



# Exploring the Nexus of Regenerative Tourism and Community Entrepreneurship: Empirical Insights from the Rural Destination of Bali, Indonesia

I Gede Gian Saputra<sup>1</sup>, I Nyoman Sunarta<sup>2</sup> and Putu Agung Surya Prawira<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Udayana University, Indonesia  
igedegiansaputra@unud.ac.id

**Abstract.** Bali's rural destinations have become iconic examples of how tourism can integrate cultural heritage, ecological preservation, and local entrepreneurship. This study explores the nexus between regenerative tourism and community entrepreneurship, highlighting how regenerative principles extend beyond sustainability by restoring ecosystems, reinforcing cultural identity, and fostering inclusive economic development. Using a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected through a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with local leaders, women entrepreneurs, youth representatives, and tourism managers in one of Bali's most recognized rural tourism villages. Thematic analysis revealed five major findings: (1) regenerative values are deeply embedded in customary practices, (2) governance faces decision-making challenges and the risk of tourism euphoria, (3) youth actively promote the destination through digital platforms but lack depth in cultural storytelling, (4) women entrepreneurs play a central role in household economies and product innovation, and (5) community-led ecological initiatives demonstrate strong environmental stewardship. These insights provide empirical evidence of how regenerative tourism contributes to resilience and long-term well-being in rural destinations when linked with community entrepreneurship.

**Keywords:** Regenerative Tourism, Community Entrepreneurship, Bali, Rural Tourism, Sustainability.

## 1 Introduction

Tourism has long been recognized as a catalyst for economic growth, cultural exchange, and rural development, particularly in regions where cultural heritage and natural resources intersect [1]. Bali, Indonesia, is a globally renowned tourism destination that has consistently attracted millions of visitors due to its unique cultural identity, artistic traditions, and diverse landscapes. Beyond its coastal resorts, Bali's rural destinations have increasingly emerged as important spaces for sustainable and inclusive tourism development, reflecting the global demand for authentic, experience-based travel [2].

In recent years, however, sustainability discourses in tourism have faced critical scrutiny. While sustainable tourism emphasizes minimizing negative impacts, it often

falls short in restoring degraded ecosystems or addressing deeper socio-cultural transformations. This gap has led to the rise of Regenerative Tourism, a paradigm that moves “beyond sustainability” by focusing on restoring ecological systems, revitalizing cultural heritage, and fostering long-term resilience [3]. Regenerative tourism challenges destinations not only to conserve resources but also to leave a net-positive impact on communities and their environments. Despite increasing scholarly attention in Europe, Oceania, and North America, empirical studies of regenerative tourism in Asian rural contexts remain scarce.

Parallel to this shift, the concept of Community Entrepreneurship has gained traction as a strategy for rural development. Community-based enterprises leverage local knowledge, social capital, and collective participation to create economic value while maintaining cultural and environmental integrity [4]. In rural tourism contexts, community entrepreneurship is critical for ensuring that benefits are equitably distributed and that local people retain agency in managing tourism development [5]. However, the intersection between regenerative tourism and community entrepreneurship has rarely been examined empirically, particularly in Southeast Asia, where rural communities face both opportunities and pressures from global tourism markets.

Bali’s rural tourism villages provide fertile ground for studying this nexus. Since the Indonesian government launched *Desa Wisata Mandiri* programs and UNWTO recognized Bali’s rural destinations among the Best Tourism Villages, communities have increasingly positioned themselves as custodians of cultural and ecological assets. Among these villages, Penglipuran in Bangli Regency stands out as an internationally recognized case. Frequently referred to as one of the world’s cleanest villages, Penglipuran has been honored as a UNWTO Best Tourism Village 2023 and has maintained its reputation for decades as a “top of mind” rural tourism destination in Bali. Its ability to combine cultural preservation, environmental stewardship, and inclusive entrepreneurship makes it a compelling case study for exploring regenerative tourism in practice.

