

# Exploring the Challenges of Tourist Villages Management in Manggarai, Flores, Indonesia

Sebastianus Menggo<sup>1</sup>, Inosensius Sutam<sup>2</sup>, Sabina Ndiung<sup>3</sup>  
{[sebastian.pradana@gmail.com](mailto:sebastian.pradana@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [sutamino70@gmail.com](mailto:sutamino70@gmail.com)<sup>2</sup>, [punyaku79@gmail.com](mailto:punyaku79@gmail.com)<sup>3</sup>}

Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus Ruteng, Indonesia<sup>1,2,3</sup>

**Abstract.** Objects in tourist villages are important resources that can be utilized by village governments to improve the welfare of rural communities. This research explores the development problems of eight tourist communities in the Manggarai area, West Flores, Indonesia. This research used purposive and snowball methods by taking a sample of 93 tourism stakeholders from eight villages of concern. The data obtained was examined qualitatively using audio-visual recordings, questionnaires, documentation, observations and interviews. The findings show that the management of eight tourist villages in West Flores, Indonesia, is still the main obstacle to developing tourist villages. This idea emerged because there is a tourist information center in the tourist village (86%), foreign language communication (82.8), the community and management of the tourist village still have rabid or infectious animals at the tourist location (82.8%), infrastructure (78, 5%, environmental sustainability (77.4%), followed by hygiene and health problems (71%). The potential of the West Flores tourism community is just a fantasy if it is not anticipated and action is taken immediately. This study suggests that stakeholders can collaborate to overcome some existing problems.

**Keywords:** challenges, exploring, tourist village management

## 1 Introduction

The Indonesian government has prioritized tourism. Tourism promotes Indonesia to the globe and accelerates its development. Foreign tourists visit Indonesia for its distinctive cultural performances, exoticism of nature, linguistic diversity, religious tolerance, and typical Indonesian cuisine. Since tourism improves community welfare, especially in tourist centers, the government has a clear and measurable road map for tourism growth, including boundary regions for sustainability [1], [2]. Indonesian tourism developed due to its natural beauty and unique cultural and religious activities that possesses a distinct interest in the diverse practices of the five major religions in Indonesia.

The Indonesian government has taken note of this exceptional and endearing attractiveness and has implemented integrated planning measures under the Integrated Tourism Master Plan [3], [4]. This planning assuredly promotes sustainable tourism across all tourist attractions and provinces in Indonesia.

The Indonesian government plans to develop the National Tourism Strategic Area in Komodo-East Nusa Tenggara. This development plan helps the government advance tourism in East Nusa Tenggara. The commitment of this growth affects the budget for building critical tourist infrastructure, which is suitable for the people of Indonesia in general and for Labuan

Bajo and the area around it. The community is slowly demonstrating its resources to meet the needs of the tourism sector, including tourism management, hospitality and communication skills in English, packaging, presentation or narrative, digital-based marketing, and sustainable tourism management that preserves ecology, local traditions, and culture [5], [6].

Village communities are crucial to Indonesia's tourism development dreams. Village communities are encouraged to use their local resources to support their economic activities. Tourism potential can accelerate rural areas' economic growth, but excellent human resources are needed to serve tourists. Five principles are essential for developing a village's tourism potential: reliability, which means giving guests exemplary service as promised; responsiveness, which means being quick to help guests and provide timely service; assurance/guarantee, which means the waiter is polite and sure of himself or herself; empathy, which means giving each guest extra attention; and availability of other supporting facilities [7], [8].

Based on this reasoning, the government, notably the governments of the three Manggarai districts—Manggarai, West Manggarai, and East Manggarai—determined the number of tourist villages in their areas through their tourism offices. It is hoped that establishing a tourist village will allow the exploration of the potential of existing resources and empower the village community itself. Eight tourist villages in Manggarai are Golo Loni and Colol in East Manggarai Regency, Meler, Todo, and Bangka Kenda in Manggarai Regency, and Wae Lolos, Coal, and Poco Rutang in West Manggarai Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia. These communities are designated tourist villages by their districts as they incorporate natural views, tourist activities, cultural attractions, and horticultural businesses that can attract tourists [9]–[11].

