Exploration of Community Empowerment in Koanara Village as the Entrance to the Kelimutu National Park

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Abstract

Community empowerment is an effort to develop self-sufficiency and community welfare by increasing knowledge, attitudes, skills, behavior, abilities, awareness, and utilizing existing resources through the establishment of policies, programs, activities, and assistance that are in accordance with the root of the problem. The purpose of this research is to explore community empowerment activities in supporting villages of the Kelimutu National Park, especially Koanara village as the entrance to the Kelimutu National Park (TNK). In order to obtain comprehensive data, a case study approach was used with data collection techniques of interviews, observation and documentation. The data analysis technique used is descriptive qualitative. Data analysis is done by organizing the data, describing it in units, synthesizing it, compiling it into patterns, choosing which ones are important and what will be studied, and making conclusions. The research results found that there were several empowerment activities in KNP supporting villages, especially Koanara villages such as The Mandiri Tourism in the National Community Empowerment Program (PNPM) received a positive response from the community. Apart from that, there are also several local community empowerment activities that have arisen from local and village government initiatives as well as by the Koanara village community itself, such as establising of tourism awareness groups: The Moni Kelimutu Tourism Association (P3MK) gave birth to actors in lodging businesses, transportation services, restaurants, cafes and art galleries; village-owned enterprise (BUMDES) Hapo Kalo Koanara Village empowers village communities in agriculture and agro-tourism; and BUMDES with Kelimutu. Bumdes Kelimutu belongs to 9 villages in the Kelimutu sub-district. There are 3 business units that are formed, namely the Coming Business Unit, the Tourism Unit and the Savings and Loans Unit.

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Keywords: Empowerment, Sustainable Tourism, Tourism Village, Community Based
Tourism

Introduction

Kelimutu National Park is located in the Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province with a geographical position: 8°43' - 8°48' S, 121°44' - 121°51' E which is designated as a Nature Conservation Area (KPA) in the form of a national park due to special conditions such as unique and distinctive ecosystems and pristine natural landscapes (Lake Kelimutu). Kelimutu National Park was designated as a National Park Area based on the Decree of the Minister of Forestry, SK No. 279/Kpts-II/92 with an area of ± 5,000 hectares. In 1997, it was determined through a Decree of the Minister of Forestry with SK No. 675/Kpts-II/97 with an area of 5,356.5 hectares. As stated in Law no. 5 of 1990, the function of conservation areas is protection of life support systems, preservation of diversity of plant and animal species,

Based on the function of the conservation area, the Kelimutu National Park has the duty to maintain the condition of the area's ecosystem so that its hydrological functions are protected, to preserve its animals and plants and to manage the potential utilization of the area in a sustainable manner. This is stated in the vision of the Kelimutu National Park, namely as a conservation area based on cultural ecotourism that is efficient for the community. Based on that Vision, the Missions that are also carried out by the Kelimutu National Park include 1) Developing ecotourism with a cultural theme parallel to nature, 2) Restoring ecosystems from Invasive Foreign Species, 3) Empowering indigenous peoples and buffer villages.

In the context of the mission of empowering indigenous peoples and supporting villages, there are four villages in the Kelimutu sub-district which are the main buffers of Lake Kelimutu and deserve the title of 'Tourist Village'. The four villages are Koanara Village, Woloara Village, Waturaka Village and Pemo Village. In the four villages there are already three basic aspects as requirements for tourist villages, namely Attractions, Accommodation and Facilities. This potential is maintained, developed and managed directly by the community. Woloara Tourism Village, located under the foot of Mount Kelimutu, has potential in tourism and agriculture. In the field of tourism, there are many tourist objects that need to be developed and handled properly, for example a cascading waterfall located in Dusun Nuaone, a bat cave, and of course a location for traditional ceremonial ceremonies because the people of Woloara Tourism Village also still uphold cultural values and are still maintained until today.

