

The Role of Mangrove Forest Ecotourism Development in Increasing Community's Economy

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Abstract. This study aims to determine the role of mangrove forest ecotourism in improving the community's economy in Bedono Village, Sayung District, Demak Regency. This study used a qualitative descriptive method with data collection techniques in the form of observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study show that ecotourism conditions are under ecotourism destination standards, where objects and special attractions that can be seen are fulfilled, such as unspoiled natural beauty, flora and fauna, and the introduction of various types of mangroves around, and the availability of facilities as support for visitors to carry out activities various kinds such as speed boats, fishing, photo spots, prayer rooms, batik halls, nature schools, mangrove tracking and the availability of facilities for shopping such as buying sea catches from fishermen, eating at restaurants and enjoying processed mangrove products. Efforts to manage and develop Morosari Sayung Demak Mangrove Ecotourism with community involvement/participation are carried out independently, such as maintenance and repair, making and adding photo spots, providing education through nature schools, planting and inserting, guarding, supervising and maintaining mangrove forests from illegal logging. The socio-economic impacts show a positive impact, namely increasing income for the community, providing business opportunities for the surrounding community with tourism, making ecotourism a forum for employees to reduce unemployment, and providing benefits to the surrounding community.

Keywords: Ecotourism, Mangrove, Community Economy

1. Introduction

Coastal areas and waters are a single ecosystem that is interrelated. The world's global environmental ecosystem is very dependent on the condition and sustainability of forests in Indonesia.[1] The forest area includes several forests, some of which are mangroves. The area of forest in the world where mangroves are 0.4%. [2] A mangrove is a coastal forest protected from waves in calm waters and depends on sea and river water flow. Mangrove forests bordering the mainland in the highest tidal ranges make this ecosystem a transitional area influenced by land and sea factors. Its existence is a component of the mangrove forest flora in the form of tree species. Its diversity is lower than other easily recognized mainland forests and their constituent fauna. Most of these are invertebrate animal groups and inhabit mangrove ecosystems, but only a small portion of these biotas are also in mangrove aquatic ecosystems.[3]

Mangrove area is divided into several functions, namely physical, ecological, and economic.[4] The physical functions of mangrove forests include stabilizing the shoreline and

riverbanks as a barrier to erosion, enlarging the area of fields by absorbing water and silt that is dragged by rivers into the mangrove area and its surroundings, including controlling the rate of seawater intrusion so that well water becomes fresher protecting the area behind the mangroves from the dangers of waves, wind, and tsunami disasters. Mangrove ecology includes places to find food for fish, shrimp, crustaceans, and marine creatures, shrimp breeding grounds, nurseries, and nesting sites for wild animals, especially birds and reptiles. The mangrove economy includes wood as community fuel and non-timber forest products consisting of food, drinks, medicines, mangrove honey, and so on.[5]

Communities in mangrove forests play a major role in sustainability. The community has a role in protecting mangrove areas or destroying mangroves. Communities can act as individuals or groups who use various forest products to support their subsistence needs and demand that they maintain environmental stability. Developing community life centered on mangrove forests requires several forms of sustainable use to maintain ecosystem stability. Mangrove forests have functions and advantages of economic and ecological resources as development resources, and people have long used them, especially those living along the coast. From that, mangroves are ecosystems that support the survival of living things that must be preserved.[6]

Based on presidential regulation No. 73 of 2012 concerning the national strategy for managing mangrove ecosystems, mangrove ecosystems are a unity between mangrove vegetation communities associated with fauna and micro-organisms so that they can grow and develop in areas along the coast, especially in tidal areas, lagoons, estuaries which are protected by sandy mud in the form of a sustainable environmental balance. The development of mangrove forests must involve the local community. This can affect the success rate of mangrove forest development.[7] because the more people involved, the more successful the development of mangrove forests will increase.

Empowering coastal communities in developing mangrove forests and bringing benefits for environmental sustainability can also provide opportunities to improve the economy of coastal communities, most of whom work as fishermen. Coastal communities can be empowered to manage mangrove forests because, in the future, successfully developed mangrove forests can be utilized as tourist attractions.

