative approach allows women to understand entrepreneurship and empowerment from their own perspectives. This study was conducted in collaboration with the people of the Karimunjawa Islands in Central Java.

Several stages of research were carried out. First, one of the women entrepreneurs (homestay) was chosen for discussion and consultation to aid in the selection of informants. She spent a long time managing the homestay and later became the manager of a women's organization. She has many good contacts with tourism actors, and she is supported by her husband, who works in the sub-district. Second, using a snowball sampling technique, several female tourism entrepreneurs were recruited as informants. Third, from April to June 2019, two focus group discussions and ten face-to-face semi-structured interviews were held.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Ecotourism and Socio-economic performance in Karimunjawa National Park

Karimunjawa National Park has enormous ecotourism development potential. The potential of marine wealth in Karimunjawa National Park, beginning with the diversity of fish species, coral reefs, and stretches of beach, becomes the capital for the development of ecotourism. Karimunjawa National Park is a popular tourist destination in Central Java for both domestic and international visitors. However, tourism is concentrated in Karimunjawa village, despite the fact that other small villages are also popular tourist destinations. The indicators of the increase in tourism in KNP are that the number of visitors from domestic and international have increased since 2007. The number of international tourists were 5,579 and domestic tourists were 84,536 in 2015. In comparison with the previous year in 2007, the increase was 158% (international tourist) and 166% (domestic tourists) [26]. It seems that the increase in tourism is because the central Java government provides support to the tourism industry such as building infrastructure, easy access to visit KNP, and providing entertainment. The number of homestays and hotels in KNP has increased from 7 hotels and 21 homestays in 2009 to 15 hotels and 78 homestays in 2017.

Visitors could visit Karimunjawa National Park by ferry, ship, or plane. The airport was a brand-new piece of infrastructure in KNP. The government provided some entertainment, such as music concerts, boat racing, and the traditional 'Barikan Kubro' festival. There was also competition among tour leaders. Tour operators are active in advertising tour packages with reasonable prices on the internet. Karimunjawa's investment for tourism

development is the availability of electricity services and internet networks. Karimunjawa's charm is widely disseminated via the internet and social media networks.

Research has indicated that fishers had good knowledge and understanding of the KNP management, reflected in the fishers' compliance to the fishing regulations especially in gear restrictions [24]. Most of the fishers were small-scale fishers (artisanal fishers) who used fishing gear that was environmentally friendly [26]. Nevertheless, they have low compliance to the spatial restrictions [24], often due to the absence of marker buoys [26], [27]. There was a rise in compliance of fishers between 2010 and 2012 but decreased between 2012 and 2014. Therefore, to increase awareness and compliance of fishers, clarity of the zone markers is important [27].

In addition, communities in Karimunjawa and Kemujan villages had a higher awareness of the core zone (no-take zone) in comparison to Parang. The high awareness of these local communities about the gear restriction in the core zone was facilitated by their involvement in a group to help core zone surveillance. The use of mobile phones and SMS provided an effective two-way communication between the KNP authority and communities [28].

Furthermore, tourism in KNP increased between 2008 and 2016. Figure 2 depicts the increase in visitors. As a result, local communities provided more comprehensive services such as hotels, homestays, transportation, tour guides, and trade (shop, kiosk). This enhancement provides economic benefits to the people of the area. This type of business benefits locals with good socioeconomic capacity, but people with low economic capacity can still earn money by working as tour guides or on inter-island boats.

Karimunjawa Village as a buffer zone for Karimunjawa National Park becomes a concentration of economic activities related to the tourism sector. Facilities for visitors are available in Karimunjawa village although tourist attractions are located on many islands around KNP [28].

3.2. Livelihood Diversity in Karimunjawa National Park

Households in KNP have access to a diverse range of livelihoods. However, households in Karimunjawa village have greater diversity in livelihoods and less dependency in fishing activities than households in Parang village, indicating that households in Karimunjawa village are more secure than households in Parang. Many households who live in Karimunjawa engage in tourism jobs which can gain good income. Tour leaders can generate income not only in that role but also from renting vehicles, preparing food, and arranging accommodation. The number of households in

Karimunjawa that have salaried employment and informal economic activities is higher than households in Parang. Most of the informal economic activities practiced by households in Karimunjawa are related to tourism businesses including homestays, food stalls, renting out cameras, vehicles or boats. Karimunjawa village is a main entrance for visiting KNP and the main tourist destinations. There was an increase of 40% in the development of hotels, resorts, and 56% for the homestays development [29]. However, there was less tourism development in Parang, which has only one homestay. It is likely that households in Karimunjawa have better earnings from informal economic activities than households in Parang.

