



The Potential of Canal to Enhance Community Economic Independence: A Case Study of Wisata Kanal Salamrejo-Banyuwangi

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Abstract. Riverbank areas, commonly referred to as waterfronts, are the interface between water and land. In recent years, these areas have increasingly been commodified for their practical value, resulting in significant benefits for local communities. Numerous destinations, both within Indonesia and internationally, have effectively leveraged riverbank resources, as demonstrated by tourist villages in Yogyakarta and developments in Venice and Amsterdam. Banyuwangi contains 116 rivers distributed across 25 districts, representing a significant resource if effectively managed. The Salamrejo Canal, originating from the Salamrejo River, serves as part of an irrigation system that supplies water to agricultural lands in Salamrejo Village. In recent years, both the community and village government have initiated development of the canal's potential. Over the past three years, the site has experienced increased visitor numbers, resulting in heavy afternoon traffic. Currently, visitor activities are primarily limited to brief riverside culinary tours during sunset. However, the surrounding area offers opportunities for further tourism development. This research aims to identify the tourism potential of the Salamrejo Canal using established theoretical frameworks. The study produces a map of the canal's tourism potential, focusing on its natural attractions and associated components.

Keywords: Map, Potential, Canal Tourism, Community, Economic Independence

1 Introduction

Each region has unique development potential, including tourism, cultural assets, local cuisine, and infrastructure established by local communities or governments. Effective management of these resources can generate significant benefits for surrounding communities. As hosts at tourist destinations, local communities are expected to deliver high-quality services to visitors. Recent trends in the tourism market emphasize meaningful experiences, sustainable practices, cultural engagement, and culinary tourism. Additionally, shifts in lifestyle, tourist preferences, and technological advancements continue to shape these trends.

Banyuwangi has demonstrated notable progress in tourism development, as reflected by the annual increase in tourist arrivals. According to detik.com, tourist visits reached 3,405,145 in 2024, a 7 percent increase from 3,182,082 in 2023. This growth encompasses both domestic and international tourists.

The rising number of tourist visits to Banyuwangi has increased the demand for tourist attractions. Numerous new destinations have emerged in the region, including river tourism. Banyuwangi contains 116 rivers distributed across 25 sub-districts. These rivers serve as significant sites, offering scenic beauty and supporting various human activities, including tourism. Rivers represent a vital spatial component of the regional landscape, contributing beauty, tranquility, and opportunities for adventure that attract visitors [26].

The Salam Rejo Canal Sunset Tour has become a prominent river tourism attraction. This popularity is evident in the steady influx of visitors in the afternoon, even though the narrow pedestrian pathways often lead to crowding. Interviews with stall owners indicate that the number of vendors at the site is increasing, leading to occasional instances of multiple stalls offering identical products. Current conditions of the canal can be seen in Figure 1.



FIGURE 1. Current conditions of the canal

River or canal rejuvenation involves four key elements of waterway tourism: the waterway's structural features, land-based experiences, water-based experiences, and boat-based experiences [28]. Management of river or canal areas is often integrated with efforts to harness their potential as natural resources that can enhance community welfare. The Salamrejo village government and community have initiated riverbank improvements to maintain river flow and develop public spaces for community use. Optimizing the potential of the Salamrejo Canal is essential to maximize benefits for the local population.

Consequently, research is essential to uncover how the Salamrejo Canal Sunset Tourism offers beneficial chances for the community.

2 Method

The research activity was conducted at the Salamrejo Canal Sunset Tourist Attraction and its surroundings, specifically in Salamrejo Hamlet, Sumber Gondo Village, Glenmore District. This study uses a descriptive, qualitative case study approach. The basis for using a qualitative approach is that this research aims to uncover the values derived from empirical findings [13]. Primary data were collected through observations, interviews, questionnaires, and field mapping, while secondary data were obtained from the literature. The subjects in this study include merchants along the river, government officials, pokdarwis (tourism awareness groups), and visitors who serve as informants. As for the method used to select informant subjects, it is accidental sampling. Ten informants were interviewed, and 35 visitors were respondents. The research framework can be seen in Figure 2.