Apart from these villages, Koanara Tourism Village is a village which is the entrance to Lake Kelimutu. Tourists who want to go to the Kelimutu National Park will definitely stay at Koanara Village. In Koanara Village, there are many lodgings and restaurants owned by residents and managed by the local community. Apart from that, Koanara Village also provides so many tourist objects that are provided for tourists. One of them is the site of the Moni-Koanara traditional house, as a cultural heritage which is still well maintained and cared for today. The villages/subdistricts that support the Kelimutu National Park and their indigenous community groups have so far maintained a harmonious relationship with the Kelimutu

National Park Office.

As a manifestation of the government's responsibility, the Kelimutu National Park Office always provides assistance every year through community empowerment programs in buffer villages. This program is implemented by supporting the economic activities of the buffer village community through various activities in accordance with the existing potential in the buffer village. Included in this program, among others, is the arrangement of traditional settlements by building several traditional buildings that have been damaged with age. One of the shared passions highlighted by the Kelimutu National Park Authority and the supporting community is to preserve civilization and culture in harmony with nature while using it to support sustainable tourism development which has an impact on improving the local community's economy. This is of course in line with the Vision of the 2017-2022 Kelimutu National Park Agency "Kelimutu National Park as a cultural ecotourism-based conservation area that is useful for the community".

Literature Review

Community Based Tourism

Community-based tourism (community-based tourism) is a concept that emphasizes the community to be able to manage and develop tourism objects by themselves. The definition of CBT is: 1) forms of tourism that provide opportunities for local communities to control and be involved in the management and development of tourism, 2) communities that are not directly involved in tourism businesses also benefit, 3) demanding political and democratic empowerment and the distribution of benefits to disadvantaged communities in rural areas. (Garrod 2001:4) Apart from what Garrod stated, in Hausler's view, CBT is an approach to tourism development that emphasizes local communities (whether or not directly involved in the tourism industry) in the form of providing opportunities (access) in tourism management and development which leads to political empowerment through a more democratic life, including in fair sharing of benefits from tourism activities for local communities. Hausler conveyed this idea as a form of critical attention to tourism development which often ignores the rights of local communities in tourist destinations. Suansri (2003:14) defines CBT as a form of critical attention to tourism development which often ignores the rights of local communities in tourist destinations. Suansri (2003: 14) defines CBT as tourism that takes into account environmental, social and cultural sustainability aspects. CBT is a tool for community development and environmental conservation, or in other words CBT is a tool for realizing sustainable tourism development.

The special characteristics of Community Based Tourism according to Hudson (Timothy, 1999: 373) are related to the benefits obtained and the existence of assistance planning efforts that defend local communities and other groups that have interests, which give greater control in social processes to realize well-being. Meanwhile, Murphy (1985: 153) emphasizes a strategy that focuses on identifying the goals of the host community and their desires and abilities to absorb the benefits of tourism. According to Murphy, each community should be encouraged to identify its own goals and direct tourism to increase the needs of local

people. For this reason, planning is needed in such a way that social and environmental aspects are included in the planning and the tourism industry pays attention to tourists and also the local community.

Tourism Village

The form of the concept of community-based tourism is the development of tourist villages, where in tourist villages, village communities in tourism areas develop their potential, both natural and cultural resource potential, as well as human resource potential (the local community). The existence of tourist villages in Indonesia is currently growing rapidly. In just three years, the number of visits to tourist villages has increased fivefold. Referring to data from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, currently in Indonesia there are 987 tourist villages. The number has increased since the first tourism village was held in 2009.

The development of a tourist village can have a positive impact on the village community itself, including the existence of new jobs for the community so that it can reduce unemployment in the village, besides that a tourist village that carries the concept of ecotourism will make a village able to maintain the preservation of the nature and culture of the village. Another thing is, tourism villages can make a village become an independent village because it can provide alternative jobs that local people can enter. Tourism villages currently have a tendency to use the concept of ecotourism, where the tourism offered is all the potential possessed by rural communities.

Rural tourism makes people to maintain the authenticity of culture and nature in their villages to be able to maintain tourist interest in traveling in tourist villages. The concept used in CBT is very closely related to empowerment, where the community is first empowered to be able to develop their own potential, with community empowerment they are trained to be able to help themselves (self-help), so that, in the development of tourist villages, communities are developed and empowered to be able to manage own tourist village.

Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable Tourism is tourism that is growing very rapidly, including increasing the flow of accommodation capacity, local population, and the environment, where tourism development and new investments in the tourism sector should not have a negative impact and can blend with the environment, if we maximize the positive impact and minimize negative impacts. So several initiatives were taken by the public sector to regulate tourism growth for the better and to place the issue of sustainable tourism as a priority because a good business or business can protect important resources or assets for tourism not only for now but in the future. Sustainable tourism is essentially related to efforts to ensure that natural resources, social and cultural aspects that are used for tourism development in this generation so that they can be enjoyed for generations to come. "Tourism development must be based on sustainability criteria which means that development can be supported ecologically in the long term.

Research Method

The research method uses a case study approach to describe a thorough explanation of community empowerment in Koanara Village as the Entrance to the Kelimutu National Park in relation to socio-economic aspects and local wisdom which has been launched as a local government program to support the Vision of the Kelimutu National Park as a Conservation Area based on cultural ecotourism that is useful for the community. The word case itself means the actual situation of an affair or case; special circumstances or conditions related to a person or thing based on Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI, 2016). Therefore, it is clear that a case study is an attempt to find out a situation or condition through searching for as many facts or data as one can find. In the case study, Data collection techniques were carried out by interviews, observation, and documentation. The data analysis technique used is descriptive qualitative. Data analysis is done by organizing the data, describing it in units, synthesizing it, compiling it into patterns, choosing which ones are important and what will be studied, and making conclusions.

Results and Discussion

National tourism development aims to reduce poverty through the concept of community-based and sustainable tourism (community-based tourism and stability/lability development) which emphasizes in increasing participation of the community, especially the people around the Tourism Attraction Objects (ODTW). As the subject of development, the community becomes an important actor and is actively involved in the planning and development of tourism activities, while as beneficiaries, the community is expected to obtain significant economic benefits from the development of tourism activities which will improve their quality of life and welfare. Today's society should be able to benefit more from tourism in the region. Community-based tourism (community-based tourism) is a concept that emphasizes the activeness of the community to be able to manage and develop tourism objects by themselves. Efforts to realize the above goals find the answer in empowerment activities. Community empowerment is an effort to develop self-sufficiency and community welfare by increasing knowledge, attitudes, skills, behavior, abilities, awareness, and utilizing existing resources through the establishment of policies, programs, activities, and assistance that are in accordance with the root of the problem.

The description of Koanara village as reviewed above is de facto a source of blessings for the village community. Empowerment is the solution to certify these blessings. In interviews with the village officials and village community, some information was obtained regarding the empowerment that had been running in the village of Koanara. First is Through the Mandiri Tourism National Community Empowerment Program (PNPM). This program originates from the government with the intention of trying to create ways to alleviate poverty and unemployment in both urban and rural areas. The community said that the PNPM Mandiri Tourism program helps the community and contributes to community empowerment in the agricultural sector. "This program is very good, really helps us in the community. We really need it so we really hope for the continuation of this program," said Mr. Lazarus. The PNPM Mandiri Tourism Program in Koanara Village, Ende Regency has been successfully

implemented, however, it is still found that the implementation of this program has not been maximized. This is due to several inhibiting factors such as still weak human resources, communication, attitudes towards programs and infrastructure that need to receive more serious attention so that in the future all program targets that have been set can be achieved properly. **Second,** establshing a tourism awareness group: the Moni Kelimutu Tourism Association (P3MK). The aim is to gather the community and tourism business actors to be guided in order to take advantage of the economic opportunities from tourism activities. With this, the efforts of the Koanara community were born, such as providing lodging for tourists, transportation services (hospitable and friendly), restaurants, cafes, and art galleries Moni Kekere and Ana Kalo who have contributed greatly to revitalizing tourism attractions such as preserving the dances and culture of the Koanara village community. Koanara Village has 20 lodgings with a total of 121 rooms and 9 restaurants. From these 20 inns the prices vary greatly depending on the facilities provided in the inn. All lodgings in the Koanara tourist village are equipped with hot water, this is because the air is very cold. Almost every day there are guests visiting the Koanara tourist village. On average, guests staying at Moni 1 night are due to the absence of an ATM and internet. This is the main obstacle in the Koanara-Moni tourist village.**Third,** the role of the government through BUMDES Hapo Kalo Koanara Village helps village communities in agriculture and agro-tourism; and BUMDES with Kelimutu. BUMDES with Kelimutu belongs to 9 villages in the Kelimutu sub-district. There are 3 business units in Benyak, namely the Coming Business Unit, the Tourism Unit and the Savings and Loans Unit. Until now, only 1 business unit is running, namely the Coming unit with Mini Market unit and buying superior commodity products in the Kelimutu sub-district area.

