

Community-Based Tourism Development in Sitalang Tourism Village: Implementation of Poverty Alleviation Program in Salatiga City

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ABSTRACT

Sitalang Tourism Village is located in Kauman Kidul Village, Sidorejo District, which is one of seven poverty priority villages in Salatiga City, so that it's became a priority program for the development of Salatiga City. This tourism village plays an important role in increasing the independence of local economy through community empowerment activities. Currently, Sitalang Tourism Village is local community economic recovery program post Covid-19. These mechanisms certainly affect availability of tourism components, community participation, and tourism development model implemented in Sitalang Tourism Village. This study aims to examine the development model of Sitalang Tourism Village. This study used a qualitative descriptive approach. Sample selection technique used purposive sampling. Data collection techniques used documentation, observation, and in-depth interview techniques. Data processing and analysis techniques used coding analysis (developed by Strauss and Corbin, 1998) and test of validity data used the source triangulation technique. The results showed that the form of community participation in the development of Sitalang Tourism Village includes planning, implementation, and share benefits stage. At the planning stage, community involvement was identified through several types of activities, namely in training related to tourism management, the formation of Tourism Awareness Groups, the preparation of master plans, and the provision of road access. At the implementation stage, community participation was identified through community involvement in three forms, namely attraction managers, arts and cultural actors, and MSME actors. Furthermore, at the impact acceptance stage, community participation is identified in the form of receiving benefits to the community from tourism management activities in Sitalang Tourism Village which are divided into two, namely economic impacts and socio-cultural impacts.

Keywords: *Tourism Village, Community-Based Tourism, Tourism Development, Poverty, Local Economy*

INTRODUCTION

During this decade, village tourism has become a favorite in various regions in Indonesia. The term village tourism emerged in 2010, which became a national program from the government as an effort to alleviate poverty at that time (Regulation of the Minister of Culture and Tourism Number 26 of 2010). This is supported by the statement of the World Tourism Organization/UNWTO (2004) that tourism is one of the sectors that can be a contributor to development, especially in alleviating poverty. Until now, many tourist villages have grown and developed in various regions in Indonesia. Its existence is timeless, even more interesting innovations are emerging from the concept of this tourist village. Rural nuances with various attractions presented, especially nature and culture, are the main attractions of tourist villages for local and foreign tourists (Widiyanto, et al 2015).

The concept of village tourism is a tourism development concept in rural areas that involves the main active role of local communities (Hadiwijoyo, 2018). In this concept, the main actors in the development of tourist villages are local communities. Local communities are involved in all processes of tourism village development, including the planning stage, management stage, and supervision stage (Dewi, Fandeli, and Baiquni, 2013). The principle of tourism village development

is bottom-up, which means that the government is only a facilitator in the process (Tofan, Subowo, and Maesaroh, 2004). Therefore, tourism villages will be very helpful in increasing community participation.

Tourism villages also play an important role in increasing the independence of the local economy and community welfare (Perda Banyuwangi Regency No. 1 of 2017; Perda Central Java Province No. 2 of 2019; Retnowati, 2020). This can be realized through community empowerment activities in the process of managing tourist villages. With a tourist village, many new jobs can be created and open up extensive employment opportunities to the surrounding population, so that it can absorb labor and reduce the unemployment rate. In addition, it can also be an alternative livelihood for people who work in the formal and informal sectors, and grow many new entrepreneurs (Harefa et al., 2024).

One of the newly developed tourist villages in Central Java is Sitalang Tourism Village. This tourism village is located in Kauman Kidul Village, Sidorejo Subdistrict, Salatiga City, which is one of the seven poverty priority villages in Salatiga. As reported by www.jatengpos.co.id, Sitalang Tourism Village has been around since 2019 and has become a priority development program for Salatiga City. Sitalang Tourism Village has various potentials that can be developed and become an attraction for tourists, such as physical, geographical, and socio-cultural aspects. From the physical aspect, this tourism village is located in a rural area that has a dominant physical appearance in the form of rice fields. This is also utilized by the manager to develop agritourism in the concept of this tourist village. Agritourism is a tourism development concept that utilizes the natural environment and agricultural activities (Mulyo, et al, 2020). One of the attractions offered in relation to this physical potential is culinary tourism at Pasar Tiban, which is located in a rice field area (Kauman Kidul Village Government, 2019).