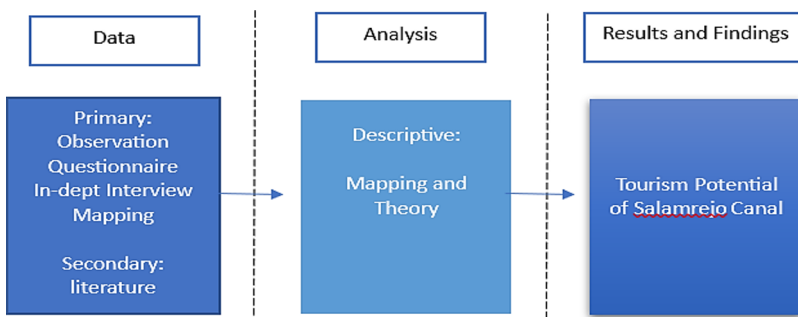


FIGURE 2. Research Framework

Based on Figure 2 above, the research flow begins with collecting primary data by distributing questionnaires to selected respondents. Although questionnaires are often associated with quantitative methods, here the questionnaire is designed with open-ended questions to explore respondents' in-depth views, experiences, and perceptions about the tourism potential of the Salamrejo canal. The data obtained from the questionnaires were then validated through in-depth interviews to clarify answers related to tourism potential and mapping. By combining these two techniques, researchers were able to obtain rich data and cross-verify information, thereby increasing the credibility and depth of analysis in producing a mapping of the tourism potential of the Salamrejo Canal.

3 Result And Discussion

3.1 History of the Salamrejo Canal

A comparatively recent development in ecological tourism is the Salamrejo Canal. This tourism can develop because of community initiative. The main tourist attraction is the natural scenery of the canals and rice fields, which the local community began developing in 2022. The head of the Pokdarwis revealed that the initial opening of this tourist spot was limited to enjoying the sunset by the canal, and the only available amenities were vendors selling goods from their motorcycles. Slowly but surely, community initiatives began to take off. Residents of Dusun Salamrejo, Sumbergondo Village, Glenmore District, began organizing and using the area around the river or canal as a comfortable place to relax. Culinary tourism activities have emerged, with the area along the canal banks bustling with food and drink vendors, making it the perfect place to relax while enjoying local cuisine. This aligns with the concept of Community-Based Tourism (CBT), which involves the active participation of residents in managing and developing the tourism potential in their area, so that the benefits can be directly felt by the community [3], whether in the form of social justice, empowerment, equitable distribution of benefits, redistributive measures, or ownership of the tourism sector [12].

The development of Salamrejo Canal Tourism became popular over time, earning a reputation as a place to watch the sunset, with views of the evening sky over rice fields and the calming flow of the river. Information about the beauty and unique atmosphere of Salamrejo quickly spread on social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, attracting visitors from both within and outside Banyuwangi.

3.2 Salamrejo Canal Today

The Salamrejo Canal tourism site in Glenmore is currently a culinary tourism destination with many stalls and cafes developed by the local community. Permanent structures already dominate the warungs and cafes currently available. A variety of traditional and modern foods are available at this tourist attraction. Traditional foods focus on local ingredients, authentic flavours, and cultural significance. At the same time, modern foods are also available, prioritizing practicality, aesthetics, and often combining international ingredients with local touches to create new combinations.

Salamrejo Canal Tourism is open every hour, but cafes and stalls close at 9:00 PM. According to an interview with the Head of the Pokdarwis there are rules governing the opening hours of cafes and stalls at this tourist spot to prevent young people from hanging out too late. Considering that young people and students still dominate the leading market share for tourism, although family markets also enjoy this type of tourism.

In 2023, the Pokdarwis is once again working to develop Salamrejo Canal Tourism by creating a tubing tourism product. Through the organization's internal funds, 10 sets of tubing equipment were collected. The tubing tourism market consists of tourists seeking nature-based recreational activities that offer challenging and fun sensations, such as young people, families, and groups looking to strengthen bonds.

Despite its captivating natural beauty, Salamrejo Canal Tourism faces several significant challenges, such as a lack of additional tourist attractions and limited supporting facilities. For a long time, the area has been used more often for culinary activities along the canal. While tubing activities are still minimal, with minimal tubing equipment available, the lack of transportation to carry tubing tourists is also a frequent obstacle, and there are no human

resources in the tubing field.