Accordingly, this paper aims to explore the nexus between regenerative tourism and community entrepreneurship in Penglipuran Tourism Village. Specifically, the study investigates how regenerative values are embedded in local culture, the challenges of governance and decision-making, the roles of youth and women in entrepreneurship, and the ecological practices that underpin the village’s sustainability. By doing so, the paper addresses the current gap in the literature by providing empirical insights from Southeast Asia to the growing global discourse on regenerative tourism and rural development.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Regenerative Tourism**

The concept of Regenerative Tourism has emerged as a response to the limitations of sustainable tourism [5]. While sustainability emphasizes minimizing environmental and socio-cultural impacts, it often fails to actively restore ecosystems or revitalize cultural traditions [1]. Regenerative tourism goes further, seeking to create net-positive

impacts for both communities and the environment [3]. It has been widely applied in destinations such as New Zealand and Costa Rica, but empirical studies from Asian contexts remain limited.

In the case of Bali, research has begun to examine the structural and practical challenges faced by rural destinations. For example, Arida, Saputra, and Sanjiwani [6] deconstructed the myths of village tourism in Bali and revealed that many rural villages face existential crises due to digital readiness gaps, political interventions, and the lack of innovative product development. These findings underscore the need for regenerative approaches that address not only ecological but also socio-political and entrepreneurial dimensions.

## **2.2 Community Entrepreneurship in Rural Tourism**

Community Entrepreneurship refers to collective entrepreneurial activities that serve both economic and socio-cultural purposes [4]. Unlike conventional entrepreneurship, which is primarily profit-driven, community entrepreneurship emphasizes inclusivity, shared ownership, and the use of local knowledge. In tourism contexts, community entrepreneurship provides a mechanism through which local residents can capture economic value while preserving cultural and ecological integrity [5].

In Bali, Saputra and Pitanatri [7] analyzed digital acceptance and resilience in rural tourism and found that villages adopting digital tools while maintaining strong community values were more resilient in facing external shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This demonstrates that community entrepreneurship in rural destinations must not only focus on economic viability but also integrate adaptive capacity and digital innovation.

## **2.3 The Nexus of Regenerative Tourism and Community Entrepreneurship**

The intersection between regenerative tourism and community entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as a promising pathway for rural resilience. Regenerative tourism provides the guiding principles of ecological restoration and cultural revitalization, while community entrepreneurship operationalizes these values into collective economic practices. However, as both Arida et al. [6] and Saputra & Pitanatri [7] highlight, many Balinese villages still struggle with structural challenges such as governance, digital readiness, and profit orientation, suggesting that the integration of regenerative and entrepreneurial frameworks remains uneven.

# **3 Methodology**

## **3.1 Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the nexus between regenerative tourism and community entrepreneurship in Bali's rural destinations. A qualitative approach was selected because it allows for capturing in-depth community

perceptions, lived experiences, and governance dynamics, which are central to understanding regenerative practices [8].

### 3.2 Study Area

The research was conducted in Penglipuran Tourism Village, located in Bangli Regency, Bali. Penglipuran has been internationally recognized as one of the world's cleanest villages, listed as a UNWTO Best Tourism Village 2023, and categorized as a Desa Wisata Mandiri (Independent Tourism Village) by the Indonesian government.

Unlike many rural villages that emerged only recently as tourist attractions, Penglipuran has maintained its reputation for decades and has become a top-of-mind rural destination for domestic and international tourists. Its combination of cultural preservation, environmental stewardship, and entrepreneurship makes it a unique case study for examining regenerative tourism.

### 3.3 Participants and Data Collection

Data were collected through a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) held in 2025 with key community stakeholders. Eight informants participated, representing diverse roles within the community:

- The customary leader (Kelian Adat).
- Village council representatives.
- Women entrepreneurs engaged in small-scale enterprises.
- Youth leaders and cultural activists.
- Tourism managers responsible for operational activities.
- Representatives from local institutions.

The FGD was guided by semi-structured questions that explored themes of cultural preservation, governance challenges, entrepreneurial practices, youth engagement, women's empowerment, and environmental initiatives. Discussions were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia and Balinese, recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis [9], which involves systematic coding, theme development, and interpretation. Transcripts were read multiple times to identify patterns and recurring issues. Codes were then grouped into themes that captured key aspects of regenerative practices and entrepreneurial dynamics, including:

- Regeneration as customary value.
- Governance challenges and tourism euphoria.
- Youth engagement and digital storytelling.
- Women's entrepreneurship.
- Environmental stewardship.

### 3.5 Ethical Considerations

The study followed ethical research protocols, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. All participants were assured that their perspectives would be used solely for academic purposes.