Based on geographical aspects, Kauman Kidul Village is directly adjacent to Semarang Regency, or is in the suburban area, also known as the periphery. This position certainly gives Kauman Kidul a distinct advantage in terms of branding and marketing in order to attract tourists from other regions to visit Sitalang Tourism Village. In addition, although administratively Kauman Village is included in Salatiga City, the physical, geographical, social and cultural characteristics of Kauman Kidul are those of a rural area. As for the cultural aspect, there are several cultural groups or communities formed in this *kelurahan*. One of them is a traditional dance culture group. This dance culture group is also used as one of the attractions in the tourist village which certainly adds to the attractiveness of tourists. With the various uniqueness and tourist attractions offered, it makes this tourist village very attractive to many tourists who visit not only from the local area, but also from various surrounding areas. Therefore, tourist villages have a vital role in the local economy (Akbariah et al., 2024).

The Covid-19 pandemic has become a new challenge in the development and management of this tourism village. The adaptation of community-based tourism management is important for the recovery of the local economy. Therefore, this is the urgency of this research regarding the form of community participation in the management of Sitalang Tourism Village. Therefore, this research aims to analyze the forms of community participation in the management of Sitalang Tourism Village, Salatiga City, as a strategy for strengthening local economic resilience and community empowerment in the post-pandemic period.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Community Based Tourism (CBT) is widely discussed as a approach to the center of tourism development. Garrod in Hadiwijoyo (2018) views CBT as a way for local communities to control and participate in tourism management and development. Similarly, the World Tourism Organization/UNWTO (2020a) defines Community Based Tourism as an approach to development that places local communities at the forefront of decision-making about how tourism is planned, developed and managed in their communities. Meanwhile, according to Suansri (2003) Community Based Tourism is a form of critical attention to tourism development that often ignores the rights of

local communities in tourist destination areas. Suansri further emphasizes that before developing CBT with its principles, the thing that needs to be considered is to prepare and build the capacity of local communities in advance so that they can manage their tourism. Hudson in Hadiwijoyo (2018) explains that the specific characteristics of Community Based Tourism are related to the benefits obtained and the existence of assistance planning efforts that defend local communities and other groups and other interested groups, giving them greater control greater control in social processes to realize welfare (Hardiyansyah, 2020).

From the various definition above, it can be concluded that, Community Based Tourism (CBT) positions local communities as both decision-makers and beneficiaries of tourism development. So based on the understanding of the concept above, the context of local empowerment in tourism development, it is further emphasized that aspects of community involvement can be implemented in three areas, namely the planning stage, the implementation stage, and the impact acceptance stage, which in more detail can be described as follows:

a. Planning stage

Local community involvement is needed especially in identifying problems or issues, development potential, development of alternative plans, facilities, etc.

b. Implementation stage

Community involvement in the implementation stage is related to the implementation of development programs, management of objects or businesses in tourism.

c. Impact Acceptance Stage

Community involvement in this stage is realized in the role and position of the community in obtaining economic, social, cultural benefits that have an impact on improving the economic welfare of the community.

In line with the concept above, Timothy (1999) explains that there are two perspectives in viewing community participation in tourism. The first perspective is the participation of local communities in the decision-making process, and the second is related to the benefits received by the community from tourism development. Furthermore, Timothy emphasized the need to involve the community in decision-making by accommodating the desires and goals of local communities in development as well as their ability to absorb the benefits of tourism.

