

Local Community Participation in the Development of Ecological Tourism in West Bali National Park

I Nyoman Sunarta

Faculty of Tourism, University of Udayana
School of Posgraduate Study
Doctorate Degree in Tourism Udayana University

Coessponding author: cairns54@yahoo.com

ARTICLE INFO

Received
15 February 2015
Accepted
03 August 2015
Available online
07 September 2015

ABSTRACT

Dependence of local communities on natural resources in the area of West Bali National Park (TNBB) showed low conservation awareness of local communities to support the area as ecological tourism resources, and showed lack of participation of the local community because of their powerlessness in decision-making and captures a wide range of benefits or contributions of ecological tourism. This study aims to determine the level of local participation in the development of products and markets of ecological tourism, by using deductive approach. During stage of analysis and synthesis, descriptive method is used to explain the causal link between the study variables. Since 2008, TNBB changed its repressive approach to community development that previously looked into persuasive public relations with TNBB as "us vs. them" later changed into "we", especially in the development of ecological tourism product, which is actualized in society called "Manuk Jegeg". Participation of local communities in the development of ecological tourism is not entirely the local community initiatives. So that kind of participation can be classified into functional types of participation. Participation is still a continuation of the existence of an external agent External interests of society. It is seen from the establishment of "Manuk Jegeg" community, where external parties are only facilitating and accommodating the aspirations of the community in decision making.

Keywords: participation, ecological tourism, "manuk jegeg"

Introduction

Ecological tourism or better known as ecotourism is developed as a reaction to the negative impacts of massive issue (mass tourism) of the conventional tourism development. The purpose of the development is to improve the quality of environmental services and quality of life in the surrounding communities (David, 1999). Similarly, it happens in the development of ecotourism in West Bali National Park (TNBB). Ecotourism of TNBB is also developed to protect

biodiversity and as an important instrument to improve the well-being of local communities through the provision of public services, employment opportunities and business opportunities (Balai Taman Nasional Bali Barat, 2009). But the surrounding communities directly adjacent to TNBB or in this case referred to the local community of Sumber Klampok Village, have a high dependence on natural resources as a source of livelihood. Dependence of the local communities on natural resources in the area of TNBB can be seen from the rampant

logging, wildlife poaching endemic, land clearing for agriculture, environmentally unfriendly fishing, nursery plants, trimming the tree canopy to feed livestock, and wild herding area. On the other hand, the dependence shows low conservation awareness of the local communities to support conservation area as ecotourism resources. While on the other hand, it shows lack of participation of the local communities because of the powerlessness of the people in decision-making and captures a wide range of benefits or contribution of ecological tourism.

Based on this phenomenon, it is interesting to conduct a research on the type of local community participation in the development of products and markets of TNBB ecological tourism. The result of this study will provide direction to optimize the participation of the local communities in the development of ecological tourism of TNBB.

Research Objectives

The purpose of the study is to determine level of the local participation in the development of products and markets of the ecological tourism. The achievement of the objectives of this research will be able to provide benefits in preparation of the local community engagement strategy in the development of ecological tourism and also as an input to build model of the local participation in the development of ecological tourism.

Literature Review

Ecological Tourism

Ecological tourism or also known as eco-tourism grows as a result of dissatisfaction with the nature and types of conventional tourism. Conventional tourism regards tourism products as the same in spite of the uniqueness owned by each product; it is very profit-oriented, neglecting the socio-cultural and environmental elements, and is anthropocentric in nature (David, 1999). Eco-tourism is said to be a natural tourism activity for the purpose of learning/research, which contributes directly to the protection of species and habitats as base attractions and indirectly provides economic benefits of tourism for

local communities (Goodwin, 1996; Wallace and Pierce, 1996; David, 1999). David (1999) stated that eco-tourism is a form of natural tourism sustainability that focuses mainly on experiences and learning about nature, in which its management can minimize its negative impacts; eco-tourism is not consumptive and it is local resources-oriented or local capital-oriented. UNEP/WTO (2002) in (David, 2003). Proposed several criteria to define eco-tourism, which are among others: 1) it has nature-based tourism products; 2) its management has minimal impacts on the physical, social and cultural aspects; 3) it includes learning experiences derived from the environment; 4) it contributes to the conservation of biological diversity and; 5) it provides benefits to local communities.