## 4 Findings and Discussion

The FGD's thematic analysis revealed five key themes that illustrate the nexus between regenerative tourism and community entrepreneurship in Penglipuran. These themes capture the interplay of cultural values, governance, youth and women's roles, and environmental stewardship.

### 4.1 Regeneration as Customary Value

The FGD revealed that the idea of regeneration in Penglipuran is not perceived as an externally imposed concept but as something deeply rooted in the village's adat (customary law) and long-standing traditions. As the customary leader explained:

*“Konsep awal dari pariwisata di Penglipuran itu adalah bagaimana masyarakat kami sadar dalam pelestarian... sehingga kegiatan pelestarian itu menjadi daya tarik wisata.” (I Wayan Budiarta, Head of the Village Area).*

This statement demonstrates that the regenerative ethos has been organically integrated into the community's social fabric of the community. In Penglipuran, tourism development is seen not as a standalone economic activity but as a continuation of cultural and environmental guardianship. This resonates with Bellato, Cavicchi, and Santini [3], who emphasize that regenerative tourism is most effective when it draws upon local epistemologies and community worldviews, rather than adopting generic sustainability frameworks.

Penglipuran's success in positioning cultural preservation as both a communal obligation and a tourism asset reflects the notion of “cultural ecosystem services” [3], in which intangible cultural practices are integral to ecological and social resilience. This alignment illustrates how regenerative tourism provides a lens to reinterpret traditional practices as future-oriented strategies, reinforcing both identity and destination competitiveness.

### 4.2 Governance Challenges and Tourism Euphoria

Despite its global reputation, Penglipuran is not immune to governance challenges. Decision-making is grounded in collective consensus, which, while democratic, often leads to slow responses to emerging issues. The customary leader acknowledged this:

*“Permasalahan... dalam pengadilan keputusan itu kita sulit sekali... ide-ide yang saya sampaikan, proses keputusannya lama.” (I Wayan Budiarta).*

The slow pace of governance has been compounded by what participants described as “tourism euphoria”, a condition where rapid growth creates enthusiasm that masks deeper risks. As expressed:

*“Orientasi sosialnya dulu tinggi, sekarang menurun menjadi profit orienting.” (I Wayan Budiarta).*

This mirrors Butler’s [11] Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC), which predicts that destinations risk stagnation or decline if growth is not carefully managed, and Doxey’s Irridex [12], which highlights the shift from euphoria to apathy or antagonism. Prof. Sunarta’s reminder during the FGD was poignant:

*“Tidak mungkin orang itu euphoria terus... makin cepat naik, makin cepat jatuh.”.*

This underscores the fragile balance between economic aspiration and long-term resilience. Governance deadlocks risk creating a mismatch between community values and tourism market demands, leaving Penglipuran vulnerable to over-commercialization or “extractive tourism” [13]. Thus, while regeneration requires collective action, adaptive governance mechanisms must evolve to manage the pace of change and to prevent tourism from undermining its very foundations.

### **4.3 Youth Engagement: Digital Enthusiasm vs Cultural Storytelling**

Youth play a double-edged role in Penglipuran’s tourism. On the one hand, they are highly skilled in digital promotion. As I Kadek Dwi Bayu Artha explained:

*“Kalau sehari-hari itu kita bergerak di Instagram sama TikTok... apapun kegiatan pasti kita share.”.*

Such digital literacy aligns with Saputra & Pitanatri’s [7] findings that digital adoption enhances resilience in rural tourism. Through social media such as Instagram and TikTok, Penglipuran maintains global visibility and engages younger audiences. Yet, the same youth often lack historical and cultural literacy. Artha admitted:

*“Anak-anak muda sekarang kalau ditanya sejarah Penglipuran, mungkin nggak tahu.”.*

Similarly, Komang Kembar pointed out:

*“Storytelling-nya yang kurang... pemahaman kami masih kurang dalam caption Instagram.”.*

This disconnect creates a paradox: while youth generate visibility, the narratives risk becoming shallow, oriented toward aesthetics rather than meaning. As Arida et al. [6] argue, regenerative tourism requires intergenerational transmission of heritage knowledge. Without bridging digital skills with cultural storytelling, the village risks producing a form of “empty promotion” detached from its regenerative ethos. The implications are profound: youth engagement must go beyond social media management to include capacity-building in heritage interpretation. Developing audiovisual content that integrates oral histories, rituals, and environmental practices could reconcile digital enthusiasm with cultural regeneration.