Thus, CBT is not merely a tourism strategy but also a resilience-building mechanism. By fostering community capacity, promoting inclusive decision-making, and ensuring fair benefit distribution, CBT can enhance adaptive capacities that help communities withstand and recover from disasters. Thus, for this study, CBT serves as a conceptual bridge linking tourism development with community resilience to disaster risks in vulnerable coastal regions.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to answer the research objectives. A case study is an in-depth strategy that allows researchers to carefully investigate a program, event, activity, process, or group of individuals within a bounded context of time and activity (Stake (1995) in Creswell, 2003), his approach is considered appropriate because the research seeks to understand community-based tourism and resilience mechanisms in their real-life settings.

The selection of Sitalang Tourism Village as the research site also strengthens the relevance of this method. As a rural community that is actively developing tourism while simultaneously facing environmental and disaster-related challenges, Sitalang presents a unique case where tourism, local empowerment, and resilience intersect. A qualitative case study is therefore essential to capture the lived experiences, social interactions, and local knowledge of the community dimensions that cannot be fully explained through quantitative approaches. This allows the research to generate a contextualized and holistic understanding of how CBT operates in Sitalang.

1. Data Sources.

The study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through observation and in-depth interviews with key informants, while secondary data were collected through

documentation such as government reports, policy documents, and relevant publications.

2. Data Collection.

Observations were carried out to capture social interactions and community activities related to tourism and resilience. In-depth interviews were conducted with community leaders, local stakeholders, and related institutions to explore perceptions, experiences, and challenges. Documentation complemented these techniques by providing contextual and historical information.

3. Data Analysis. The analysis was conducted through several stages:

- a. Coding – organizing and categorizing qualitative data to identify emerging themes;
- b. Qualitative descriptive analysis – interpreting themes and patterns in relation to the research objectives;
- c. Spatial analysis (qualitative mapping) – mapping the geographical and social dynamics of community participation and disaster risks.

4. Data Validity.

To ensure credibility, the study applied source triangulation, in which information obtained through interviews was cross-checked with observation and documentation. This process minimized bias and enhanced the reliability of findings.

Through this methodological design, the study was able to generate valid conclusions that answer the research objectives and provide a holistic understanding of community participation and resilience within Sitalang Tourism Village.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Community Participation in the Development of Sitalang Tourism Village, Salatiga City

1. Planning Stage

As mentioned by Dewi, Fandeli and Baiquni (2013) that in the planning stage, the components used to determine the degree of community participation are involvement in problem identification, goal formulation, and decision-making related to tourism village development. Based on the results of interviews with several community leaders in Kauman Kidul, the community has been involved in the planning process for the development of Sitalang Tourism Village. Community involvement in the planning process is in the form of discussions in a forum such as FGD (Focus Group Discussion) and deliberation, both formally and informally. The participants involved in these deliberations and FGD were several community leaders who were considered capable of representing the voices and aspirations of the entire Kauman Kidul community in general. Thus, community leaders who have a good knowledge of the history, potential and problems in Kauman Kidul were chosen, such as all RW heads, all RT heads, pokdarwis heads, gapoktan heads, lurah and his staff, and village elders.

FGD and deliberations were conducted between Kauman Kidul community leaders and stakeholders involved in the planning of Sitalang Agrotourism. These stakeholders include the Department of Culture and Tourism, the Department of Agriculture, Urban Planning and Development Agency, academics, and private sector. The FGD and deliberation activities were carried out in 2019. Prior to the FGD and deliberation, the Salatiga City Government through the Department of Culture and Tourism held a socialization on the Sitalang Agrotourism development program.

Kauman Kidul community participation process at the planning stage includes problem identification to decision-making. Timothy emphasizes the need to involve the community in decision-making by adjusting the desires and goals of the local community in the development and benefits of tourism. Communities located in tourism development areas should be encouraged to identify their own goals and direct tourism development that aims to improve the fulfillment of the needs of local communities themselves. Timothy sees the importance of involving stakeholders not only the local community itself but also other stakeholders, namely the government, and the private

sector. Thus, tourism development planning must follow the desires and abilities of local communities to participate and be able to obtain maximum benefits from tourism development.