Bedono Village is located in Sayung District, Demak Regency. Bedono Village is located in the Morosari Demak mangrove forest conservation area. The local government uses the existence of mangrove forests to become a place for marine and religious tourism to improve the economy of the surrounding community, which are fishermen incidentally. Morosari Beach is a place to enjoy panoramic sea views, especially sunsets. Visitors can also make a pilgrimage to the grave of Sheikh Abdullah Mudzakkir, a cleric and cleric in the local area. This cleric's grave is in the middle of the sea, but the tomb never sinks even though the sea water is high tide. If visitors are going on a pilgrimage to the tomb, they will pass through a beautiful mangrove forest complete with bird species. The mangrove forest is equipped with a mangrove track. Apart from going by road, visitors can also use sea transportation. Available motor boats take visitors to the tomb and enjoy the sea. Morosari Beach also has several games visitors can enjoy, such as banana boats, dragon boats, water ducks, etc. After enjoying the tour on this beach, visitors can sample seafood dishes from the floating stalls on Morosari Beach. The following is a portrait of the mangrove forest conservation tourism area in Morosari, Bedono Village, Demak Regency:



For visitors who want to enjoy the beauty of the beach, a fee of IDR 5,000 per person will be charged. Visitors who bring vehicles will be charged a parking fee of IDR 3,000 for motorbikes and IDR 5,000 for cars. Morosari Beach is open 24 hours, so visitors are not limited by visiting hours to tour this place.

Morosari mangrove forest tourism in Bedono Village, Sayung Demak District, is a place for tourists to visit to see the natural beauty of marine tourism, which can provide a pleasant atmosphere for visitors. A clean place is also an assessment for visitors. Even though the facilities are not so complete, visitors still come.

The tourism sector, as one of the sectors that are expected to be a supporter of development in Demak Regency, especially in the village of Bedono Sayung Demak, is also one of the sectors that have quite an important role in development, increasing foreign exchange, expanding business opportunities, and increasing people's income in an effort development and expansion of product diversification and quality of tourism based on community empowerment. Apart from that, the arts, education, regional culture, and local natural resources while still paying attention to the preservation of the local environment, the conservative development of local natural resources as a potential tourism product, such as arranging maritime objects by increasing the accessibility of potential tourism and increasing the ability of public service development in regions through increasing human resources and providing relevant and conducive regulations for tourism development.

2. Method

The type of research used is qualitative research.[8] Where this study tries to solve problems related to empirical data.[9] The research was carried out in the Morosari mangrove forest conservation area in Bedono Village Demak Regency, which the local government enabled to become a marine and religious tourism destination to increase the income of residents who incidentally are fishermen. The focus of this study is the community's role in the existence of mangrove forest tourism in improving the welfare of the people of Bedono Village.

The data used in this study is from observations and interviews with several sources, namely the Demak Regency Tourism Office, tourist visitors, and the community at tourist sites. As well as secondary data obtained from literature in books, journals, and previous research.

Qualitative data analysis is carried out if the empirical data obtained is in the form of a collection of words and not in the form of a series of numbers and cannot be arranged into categories.[10] The data may be collected in various ways (observation interviews, document instances, and tape recordings). And usually processed first before being used in qualitative research, including the results of interview transcripts, data reduction, analysis, data interpretation, and triangulation.[11]

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1 Location Overview

Mangrove Park is an attractive and recommended tourist destination in Bedono Village, Sayung District, Demak Regency, Central Java. This mangrove park offers a different travel experience than what you usually get in other tourist spots. In addition to presenting enchanting natural beauty, Demak Mangrove Park also provides complete facilities to support the comfort of visitors.

One of the most important facilities for visitors is the location of a fairly large vehicle parking area. With adequate parking facilities, visitors can easily park their vehicles without worrying about finding a parking space.

Demak Mangrove Park also provides a pavilion as a place to rest. These pavilions are available at several strategic points within the tourist area and are ideal for relaxing while enjoying the beautiful natural scenery. In addition, visitors can also try out the walking tracks that are available in the mangrove park area. This walking track will take visitors through paths flanked by shady mangrove trees.

