

Development and Community Empowerment in Local Wisdom Based Ecotourism in Sambangan Village, Sukasada District, Buleleng Regency, Bali Province

Toto Noerasto^{a, 1}

¹Program Studi Magister Administrasi Publik Fakultas Pascasarjana Universitas Warmadewa

Anak Agung Ayu Dewi Larantika²

²Program Studi Magister Administrasi Publik Fakultas Pascasarjana Universitas Warmadewa

I Made Mardika³

³Program Studi Magister Administrasi Publik Fakultas Pascasarjana Universitas Warmadewa

I Gusti Agung Istri Anindyayani⁴

⁴Program Studi Magister Administrasi Publik Fakultas Pascasarjana Universitas Warmadewa

Corresponding author : totoknurasto@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aimed to analyze the development and empowerment of the community in managing ecotourism based on local wisdom in Sambangan Village, Sukasada District, Buleleng Regency, Bali. Initial observations indicated that the village's tourism potential, including ten waterfalls, cultural attractions, and man-made tourism facilities, had not been optimally managed due to limited development strategies and human resource capacity. This study employed a qualitative method, collecting data through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. The results showed that ecotourism development based on local wisdom successfully utilized natural, cultural, and artificial tourism potentials to attract visitors and improve community welfare. Local wisdom, reflected in the spirit of mutual cooperation, agricultural traditions, arts, and culture, strengthened tourism governance, with community members actively participating in village deliberations, training, homestay management, digital marketing, and preservation of traditional arts and handicrafts. Institutions such as LPHD and POKDARWIS served as coordination platforms to maintain environmental sustainability and ensure responsible tourism. The study produced a model of community empowerment that supported local economic improvement while preserving cultural values and environmental sustainability. The findings emphasized the importance of community collaboration and the utilization of local wisdom as a strategy for

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inclusive, sustainable, and adaptive ecotourism development.

Keywords: community empowerment; ecotourism development; local wisdom

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a leading sector that plays a role in increasing economic income, especially on the island of Bali. The diversity of tourism potential in Bali is a strength that can generate foreign exchange for the community and the country. The Bali Provincial Government has begun to focus development on tourism based on tourism villages. This model aims to manage, maintain, and preserve the tourism potential of each region, thereby contributing to the economy through increased economic equality and development at the village level.

The existence of tourist attractions scattered across several regions of Bali is not matched by an even distribution of tourist visits. Most tourists tend to visit the southern part of Bali. This phenomenon is caused by uneven development, where development is more concentrated in southern Bali, so that tourist attractions located far from the southern region affect the level of visits to other areas. The impact of this can be seen in the underutilization of tourism potential in northern Bali, which actually has a variety of attractions and natural resources, one of which is Buleleng Regency. The Buleleng region stretches from west to east, with the southern part consisting of hilly areas and the northern part consisting of lowlands.

Buleleng Regency is divided into nine districts, namely Banjar District, Buleleng District, Tejakula District, Seririt District, Sawan District, Kubutambahan District, Gerokgak District, Busungbiu District, and Sukasada District. Sukasada District has the most tourist destinations (Housing Agency, 2018). This subdistrict is located about 4 km from Singaraja and has a variety of tourist attractions that are worth visiting. Sambangan Village is one of the tourist villages in Sukasada Subdistrict, according to the Buleleng Regent's Decree Number 430/927/HK/2015 concerning the determination of tourist villages in Buleleng Regency in 2015 (Communication Office, 2018). Subagyo's (1991) perspective states that rural tourism is tourism that offers village life, natural scenery, and culture as objects and commodities for tourists, while also involving the community as organizers.

Sambangan Village has great potential not only in the agricultural sector, but also in tourism. Several tourist attractions, such as waterfalls and man-made attractions, are



well organized, from road access to public facilities. The well-organized infrastructure is supported by adequate security, creating comfort for visitors. The main potential of this village lies in adventure tourism (Bisnis Bali, 2018). Some of the tourism potentials of Sambangan Village include: Dedari Waterfall, Aling-Aling Waterfall, Kroya Waterfall, Kembar Waterfall, Pucuk Waterfall, and Tembok Barat Waterfall. In addition to waterfalls, tourists can enjoy Cengana Terraces, Cengana Love Bridge, adventure tourism, and local culinary delights.

Interesting activities in Sambangan Village also increase its appeal to tourists. This village is famous for adventure tourism in certain locations, such as Krisna Adventure and Aling-Aling Waterfall. Activities at Krisna Adventure include *flying fox*, *paintball*, *trekking*, and ATV, while trekking is available at Aling-Aling Waterfall. The local community still maintains the tradition of plowing rice fields with cows and gardening. Balinese arts are preserved through baleganjur training. The calm and beautiful natural panorama has made Sambangan Village develop into a spiritual tourism area (Supariarta, 2012).