Tourist villages in Manggarai already have non-standard tourism-supporting facilities. However, the tourist village movement is working to meet tourists' needs for toilets, clean trash cans, homestays/guest houses/tourist cottages, internet networks, and attractions. Cultural, plastic- and pesticide-free tourism attractions, clean air, land, water, sound/music environments, and many more tourist village development movements. They are practical recommendations from stakeholders to overcome tourist village management challenges.

These tourist villages in the Manggarai region have prospective tourism assets. These tourist villages cultivate rice fields in the agricultural sector through frequent terraces. The conventional rice cultivation system, where farmers still use buffalo to plow the fields, makes guests feel at home visiting these tourist villages. The guests were involved in plowing the rice fields in question. Guest participation in a rural activity like buffalo plowing is exciting and unique. Guests can plow rice fields with buffalo. While plowing, guests can ride a buffalo. Some farmers are currently employing tractors. Farmers practice dry land cultivation in addition to rice. Tourist village farmers grow vegetables, spices, nuts, grain, and fruit on dry land/fields. They also cultivate various freshwater fish thanks to high rainfall and sufficient water supplies.

Most of these tourist villages are inhabited by the Manggarai ethnic community. The potential for natural resource-based tourism, cultural attractions, ecotourism, and agro-tourism in these villages is exciting. The *tiba meka* (guest receiving) dance, *Caci* (agility test), and agro-tourism with its superior horticultural plants are presented to tourists along with natural beauty often terraced rice fields. The potential of these tourist villages offers unique and exciting types of tourism, both natural and cultural attractions.

Indeed, tourist communities in Manggarai, Indonesia, offer natural views like *Compang Kaweng* hill in Bangka Kenda village. This hill's terraced rice fields offer incredible views of Bangka Kenda Village and its surroundings. This hill is also a good place for tracking tourists

both in the morning at sunrise and in the afternoon at sunset. Apart from that, horticultural farming also has its attractions to visit. Horticultural farmers in Bangka Kenda, Golo Loni, Meler, and Wae Lolos villages in Manggarai, West Flores, Indonesia, provide a variety of plants directly to guests.

These villages' terraced rice fields (gardens) are a distinctive tourist attraction. These communities have considerable tourism potential, considering they are near Labuan Bajo, an international destination. Tourist villages in Manggarai have become tourist destinations; however, most residents have yet to benefit from the industry. Due to many severe tourist village management challenges [12], [13]. To maximize village communities' economic growth, proper information has to be used to address tourist village management challenges.

In addition, Manggarai culture uses *gendangn oné-lingkon pé'ang* (drum inside, garden outside). Manggarai cone-shaped houses are called *gendang or mbaru niang*. The conical mbaru drum has other distinctive traits, such as its 15-meter height. With a house that reaches tens of meters in height, the *mbaru gendang* consists of several parts, namely *lutur, lobo, lentar, lémpa raé, sékang kodé*. Each part has its function, such as *lutur* as a place to live or a place for families to gather, *lobo* as a place to store food, *lentar* as a place to store various types of food seeds, *lémpa raé* as a place to store food reserves during times of crisis and *sékang kodé* as a place to store food, laying offerings for the ancestors. Furthermore, the *Mbaru Gendang* home has buffalo horns on the ridge and a palm fiber roof. Buffalo horns (Rangga Kaba) symbolize values since the Manggarai people's ancestors wanted their descendants to be strong and robust like buffalo. Meanwhile, the spherical palm fiber roof represents a strong, unbreakable relationship [14], [15].

Gardens focus on signs of economic power, while traditional homes focus on signs of social and political power. However, they represent holy and spiritual power when they are put together. This idea also has great tourism potential, and so far, it has been visited. However, its management could have been more optimal due to various obstacles faced by tourism village stakeholders [14].

Manggarai tourism villages also have rich cultural features like dancing. Traditional rites include *congka saé* and *rangkuk alu*. Besides these dances, the *Caci* dance is the most important and famous in Manggarai culture. This dance is performed by two men, with several pairs at once. This dance emphasizes masculinity, agility, sportsmanship, respect, grace, vocal artistry, and politeness toward the audience and *Caci* dancing partners. The shield (*Nggiling*) symbolizes the earth, while the *agang* (small bamboo tied together in a curved shape) symbolizes the sky. The command that is the philosophy and spirituality of this dance is to hold onto the heavens and the earth (respect God), and then you will be kept away from evil, which is symbolized by the whip (*kalus*) [16], [17]. This concept is also an exciting place for tourists.

