



Development of Eco-tourism with Cultural Insights and Local Wisdom for Community Empowerment

Made Sukerani^(✉)

Law Faculty, Warmadewa University, Denpasar, Indonesia
madesukerani@gmail.com

Abstract. The objective of this study is to examine (1) ecotourism activities that promote community empowerment and (2) cultural values and indigenous knowledge that can support ecotourism growth. The technique employed is a form of normative legal research. (1) Ecotourism activities encourage community empowerment aimed at strengthening the role and participation of the community in tourism development for the purpose of obtaining economic, socio-cultural advantages from tourist development; providing equal opportunities for all members of society. Consequently, the development of community-based tourism requires coordination and cooperation as well as a balanced role between various elements of stakeholders, including the government, the private sector, and the community; and (2) cultural values and local wisdom that can support the development of ecotourism demonstrate that many cultural values and local wisdom can be explored and developed through ecotourism activities to support economic empowerment and community development. These cultural values and local wisdom exhibit themselves in numerous forms and activities, including customs, mentalities, and communal conduct.

Keywords: Development · Ecotourism · Culture and Local Wisdom

1 Introduction

One type of tourism that is mostly done by tourists is ecotourism activities. According to Boyd & Butler, ecotourism is “Nature-based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the natural environment which is managed to be ecologically sustainable”. Natural environment contains cultural components, and ecological sustainability requires a suitable return to the community and long-term resource conservation [1]. Thus, ecotourism is a tourism activity that uses the natural and cultural environment judiciously to meet the demands of tourists engaged in tourist travel activities, while contributing to the preservation of environmental functions and the economic development of the local community.

The development of the number of tourists who carry out ecotourism activities from time to time is increasing. At the global level, the growth of the ecotourism market was recorded to be much higher than the growth of the tourism market as a whole.

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Based on the analysis of The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) in Damanik & Weber, the growth of the ecotourism market ranges from 10–30 percent per year, while overall tourists only reach 4%. In Indonesia, it is estimated that 25% of domestic tourists in 1996 were ecotourists [2]. These statistics show that a shift in the behavior of the tourism market is taking place at the moment, and ecotourism is expected to become a highly prospective tourism market in the future.

The development and management of ecotourism activities will be more effective if accompanied by efforts to increase tourist awareness of the environment through the introduction of culture and local wisdom so that they can support the creation of environmentally friendly tourism activities. Beaumont points out that pure conservation programs that are not linked to other activities such as recreation or tourism are an ineffective past concept and need to be revised. Tourism activities that can generate economic benefits can be used to support the conservation of natural and cultural wealth [3]. However, in this case, tourism planners must consider the carrying capacity of each tourist destination so that a harmonious relationship will be created between tourism and the environment that is its attraction.

This paper intends to discuss the development of ecotourism with cultural insight and local wisdom for community empowerment.

2 Method

This research use normative legal research as its methodology. Normative legal research is study undertaken by examining the laws and regulations that pertain to or are applied to a specific legal topic. Normative legal research investigates the law from an internal perspective, with legal norms as the object of study [4].

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 Ecotourism Activities Support Community Empowerment

Rara Sugiarti said that people who live in mountainous areas have a very important role in preserving environmental functions. Therefore, the development of ecotourism needs to involve the local community. Developing ecotourism based on community empowerment means developing ecotourism with the community [5]. Thus, efforts to empower communities are directed at increasing their involvement, role, capacity, and competence in ecotourism development activities. Community empowerment-based tourism is ecotourism that is planned, created, managed, controlled, monitored, and evaluated by maximizing the participation of the local community. In other words, community-based ecotourism also signifies development ownership by the community; decisions regarding ecotourism in their area are made democratically and based on complete information by the local community, as it is the local community that will directly or indirectly experience both positive and negative impacts from ecotourism development in their area.

Community empowerment is carried out by involving and increasing the role of the community as well as increasing their capacity and competence. The community is

expected to be involved in the entire ecotourism development process from beginning to end, starting from planning, implementing, managing, monitoring and assessing the success of ecotourism development in driving the local economy, increasing income and living standards and welfare of the local community. Meanwhile, increasing the role of the community includes increasing the role as owner and host, investors, planners, managers, organizers/service providers who provide attractions, facilities, developers, information centers, sellers/marketers and promotional agents, carers, and finally the community must be the beneficiary of development, ecotourism in the area.