Community-Based Tourism

Community-based tourism is a type of tourism that incorporates community participation as a key element in tourism in order to achieve the goals of sustainable tourism development (Telfer and Sharpley, 2015). This definition is in line with the point of view of Garrod, Wilson and Bruce (2001). Timothy and Boyd (2003) states that community-based tourism involves the community participation in tourism development. In this matter, community participation can be in two ways that are: getting involved in the decision-making process; and the distribution of benefits of tourism. Mowforth and Munt (1998) and Ramukumba *et al.* (2011) divided the community participation into seven types, namely: manipulative participation; passive participation; consultation; participation for material incentives; functional participation; interactive participation; and mobilization.

Community-based tourism is often understood as tourism that is in contrast with large-scale tourism (enclave tourism), in the form of packages (all inclusive) and having mass tourism as well as minimal association with the local community. Therefore, community-based tourism is also called as tourism built by local small-scale communities and involves a variety of elements such as employers, organizations, and local governments (Hatton, 1999 in Leslie, 2012; Telfer and Sharpley, 2015).

Alternative tourism development that is called small-scale tourism development can directly provide a space for the greater participation of local communities (Telfer and Sharpley, 2015). In fact, the local community in a tourist destination is divided into different interplaying groups based on the social class, gender, and ethnicity (Scheyvens, 2002). Among the groups, some usually claim that they possess or have the most privilege to the existence of certain tourist resources. Certain elite communities are often in a position to dominate the implementation of community-based tourism, and monopolize the distribution or the gain of the benefits of tourism (Mowforth and Munt, 1998). Society in general, does not adequately have information, resources, and power in conjunction with various other decision-makers in the development of tourism; thus, this makes local communities vulnerable to exploitation (Campbell, 1999).

Methodology

Research Approach

The research approach is using deductive method, which verifies the conceptual relationship of tourism on empirical conditions (Veal, 1997). Construction of the concept of community participation in ecotourism is based on literature review. Empirical conditions is collected and known by various techniques, adapted to variables of the study. While in the stage of analysis and synthesis, descriptive method is used to explain the link or causal relationship between variables of the study.

Type and Source of the Data

Types of the data used are quantitative and qualitative data. The data in this study derived from primary and secondary data. Primary data will be collected through observation and interviews. While secondary data is through relevant literature.

Data Collection Techniques

This study is using multiple data collection techniques, that are literature review, observation, and interviews. Observation and interview techniques are

chosen to gain knowledge and understanding of the basic research questions related to the type of local community participation in the development of ecological tourism.

To obtain the necessary data and information, there are steps to be performed in this study includes:

- 1) Literature Review. Literature review is intended to gain an understanding of some basic concepts in this study that is about ecotourism, community participation, and community-based tourism. Besides literature review, secondary data is also used for both qualitative and quantitative ones.
- 2) Observation. Observation is data collection efforts with direct observation studies on sites to validate and complement the data already obtained previously.
- 3) Interview. Interviews will be conducted with several informants at the sites that have necessary information to answer the research questions. As for some of these informants are:
 - a. Local community leaders, both official figures (*Dinas* and *Adat*) and Village institutions of Sumber Klampok village.
 - b. Ecological tourism operators (BTNBB)
 - c. Nature tourism businessman (PPA) in TNBB

Reasons for choosing the informants are their knowledge, understanding, and stature (purposive) that are expected to provide information on the participation of local communities in the development of the ecological tourism.

