

Empowerment of Rural Community through the Development of Village Tourism

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Abstract: The development of community based tourism is a strategic effort in building the community. Rural tourism development is a long-term and potential investment for society and government. This study will examine the "empowerment of the village community through a village tourism development program". The purpose of this research is to find out the strategy of empowering rural community in developing tourist village through the stage of awareness, organizing, and resource delivery. This result of the research can be used to convince the government how important the role and participation are for the community toward tourism village development program as factors in achieving the program objectives. This research uses qualitative approach with 10 informants purposively selected. The results showed that the awareness process was conducted through an open discussion process between community leaders, religious leaders, youth, and the government officers. The organizing process is carried out by empowering existing organs with strengthening through organizational coaching. Delivery of resources is done by the provision of physical resources and human resources.

1 INTRODUCTION

West Bandung regency is a relatively new regency in Jawa Barat Province. It has been developing many supporting sectors of empowerment for its community. One of them is tourism. This sector is chosen because tourism is a promising sector that can be conducted by the local potential natural environment. This idea of putting the tourism as a supporting factor is in-line with the program of UNESCO on tourism that stated in its report:

As one of the fastest growing and most profitable industries in the world, tourism can provide limitless opportunities for economic development, particularly in developing countries. It can generate income and employment effectively through the development of natural and cultural resources. It also provides local communities with the opportunity to express pride in their own culture, thus giving the impetus to revive threatened traditions and cultural practices. Tourism enables interaction between individuals of different nationalities and backgrounds, thus fostering dialogue among culture (Hoi An Centre for Monuments Managements and Preservation, 2008).

West Bandung regency has the very extraordinary potential of natural tourism. In some areas have been developed into tourism villages. In the year 2014 West Bandung Regency Government set five villages into a tourist village. The five tourist villages are Suntenjaya in Kecamatan Lembang, Rende (Cikalongwetan), Sirnajaya (Gununghalu), Mukapayung (Cililin), and Cihanjuang Rahayu (Parongpong). Tourism plays an extremely important role in the economic and social development of most countries in the world. It is the largest generator of employment and its services range from travel, accommodation, catering and maintenance of culture and traditions especially the handicraft industry and to preservation of eco-system. (Zaei and Mahin, 2013). Besides providing visitors rewarding experiences, sustainable ecotourism became an instrument in natural resource conservation such as water use. The village tourism brought benefits and income to most local residents with tourism involvement." (Tungchawal, 2001).

West Bandung Regency area is a fertile agricultural area with beautiful natural scenery. Geographical conditions in the region are hilly with varying heights and slopes. This area has the lowest

altitude at 125 m below sea level and the highest ground at an altitude of 2150 m above sea level. The hilly areas of West Bandung Regency are based on agricultural and livestock activities. Some hilly areas such as Lembang become the mainstay of tourism in this district. Meanwhile, in the central region or in a relatively flat area (around the area of Padalarang City) developed industrial and urban areas. This environment is very attractive, yet also vulnerable if exploited uncontrolled by government which can lead to a great loss for the people who live in and around the area. Uncontrolled conventional tourism poses potential threats to many natural areas around the world. It can put enormous pressure on an area and lead to impacts such as soil erosion, increased pollution, discharges into the sea, natural habitat loss, increased pressure on endangered species and heightened vulnerability to forest fires (Sunlu, 2003).

In addition to the potential of agro-based areas of agriculture, plantation, forestry, animal husbandry and fishery, West Bandung Regency has some potential in the field of tourism, both natural tourism, special interest tours, and other types of tourism. KBB tourist areas are divided into 3 major tourist zones namely North Bandung Zone, South Bandung, and West Bandung. Kecamatan Lembang is a subdistrict that has the most natural attractions compared with other districts. There are several attractions that are managed by the government and some are managed by other parties. Tourism is one of the key development of West Bandung Regency if it refers to the existing Vision. Therefore, its development becomes a very important thing. Based on its characteristics, tourist objects can be grouped into objects of Agro Tourism, Nature Tourism, and Special Interest Tours. If these agro tourism are well-managed, they will have the benefit of increasing environmental conservation, enhancing aesthetic and natural beauty values, providing recreational value, enhancing scientific activities and developing science, and developing the economy of the community. As an example of the value of benefits in improving the conservation of the environment is embedded conservation values which are emphasized on the balance of ecosystems and capacity of environmental carrying capacity in the soul of the community. This can encourage everyone to always take into account the future and sustainable development.

At the international level, destinations often compete on nothing more than the image held in the minds of potential travellers. Therefore, marketers of tourist destinations spend money, time and effort to create the right favourable image to guide prospective

travellers in their decision to visit or re-visit their destinations. In the internationally competitive environment of today's tourism industry, marketers and developers of destinations should have a good understanding of travellers' image of their destination (Thorhallur, 2012).