Apart from that, there are three main instrumental musical instruments in Manggarai, including those in tourist villages that are often used, such as *nggong, tambor, and gendang*. These three musical instruments are seen as symbols of the presence of ancestors for living people. There are several ways of hitting/sounding gongs and drums, namely *ndundu ndaké, concong, kedindit, and takétu*. The four musical rhythms are basic rhymes and use gong and drum musical instruments.

This traditional musical instrument could be a potential tourist attraction. People in tourist villages are very skilled at playing this traditional musical instrument. Apart from the *Caci* dance, residents of tourist villages also know other dances, such as the *saé tiba meka* (Dance of Receiving/welcoming Guests), the *ndu-ndu ndaké* dance, and others.

The *tiba meka* dance is a dance to welcome guests who have just arrived or visited Manggarai land. Manggarai's boys and daughters perform this dance. Meanwhile, the *ndundu ndaké* dance is a traditional Manggarai dance incorporating beats from gongs and drums. This dance depicts the happiness or joy of the Manggarai people [18].

People in tourist villages also know traditional vocal arts such as *sanda*, *mbata*, *nénggo*, and *danding*, which are sung during village festivals. *Sanda* is a cultural dance with marching movements while singing between men and women wearing the applicable traditional clothing. It is only performed in traditional houses and at night in an atmosphere of joy. *Sanda* contains symbolic meaning, symbolizing unity. *Nénggo* is a traditional song in Manggarai and is often sung by people in tourist villages. This song has its characteristics, where the *Nénggo* song is sung spontaneously and adapted to ongoing traditional ceremonies such as the *Penti* ceremony (Thanksgiving ceremony) [17], [19].

Like the people who live in Manggarai, those who live in tourist towns keep up with regional literature like *go'ét* (poetic sentences), different kinds of stories, and spoken language (*tombo*, *jaong*, *jangkong*). People go to tourist villages and are given local specialties with a unique and exciting twist to local culture. Guests are given local drinks and sarongs and are asked to sit in a circle and talk while they eat. This kind of service gives tourists something special to do and value. Guests say that the town has a heavy, pleasant energy.

However, three previous research results [20]–[22] only focus on the management of tourist attractions in general in Indonesia and have not focused on data related to obstacles to managing tourist villages in Indonesia. Three studies before others [23]–[25] also only talk about CHSE-based tourism village management and have not shared the results of any studies that looked into actual problems and how ready tourism village managers are to deal with them. Exploring the obstacles faced by tourism village managers is very important. Revealing data about the challenges of managing tourist villages in Indonesia is very useful for managers and tourists. The results of this study can cover this gap.

Data on the challenges of tourism village managers is essential to present in the public space to encourage improvements in the skills of tourism village operators and the lives of village communities to accelerate progress in the potential of tourist villages. On this basis, exploring the challenges of managing tourist villages is proposed as a solution to help with the problems managers face in the Manggarai region, East Nusa Tenggara province.

Based on the description and data expressed above, the researchers asked the research question, what factors hinder the management of tourist villages in the Manggarai region?

This problem addresses the primary objective of this research, which is to explore tourist village management barriers in Manggarai, Indonesia.

## 2 Method

Phenomenological research methods are used in this qualitative study. A phenomenological approach is acceptable since it addresses social challenges in specific groups. Additionally, this technique provides several instruments for analyzing these events [26]. Phenomenological research aligns with respondents' interpretation and real-life experiences, those considered tourism village stakeholders in this particular instance. This approach is employed because it examines the healthy and natural lifestyle of tourist villages. The investigation of eight tourist villages in Manggarai, West Flores, Indonesia, was conducted in November 2023. Local government leaders, cultural personalities, tourist village representatives, spiritual leaders, and entrepreneurs participated in the study. Their cooperation was centered on improving the tourist villages' advancement and growth. The

sample includes ninety-three people, averaging twelve in every tourist village. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques identified ninety-three respondents.