The process of identifying potentials and problems as well as formulating goals by the community was carried out during FGD and deliberations. FGD and deliberations are conducted to capture the aspirations of the community as the subject and object of development. This is because the true development of a region can be realized well if it is in accordance with the aspirations of the community (Baiquni, 2004). Local communities know what the potential and main problems are in their areas, so they have the right to propose what they want to improve, develop and achieve in their areas. In addition, the community also determines decisions according to what they want or expect from the development in the future. Based on the results of FGD and deliberations, it was conveyed that the Kauman Kidul community emphasized the concept of Community Based Tourism (CBT). The reason for this is that the community still wants to be friendly with the natural environment around them while also maintaining the integrity of the existing local community. In addition, CBT benefits the local community because it can absorb a lot of labor in jobs that are in line with their desires, empower local communities, and preserve their nature and culture (Labsos IPSK in Salatiga City Culture and Tourism Office, 2021a).

During the decision-making process to reach a decision that can be agreed upon and accepted by various parties is certainly not an easy thing. This process also takes a long time. The tourism development plan that has been successfully developed is also repeatedly socialized to the community so that the planning process takes place in a transparent and participatory manner. Information disclosure from the government to the community will further encourage increased community participation (Purnomo, et al, 2018).

One of the outputs produced in this planning stage is the preparation of a planning document in the form of a Sitalang Agro-tourism Master Plan. The masterplan, which has been prepared since 2019, was completed in 2021. In the process of preparing this masterplan, apart from Kauman Kidul community leaders, the Salatiga City Culture and Tourism Office also involved the Agriculture Office, PUPR Office, academics, and development consultants, as stated by the Head of RW 6 (AT). This is none other than so that the planning process (which includes identifying potential and problems, formulating planning objectives, and making decisions) can be carried out carefully by looking at the various perspectives of the actors involved in development with the hope that a comprehensive and sustainable development of Sitalang Agrotourism can be realized. This is in accordance with the views of Murphy (1985) and Inskip (1991), that the tourism industry is not as simple as other industries, because it is highly dependent on the goodwill and cooperation of tourism decision makers including local communities, because the community is an integral part of tourism destinations. That is the urgency of the involvement of every decision maker in various stages or processes of tourism planning.

2. Implementation Stage

Community participation at the implementation stage is reflected in the way local residents directly manage tourism activities. As noted by Dewi, Fandeli, and Baiquni (2013), this stage often involves roles such as homestay providers, restaurant operators, tour guides, and cultural performers. In Kauman Kidul, participation has emerged primarily from community initiatives, supported by government facilitation and partnerships with external stakeholders. The establishment of Pokdarwis Sitalang in 2019 has been a crucial institutional innovation. Acting as the umbrella organization for community participation, Pokdarwis coordinates the management of attractions across the seven neighborhood units (RW), with each RW represented by a Korsa (Sitalang Coordinator). This structure enables more inclusive participation and ensures that various attractions from river tubing and homestays to cultural performances and culinary businesses are managed directly by local residents.

However, not all attractions fall under community management. Sites such as the Plumpungan

Inscription and Salatiga Museum remain under the authority of the City's Department of Culture and Tourism in collaboration with Salatiga Heritage. This division highlights both the strength of community-based initiatives and the continuing role of external institutions in heritage tourism. Overall, the implementation stage in Sitalang demonstrates the operationalization of CBT principles: community empowerment through Pokdarwis, participatory management of resources, and cooperation with government and private actors. This reflects Suansri's (2003) notion of CBT as both empowerment and partnership, where local communities act as central agents but also rely on collaborative support.

3. Impact Acceptance Stage

At the impact acceptance stage, community involvement is identified through how much the community gets benefits from tourism activities, both in terms of economy, socio-culture, and environment (Syah, 2019). These impacts can be direct (short-term) or indirect (long-term), and they span economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions. The development of Sitalang Tourism Village has generated both direct and indirect economic benefits for the local community. Directly, the presence of new tourism businesses—such as homestays, souvenir shops, culinary ventures, service providers, and art-based enterprises—has opened up new job opportunities, thereby reducing unemployment rates in Kauman Kidul. This finding aligns with Guzmán, Cañizares, and Pavón (2011), who argue that local tourism potential contributes to economic growth by creating jobs and increasing household income, for example through entrance fees, service rentals, and parking fees.