Results and Discussion

Sumber Klampok village is selected as the research sample based on some considerations. First, it is one of the villages located in the utilization zone of West Bali National Park (TNBB) and has a tendency of typical typology in its interaction with the management institution, which is the West Bali National Park Authority (BTNBB).

Secondly, the typical characteristics of the community in the resistance against stigmatization attached to the community as looters of conservation areas: logging, hunting endemic species, land clearing for agriculture, environmentally unfriendly fishing, nursery plants, trimming the tree canopy for animal feed, and wild herding area. The third one is as a model of community-based ecotourism.

Sphere and Social Space of TNBB Tourism Area

The conception of space referred to in this context is not a domain, but rather a locus of power, in which can be found many exist and dynamic potential. In other words there are individuals or groups who fight each other for the benefit of positions in the social space. Social space itself implies a diverse set of domains that have a relationship between one and the other. This means that the social space is at higher level of abstraction than the sphere and can be understood based on its empirical observations.

By using the concept of domains and social space, the phenomenon of ecological tourism in TNBB will be explored. Based on conducted observations and interviews, it is found out some interesting facts. Individuals or groups that interact in a social space tourism could be grouped into 2 (two) domains; direct and intensive intersect. Both of these domains are bureaucrats of BTNBB represented by rangers or park rangers as well as forestry enlighten workers and local community groups, "Manuk Jegeg".

Between BTNBB and Local Communities; From Repressive Towards Persuasive Approach.

The second meeting of the sphere has a unique dynamic. As if has become a "public truth", that the relationship between these institutions often face diametrically issue because each have stereotypes, resulting in the exclusive groupings: "us" versus "them". BTNBB party as formal legal institution has the state power in conservation and protection of biodiversity, tends to promote a repressive approach when interacting with the public. Implicitly, this approach is based on prejudice that people who lives in the neighborhood of

TNBB are as a destroyer and plunderer of natural resources and biodiversity. While conceptually, the arrangement of TNBB region is based on their distributional and functional activities to provide opportunities for social, cultural, economic, and especially outside the Core Zone and Wilderness Zone with certain fundamental rules. But de facto, TNBB area utilization for local communities is very limited, thus triggering a conflict that actualized through capture and arrest activity. While the local people themselves have the opposite viewpoint, which inclined to regard the presence of TNBB even depriving the forests areas that have been utilized by them for generations. Local people would not take for granted when the presence BTNBB even make the local community as the guilty party and get a negative stigma associated with conservation efforts.

Arrangement relationship with conflict issue is experiencing a turning point in 2008, when the BTNBB attempt to change the perspective of the local community. Stereotypes of the society began to be slowly changed in the mindset of the rangers and forestry enlighten officers who had been directly involved in the interaction with the local community. Through a series of training programs, seminars, and workshops at internal BTNBB aimed to initiate local community development approach, the pattern of repressive approach began to be abandoned, replaced by a persuasive approach.

This paradigm shift cannot be separated from the paradigm shift of human relationships with the natural order. Al along, this understanding of the relationship between man and nature rests on anthropocentric understanding, which gives special status of man as the center of the universe, to the understanding of eco-philosophy that sees humans as a part of the nature and have the ability of reflection to get better harmonization interaction with the nature. Besides that, a shift in perspective is also caused by the phenomenon of the permeation of academic technical terms into public space, making it an inclusive term, meaning it is not merely used by academics, but also by general public. Thus the term eco-philosophy, which was originally used by the intellectuals as a philosophical critique toward analytic mechanistic

modernism, became a popular term since the 1990s until the 2000s, especially as public terms in Indonesia. It is very possible with massive media using the term to the phenomenon of environmental degradation by humans to cause natural disasters.

BTNBB initiative to change the relationships between stakeholders in the region of TNBB can be traced since 2010. Intensive approach undertaken by the rangers and forestry enlighten officers to include local communities in joint management to utilize TNBB zone initially received suspicious responses. This can be understood as a former relationship that is built up formerly based on suspicious matters, which departs from the presumption of the existence of vested interests. Through a series of informal meetings that begin to create relatively light communications, slowly began to grow mutual trust. Interactions that were constructed through this type of informal meeting forums are considered quite effective, when compared with previous formal interactions.