#### 4.4 Women as Community Entrepreneurs

Women emerged as critical actors in embedding regenerative values into entrepreneurship. Ni Luh Merdani envisioned diversifying the village’s tourism economy:

*“Nanti bukan hanya ada Bambu Cafe, tapi juga tempat camping... biar wisatawan nggak hanya berfoto di depan rumah.”*

Her suggestion reflects entrepreneurial creativity that integrates cultural and natural assets into new experiences. Meanwhile, Cintya underscored the economic transformation:

*“Dengan adanya pariwisata ini... sebagian besar ibu-ibu yang dulunya hanya ibu rumah tangga, sekarang punya pekerjaan sebagai pedagang.”*

She further noted daily earnings:

*“Omset per hari mencapai 1 juta rupiah... bisa untung Rp200.000 per hari.”*

These narratives confirm Peredo & Chrisman’s [4] thesis that community enterprises integrate social and economic objectives. In Penglipuran, women not only gain financial independence but also enhance family welfare, thereby reinforcing resilience. However, commercialization risks remain. As Zapata et al. [14] caution, community entrepreneurship can lead to uneven benefits if not monitored. Women’s enterprises must be supported by governance mechanisms ensuring fair competition and cooperative networks, rather than atomized individual businesses. Strengthening women’s cooperatives could help institutionalize regenerative entrepreneurship that is inclusive and equitable.

#### 4.5 Environmental Stewardship

Penglipuran demonstrates innovative ecological practices that align with regenerative tourism principles. I Wayan Agustina described local waste management:

*“Ibu-ibu PKK memilah sampah... sebulan sekali dikumpulkan, dikerjasamakan dengan bank sampah.”.*

He also explained wastewater innovation:

*“Sudah dibentuk tanki serata... waktu Kementerian BPL membawa program, diarahkan ke desa tetangga karena di sini sudah ada duluan.”.*

These practices exemplify bottom-up environmental governance, where women’s groups and customary institutions collaborate to manage waste and sanitation. Such initiatives resonate with Pollock’s [5] idea that regenerative tourism requires destinations to act as “living laboratories” of ecological innovation. Yet, scaling remains an issue. Informants noted challenges in sustaining consistent community participation and technical maintenance. Regenerative tourism here depends not only on local commitment but also on external partnerships with government and NGOs to provide capacity-building and resources.

#### **4.6 Discussion**

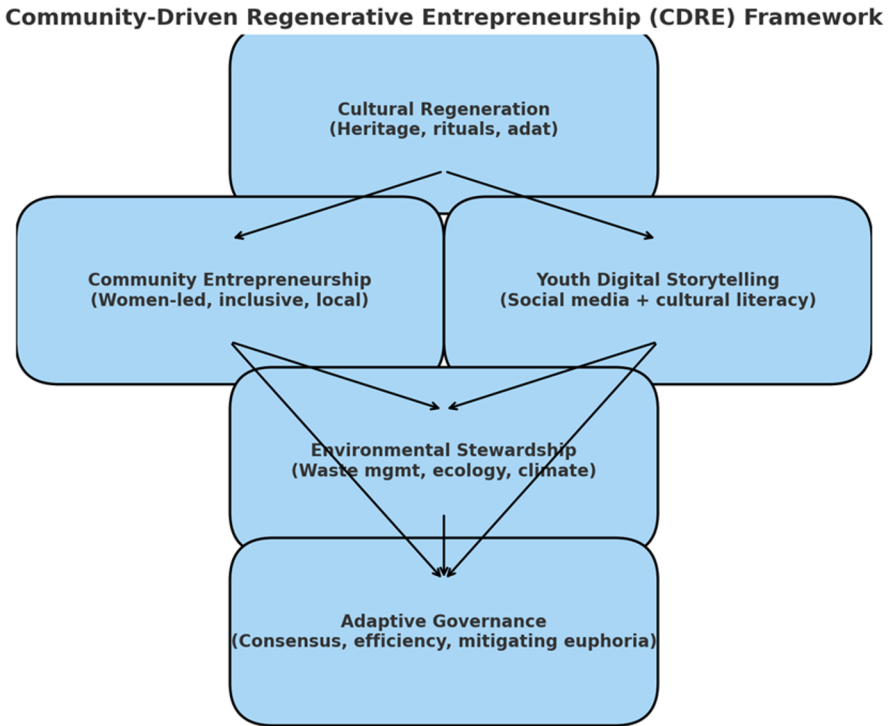
The findings demonstrate that regenerative tourism in Penglipuran is strongly rooted in cultural values and customary practices, confirming Bellato et al. [3] that regeneration must go “beyond sustainability” by revitalizing ecological and socio-cultural systems. However, governance challenges such as consensus-based inertia and the risk of tourism euphoria highlight the fragility of such models, echoing Butler’s [11] Tourism Area Life Cycle and Doxey’s Irridex [12].