This research is a continuation (Year 2) of a three-year research plan. In the second year, the research focus is directed at mapping potential and development. organization, and community-based village governance. The next stage includes developing the village's potential and creating a website related to tourist attractions. Initial observations show that ecotourism in Sambangan Village is not yet running optimally due to a lack of development strategies and limited human resources. The researcher is interested in identifying efforts to develop ecotourism in Sambangan Village through local wisdom and community empowerment so that this village can become a developing and sustainable tourist destination.

Based on the above description, the researcher is interested in conducting research entitled "Community Development and Empowerment in the Field of Local Wisdom-Based Ecotourism in Sambangan Village, Sukasada District, Buleleng Regency, Bali Province". The research questions in this study are: How is the governance of community development and empowerment in the field of local wisdom-based ecotourism in Sambangan Village, Sukasada District, Buleleng Regency, Bali Province? And what is the role of local wisdom in community development and empowerment in the field of local wisdom-based ecotourism in Sambangan Village, Sukasada District, Buleleng Regency, Bali Province?

The approach to solving the problem in this study is to develop the capacity of the local community by empowering them in managing the village's tourism potential,



utilizing the local wisdom of Sambangan Village as the basis for ecotourism development and community empowerment, and building organizations and governance that actively involve the community so that the development of the village's potential can be carried out sustainably.

The state of the art of this research is that it focuses on the development of ecotourism based on local wisdom through the empowerment of local communities, which has a positive impact on improving the quality of public services, particularly in the management of village tourism potential.

The research *road map* until 2025 is as follows: Year I: mapping of village potential and development of community-based organizations and governance; Year II: evaluation of potential mapping, strengthening of organizations, development of village potential, and creation of *websites* related to tourist attractions; and Year III: evaluation of village potential development and *websites*, digital promotion of tourist attractions, and optimization of supporting facilities.

METHOD

This study was conducted to examine the phenomenon of Community Development and Empowerment in the Field of Local Wisdom-Based Ecotourism in Sambangan Village, Sukasada District, Buleleng Regency, Bali Province. The study used a qualitative descriptive method so that the data obtained could be analyzed in depth regarding community empowerment and the impact of local wisdom-based ecotourism development. This approach allowed for data collection through in-depth interviews, observation, and literature study so that the issues could be analyzed optimally. The research flowchart consisted of initial observation, problem identification, problem formulation, question list preparation, field data collection, data processing and tabulation, data analysis and conclusions, to seminars, reporting, and publication.

Preliminary observations were conducted before formulating the research problem. The problem identified was that ecotourism in Sambangan Village was not running optimally due to limitations in ecotourism development strategies and human resource capabilities.

Types of data

The research consists of primary and secondary data. Primary data includes



information related to community empowerment, ecotourism development, and local wisdom. Secondary data was obtained from community leaders, reports, writings, and visual documentation relevant to ecotourism development in Sambangan Village. The main instrument of the research was the research team from Warmadewa University. The research was also supported by supporting instruments, including recording forms, measuring instruments, interview guidelines, and audio-visual and digital documentation tools using smartphones. The use of these instruments ensured that the data collected was valid and could be analyzed comprehensively in accordance with the characteristics of qualitative research.

The research schedule was prepared based on the year of implementation, namely Year 2, with the topic of Community Development and Empowerment in the Field of Local Wisdom- Based Ecotourism in Sambangan Village, Sukasada District, Buleleng Regency, Bali Province. This research is relevant to the fields of Policy Implementation, Public Sector Management, and Tourism Management. Community empowerment activities in the development of local wisdom- based ecotourism fall under SDG point 8 on decent work and economic growth, as optimal community empowerment can support the development of ecotourism in Sambangan Village, while contributing to the achievement of SDG goals.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Governance of Community Development and Empowerment in the Field of Local Wisdom-Based Ecotourism in Sambangan Village, Sukasada District, Buleleng Regency, Bali Province

Sambangan Village was designated as a Tourism Village based on Buleleng Regent Decree No. 430/405/HK/2017 dated May 9, 2017. This village meets the requirements for designation, namely: (a) adequate village accessibility so that tourists can visit by motorcycle and car, (b) attractive tourist attractions, such as waterfalls, terraces, and adventure tourism, (c) the community and village officials provide full support for the tourism village and tourists, including the formation of a tourism working group and active community involvement, (d) village security is guaranteed through pecalang and bhabinkamtibnas, (e) the availability of accommodation such as villas or homestays, telecommunications, and adequate labor, (f) the village has cool air, and (g) Connectivity with other well-known tourist attractions. The availability of attractions, accessibility,



amenities, and inclinary is supported by local community awareness so that the tourism potential of Sambangan Village can be packaged into a legally formal Tourist Village (Subadra, 2019).