The combination of natural beauty, rural livelihood, and agricultural potential, when properly laid out and handled seriously can develop a tourist attraction for one region. So that region can become a new tourist destination that offers nature beauty and education. In addition, with the development of agro tourism in one area tourist destinations will provide benefits for the increase in incomes of society and government. In other words, the function of tourism can be done with the agricultural cultivation, rural settlement, and conservation functions.

Agro-tourism development in addition to functioning as an enhancement of environmental conservation, also serves as the economic development of the community. Community economic development is a form of community empowerment. Community empowerment is an important aspect in developing tourism village. This is because the development of tourist villages utilizes many resources owned by the community. The community has an important role to support the successful development of tourist villages.

Community empowerment in tourism village development by Tourism Village managers is applied in the areas of attraction, accommodation, and preparation of human resources. The three components are a) meetings, b) mentoring, c) capital assistance, d) construction of facilities and infrastructure, e) establishment of village tourism organizations, f) consecration, g) marketing. The empowerment activities are expected to give socio-cultural, economic impact to the people of Desa Wisata (village tourism). The purpose of the research is to find out the community awareness about their potential to become a tourism village and to understand the role of the local leaders and the government in building the awareness and drive them to develop the tourism village. According to Jafari in his report entitled "The Role of Empowering Village Managers in Tourism Industry: A Case Study of Bojnord Villages," which said that:

The rural manager should take the understanding of local development, innovations, pluralism and participation into account should be capable of understanding and analyzing the social, economic and environmental problems of the village (Jafari, 2013). The findings of the research will be used as starting points to improve the management of tourism villages

especially by the local community supported by the government.

2 METHODS

This research uses qualitative approach. The qualitative approach focuses its study on subjective meanings, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of a specific case to be examined. This approach was chosen so that this study acquired a detailed and profound picture of a particular social phenomenological phenomenon. Based on the objectives, this research is included in the category of descriptive research that is, a research that attempts to describe the specific details of situations, settings or social relationships that take place within the scope of research subjects. Informants in this research are government officers, society members, and the managers of village tourism in the village of Cibodas Regency of West Bandung amount 10 person. Techniques of data collection are observation, interview, Focus Group Discussion, and literature studies. Technical analysis of data used is descriptive data analysis with steps of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. Validity and reliability test is done through a process of data triangulation and triangulation of sources.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Community empowerment is often the first chosen alternative in a development approach involving community participation. In the development of tourism, community empowerment is seen as one of the most effective approaches in stimulating the active participation of all stakeholders, particularly local people.

The importance of community empowerment in development is underlined by Murphy (1988), who views that the development of tourism activities is community-based activity. This community-based activity is the resources and uniqueness of local communities in the form of physical and non-physical elements (tradition and culture). The uniqueness attached to the community is the main driving force of tourism activity itself; On the other hand, a local community that grows and lives side by side with a tourist object cannot be denied has actually become part of a related ecological system. Therefore, community empowerment is an approach that is currently considered as very strategic in improving people's welfare. More sustainable results will be achieved if communities are given the confidence to

determine the development process needed by themselves. People can analyze existing problems and opportunities and find solutions to their own resources. The community itself makes the decisions and plans, implements and evaluates the effectiveness of the activities undertaken. The role of government and other agencies is limited to support and facilitate.

The process of community empowerment in the development of tourist village should pay attention to the principles of Enabling, Empowering, and Protecting. Enabling is to create an atmosphere or climate that allows the potential of developing societies; Empowering is to strengthen the potential or power owned by the community; And Protecting to prevent unfair competition, and the strong exploitation of the weak. These principles should be the basis for developing tourist villages. This review of the objective of community empowerment in the development of a tourist village is to facilitate the community to be able to analyze their livelihoods and problems, and to seek solutions based on their abilities and limitations. In addition, the empowerment of society is expected to stimulate to develop their own business with all the capabilities and resources owned. Benefits that can be felt from the tourism village community empowerment program are (a) Continuous long-term welfare improvement; (B) Increasing income and improving livelihoods of community groups; (C) Increasing the use of available resources effectively and efficiently; (D) A more democratic development process.

In the context of local community empowerment in tourism development, it is further asserted that the aspects of community involvement can be implemented in three areas, namely planning stage, implementation stage or implementation, and in terms of beneficiary benefits. (Rorah, (2012) In terms of benefits, especially economic and socio-cultural, community empowerment in tourism village development can be done through awareness, organizing and resource delivery strategies.