Community entrepreneurship has proven to be a central mechanism in ensuring that tourism development remains inclusive and community-driven. Women-led enterprises and youth involvement in digital promotion reflect Peredo & Chrisman’s [4] thesis on community-based enterprises as integrative socio-economic models. This aligns with Nair & Hamzah’s [15] CBRT framework and Suansri’s [16] principles of CBT products, both of which emphasize local participation and benefit-sharing. Penglipuran demonstrates this by diversifying its cultural products and small-scale enterprises while maintaining its identity as a clean and heritage-oriented village.

At the ecological level, Sunarta & Saifulloh [17] show that Bali’s tourism regions are environmentally vulnerable, with fluctuating air quality linked to tourism intensity. This underscores the importance of integrating ecological stewardship into regenerative governance. Equally important, digital innovation emerges as both an opportunity and a challenge. While Penglipuran’s youth are active in digital platforms, research by Saputra & Pitanatri [7] indicates that digital adoption in rural tourism must be coupled with resilience-building. Similarly, Saputra & Suta [18] highlight the governance of tourism narratives in digital marketplaces, while Saputra [19] demonstrates the role of digitalization in enhancing rural tourism competitiveness.

Taken together, Penglipuran provides empirical evidence of a community-driven regenerative entrepreneurship (CDRE) system in which cultural regeneration, women’s entrepreneurship, ecological stewardship, and digital innovation intersect. Building on

these findings, this study proposes the Community-Driven Regenerative Entrepreneurship (CDRE) framework (Figure 1), which conceptualizes the nexus between regenerative tourism and community entrepreneurship in rural destinations of Southeast Asia.



**Fig. 1.** The Community-Driven Regenerative Entrepreneurship (CDRE) Framework

This framework illustrates the nexus between regenerative tourism and community entrepreneurship in rural destinations. Cultural regeneration, rooted in heritage, rituals, and adat, provides the foundation for sustaining identity. From this foundation, community entrepreneurship (women-led, inclusive, and local) and youth digital storytelling (social media combined with cultural literacy) interact to reinforce environmental stewardship through practices such as waste management, ecological preservation, and climate adaptation. At the core, adaptive governance ensures consensus-based decision-making, efficiency, and the mitigation of tourism euphoria. The CDRE framework reflects empirical insights from Penglipur Tourism Village, Bali, while offering transferable lessons for rural tourism contexts in Southeast Asia.

## 5 Conclusion and Implications

This study explored the nexus between regenerative tourism and community entrepreneurship through empirical insights from Penglipur, one of Bali’s most recognized

rural tourism destinations. The findings indicate that cultural regeneration, community entrepreneurship, youth digital storytelling, and environmental stewardship collectively shape a community-driven regenerative entrepreneurship (CDRE) system. While Penglipuran demonstrates the capacity of rural communities to integrate heritage, ecology, and entrepreneurship, challenges remain in governance efficiency, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and the risk of cultural commodification.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the growing literature on regenerative tourism by bridging it with community entrepreneurship scholarship in Southeast Asia. The proposed CDRE framework extends existing models of community-based rural tourism [15, 16] by emphasizing adaptive governance and digital cultural storytelling as critical mediating elements. It also highlights how regenerative tourism must move “beyond sustainability” [3] to foster resilience in rural destinations.

Practically, the research offers policy insights for rural tourism managers and local governments. Strategies should prioritize cultural storytelling, innovation in community entrepreneurship (especially women-led initiatives), and youth engagement through digital platforms. Moreover, adaptive governance mechanisms are needed to mitigate the risks of over-tourism and tourism euphoria while ensuring fair distribution of benefits. By institutionalizing these elements, rural destinations across Southeast Asia can replicate Penglipuran’s resilience and move toward tourism models that are both regenerative and inclusive.

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