Sambangan Village, Sukasada District, Buleleng Regency, Bali, has ecotourism potential in the form of a combination of natural, cultural, and man-made attractions. This village is nicknamed "*the waterfall village of paradise*" because it has ten beautiful waterfalls, including Aling-Aling, Kroya, Pucuk, and Tembok Barak Waterfalls. Each waterfall has unique characteristics, such as the red cliffs at Tembok Barak and the natural slides at Kroya, which attract tourists. This natural potential is the main basis for the development of ecotourism in Sambangan Village (Manalu, 2021). Sambangan Village also has a rich culture that supports its tourism appeal. The traditional Jaged Bumbung dance from the Jaged Amour Legawa Studio is a prominent cultural attraction. Kriya Undagi Sambangan produces distinctive Balinese handicrafts, while Pandai Besi or "*Pande*" allows tourists to witness the process of making keris. This cultural potential adding to the appeal for tourists who want to experience authentic Bali (Arystiana, 2021).

Artificial tourism in Sambangan Village includes Krisna Adventure with adventure activities, *flying fox*, *paintball*, ATV, and *trekking*. The Alam Sambangan recreational pool is also a place of relaxation and entertainment for tourists. These artificial tourist attractions complement natural and cultural tourism, increasing tourist visits, including foreign tourists, while preserving culture and the environment through the participation of the local community (Wiryantini et al., 2022). Bali Provincial Regulation Number 5 of 2020 Article 8 provides a legal basis for traditional villages, traditional institutions, and community groups to develop rural tourism in accordance with local potential, as well as to comply with laws and regulations. The designation of tourist villages through a Regent or Mayor's Decree provides official legitimacy. Managers are obliged to utilize local investment and resources so that tourism development has a direct positive impact. Community involvement aims to improve economic welfare while preserving nature and culture for future generations to enjoy (Subadra, 2019).

The village of Sambangan formed a Village Forest Management Institution (LPHD) in collaboration with POKDARWIS Tunjung Mekar to develop the village forest as a managed nature tourism destination. The programs developed include agro-tourism packages, the development of untouched waterfalls, and additional attractions such as rock climbing, survival camps, and mini rafting. The utilization of natural resources is



directed towards environmentally friendly and sustainable tourism (Asriani & Suprpta, 2021). The *Tri Hita Karana* philosophy is the basis for sustainable tourism management in Sambangan Village and its surroundings. The principle of harmony is applied in planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, covering parhyangan, pawongan, and palemahan (Atmadja, 2020). This value ensures that the development of tourism villages is in line with the balance between humans, culture, tradition, and the environment. Every element of the community, customs, and managers plays a role in maintaining spiritual, social, and natural harmony so that tourism develops in accordance with inherited cultural values (Mudana et al., 2023).

The agro-tourism model in Sambangan Village is realized through *Agrosubak* and *Agroventure*. The *Agrosubak* trail starts from TIC Aling-aling, where tourists can obtain information about subak, which regulates water management between villages. The 91-hectare Sambangan subak is used as a trekking trail to the Aling-aling waterfall. Tourists can interact directly with farmers and understand the role of subak in maintaining harmony between pawongan, palemahan, and parhyangan. The beautiful and cool atmosphere makes subak a special attraction, while also providing an educational experience about local agricultural wisdom and Balinese traditions (Paramita et al., 2023).

The development of ecotourism is inseparable from the role of local human resources, supported by a population of 5,366, the majority of whom are of productive age and adequately educated. The community has great potential to support tourism management. Their involvement is important in facility management, the provision of tourism services, and the development of local handicraft products as souvenirs (Rismayanti et al., 2020). The management of tourist attractions in Sambangan Village has met the requirements, including attractions to see, activities to do, items to buy, and accommodation facilities. Several aspects still need improvement, especially accessibility to the location and the availability of souvenir shops. Infrastructure improvements support more inclusive tourism development and make it easier for tourists to enjoy the existing destinations (Arystiana, 2021).