Community empowerment is a concept of economic development that encapsulates community values to build a new paradigm in development that is *people-centered, participatory, empowerment and sustainable*. Within this framework efforts to empower the community can be studied from three aspects: First, *Enabling*, namely creating an atmosphere that allows the community's potential to develop. Second, *Empowering*, namely strengthening the potential of the community through concrete steps regarding the provision of various inputs and creating various opportunities that will make the community more empowered. Third, *Protecting,* namely protecting, and defending the interests of the weak (Noor, 2011). The fact that the village of Koanara and the supporting villages of KNP have the blessing of abundant tourist attractions, it is necessary to be empowered optimally through the aspects described above. *Enabling* is a creation of conditions that enable society and all its potential to develop, through extension activities, socialization to raise enthusiasm and especially change people's mindset (consumptive mindset to productive mindset); followed by *Empowering* steps, strengthening community capacity through training activities, empowerment, forming categorical empowerment groups etc. as a way for actualizing community potential with all its natural wealth; the final step is *Protecting*, is the government's intervention step in supporting all community empowerment efforts through policies that support and protect community businesses, especially from the expansion of capital owners who are more exploitative of natural and human resources.

Finally, in an effort to resolve the various obstacles to community empowerment in the village of Koanara,Ismawan (in Prijono & Pranaka, 1996) suggests five development strategies in community empowerment, namely; (1) human resource development program, (2) local institutional development program, (3) private capital accumulation program, (4) productive business development program, and (5) program for providing appropriate information. All strategies for community empowerment programs are development-oriented which are reflected in four generations, namely:

1. Generations that prioritize *relief and walfare*, which are designated as soon as possible to meet certain deficiencies or needs experienced by individuals and or families, such as food, health, and education needs.

2. Generations that focus their activities on *small-scale reliant local development* or what is called *community development*, in this segment include health services, application of appropriate technology, and infrastructure development. In this case, solving *grassroots* problems cannot be solved by using only a *top-down approach,* but requires a *bottom-up approach.*

3. The generation where all existing human resources and potential must be involved in a *sustainable development system*, namely starting to pay attention to the impact of development and tend to look far into other areas, both at the regional, national, and international levels. At this stage there are efforts to influence the formulation of development policies and expect changes at the regional and national levels.

4. Generations that act as facilitators of *(people's movements)*. The role of this generation helps people to be able to organize themselves, identify local needs, and mobilize the resources they have. This generation does not only influence policy formulation, but expects changes in its implementation.

Conclusion

Community empowerment is an important step in the context of activating community participation to be involved in national development and especially to experience the impact of national development, especially in the tourism sector. Increasing the community's economy, increasing people's welfare, minimizing classic social problems such as extreme poverty, stunting/malnutrition, unemployment and juvenile delinquency. Therefore, it is hoped that the Koanara village government, in collaboration with the Kelimutu District Government, the person in charge of the Kelimutu National Park and the Tourism Office, will carry out community empowerment programs in various ways and categories. For example increasing the stretching of traditional weaving groups among mothers, empowering farmers to support businesses in agriculture and agro-tourism, groups of travel and lodging business actors to provide quality services. It is also important to avoid exploitation of natural and human resources by certain parties, supporting national empowerment programs in the tourism sector.

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