Indirectly, the establishment of Sitalang Agrotourism strengthens Kauman Kidul's position as a new tourism hub in Salatiga. The future integration with Salatiga's Historical Tourism Park and the construction of the Salatiga toll exit will further enhance accessibility and attract more visitors. As expressed by the Head of Creative Economy Sub-Division of the Salatiga Culture and Tourism Office, Kauman Kidul is projected to become the "golden belt of tourism" in Salatiga, thereby contributing not only to household incomes but also to the city's regional revenue. From a socio-cultural perspective, the revival of previously inactive community groups has been one of the most significant impacts. Before the tourism village initiative, many local communities in arts and culture were dormant due to limited activities and the COVID-19 pandemic. However, tourism development has reactivated these groups and fostered the emergence of new ones, such as Drumblek Lowo Ireng and Pokdarwis Sitalang. These groups function both as cultural attractions and as organizational platforms that enhance community solidarity. This aligns with Tikson (2005) and Hadi (2012), who note that tourism's socio-cultural impacts are qualitative in nature, particularly in strengthening social relations and cultural vitality. Moreover, Ndraha (1990) in Hadiwijoyo (2018) emphasizes that economic benefits must be accompanied by socio-cultural benefits to achieve balance, which is evident in Kauman Kidul where cultural vibrancy grows alongside economic improvements.

The establishment of Pokdarwis Sitalang illustrates the importance of institutionalized community participation in tourism development. As a formal organization, Pokdarwis not only manages attractions but also empowers local residents to sustain their livelihoods. However, its sustainability depends on collaboration with local government institutions, particularly through training, mentoring, and policy support (Muslim, 2016; Khasanah, 2019). This reflects the principle of collaborative governance, where the synergy between community groups and government agencies becomes the foundation for sustainable tourism development. As Fauzy and Wiloso, (2021) argue, such institutional arrangements ensure continuity of community participation beyond initial project implementation.