Active community participation is evident in every stage of ecotourism development, from planning to supervision. The planning stage involves village deliberations and socialization regional and national tourism. The community also participates in training and technical guidance to improve the quality of tourism management, reflecting their important role in developing the potential of the village



(Wahid & Hariyanto, 2018). The supervision of tourism development involves the community actively. They maintain the implementation of the seven charms, participate in village meetings to evaluate programs, and play a role in maintaining the quality of human resources in the field of tourism. This collective participation is the key to the success of ecotourism based on local wisdom, which provides economic benefits while preserving the natural and cultural environment (Widowati & Nadra, 2013).

Ecotourism management in Sambangan Village demonstrates the integration of natural, cultural, and man-made potential structured through the role of the local community. Community involvement, from planning and implementation to supervision, shows a high level of participation, which has a direct impact on improving the quality of tourism services. Institutions such as POKDARWIS and LPHD provide institutional support in village forest management, tourist attractions, and human resource training. Community involvement also ensures an equitable distribution of economic benefits, including employment opportunities in services, lodging, and local crafts. The development of tourism based on local wisdom emphasizes the principle of *Tri Hita Karana*, maintaining a balance between spiritual, social, and environmental aspects. Agro- tourism activities through *Agrosubak* and *Agroventure* serve as educational platforms for tourists, strengthening awareness of cultural preservation and agricultural ecosystems, ensuring that tourism is not only commercial but also educational and sustainable.

Active community participation and local government support influence the effectiveness of ecotourism development in Sambangan Village. Infrastructure such as road accessibility, accommodation, and tourist facilities are important factors that determine visitor comfort. Training and technical guidance provided to local residents increase human resource capacity in destination management, tourism services, and the production of handicrafts as souvenirs. The development of environmentally friendly tourism programs, the management of untouched natural attractions, and the application of the seven principles of charm demonstrate efforts to preserve nature while increasing the economic value of the village. Direct interaction between tourists and the local community provides an educational experience, strengthens cultural promotion, and increases appreciation for local wisdom. This collaboration between parties and collective participation has formed a model of sustainable, inclusive ecotourism development that has a long-term positive impact on Sambangan Village.



The Role of Local Wisdom in Community Development and Empowerment in the Field of Local Wisdom-Based Ecotourism in Sambangan Village, Sukasada District, Buleleng Regency, Bali Province

Local wisdom plays a significant role in the development of ecotourism in Sambangan Village, Sukasada District, Buleleng Regency, Bali. The spirit of mutual cooperation is a prominent form of local wisdom, applied by the community in every village activity, including the management of tourist attractions. Village meetings provide a forum for community collaboration to plan and develop tourist attractions that take into account the potential of nature and the preservation of local culture (Noerasto et al., 2024). Agricultural traditions passed down from generation to generation are also an integral part of developing local wisdom-based ecotourism. Agro-tourism programs utilize community farmland, allowing tourists to learn firsthand about traditional farming methods, providing educational value while supporting the local village economy (Manalu, 2021). The integration of agricultural traditions and community participation shows how local wisdom is the foundation for sustainable ecotourism while enhancing the tourist experience.

The designation of Sambangan Village as a tourist village has brought significant benefits to the community by boosting the economy and creating jobs in the tourism sector. Forest management is geared towards preserving the environment through community participation in preventing illegal logging and land conversion. The establishment of the "Giri Amertha" Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDesa) on December 30, 2017, has been an important instrument for harnessing local economic potential. The initial capital came from the Village Fund, aimed at encouraging business development, increasing local revenue, and improving the welfare of residents. Tourism and clean water businesses are the main programs, although they still face challenges related to management, networks, and debt collection. Improvements are made periodically to ensure the sustainability of management and increase the capacity of BUMDesa as a driver of the local economy (Wiryantini et al., 2022).

Traditional arts and culture play a role in supporting the development of ecotourism in Sambangan Village. The preservation of traditional arts such as Joged Bumbung has become a tourist attraction as well as a cultural identity that has been passed down from generation to generation. This dance performance welcomes tourists and introduces the rich traditional values and philosophy of life in Bali. The presence of



Pandai Besi or "*Pande*" provides an educational experience for tourists by witnessing the traditional process of making keris using the skills of the local community. This process shows the application of traditional technology to produce works of art with spiritual and historical value, while also being part of local wisdom that strengthens tourist appeal (Rismayanti et al., 2020).

The Village Forest Management Institution (LPHD) and the Tourism Awareness Group (POKDARWIS) are forms of implementing local wisdom in sustainable natural resource management. The community plays an active role in preserving the forest while responsibly utilizing its natural tourism potential. Tourism activities are managed so as not to damage the environment and remain in line with ecotourism principles. Community supervision includes the implementation of the seven charms, which are safety, cleanliness, order, coolness, beauty, friendliness, and memories. This collective participation demonstrates the community's responsibility in creating comfort and safety for tourists while ensuring that the environment and local culture are preserved (Asriani & Suprpta, 2021).