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In the period 20107 and 2015 an increase in tourist visits to Karimunjawa. This indicates that KNP has an important role in increasing household income diversification in Karimunjawa village through tourism activities and the informal economy [29]. The provision of airport and hotel infrastructure by the Central Java Provincial Government is clear evidence that the

Government plays a major role in promoting Karimunjawa as a marine tourism destination [25].

However, the marine tourism sector and small businesses related to tourism activities do not appear to be sustainable, because they can have a negative impact on coral reefs. There is potential damage to coral reefs at three snorkelling points in Karimunjawa. The most common activities that damage corals include physical contact with tourists on coral reefs when tourists sit, kneel or stand on corals, while physical contact with tour operators at snorkelling spots includes mooring boats on coral reefs and feeding fish [30].

Karimunjawa's tourism industry is firmly rooted in eastern cultural values. There are few night activities, cafes open till late, and it's difficult to find vendors or shops selling liquor. This is one of the reasons why Karimunjawa women have the fortitude to engage in tourism business activities in Karimunjawa. They are at ease managing homestays, restaurants, and other enterprises that support the Karimunjawa tourism sector

Women entrepreneurs are more prevalent in the tourism industry when it comes to managing homestays, restaurants, and souvenir shops. Women who work directly in tourism activities such as tour guides, diving or snorkelling guides, and others are uncommon. Numerous women are pondering keeping in charge of their own homes and families. According to them, homestay allows them to continue taking care of the household.

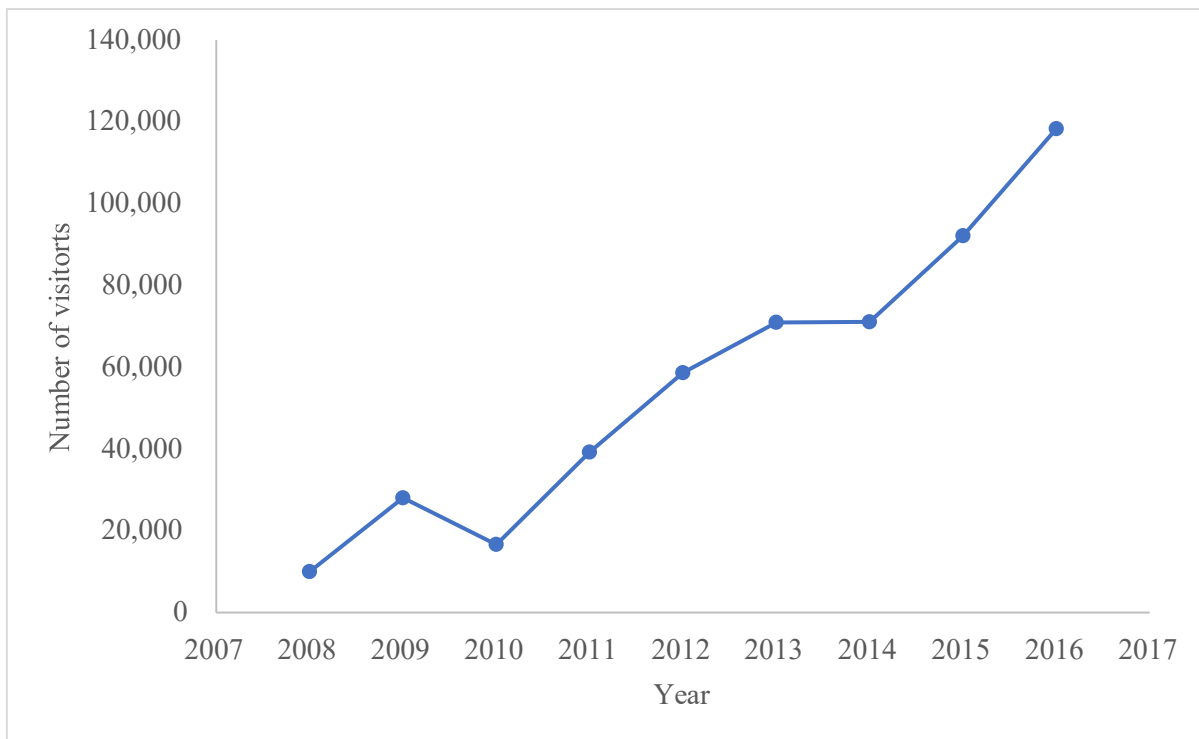


Figure 2 Number of Visitors in KNP between 2008 and 2016.

