

# Community Based Ecotourism Development Strategy In The Gunung Mutis Natural Reserve Area South Central Timor District

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this research is to propose a CBE development strategy in the Gunung Mutis Nature Reserve Area. Data collection techniques were obtained by observation, in-depth interviews conducted with village heads, community leaders and local communities through focus group discussions, documentation and literature study. The data analysis method used is the SWOT (Strong, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat) analysis. Results show that community participation is still limited as an object of ecotourism development and has not yet reached the stage of planning and evaluation. There is need for assistance and training to the community to improve human resources and improvement of infrastructure and if managed by applying the concept of Community Based Ecotourism (CBE) which places local communities as the holder of full control in management and development, it will contribute in the form of improving community welfare and the sustainability of local culture.

**Keywords:** Community based ecotourism, Gunung Mutis.

## 1. BACKGROUND

Indonesia has a vast tourism potential that is spread in almost every region with high aesthetic value. But along with the change in the world tourism paradigm, there has been a shift in orientation from mass tourism to special interest tourism. This happens due to the increasing number of tourists who tend to visit natural and cultural-based objects of the local population. Special interest tours, one of which is known as ecotourism.

Ecotourism is a tourism activity that draws great attention to the preservation of natural resources and the environment as one of the main issues. Ecotourism as a form of responsible travel to the natural area is carried out with the aim of conserving the environment and preserving the lives and well-being of the local population, demonstrating a conceptually integrated conceptual concept of a balance between enjoying the beauty of nature and maintaining it. Therefore, ecotourism can be seen as a concept of sustainable tourism development that aims to support efforts to preserve the environment (natural and cultural) and increase community participation.

Potential development of Community Based Ecotourism (CBE) is the concept of ecotourism development by involving and placing local communities who have full control in management and development so as to contribute to society in the form of improving community welfare and the sustainability of local culture. Five key aspects of community-based ecotourism, namely ecotourism management is carried out by local communities, local

ownership, accommodation facilities provided by local residents, guides are local people, and pioneering, management and maintenance are the responsibility of the local community [1].

The Gunung Mutis Nature Reserve area is located on the mainland of Timor Island and administratively the administration is located in Fatumnasi District and Tobu District, South Central Timor Regency and West Miomafo District, North Central Timor Regency. The gunung mutis reserve is inhabited by one of the oldest tribes in NTT, the Dawan Tribe. This Nature Reserve area is one of the Nature Reserve areas which was designated through a Minister of Forestry and Plantation decree number: 423 / Kpts-II / 1999, dated June 15, 1999 with an area of 17,211.95. The distance between the Gunung Mutis Nature Reserve and the capital of the TTS Regency, SoE City, is 40 km. Cold and humid weather allows a variety of tropical plant vegetation to flourish and is an ideal place for various types of fauna[2].

So far, the development of community-based ecotourism in Mutis has not been developed comprehensively because people do not have knowledge about nature and culture that are potential and selling points as tourist attractions. In addition, the community also does not have quality expertise to manage or be directly involved in tourism activities. Community-Based Ecotourism can create employment opportunities for the community and reduce poverty, where ecotourism income such as guide fees, transportation costs, the provision of homestays such as accommodation, selling handicrafts, management and maintenance of attractions which are the responsibility of the local community, including the determination of fees for tourists. It is hoped that these activities will have a positive impact that will ultimately be able to foster identity and pride among local residents who grow due to increased ecotourism activities.

From the background above, this research seeks to propose a strategy for community-based ecotourism development in provision that the proceedings will serve well and make the gunung mutis nature reserve located in Fatumnasi to be one of the more desirable tourist destinations.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Ecotourism**

Ecotourism according to The International Ecotourism Society is a responsible journey to natural areas that preserve the environment, sustaining the welfare of the local community involving interpretation and environmental education [3]

From the understanding of the potential of ecotourism it can be concluded that the potential of ecotourism is related to tourism offerings. The elements of tourism offers consists of three perspectives: (1) Products, which are all attractions based on natural resources. Attractions can be divided into tangible and intangible attractions that provide pleasure to tourists in the form of natural wealth, culture and man-made products. (2) Market, which is a journey directed at environmental preservation efforts and (3) Development approach, which is a method of approach and utilization of tourism resources in an environmentally friendly manner. Responsible tourism activities for local people and environmental preservation are emphasized as a feature of ecotourism [4].