The following criteria selected ninety-three respondents: (1) Tourism village stakeholders include small, micro, and medium-sized enterprises around tourist areas. Those who act are shopkeepers, homestay and guest house owners, restaurateurs, coffee shop owners, indigenous fabric weavers, local tourist guides, people in the community, spiritual advisers, village officials, and tourist organizations. These parties have a concern for tourism communities' long-term viability and sustainability; (2) excited to take part in the discussion with the research team; (3) provide accurate information on the matters related to the management of tourist communities; (4) delighted to provide their knowledge on the issue of managing tourism-related communities; and (5) agree to participate in focus groups and have their conversations recorded.

The researchers themselves served as the principal research instrument due to the nature of the analysis. This strategy corresponds with the claim proposed by Creswell (2014). Creswell claimed that people's adaptability, flexibility, and competency could be used to collect data. Secondary instruments, including recording, documenting, observing, and in-depth interview guidelines, support the main instrument. The information from respondents was then analyzed qualitatively.

### 3 Findings and Discussion

This section discusses data about the research's problem. The problem is related to obstacles in tourist village management. Table 1 details the tourist village management issues and data.

**Table 1.** Tourist village management obstacles

No	Statements	Answer	
		Yes	No
1	Connectivity instability in areas for tourists.	65,6%	34,4%
2	Lack of cultural skills affects tourism product and service development and promotion.	76,3%	23,7%
3	Local governments have struggled to build roads, canals, water supply amenities, irrigation systems, sanitation facilities, garbage collection units, medical centers in tourist villages, and accommodations like homestays, guesthouses, and tourist cottages to rent.	78,5%	21,5%
4	Tourist attractions and community information centers should be present.	71%	29%
5	The community needs a tourism management business.	61,35	38,75
6	Community involvement in tourist management in villages is underrepresented.	75,3%	24,7%
7	Limited foreign language skills among tourism village workers.	82,8%	17,2%
8	A comprehensive and widely acknowledged discourse on tourism attractions is needed.	77,4%	22,6%
9	A tourist information center is needed.	86%	14%
10	Tourist sites' communities and leaders need to maintain cleanliness.	71%	29%
11	The community and managers of tourist villages are not yet free from rabid animals or animals that carry infectious diseases at tourist attractions.	82,8%	17,2%
12	Being able to get directions to tourist spots.	62%	38%
13	Accessible infrastructure that is accommodating to caregivers, kids, and individuals with challenges.	68%	32%
14	The accessibility of communication channels and the media for managing	72%	28%

	emergencies.		
15	Preserving indigenous knowledge to ensure ecological sustainability.	77,4%	22,6%

Table 1 lists 15 obstacles hamper tourism management in villages in Manggarai, Indonesia. The biggest obstacle is the lack of tourist attraction information centers in tourist villages (86%), which is followed by stakeholders' inability to communicate in foreign languages (82.8%), the community's and the managers' continued presence of rabid animals or animals carrying infectious diseases in tourist attractions (82.8%), infrastructure to reach 78.5%, and other factors that inhibit (see table 1).

Information centers serve in mass communication, notably at tourist attractions. Tourist destination management can use an information center to provide visitors and other stakeholders with information offline or on their websites [28], [29]. Information centers in eight tourist communities in West Flores have the most significant challenge identified in this research since they either do not exist or need to be used efficiently. There are still many tourist attraction managers who need to be able to manage information centers so that many tourists do not explore the depth of the tourist attractions in tourist villages.

The second aspect of managing tourist communities in West Flores is the ability to communicate in a foreign language. Proficiency in foreign languages, including English, is crucial for developing tourist villages [30]–[32]. These competencies improve service quality by making communicating between tourism stakeholders and guests simpler, explaining tourist sites to English speakers, and promoting them worldwide. According to this viewpoint, tourist village employees and other stakeholders expect good English communication abilities to serve guests smoothly and successfully.

Third, rabid dogs in Flores Island prevent more tourists from visiting East Nusa Tenggara, primarily Labuan Bajo. It is estimated that around 59,000 people die from rabies, and the economic loss is 8.6 billion USD every year [33]. In underdeveloped nations, dogs contribute to 99% of rabies infections. Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Flores have long had rabies. Flores Island is a global tourism destination. Several things in this region have high dog populations due to the people's social and cultural lives. To expand tourism without changing community life, stakeholders must decide on the best possible solution.