For photography enthusiasts, Demak Mangrove Park also provides interesting photo spots. These photo spots are designed in such a way as to maximize the natural beauty around the tourist area. In addition, visitors can also enjoy the cleanliness and comfort of the toilets and bathrooms available in the tourist area.

After getting tired of walking around and taking pictures, visitors can fill their stomachs at the food stalls in the tourist area. This food stall serves a variety of delicious and delicious regional specialties. In addition, Demak Mangrove Park also provides a place of worship for visitors who want to worship.

To get typical Demak souvenirs, visitors can visit the souvenir center available in the tourist area. This souvenir center provides various types of typical Demak souvenirs that can be purchased as a memento or as gifts for relatives and friends.

Not only that, but the Demak Mangrove Park also provides interesting rides for games such as water ducks and others. This game vehicle will provide visitors with an exciting and fun playing experience, especially children.

In addition to the facilities mentioned above, Demak Mangrove Park also provides tour boats for visitors who want to explore the natural beauty of mangroves from a different angle. This tour boat will take visitors around the mangrove area and present spectacular views. With all the abovementioned facilities, Demak Mangrove Park is a suitable tourist destination.

3.2 The Role and Economic Condition of the People of Bedono Village, Sayung Demak District, with the Existence of Mangrove Forest Tourism

Efforts to manage and develop mangrove forests in terms of planning objectives and functions in particular, namely, as an economic area, a recreation area (tourism), an educational area (education) and a productive area. In managing tourist attractions in the mangrove forest conservation area in Bedono village, the local government involves the local community in its management, which includes serving as ticket counter guards, parking lots, boat drivers, cleaners, and tour gates, to involving the community to take part in selling snacks that are at the tourist spot.

In implementing its management and development, there have been several efforts made with the involvement/participation of the community, which are carried out independently, such as:

3. Maintenance and repair, especially on tracking in ecotourism areas for the convenience of visitors.
4. Create and add photo spots and parks in ecotourism areas to attract tourists.
5. Providing education through natural schools to change people's mindsets to care more about the environment and manage mangroves for a productive economy.
6. Planting and inserting mangrove plants to preserve the mangrove forest.
7. Maintain, monitor and maintain mangrove forests from illegal logging, which can damage the ecosystem and the community.
8. Taking wood from the branches and twigs by not logging the main trunk of the mangrove tree. And it is mandatory to plant ten mangrove seedlings and plant them in the same location

This study shows that the existence of Morosari mangrove ecotourism impacts the socio-economic conditions of the community consisting of income, business opportunities, employment, and profits.

3.2.1 Income

With the existence of the Morosari mangrove ecotourism, it is hoped that it will positively impact the socio-economic conditions of the surrounding community. One of the socio-economic conditions of the community can be seen in the income of the community. The existence of the Morosari mangrove ecotourism has positively influenced the income of the surrounding community. The existence of the Morosari mangrove ecotourism provides benefits for the surrounding community, especially the Bedono community, Sayung Demak District. In terms of income, the people of Bedono Village experience changes in increasing their income with the existence of the Morosari mangrove ecotourism. Along with the increase in the income of Bedono Village, the community's needs can be fulfilled so that it has a positive impact on the people of Bedono Village.

Based on interview research findings with several informants, it can be seen that the existence of Morosari Mangrove Ecotourism can increase income and fulfill their daily needs, help increase the income of trading businesses, increase the involvement of unemployed people, such as cooks in ecotourism restaurants feel very helped and as housewives can also work to increase income, as fishermen feel that ecotourism plays an important role and is very helpful for marine catches and also the income of fishermen, as traders who sell can increase and fulfill their daily needs with the large number of visitors who come and approach their wares, as traders feel that by selling can increase and meet daily needs.

3.2.2 Business opportunities

The existence of Morosari Mangrove Ecotourism has a direct impact on the socio-economic community, including having an impact on business opportunities for the economy of the surrounding community, especially the community around the ecotourism. The types of community businesses are traders, seafood businesses, and canteens.