The local communities were also making an effort to change the attached negative image. Beforehand there were formed community groups based professions, such as a group of fishermen and farmers. Although the formation of these community groups are still a top-down, in the sense were not purely an initiative of the people themselves, but still related to the initiative of the enlighten officers of the government institutions. A bright idea to confront the two interests, between the interests of conservation with the interests of society to change the negative image of Sumber Klampok village appears when the activity of ecological tourism became a consideration. The ecological tourism activities are not still optimizing the participation of local communities, only exclusively managed by BTNBB and PPA, so that access of the local people to actively participate in the development of products and market of ecotourism is still limited.

This spirit of collaboration is further strengthened by the presence of environmental awareness in the local community. Based on a series of informal meetings between BTNBB and local communities, bear the idea to form a group of people who have economic activities

without damaging natural resources in accordance with the existing potential in the local community. The community group is named "Manuk Jegeg". As the name implies, Manuk Jegeg aims to preserve White Starling bird that is on the verge of extinction. Preservation is done by giving permission of captivity and the wildness release to local communities. In addition to the conservation objectives, Manuk Jegeg also has the goal of community economic development through distribution license (White Starling can be traded after fulfilling certain rules) and also as product of an alternative tourism for tourists who visit TNBB.

"Manuk Jegeg" community becomes strategic, because it is a bridge forum of communication between the interests of local communities and BTNBB in the context of public participation in the development of ecological tourism. It can be said there is an agreement that tourism is the answer to the problem of interaction at this time. The spirit to change the image on both sides is very clear, when the people submitted proposals to BTNBB to provide White Starling birds for breeding, and the provision of the cage is fully prepared by the local community. That means there has been a logic termination in aid of charity, which sometimes does not entirely a community needs and does not paying attention to aspects of sustainability. This relief aid model has proven unsuccessful and generally practiced by government agencies.

Actual betting is done by both sides. BTNBB is at risk of losing a few pairs of White Starling with estimated cost Rp. 15.000.000 per pair. While the local people bets on the success or failure to be out from the negative image that had been attached. Currently, the stakes won by both parties. Breeding process is still ongoing, involving 17 members of the community who are members of the Manuk Jegeg. This group can be considered to represent the elements that exist in the Sumber Klampok Village community, because the composition of its membership consists of people who work as fishermen, farmers, sellers, villagers and even the village chief joined the group. White Starling breeding activities conducted by this community was relatively successful, and has two strategic significances, that are from the

perspective of conservation as efforts of Starling White preservation, and from the perspective of tourism as a diversification product component of ecotourism. Breeding activity and wilderness release has become a leading tourist attraction and even will be developed as a tourist village. Now the group has introduced the community and organizing ecotourism products to the market. From 2010 until mid-2013, Sumber Klampok village has been visited by tourists who come from Japan and the United States. Besides Japan and the United States, this product of alternative tourism is also very attractive to tourists who come from Europe (France, Germany, and the UK). Best things that are certainly sold here are White Starling bird breeding and thrill experience of rural life. Even the local community has also provided accommodation and culinary facilities by utilizing their residence as a home stay for the tourists.

Type of Participation

With the existence of Manuk Jegeg community, it can be said that the participation of local communities in the development of TNBB ecological tourism belong to the functional participation. Some indicators that indicate the presence of functional participation in local communities are:

The Existence of External Interests of Society

BTNBB have an interest to carry out the functions of conservation and local community development. As the chronological pattern of interaction between BTNBB and local communities, information obtained from both parties that the initial initiative was initiated by BTNBB to include the local community in the development of ecological tourism.

The Formation of Community Groups as Interests Representation

In the case of Sumber Klampok Village, "Manuk Jegeg" community was formed as a manifestation of the organization that brought together the interests of both parties.