In addition to increasing roles, the community needs to be facilitated to increase their capacity and competence, both in the form of knowledge and skills as well as other related matters such as access to information networks and policies, resources (natural and cultural environment).

Balance and harmony between the interests of the government, the commercial sector, and the community are key to the process of developing community-based ecotourism. Ecotourism should ideally be developed “from the community, by the community, and for the community,” according to the premise of community-based tourism development. To achieve the ultimate goal of bettering the community’s welfare and quality of life, all members of the community must be actively involved and given the opportunity to participate in all phases of development, from planning to development to management and development to monitoring and evaluation.

One goal of community-based tourism development is to “empower the community,” while another is to “increase the involvement and participation of the community in ecotourism development in order to achieve economic, socio-cultural benefits from ecotourism development” [6]. This means that the government, the corporate sector, and the community all need to work together and strike a balance in order for community-based ecotourism to flourish. To grow ecotourism successfully, the local people must be made aware of its potential and encouraged to take pride in its many natural and cultural assets.

According to Satya Hermawan, the interests of the government, the corporate sector, and the community were all taken into consideration when designing community-based ecotourism. Community-based tourism advocates for ecotourism to be created “from the community, by the community, and for the community” [7]. When it comes to improving the community’s welfare and quality of life, Teguh Hartono argues that local communities should be consulted and given opportunities to contribute at every step of development, from planning to development to management and development to monitoring and assessment [8].

3.2 Cultural Values and Local Wisdom that Can Support Ecotourism Development

Embedded and followed by community members, local concepts that are smart, full of insight, and of good value are referred to as “local wisdom.” The local community’s smarts in response to their environment is what produces local wisdom. In order for a nation to successfully absorb and cultivate foreign cultures in accordance with its own character and talents, it must have a strong sense of its own local identity, or national cultural identity. According to a comment attributed to Moendardjito and included in

Sartini's book, [9] regional cultural elements have the potential to become local geniuses because their ability to endure has been tested until now. Among its many features are those that:

- a. Able to resist the impact of outside culture;
- b. Able to accommodate parts of foreign culture;
- c. Able to incorporate components of foreign culture into the native culture;
- d. Able to control;
- e. Able to steer cultural growth

The societal manifestations of local knowledge include values, norms, ethics, beliefs, practices, customary law, and particular regulations. Its functions are diverse due to the fact that it exists in diverse social cultures and assumes diverse shapes. For instance, local wisdom has a very broad meaning and purpose in the Balinese culture, namely:

- a. Function for the conservation and preservation of natural resources;
- b. Functioning for the development of human resources, for example related to life cycle ceremonies;
- c. Functioning for the development of culture and science, for example at the Saraswati ceremony, belief and worship at the Panji temple;
- d. Function as advice, belief, literature and taboos;
- e. Social meaning, for example, communal/relative integration ceremony;
- f. Socially meaningful, for example in agricultural cycle ceremonies;
- g. Meaningful ethics and morals, which are manifested in the Ngaben ceremony and the purification of ancestral spirits;
- h. Political meaning, for example, the mournful nodding ceremony and patron-client power [10].

So, local wisdom is an important part of the identity of the community that has it. It needs to be kept alive by being passed down to future generations, because the values it contains are in line with their character and personality.

4 Conclusion

Based on what was said in the above discussion, the following can be said:

- a. Ecotourism activities that help empower communities aim to increase the role and participation of the community in tourism development so that economic, social, and cultural benefits can be gained from tourism development and everyone has the same chances in life. So, for community-based tourism to grow, there needs to be coordination and cooperation, as well as a balance of roles between the government, the private sector, and the community.
- b. Cultural values and local wisdom that can support the development of ecotourism show that there are many cultural values and local wisdom that can be explored and developed through ecotourism activities to support economic empowerment and community welfare. These cultural values and local wisdom are manifested in many forms and activities such as customs, mindsets, and community behavior.

5 Suggestion

The suggestions that can be described are:

- a. It is recommended that local wisdom based on the culture of indigenous peoples is always used as the basis for the development of ecotourism.
- b. It is recommended that an indigenous community-based ecotourism development model be formed immediately.

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