### **2.2 Definition of Community-Based Ecotourism**

Community-based ecotourism can help maintain the use of natural resources and sustainable land use. Some basic requirements in developing community-based ecotourism are: [5]

1. Landscapes or plants and animals that are considered attractive to visitors
2. Ecosystems can still receive a certain number of visitors without causing damage.

3. Local community who are aware of potential opportunities, risks and changes that will occur and have an interest in receiving visitors.
4. There is a potential structure for effective community decision making
5. There is no real threat that cannot be avoided or prevented from local culture and traditions.
6. Initial market assessments indicate potential demand for ecotourism and there are effective ways to access the market. It must also be known that the potential market does not receive too many ecotourism offers.

Local communities involved in community-based ecotourism development need to fulfill several aspects, namely: [6]

1. The ability to host an inn
2. Basic English skills
3. Computer skills
4. Financial management skills
5. Marketing skills
6. Openness towards visitors

The CBE concept has principles that can be used as a tool of community development for local communities namely: [7]

1. Recognize, support and promote tourism in the community.
2. Involve community members from the beginning on every aspect.
3. Promote community pride.
4. Improve quality of life.
5. Ensure environmental sustainability.
6. Maintain unique local character and culture.
7. Help develop cross-cultural learning.
8. Respect cultural differences and human respect.
9. Distribute benefits equitably among community members.
10. Contribute a specified percentage of community project income.

### **2.3 Local Community Participation**

Society as an important element requires direct involvement in the arrangement of tourist areas. The process of community involvement depends on the existing potential and capabilities. The community around tourist objects and attractions play an important role not only in the process of implementing tourism directly but also in the management of the tourist area later [8].

Several conditions for someone to participate, namely: [9]

1. If the activity is important for the person
2. Someone feels that the action to be taken makes a difference
3. Someone feels recognized and valued
4. There is an opportunity to participate

### **3. RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA ANALYSIS**

This research will use a qualitative descriptive method. This method is used to obtain in-depth information data but to describe the overall real conditions that exist. The research was conducted for six months. In connection with the field survey and data processing, the tools used are cameras, maps of the research area, writing instruments, interview guides while the material used is the community and the potential of attractions. Data collection techniques were obtained by observing directly/observing forms of community involvement in ecotourism activities to obtain data and related images, in-depth interviews will be conducted to a number

of speakers; in this case are the village head, community leaders and local communities through focus group discussions, documentation and literature study.

The data was analysed through the SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat) analysis. SWOT analysis is used to identify relationships of ecotourism resources with other resources [10].

#### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The development of community-based ecotourism in the Gunung Mutis nature reserve is carried out by analyzing the strengths, weaknesses of opportunities and threats related to the conditions that exist in the area. Analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are the basis of considerations that will support the development of community-based ecotourism.

##### **4.1 Identification of Internal and External Factors**

Internal factors in the form of strengths and weaknesses can provide as one of the basis in preparing plans and strategies for community-based ecotourism development in the Gunung Mutis reserve. Assessment of internal environmental factors can provide information about the ability or capital internally to utilize and or overcome external factors in achieving development goals. Based on the results of data collection, there are several internal environmental factors, which can be described, as follows:

a. Identification of Strength factors

- 1) The tourist attraction in the Gunung Mutis nature reserve in the Fatumnasi village area of TTS Regency is still natural and has natural potential and the tourist attraction which is the main element of ecotourism products namely the charm of marble mountains dominated by *ampupu* and sandalwood trees, *fir* and *bonsai* and various types of animals, which are the timor deer, couscous, timor timayak, timor python, *timai punai*, and *timet betet*.
- 2) The desire of the community to participate in ecotourism development activities in the Gunung Mutis nature reserve was proven by the establishment of a tourism awareness group (*Pokdarwis*) in the area. *Pokdarwis* consisting of local communities is a place for the community to cultivate the various potentials that exist in their area. *Pokdarwis* activities in fatumnasi include weaving which is carried out by women and young women, and managing dance studios to preserve the traditional arts of the area.
- 3) The community is open to tourists visiting the Gunung Mutis Nature Reserve. The existence of a homestay is provided with residents' houses which are used as places to stay so that tourists can directly interact with and know the life of the local community. In particular, a homestay may consist of ten lopos.
- 4) It is inhabited by one of the oldest tribes in NTT, the dawan tribe. This tribe still upholds the traditions handed down by their ancestors such as offering betel and areca nut to guests as a sign of welcome. In addition, the use of native languages (regional languages) namely Dawan's language is still attached to today in everyday life.
- 5) Compliance with certain community leaders. Community leaders remain in control in society because considered to control the behavior of the people to what is uttered by community figures certain will obeyed, when problems occur in of the community usually community leaders presented to give a solution and can also give sanction in form of fines.
- 6) It has a distinctive culture that is the existence of traditional arts in the form of dances, especially the welcoming guest dance; that is the sleigh dance and Natoni

as the welcoming poem for the special guests. Natoni is expressed in the form of traditional figures of speech spoken verbally by a speaker (atonist) who is accompanied by a group of people as a companion (nahe'en).

- 7) The access to the highway to the location of the Gunung Mutis nature reserve is already good, with the presence of tourism events that began to be held at Fatumnasi, and the road construction has begun to be improved.
  - 8) It has three large watersheds, namely Noelmina and Noel Benain in the south and Noel Fail in the north. The rivers are a source of water used for community agricultural land.
  - 9) Presence of a photo booth. Many places in the Gunung Mutis nature reserve present stunning natural scenery which has beautiful beauty and panoramas ranging from the uniqueness of old rock hills to the bonsai forests that are still preserved.
- b. Identification of weaknesses
- 1) The educational background of the community is still low so that people are still not ready to accept tourists. In this connection the community recognizes that they do not have the knowledge and understanding of the importance of tourism development so they do not care about the positive impacts of tourism activities that can produce economic value.
  - 2) Lack of public awareness and tourists in maintaining cleanliness so that there is still a lot of plastic waste that is disposed of carelessly in residential areas and in the nature reserve. Community participation is only as an implementer not at the planning and evaluation stage
  - 3) Community participation is only as an implementer not yet at the planning and evaluation stage. Communities are often only involved as training members of a community tourism activity and have not been given the opportunity to actively contribute as a planner of tourism activities
  - 4) Community knowledge about CBE is still very low. This is due to the fact that the majority of the local community has low education at the elementary and junior high school level.
  - 5) The unavailability of supporting facilities such as stalls, public toilets, trash bins and the lack of directions in the tourist destination.
  - 6) Community handicraft products are not available yet. The unavailability of typical products in the form of community crafts. Like selling souvenirs in the form of weaving, Muti necklaces and marble stones that can be packaged into accessories.

#### **4.2 Identification of external factors**

The external environment is the environment outside the area that influences the development of the Gunung Mutis nature reserve, both positive and encouraging, as well as negative ones that threaten its development. The external environment of the Gunung Mutis nature reserve consists of Opportunities factors that are positive and negative Threats factors.

a. Opportunitieess

- 1) The support of tourism stakeholders to develop community-based ecotourism in the Gunung Mutis nature reserve. Those who support tourism activities are academically by providing village tourism training, homestay training, and guestbook training. The governments in this case the central and provincial tourism ministries that provide assistance such as tents and making toilets in homestays.

- 2) The location of Fatumnasi village is in the area of the Gunung Mutis Nature Reserve, which means it has a wealth of diverse tourist attractions both natural and cultural in the local community. Natural attractions such as the beauty of mountains, marble, sandalwood trees, natural bonsai, watersheds, natoni culture, sleigh dancing and betel nut culture.
  - 3) The rapid development of technology and information at this time that makes it easy for tourists to reach various tourist destinations and to various tourist attractions is an opportunity to promote the ecotourism of the Gunung Mutis Nature Reserve. This proved from the number of posts on one social media with the number reaching more than 6000
  - 4) Adequate infrastructure at this time such as the existence of electricity, highways, telecommunications connections, educational facilities available to facilitate the community in their activities.
- b. Threat identification
- 1) Lack of community knowledge in managing existing resources at the community level such as not being able to manage homestays, destinations, lack of initiatives to be aware of tourism and lack of souvenir making skills.
  - 2) The lack of community understanding of ecotourism and nature conservation is related to the low level of community education as evidenced by the fact that there are still people who cut trees illegally.
  - 3) Other villages / regions that have similar tourism potential.
  - 4) Possible jealousy from other villages / regions related to tourism development.
  - 5) The possibility of exploitation of Natural Resources that damage the environment
  - 6) Concern about outbreaks of infectious diseases, such as the SARS Virus, Avian Influenza, Ebola, and others where these viruses are zoonotic diseases. This certainly will be a threat to the host community, so that the host community feels worried about the arrival of foreigners or tourists.