Community Involvement in Decision Making.

In the decision-making process, local people began to be actively involved. It is conditioned when the function of BTNBB is more as facilitators in community aspirations.

Following Up of External Programs.

As a conservation area management, BTNBB have a program aims to maintain the quality of the environment and quality of the communities' life. The establishment of Manuk Jegeg is also an implementation of such programs.

Co-Optation by the External Community.

BTNBB opportunity to co-optation is possible, because in this type of functional participation the local communities have not been entirely free from dependence of outside parties. Limitations in terms of tourism facilities, knowledge, and operating funds by local village of Sumber Klampok state their not fully independent position. From some of these indicators, it can be stated that the participation of local communities in the development of ecological tourism is not entirely a community initiative. The condition is due to the type of current participation is being facilitated and as the follow up of ecotourism development program of external parties, that is BTNBB. It shows that there are still challenges and barriers experienced by local communities to optimize their potential involvement in the development of ecological tourism of TNBB.

Conclusion

Begins in 2008, BTNBB changed the community empowerment approach in protected areas of TNBB from repressive to persuasive approach. Similarly in the local community of TNBB, which previously view their relations with BTNBB as "we vs. them" later changed to "us", especially in the development of ecotourism products. The change into "us" is actualized in a community groups called Manuk Jegeg.

The change has contributed to the increase in number of tourist arrivals to TNBB especially in the last 3 years. Besides the change in community empowerment approach, it has also formed embryo as an initial tourist conservation village, as a diversification of ecological tourism product of TNBB. The tourist conservation village embryo has long contained in Manuk Jegeg communities.

Participation of local communities in the development of ecological tourism is not entirely a local community initiative. So that kind of participation can be classified into functional types of participation. Some evidences suggest the participation of local communities are still in the stage of functional participation including; presence of external interests of the community; Formation of community groups called Manuk Jegeg as interests representation; community involvement in decision making, where external parties has only facilitate and accommodate the aspirations of the people; Participation is a follow up of the program of external agents; Existence of community co-option by the external party.

References

- Balai Taman Nasional Bali Barat (2009) 'Review Zonasi Taman Nasional Bali Barat'. Jembrana-Bali.
- Campbell, L. M. (1999) 'Ecotourism in rural developing communities', *Annals of tourism research*. Elsevier, 26(3), pp. 534–553.
- David, F. A. (1999) 'Ecotourism: An introduction'. Routledge, London.
- David, F. A. (2003) *Ecotourism: An introduction Second edition*. London: Routledge.
- Garrod, B., Wilson, J. and Bruce, D. (2001) 'Planning for marine ecotourism in the EU Atlantic Area: Good practice guidance: A summary'. University of the West of England.
- Goodwin, H. (1996) 'In pursuit of ecotourism', *Biodiversity & Conservation*. Springer, 5(3), pp. 277–291.
- Leslie, D. (2012) *Responsible tourism: Concepts, theory and practice*. CABI.
- Mowforth, M. and Munt, I. (1998) *Tourism and Sustainability; New Tourism in the Third World*. New York: Routledge.
- Ramukumba, T., Pietersen, J., Mmbengwa, V. M. and Coetzee, W. (2011) 'Participatory development of peri-urban and rural poor communities in tourism in the Garden Route area of Southern Cape, South Africa', *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 1, pp. 1–9.
- Scheyvens, R. (2002) *Tourism for development: Empowering communities*. Pearson Education.
- Telfer, D. J. and Sharpley, R. (2015) *Tourism and development in the developing world*. Routledge.
- Timothy, D. J. and Boyd, S. W. (2003) *Heritage tourism*. Pearson Education.
- Wallace, G. N. and Pierce, S. M. (1996) 'An evaluation of ecotourism in Amazonas, Brazil', *Annals of tourism research*. Elsevier, 23(4), pp. 843–873.