3.3. Benefits for women entrepreneurs and women's empowerment

The increased number of visitors to the Karimunjawa National Park has resulted in the expansion of tourism facilities in the Karimunjawa National Park's buffer zone. Opportunities to engage in tourism services are plentiful, and the majority of villages within the National Park buffer zone recognize this. Although the people of Karimunjawa rely heavily on the fisheries sector or make their living as fishermen, they do not pass up the possibility to establish a tourism-related business. Tourism is the primary source of income for women in the majority of households in Karimunjawa. Women entrepreneurs formed as a result of tourism service business prospects in the Karimunjawa National Park's buffer zone. Women entrepreneurs in Karimunjawa operate a variety of companies, including homestays, restaurants, and souvenirs. For them, this business serves

as a supplement to their primary source of income, which is fishing.

The majority of women who run homestays, restaurants, and souvenir shops have prior expertise. In the majority of cases, it is assisted by intimate family members, typically spouses or next of kin (parents). All of the female entrepreneurs were married and between the ages of 23 and 49. The homestay's women are all either Karimunjawa indigenous or married to Karimunjawa males.

Women's participation in the tourism service industry boosts household income through increasing household income. Women who work in tourism service businesses generally experience a rise in income. Along with economic benefits, engagement of women entrepreneurs in the tourism industry helps women's self-confidence, capacity, and the role of women in decision-making (Table 1).

Table 1 Benefits and Challenges for woman entrepreneurs

	Sub Themes	Key Indicators
Benefits	Self Confidence	- Informant report increased self-confidence.
	Economic independence and influence in household decisions	- Informant mention having some cash income.
	Capacity Building	- Informant mention opportunities that they had received to enhance their skill sets.
Challenges	Social Norm	- Informant report behaviour that is considered not appropriate for woman in society, but is needed in their enterprise management.
	Knowledge and skills	- Informant report gaps in knowledge and skill necessary for their business management

All women entrepreneurs expressed increased confidence in their ability to manage their businesses and establish relationships with tourism actors and tourists. Karimunjawa tourism, in their opinion, is a clean tour that leaves a favourable impression. The KNP buffer zone is well-known for its vibrant culture and religious life. Such tourism conditions boost the confidence of women entrepreneurs in Karimunjawa. Karimunjawa tourists adore the religious life in Karimunjawa, and it's difficult to find a bad nightlife in Karimunjawa. Liquor and alcohol are scarce in Karimunjawa.

Tourism businesses' management also has an effect on the cleanliness of their homes and surroundings. Women entrepreneurs in Karimunjawa also increasingly possess confidence in communicating with tourists. Women who manage tourism service businesses report an increase in their family income and access to cash. Their access to cash increases as it is directly from guests or tourists and can be considered self-employment. Tourism services provide an additional source of income for their families. Women who can contribute to the family income experience happiness in and of themselves. When tourists pay additional fees, the

income from homestay management has the potential to increase (tips). The additional income generated by their tourism business is used to pay off debts, purchase household goods, and assist with the cost of their children's education.

4. CONCLUSION

The number of visitors to Karimunjawa National Park has increased in recent years as ecotourism has been promoted as a conservation and development tool in buffer zone communities by both government and non-government organizations. This increase in visitors also has an effect on infrastructure such as airports, roads, and electricity, as well as on the human resource capacity of the KNP buffer zone's local population. When one considers the current and future prospects for tourism growth in KNP, the opportunity for local residents living within the park's buffer zone to enter the tourism service business is obvious. The provision of homestays, restaurants, and souvenirs are just a few of the largest opportunities in tourism services that are accessible to local residents. Due to the fact that tourism provides a means of livelihood diversification for the people living

in the KNP buffer zone, the involvement of women in tourism services is quite visible. The purpose of this study is to examine the benefits and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, as well as their potential role in empowering residents of the Karimunjawa National Park's buffer zone community.

The general principles that guide tourism development are environmental conservation, local participation, and community development. However, women in Karimunjawa are guided in their tourism work by the community's sociocultural norms. These sociocultural norms constrain their role in the tourism industry, as evidenced by their continued involvement in the tourism industry within the confines of the home and family.

Women entrepreneurs managing tourism service businesses create real economic opportunities, such as increased access to family income and extra money. Additionally, women's participation in the tourism industry boosts women's confidence when interacting with tourism actors and tourists. Women can also take on a greater role in household decision-making. Men who are more involved in the fishing sector (fishermen) provide women with more financial decision-making opportunities.

Family support is essential to women entrepreneurs' success in the tourism service business. Women's empowerment can be measured by their capacity to be self-sufficient, assertive, and respected by society. Tourism provides opportunities for women's empowerment, particularly through increased self-confidence, increased income opportunities, and increased roles in household decision-making.

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