Based on the research results obtained, as a manager that for around ecotourism it feels the impact in terms of business opportunities such as trading, where visitors buy merchandise from traders, as a cook argues that for business opportunities that occur such as the development of shop houses that did not exist before and also gazebos made around tourism, as tour guides argue that for business opportunities that occur around Morosari Mangrove Ecotourism are seafood food, canteens and for outside ecotourism there are traders, which means it has an impact on business opportunities, as fishermen argue for business opportunities that occur around Morosari Mangrove Ecotourism are ice traders and stalls that provide seafood, which means it has an impact on business opportunities, as a parking attendant argues for business opportunities that occur around Morosari Mangrove Ecotourism are traders selling, which means it has an impact on business opportunities as fishermen argue that for business opportunities that occur around the Morosari Mangrove Ecotourism, there are traders who sell and also sometimes guard visitors' cars because there are no car parking facilities yet, which means it has an impact on opportunities business.

3.2.3 Employment

The existence of Morosari Mangrove Ecotourism has a direct impact on the socio-economic community, including having an impact on employment for the economy of the community around ecotourism. The types of work accommodated mainly are ecotourism maintenance and repair workers, teachers at nature schools, parking attendants, speed boat drivers, tour guides, ticket guards, local women (*dodol*, batik, and food makers), and cooks.

Based on the research results obtained by the researcher from interviews with the manager, he said, "With the Morosari Mangrove ecotourism, the economy of the surrounding community can be helped where the establishment of this tour can absorb labor which we are focusing on absorbing local workers, namely from the people of Bedono Village."

So that it can be concluded that the existence of the Morosari mangrove forest, the regional government hopes to reduce unemployment in the community, especially Bedono Village, and fully involve the community in managing Morosari mangrove tourism and foster a sense of community awareness to participate in developing this mangrove tourism.

3.2.4 Profit

The existence of Mangrove Ecotourism Mangrove has a direct impact on the socio-economic community, including an impact on the benefits of the surrounding community, where it is known that the Morosari mangrove ecotourism is community-based and the benefits and benefits are intended for the surrounding community.

From the research results obtained by the community, which previously only earned income from fishermen, now it is greatly helped by the existence of the Morosari mangrove tour, namely now they have a shop to get additional income, and their children also get additional work apart from fishing, they are also involved as tour gates. So that it also contributes to increasing the income of the local community.

Thus, the impact provided by the existence of Morosari Mangrove Ecotourism on the socio-economic community of Bedono Village, Demak Regency, shows a positive impact from 4 indicators, namely increasing income for the community, providing business opportunities for the surrounding community with tourism, making ecotourism a place for absorbing labor so that reduce unemployment and provide benefits to the surrounding community.

The community becomes aware of the existence of ecotourism. It develops a mindset in which they become more concerned about the environment, do not litter and understand that in religion, protecting and preserving the environment and natural resources is a must, especially for fishermen. It has a positive impact. Good for them to look for sea catches with the mangrove area preserved.

Changes in the community's economy are also seen to be increasingly profitable from busy visits for traders, providing job opportunities for the community, the productive economy from mangrove processing, and especially for fishermen helping increase fishermen's income. Even though the role of the government has not yet existed in the development of ecotourism, so far, Morosari mangrove ecotourism has positively impacted the local communities.

4. Conclusion

The development of mangrove forest ecotourism areas is a form of tourism area management that seeks and aims to provide benefits, especially for the protection, preservation, and utilization of ecotourism potential and environmental services of natural resources, especially in coastal areas. On the other hand, the community can directly benefit from the tourism sector by opening business fields that create new job opportunities and increase the community's income. The development of green leaf mangrove forest ecotourism areas requires determining the exact location of each area so that there are no problems of interest between the growth of settlements and the green leaf mangrove forest ecotourism area, which is managed and used for recreational activities.

The existence of Morosari Mangrove Ecotourism has had a positive impact on the socio-economic community of Bedono Village, Sayung District, Demak Regency, such as:

- a. Increasing people's income so that there is an increase in income that can meet the daily needs of the surrounding community
- b. Increasing business opportunities that trigger an increase in the economy of the surrounding community
- c. Absorption of labor in the Morosari mangrove ecotourism area as a forum for employment opportunities, thereby reducing unemployment.
- d. The development of development around the mangrove forest area

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