#### **4.3 SWOT Strategy**

Following the identification of internal and external factors is to formulate priority and alternative strategies through the SWOT analysis. Referring to the four groups of development strategies, the SWOT analysis regarding the development of community-based ecotourism in the Gunung Mutis nature reserve can be described as follows:

1. Village development program according to natural and cultural potential
 

This strategy was chosen to take advantage of opportunities by optimizing existing strengths. The charm of the natural and cultural attractions of the Gunung Mutis reserve has the potential to be developed into a tour package that offers natural beauty and cultural uniqueness of the local community. The development of this strategy should always be guided by the principle of ecotourism that unites environmental conservation, community development and sustainable tourism, going hand in hand so that it does not cause damage to these tourism resources. Ecotourism is not a mass tourism so there is a need for regulation and restrictions on the number of tourists. In addition, it is necessary to make a routine event calendar in the form of cultural and traditional arts festivals by displaying interesting artistic attractions. With this development, it is expected to improve the standard of living of the people.
2. Community assistance programs
 

This strategy was chosen using the opportunities they have to overcome threats. This strategy needs to be done because it is a process so that the community is able to manage

their resources independently. Community activities that need attention and assistance include homestay preparation, catering, craft manufacturing and marketing, basic English, service ethics and simple accounting. This assistance is carried out by parties who have competence in their fields.

3. Training programs for enhancing human resource capacity

This strategy is based on harnessing power to overcome threats. This strategy was chosen because of the low educational background of the community so that the lack of ability in scouting tourism, lack of knowledge in food management, lack of skills in producing crafts as souvenirs typical of the area. The training activities that can support the development of community-based ecotourism in the Gunung Mutis nature reserve include homestay structuring skills, scouting, basic English, culinary, making souvenirs and simple accounting. In community-based ecotourism (CBE), the community acts as a manager as well as implementing activities so that the community is expected to have an economic impact to improve the living standard of the community.

4. Tourism facilities and infrastructure development program

This strategy was chosen in an effort to minimize weaknesses to avoid threats. Suggestions and supporting infrastructure used must pay attention to the principles of living natural resources and its ecosystem. In addition, planning the development of pre-used facilities must involve and utilize the abilities of the community. To maintain the sustainability of the existing ecosystem in the Gunung Mutism Nature Reserve, there is the need to put up a warning board and make regulations for tourists to help maintain the beauty of nature by not polluting the surrounding environment.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The results showed that the strategies and programs that need to be developed to succeed in the development of community-based ecotourism include, among others, village development programs according to natural and cultural potentials, community assistance programs, human resource capacity building training programs, tourism facility and infrastructure development programs. The main key to the successful development of community-based ecotourism in the Gunung Mutis nature reserve is the involvement and participation of local communities, so that a sustainable development is expected to be able to encourage economic development towards improving the welfare of local communities.

## 6. SUGGESTION

Firstly, it is hoped that the district government needs to improve, provide and develop tourism facilities that are more empowering for the local community, namely by utilizing local products, so as to be able to encourage the community's economy towards improving the welfare of local communities, and need to improve the quality of human resources in the field of tourism so that the community has the knowledge, ability and more skilled in packaging various tourism products, so as to realize the development of ecotourism that leads to the involvement and participation of local communities. Secondly, the community is expected to help maintain the cleanliness and beauty of the tourist sites by keeping the environment clean, comfortable and beautiful. Don't litter, don't cut down any trees.

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