An interesting thing is that cleanliness is a variable that is a challenge. Data from the community and managers around tourist attractions have yet to maintain the cleanliness of the object's environment and tourist attractions, reaching 71%. People's cleanliness habits make this data fascinating. If this is acknowledged as an obstacle, the clean living movement will grow, especially in popular tourist destinations. Cleanliness is essential in serving tourists [34], [35]. The community can take several practical steps at tourist destinations to address these issues, such as organizing hand-washing campaigns, providing soap and hand-washing facilities, disinfecting public areas and items, keeping them free of disease-carrying animals and vectors, maintaining clean restrooms and trash cans, and cleaning public spaces and goods. These various concrete actions are one strategy to overcome obstacles in managing tourist villages and increase stakeholders' readiness for this cleanliness aspect. Health-related factors are impacted by hygiene. Health is defined as a service that uses prevention, treatment, monitoring, and control measures to apply health regulations and provisions to people and the tourism ecosystem [36], [37].

Stakeholders must also overcome the obstacles of convenience and security. Data indicates that one of the constant obstacles in managing tourist communities in the West Flores region is the provision of infrastructure that is accessible to the elderly, children, and people with disabilities. Two factors must be considered: convenience and security [38], [39].

To overcome safety and comfort variables, the community around the tourist attraction must maintain pollution and contamination, evacuation routes, security, and media and communication mechanisms for emergencies. These concrete actions are one strategy to overcome obstacles in managing tourist villages and increase stakeholders' readiness for this safety aspect.

Furthermore, managing a tourist village oriented towards preserving local wisdom and environmental sustainability is a challenge that cannot be underestimated. This challenge reached 77.4%. The issue of managing tourist villages oriented towards environmental sustainability is a challenge that must be addressed immediately. Planting trees on the road to the object, not throwing trash/waste carelessly, cleaning up plastic/non-plastic waste at tourist attractions and water sources, preventing air pollution from vehicle gases, cigarettes, or other smells, and practicing traditional environmental rites are some ways to solve this ecological issue. These various concrete actions are one strategy to overcome obstacles in managing tourist villages and increase the readiness of stakeholders for this part of environmental integrity [40], [41].

#### **4 Conclusion and Recommendation**

Nevertheless, it is recommended that the tourism sector continue to be a mainstay to hasten the advancement of social welfare throughout Indonesia, especially in the West Flores region. This industry accelerates the downstream of society's productive activities, which increases society's welfare. Nature, culture, gastronomy, and religion are valuable tourism advantages in Flores Island, Indonesia. The Indonesian government has approved the Komodo-East Nusa Tenggara and Labuan Bajo National Tourism Strategic Areas as super-premium tourism due to their infinite value in accelerating people's welfare. This idea is a tangible way that the Central Government is supporting the growth of the tourism industry in Flores, Indonesia. Flores Island has many tourist attractions, particularly in the Manggarai region. Manggarai region has several villages that have been designated as tourist destinations, including Golo Loni in East Manggarai Regency, Poco Ruteng and Coal in West Manggarai, Bangka Kenda, Todo, and Meler in Manggarai Regency, and, of course, a large number of other tourist destinations with growth potential. The tourist villages have natural resources, local cultural attractions, ecotourism, and agricultural tourism possibilities that are interesting to research, preserve, and experience. Tourists in tourist villages in the Manggarai region are pampered not only with natural beauty but also with various local community traditions that contain historical-educational value, as well as agro-tourism with various horticultural plants suitable for tourists.

Nevertheless, the community's welfare, particularly that of the area surrounding the tourist attraction, has not benefited fully from the valuable assets in these tourist villages as they face several serious problems that require immediate attention, such as the lack of tourist attraction information centers (86%), the inability of village stakeholders to communicate in a foreign language (82.8%), the fact that rabid animals or animals carrying infectious diseases are still a problem (82.8%), the infrastructure (78.5%), the environment (77.4%), and issues with cleanliness and health (71%). With the help of this data, stakeholders can work together to address several issues related to managing Indonesian tourist villages, particularly in the West Flores region. These issues include the need for information centers at each tourist destination, widespread and consistent rabies vaccination campaigns for dog populations, English language instruction for tourists at each destination, infrastructure that can

accommodate handicapped visitors, and actions to maintain a clean, safe, comfortable, and healthy environment.

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