Community-Based Tourism Model in Sitalang Tourism Village

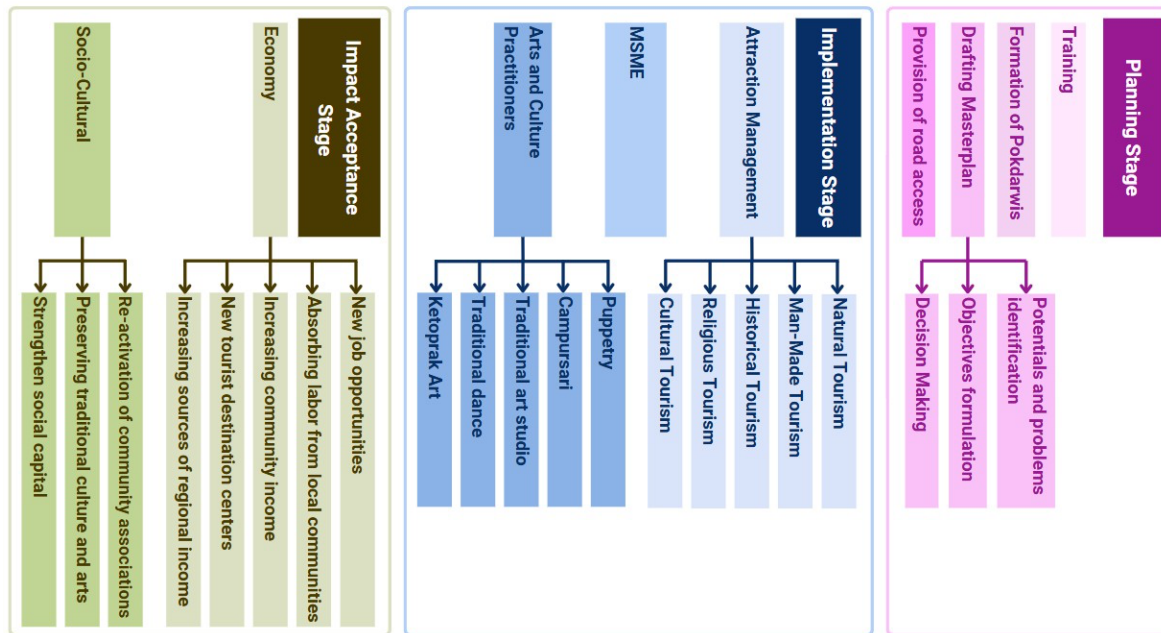


Figure 1 Community-Based Tourism Model in Sitalang Tourism Village

Source: Data Analysis

In accordance with the image above, The findings reveal a unique model of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in Sitalang Tourism Village, which is structured into three stages:

- Planning Stage:** Characterized by the provision of training, establishment of Pokdarwis, preparation of master plans, and the development of supporting infrastructure such as road access. Notably, local residents voluntarily donated pieces of their land for road development, demonstrating a high level of commitment and collective responsibility rarely seen in other regions.
- Implementation Stage:** The community actively manages attractions, cultural performances, and micro-businesses (UMKM), showcasing a strong sense of ownership in tourism operations.
- Impact Acceptance Stage:** The community experiences both economic and socio-cultural benefits, with improved livelihoods, stronger community networks, and increased opportunities for cooperation with external institutions.

The high level of awareness and willingness to participate in all three stages indicates that Kauman Kidul's community possesses strong social capital. This social capital, coupled with the village's diverse attractions, has made Sitalang Tourism Village a distinctive example of CBT development in Indonesia. Nevertheless, the success of CBT in Sitalang also brings to light several challenges that need to be addressed to ensure its long-term sustainability.

Although less visible, the community's preference for CBT reflects a desire to balance tourism development with environmental preservation. By managing attractions themselves, residents maintain stronger stewardship over local resources, reducing risks of overexploitation. However, continued monitoring is needed to ensure that growth in visitation does not compromise environmental sustainability. Despite these positive impacts, issues remain. Benefit distribution is uneven, with those directly engaged in tourism (e.g., homestay owners) enjoying greater gains than peripheral actors. Moreover, Pokdarwis still depends heavily on government support, raising concerns about long-term self-reliance. These challenges confirm Suansri's (2003) caution that CBT requires sustained capacity building to ensure equitable and sustainable outcomes. In summary, the impact stage in Sitalang demonstrates that CBT has generated significant economic, social, and

cultural benefits for the community. Yet, the persistence of inequalities and institutional dependencies highlights the need for ongoing efforts to strengthen inclusivity and sustainability. This critical balance underscores Murphy's (1985) idea of tourism as a "community industry," where the long-term viability of tourism depends on community support and equitable participation.

CONCLUSION

Community participation in the management of Sitalang Tourism Village occurs in three stages: planning, implementation, and impact acceptance. In the planning stage, the community is actively involved through trainings, Pokdarwis formation, master plan preparation, and stakeholder forums such as FGD and deliberations. In the implementation stage, participation is seen in the management of attractions, involvement in arts and cultural activities, and engagement as MSME actors, with most tourism attractions directly managed by the local community. Finally, in the impact acceptance stage, participation is reflected in the economic benefits (job creation, increased income, and regional revenue) and socio-cultural benefits (strengthened social capital and cultural preservation).

To strengthen CBT in Sitalang, several aspects need attention. First, community involvement in planning should be expanded to include more inclusive participation across social groups. Second, the management of tourism attractions should be supported with continuous training and institutional strengthening to ensure professionalism and sustainability. Third, equitable distribution of economic benefits must be prioritized so that peripheral community members can also feel the positive impacts. Lastly, socio-cultural sustainability requires ongoing efforts to preserve local traditions while adapting to changing tourism demands.

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