One of the speakers noted that tourism management is still ineffective due to limited human resources. This condition leads to low interest among tourists in returning and limits the area's appeal to new visitors. Additionally, basic infrastructure, such as parking and accessibility, still needs improvement to enhance visitor comfort.

Previous studies have shown that diversifying tourism products is key to increasing tourist attractiveness. For example, research in Kudus Regency showed a positive relationship between the number of tourist attractions and tourism sector revenue. Additionally, the uniqueness of a tourist attraction is an important factor in motivating tourists to visit a destination.

3.3 Canal as a Tourist Attraction

According to Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism, tourist attractions are defined as anything that possesses uniqueness, beauty, and value, in the form of the diversity of natural wealth, culture, and human-made products, which are the target or purpose of tourist visits.

According to existing regulations, a canal is defined as an artificial waterway, whereas a river is a natural waterway. Although regulations in Indonesia often specifically address rivers and canals, which are part of water resources management, they are also subject to relevant regulations. Therefore, Government Regulation Number 37 of 2012 concerning River Basin Management regulates the management of river basins (DAS), including rivers and related structures, such as canals. Meanwhile, regarding tourism, according to [1] rivers are among the ecosystems that can be developed as tourist attractions, especially for rafting. Furthermore, [11] added that for river tourism planning and development, an understanding of river behaviour and characteristics is necessary. The behaviour of a river can be seen in its water, while its character can be seen in its ecosystem.

3.4 Analysis of Canal Tourism Potential

In general, the Salamrejo Canal falls into the category of natural tourism, where, according to [15] natural tourism objects are natural resources with potential and appeal to visitors, both in their natural state and after cultivation efforts. The map of tourism potential can be seen in Figure 3.



FIGURE 3. The Map of Tourism Potential in Salamrejo Canal

Vegetable Harvesting Experience. According to the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Indonesia, agritourism is considered a sustainable tourism option that optimizes agricultural activities as tourist attractions, with the aim of expanding knowledge, fostering experience, promoting recreation, and strengthening relationships in the field of agriculture (Nurani et al., 2020). The concept of agritourism is tourism that offers authentic, memorable experiences, not only providing views but also encouraging active participation in tourist activities [19], and it is also an effort to improve the welfare of farmers and the surrounding community.

Salamrejo Village is one of the vegetable-producing centres in Banyuwangi Regency. Tomatoes, chillies, mustard greens, cucumbers, green onions, and long beans are commonly found in this village. Besides being a vegetable centre, this village also produces guava, salak, durian, dragon fruit, and bananas. However, despite high vegetable and fruit production, farmers have faced unstable or even low prices in recent years. This problem is caused by high production volumes, market competition, and declining demand, which often lead to crop failures/post-harvest losses and financial losses for farmers. On average, farmers sell their harvests directly to local vegetable and fruit warehouses, resulting in lower prices than when selling directly to buyers such as large/small retailers. This is because, with low and unstable prices, the profit from selling the harvest may still not cover post-harvest costs, such as harvesting, packaging, and transportation. Farmers often also decide not to harvest and prefer to leave their crops in the fields until the next planting season (Interview with farmers). Therefore, fruit and vegetable picking agrotourism can be developed as a potential resource to support the community's economy. Information can be found in the Table 1.

TABLE 1. Analysis of the Potential Vegetable and Fruit Picking Attractiveness

No.	Components	Analysis
1.	Attraction	It already exists, in the form of community land planted with fruits and vegetables typical of this region.
2.	Accessibility	It is already there, and the location is effortless to reach by both private and public transportation.
3.	Amenity	There are not any; there are no facilities to accommodate vegetable and fruit-picking tourism activities.

The potential for picking vegetables and fruits at Salamrejo Canal Tourism can be created, as the canal is also surrounded by community land planted with vegetables and fruits. Managing this potential can involve various parties in the village, such as farmers and the local community. Farmer involvement in agritourism management is crucial because farmers are the leading actors who can enhance the tourist appeal of agricultural businesses, playing a role in cultivation systems and as guides due to their deeper experience and knowledge [16]. Trees also as one of the initial assets in environmental conservation can create a sustainable and pleasing tourism environment [7].