3.1 Awareness Process

Community empowerment in Cibodas Village should be done with a mission to support the development of local potency-based tourist village with emphasis on home industries, agricultures and livestock industries. The empowerment process should be based on the potential of most people. Therefore, the first step that needs to be done is to provide an understanding of the importance of this village tourism development program in supporting the family economy by instilling a critical awareness of its potential. Both the potential of nature, economy, and human resources. The form of awareness that has been done is to invite

the community to attend the meetings initiated by the program implementers at the local level with the support of various community's element including the district and district level of government. This awareness program is followed by counselling and training or short courses that will enhance their skills in developing a tourist village. In addition, in the training provided, also presented material on the management of a good business, accompanied by a feasibility study that will increase public confidence. Thus, the community will be more aware and convinced that the development of village tourism village will help the economic development of families and communities, yet should be treated carefully so this program will not threat the environment. Tourist destinations are not infinite and timeless and should be viewed and treated as finite and possibly non-renewable resources. The life cycle concepts as an aid to understand the evolution of tourist destinations, and provide guidance for strategic decisions as well as a forecasting tool (Ahmed, 2015).

The process of awareness is closely related to the process of community motivation in understanding the potential of themselves and the environment. Motivating the community is a very important factor in building community self-reliance. Motivation process can be done by societies, public figures, government officers, as well as outsiders (NGOs, Colleges, Companies.) who have a competency in the development of tourist villages. This will increase public confidence in improving his business to support the development of tourist villages.

This process of awareness and motivation should examine the problems faced by the village tourism developer community, so the settlement is really appropriate to the conditions and potential that exist in themselves and their environment. Basically, the awareness process that will be done has the potential to succeed. This can be seen from the high level of community participation in every meeting conducted by village tourism managers and village government officers.

The community presence in this awareness activity will be the benchmark of program success. This is a form of people's desire to develop themselves and their environment. This is in line with Ohama's (2001) opinion which reveals that in key concepts of participatory approaches, the process of awareness, clarification of the issues, and the specific needs of everyday life are essential. The hope of this awareness process is the recognition of the pattern of the old society that constructed poverty and the birth of a vision for the realization of a society that reduces poverty.

3.2 Organizing

Organization is a place for people to convey their aspirations and conduct activities for capacity development. Organization is one element of development that has an important position in the context of empowerment. Without the organization, community empowerment will not be managed and utilized properly. The organization has the role of an actor to change or adjust the balance relationship between the three elements when dealing with a new condition or situation. The organization that has been built in the village tourism development program is the Independent Agricultural and Rural Training Center (P4S) Mekar Tani Jaya. Through this group, the community conducts activities in improving skills and skills in farming, farming, trading, and others.

This farmer group is formed by members of the community who have the skills, abilities, and interests in a particular field. This business group is better because it is formed on the initiative of the community and driven by the needs of the community. In other words, groups are formed by and for society. In the next stage, a new business group was created which has never existed before, with the division of each Local Community. Organizational structure is formed in accordance with the wishes of members. In this new group, there are rules that bind each member, such as the division of labor and profit-sharing mechanisms.

The formation of this business group should be managed by the community itself, so that they can learn how to cooperate and organize and elect a chair who has the capability and capability sufficient to lead. This is done to make them accustomed to face the same conditions to encourage the empowerment process itself. Farmers and tourism groups that are formed are expected to apply and share their knowledge to other communities that have not been involved in the activities of business groups.

3.3 Resources Delivery

Delivery of resources intended in this empowerment program may be in the form of physical, material or human resources. Physical resources such as workshops. This workshop includes various tools that will be used for business group development. Material resources are the ingredients that form the basis of business development. While human resources in the form of skills and abilities possessed by target community groups with better quality.

The process of delivering of these resources has been done by the Mekar Tani Jaya Independent Agriculture and Rural Training Center (P4S) with a program of farmers, producers of agricultural

products, and communities that develop other creative economies. This is reinforced by an explanation from the village leader of Cibodas stating that basically the process of delivering these resources has already exists, but has not yet touched the community as a whole. The most important thing in the development of this resource is the resources that will be used is the potential owned by Cibodas Village so that the community can improve its ability by optimizing the existing resources.

In the process of community empowerment, especially the delivery of resources in line with the opinion expressed by Salman (1995) that the role of outsiders, in this case, NGOs or donors are not actors who plan, design and make decisions about the agenda of improvement of the plight of the poor. They are simply facilitators, supporters and amplifiers of the agenda planned and implemented by the community through local organizations. Delivery of resources should consider the local potential in the Cibodas village, so later after the program has been completed, the community still perform activities in the framework of self-development and society by using the potential that exists.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the process of awareness is done through open discussion process between community leaders, religious leaders, youth, and government. The organizing process is carried out by empowering existing organs by strengthening through organizational coaching. Organizing in the development of village tourism is driven by the Center of Independent Agriculture and Rural (P4S) Mekar Tani Jaya. Delivery of resources is done by providing physical, material or human resources. Physical resources such as the availability of workshops or workshops. This workshop includes various tools that will be used for business group development. Material resources are the ingredients that form the basis of business development. While human resources in the form of improving skills and abilities possessed by target community groups with better quality.

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