Human resources in Sambangan Village are part of the local wisdom that supports the development of ecotourism. The productive-age community participates in tourism-related training and education, trained as tour guides, *homestay* managers, local restaurant entrepreneurs, and handicraft makers as souvenirs for tourists. Community involvement occurs at every stage of tourism development, from planning to supervision, reflecting the principles of participation and inclusiveness. Village deliberations and tourism socialization provide a space for the community to jointly determine the direction of ecotourism development. The community's creativity in creating man-made tourist attractions, such as Krisna Adventure and the Alam Sambangan recreational pool, demonstrates their ability to combine local wisdom with modern innovation to attract tourists while maintaining a balance between nature tourism and man-made tourism (Arystiana, 2021).

Activities based on local wisdom continue to develop through the provision of *sliding jumping*, *swimming*, and *camping* facilities, the implementation of *pitra yadnya* and *dewa yadnya* ceremonies, the creation of handicrafts from teak and cempaka wood, and maintaining environmental cleanliness in waterfalls, rice fields, and forests. Other developments include rock climbing and mini rafting facilities in the waterfall area, managing rice fields as traditional farming tourism, utilizing forests as fruit picking tourism



areas, providing art attractions and cultural packages, as well as special interest tourism in the form of *cycling* and *canyoning*. These efforts enrich the experience of local and foreign tourists and maximize the utilization of the natural, cultural, and creative potential of the local community (Dewi et al., 2021).

The role of local wisdom in Sambangan Village has proven to encourage the development of sustainable ecotourism through collective community participation. Mutual cooperation and village deliberations enable every resident to be involved in the planning and management of tourist attractions, so that natural and cultural potential can be optimally utilized. The integration of agricultural traditions into agro-tourism programs provides an educational experience for tourists while supporting the local economy. The preservation of arts and culture, such as Joged Bumbung and keris making by Pandai Besi, adds to the appeal of tourism while maintaining cultural identity. The presence of institutions such as LPHD and POKDARWIS ensures that natural resources are managed in accordance with ecotourism principles, including the application of the seven charms. This combination of factors demonstrates that ecotourism management is not only focused on economic benefits but also considers environmental, social, and cultural balance, ensuring that tourism development in Sambangan Village proceeds harmoniously and provides long-term benefits for the local community.

The involvement of village human resources is also key to the success of ecotourism based on local wisdom. Training for tour guides, *homestay* managers, local restaurant entrepreneurs, and handicraft makers increases the community's capacity to manage tourism potential. The creativity of residents in creating artificial tourist attractions, such as Krisna Adventure and the Alam Sambangan recreational pool, demonstrates their ability to combine local wisdom with modern innovation to attract more tourists. The development of additional facilities, including rock climbing, mini rafting, traditional farming tours, fruit picking, and cultural packages, enriches the experience of both local and foreign tourists. Community participation in every stage of management, from planning to supervision, affirms the principles of inclusivity and collective responsibility. This model demonstrates how local wisdom can be used as a foundation for ecotourism development, preserving nature and culture, and promoting sustainable economic improvement for the community.



CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- 1) The development of eco-tourism based on local wisdom in Sambangan Village, Sukasada District, Buleleng Regency, Bali, has successfully utilized natural, cultural, and man-made tourism potential to attract tourists. With natural attractions such as ten stunning waterfalls, cultural riches such as the Joged Bumbung dance and local crafts, as well as man-made adventure facilities, this village has become a leading eco-tourism destination.
- 2) Local wisdom plays an important role in the development of ecotourism in Sambangan Village, Sukasada District, Buleleng Regency, Bali, by integrating the spirit of mutual cooperation, agricultural traditions, arts, and culture into every aspect of tourism management. The community collaborates through institutions such as LPHD and POKDARWIS to preserve nature and is actively involved in village deliberations, training, and tourism socialization. Traditional arts and local crafts are the main attractions, combined with modern tourism innovations, reflecting a balance between cultural preservation and sustainable ecotourism.

The development of ecotourism in Sambangan Village should continue to improve community capacity through tourism training, *homestay* management, and promotion of local culture. Accessibility infrastructure and tourism support facilities need to be improved for visitor comfort. Innovative man-made tourist attractions can be developed in harmony with nature and cultural preservation. Active community participation and the strengthening of LPHD and POKDARWIS institutions must be maintained to ensure the sustainability of ecotourism.

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