Fish Therapy Experience. The potential for fisheries in Banyuwangi is vast, encompassing offshore capture fisheries and freshwater and brackishwater aquaculture. Nowadays, the capture fisheries sector is experiencing stock limitations, making aquaculture a more promising option. Aquaculture is one of the fisheries sectors that aims to maximize profit within a controlled environment. Aquaculture activities are not only carried out on edible fish products, but also on ornamental fish products. One of the aquaculture products from the ornamental fish segment currently in development is Garra rufa. Garra rufa is a fish species with unique abilities compared to other ornamental fish. This fish species is one of those that provide benefits for human health therapy. When someone with skin problems undergoes Garra rufa spa therapy, the fish will spontaneously swarm to the skin that contains a lot of dead skin cells. Research states that as the fish exfoliate dead skin cells, they simultaneously secrete the enzyme dithranol, which can make one look younger.

The Salamrejo Canal tourist attraction has promising natural tourism potential that could be developed into a fish spa. The area, which is still very vast and limited to only rice fields and community farms, could be developed into fish therapy ponds. Considering the water source is very easily accessible, the potential for creating a fish pond is also possible. Information can be found in the Table 2.

TABLE 2. Analysis of the Potential Attractiveness of Fish Therapy

No.	Components	Analysis
1.	Attraction	It is already there, consisting of a large plot of land adjacent to a river and two fish ponds, both ready for use

No.	Components	Analysis
2.	Accessibility	It is already there; the location is effortless to reach by both private and public transportation.
3.	Amenity	There is not any, there are no facilities to accommodate fish therapy tourism activities.

Currently, the growing popularity of fish therapy makes this business highly promising. This relates to the properties of the Garra rufa fish and can be used by all segments of society, from children to the elderly. As for the benefits of fish therapy, it can improve skin texture, prevent unhealthy skin growth, and relieve stress [17]. Therefore, if the potential for fish therapy tourism is realized, it will attract tourists from diverse backgrounds.

Tubing Attraction. Tubing is a water recreational sport performed in fast-flowing water, involving descending river terrain and irrigation flows in inner tubes [30]. Tubing is also used as a village icon that contributes to the community's economic Well-being. Essentially, this tourism activity is inseparable from daily community life and has transformed into an activity that is a necessity for humans because it can make the body more fit, make people happier, help them lose weight, increase positive energy, reduce chronic risks, maintain skin health, preserve brain memory, promote relaxation, and reduce body pain caused by lack of movement [32].

The potential of the canal in Salamrejo for tubing includes calm or varied currents, beautiful natural scenery, and terrain that is not too extreme, making it suitable for beginners and other skill levels. The presence of supporting facilities and the potential for local community management also add value, making the river a promising natural tourism destination. Information can be found in the Table 3.

TABLE 3. Analysis of the Potential Attractiveness of Tubing Tourism

No.	Components	Analysis
1.	Attraction	It already exists, in the form of a channel ready to be used as a tubing area; 10 sets of tubing equipment (3 sets are no longer suitable for use).
2.	Accessibility	It is already there; the location is effortless to reach by both private and public transportation.
3.	Amenity	Not yet, there are no special facilities to accommodate tubing tourism activities.

Rice Planting Activity. Today, agriculture has the potential to be developed as a tourist attraction, known as agrotourism. Several studies indicate that agrotourism is growing worldwide and can increase income and Well-being for those involved. In Nigeria, abundant agricultural resources have the potential to be developed into agrotourism [21], and agrotourism is an option for agricultural diversification for farmers in Kansas [5]. Agrotourism is a widely used tool worldwide to enhance the socio-economic Well-being of local communities [14]. This supports the assertion that tourism development can provide local farmers with an opportunity to increase income and sustain their families [31].

In the agricultural sector, farmer income is the difference between revenue and all costs incurred in running a farm. Data from the Banyuwangi Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2025 shows that the harvested area in the last three years has consistently decreased by 76.75 hectares (2022), 75.06 hectares (2023), and 67.24 hectares (2024). This indicates that the shrinking area of rice fields in Banyuwangi is associated with lower income for farmers. Therefore, increasing household income can be achieved by making all available family resources productive, including through the development of agrotourism.

Agrotourism that emphasizes local culture in land use is expected to become a mainstay for rural communities to increase income while conserving land resources and maintaining local cultivation methods and technologies that are generally suited to the natural environment [29]. Rice paddy agrotourism at the Salamrejo Canal can be developed by offering rice paddy cultivation activities as attractions, such as traditional plowing with cows or buffalo, planting rice, and harvesting (if the agrotourism activity coincides with the harvest season). This is very popular with students, especially those from big cities, in areas where rice fields are rare, making various rice cultivation activities a unique and fascinating attraction. Information can be found in the Table 4.

TABLE 4. Analysis of the Potential Attraction of Rice Planting Tourism

No.	Components	Analysis
1.	Attraction	It already exists, in the form of community rice fields.
2.	Accessibility	It is already there; the location is effortless to reach by both private and public transportation.
3.	Amenity	Not yet, there are no facilities to accommodate rice planting tourism activities.

Minapadi Attraction. Minapadi (rice and fish farming) has the potential to be an integrated form of agriculture that produces two products simultaneously (rice and fish) from the same plot of land. This can increase farmer productivity and income, reduce production costs by using fewer chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and use land and water more efficiently. Furthermore, Minapadi also has the potential to attract agro-tourism and create new jobs.

The history of minapadi in Indonesia dates back to a local tradition in West Java, dating back to the 9th Century. It is a form of local wisdom that integrates rice and fish cultivation to promote agricultural diversification and food security, replacing secondary crops in rice paddies [6]. This method experienced a decline but has been revived since the 1970s, and was recognized by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 2012 as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS). In East Java, the integration of rice and fish, known as "sawah tambak," has also been practiced. Thus, minapadi (rice-fish farming) is nothing new among rice and fish farmers [24].

Potential areas for minapadi include well-maintained rice paddies, designed to provide prime views for tourists visiting the Salamrejo Canal Tourism Area. However, this area offers potential for development, particularly through rice-fish farming. This strategic location also benefits Kluncing Tourism, which has been a target of a government program to develop rice-fish farming since 2010. Information can be found in the Table 5.

TABLE 5. Analysis of the Potential Attractions of Mina Padi Tourism

No.	Components	Analysis
1.	Attraction	It already exists in the form of community rice fields near river water sources.
2.	Accessibility	It is already there; the location is effortless to reach by both private and public transportation.
3.	Amenity	Not yet, there are no special facilities to accommodate tubing tourism activities.

The design of the rice-fish farm is undoubtedly supported by a government program that continues to prioritize fish farming in Banyuwangi. Since 2023, there have been continuous development activities on good fish farming practices, including technical guidance on the rice-fish farming system. The current area of fishery land for rice-fish farming is 111 hectares out of a total of 8,754 hectares being developed. Based on BPS, capture fishery production in Banyuwangi Regency has continued to increase over the past six years, even becoming the second-highest capture fishery production in inland waters after Lamongan Regency. This indicates that rice-fish farming is a promising prospect for development in Banyuwangi, especially in Salamrejo Village.

4 Conclusion

Based on the analysis, the Salamrejo Canal Tourism Area has significant natural tourism potential. This area spans several areas with varying tourism potential. The canal's tourism attractions are located along it, which is used for tubing, and utilizing its water resources could develop fish therapy tourism. Natural land-based attractions along the banks of the Salamrejo Canal are characterized by agrotourism, including fruit and vegetable picking, rice planting, and fish and rice farming.

The results of this study indicate that tourism potential maps play a crucial role as a catalyst for sustainable local community development. Identification of tourism assets, whether natural, cultural or man-made, does not stop at an inventory of objects, but becomes the basis for developing strategies for empowering the village community's economy. Field data demonstrates a positive correlation between the clarity of tourism potential maps and the level of community participation in the tourism ecosystem, such as the development of local MSMEs and the provision of accommodation services. Thus, these maps can open up new economic opportunities, increase the capacity of local human resources, and foster a sense of community ownership of their region's potential, ultimately leading to

increased welfare and independence for local communities. while increasing the stigma that the number of tourist visits indicates the popularity of a tourist attraction [7].

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