

Research Article

Community Empowerment in Supporting Tourism in West Manggarai, Welak district, East Nusa Tenggara

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Abstract.

This research discusses the empowerment of rural communities in Welak District through tourism development. By using a qualitative approach and primary and secondary data collection methods, it focuses on community development as human resources. By understanding the concept of economic empowerment and implementing a village strategic plan, this research aims to increase community participation in developing the tourism sector. Interviews with government officials and local communities reveal challenges in maximizing tourism assets and prioritizing infrastructure development for tourism access. Overall, this research highlights the importance of community empowerment for sustainable tourism growth. The results show that the community around the tourist location had not been maximized in terms of utilizing tourism assets that could possibly become additional tourist destinations. Given the nature of the Labuan Bajo tourist destination, this was because there was still a “wait and see” attitude towards what they expected the government to be able to give them after they handed over the assets. On the other hand, the problem of infrastructure has not been a priority for access to tourist destinations.

Keywords: community empowerment, supporting tourism, community-based tourism, West Manggarai

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1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector has become one of the most dynamic and fast-growing sectors worldwide. Labuan Bajo is located in Komodo District, West Manggarai Regency, NTT Province which has been declared as one of the super priority destinations by President Joko Widodo since 2015 (16). The implementation of development in Indonesia, especially in the economic field, before the crisis had recorded a number of



progress, although there were still a number of development problems that needed to be addressed and solved immediately.

The government through the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf) intends to develop other areas that can become tourism magnets in Indonesia whose success can also rival Bali. Some of the factors that make Bali successful as a tourist destination are because Bali has many other tourist alternatives besides the beach, meaning that the more diverse tourist attractions that are supported by adequate infrastructure will make the area more attractive to visit.

Welak District, which until now has become one of 4 sub-districts with a backward status in West Manggarai Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province (NTT), an archipelago in the middle of Indonesia's maritime area. The district has a total of 12 sub-districts, 8 of which have the status of developing sub-districts according to the release of the Ministry of Villages, PDT and Transmigration (Kemendes PDTT) Building Village Index (IDM) Ranking in 2023.

By empowering communities that are managed continuously, the potential of disadvantaged areas to become developed areas, for example, will be easily realized. One way that can be taken is by presenting other tourist attractions that can provide tourism diversity in Labuan Bajo, through this tourism we can also provide solutions to the problems of disadvantaged areas in Welak District by digging and promoting other tourism that can be used as companions for tourists visiting Komodo Island. Komodo National Park is one of the four UNESCO World Heritage sites that offer tours to see the original habitat of Komodo dragons, including reptiles, which will be greatly helped by the existence of other types of reptiles that can be used as the main attraction in this type of unique tourism. The Snake Palace, which is also an animal of the same class as the Komodo dragon, is located in Welak District with a distance of about 60 KM only, the Snake Palace will be able to complement unique tourism with animal attractions, especially the reptile group.

The focus of this study is to link community empowerment to contribute, especially in the tourism sector, with reference to the development of community-based tourism (CBT). CBT refers to efforts to empower local communities in tourism development with the intended benefits so that they can be felt directly by the community (2). The community as a party directly in the field will be the main highlight for tourism sustainability.

2. THEORETICAL STUDY

2.1. Participatory planning

There are two approaches related to the application of planning principles in the context of tourism. The first is associated with a formal planning system and places a strong emphasis on the potential benefits of tourism, the second is associated with the term participatory planning that leads more to balanced provisions and arrangements between development and controlled planning, this approach emphasizes more on sensitivity to the natural environment as an impact on Garrod's tourism development (2).

Drake and Paula (2) argue that if we focus more on the advantages of a participatory planning approach, it can be identified as follows:

1. Consulting the project with the community or involving the community in the management of project implementation and/or project operation can improve project efficiency;
2. The effectiveness of the project is much increased by involving the community which can help ensure that the project objectives can be found and the benefits will be received by the local group/community;
3. As a capacity building for community groups so that they understand what tourism is and its role in sustainable development. (it is guaranteed that those involved are very likely to be actively involved in projects with formal/informal training and awareness-raising activities);
4. Local empowerment is increased by giving local communities greater control over resources and deciding on the use of influential/important resources according to where they live. (meaning guaranteeing that local communities receive benefits in accordance with the use of resources); and
5. Profit sharing with local beneficiaries, e.g. labor costs, financial costs, project operations and maintenance and/or project monitoring and evaluation.

The elements of successful participatory tourism planning are as follows (2)

1. Focusing on effective leadership (having credibility as a person who understands, empathizes and cares about stakeholder opinions, someone who has the skills

needed in the area, is independent, has the ability to identify real and unreal problems, has the ability to organize participants, is willing to develop the group) and is able to direct top-down involvement to bottom up);

2. Empowerment of local communities;
3. Linking economic benefits to conservation;
4. Involve local stakeholders in every stage of the project;
5. There is local participation in project monitoring and evaluation.

2.2. Community Based Tourism (CBT)

Community Based Tourism (CBT) is a concept that pays attention to economic sustainability, pays attention to the surrounding community and continues to maintain the integrity of culture so that it does not change or mix with other cultures. (1) This is in line with the research plan which is directed as a means of empowering the community, especially in the development of tourism which can ultimately contribute to economic sustainability. The following phases can provide a practical illustration of the process of group formation in community empowerment(14) namely:

1. Phase 1 Initiation, including:
 - Stage 1: Awareness of problems and opportunities to advance both internally and externally;
 - Stage 2: Unification of attention to problems and opportunities (informal discussions among parties aware of the existence of problems);
 - Stage 3: Recognition of the existence of groups for the wider community as well as village heads, informal leaders and related agencies;
 - Stage 4: Seeking further infrastructure support (in particular, and community leaders, reform agents, capital owners, etc.).
2. Phase 2: Formation, including:
 - Stage 1: Invite for a meeting (including staff from relevant agencies and community leaders. This is the main thing to be achieved at this stage is the election of the steering committee, which is then tasked with drafting a general plan of the activity program, goals and group structure);

- Stage 2: Develop a temporary group structure and general plan (taking into account government policies, and seek information and assistance from relevant parties);
- Stage 3: Approval of the structure and general plan of the group in a general meeting by the Village Head.

3. Phase 3: Action includes:

- Stage 1: Carry out activities in accordance with the program that has been determined, either independently or with assistance from the village government;
- Stage 2: Developing a work plan and improving performance (e.g. deciding what needs to be done next related to resource development, time, coordination, etc.);
- Stage 3: Evaluation and documentation of progress.

4. Phase 4 of Group Development, including:

- Stage 1: Develop existing functions (deal with more problems, achieve broader goals or targets, increase initiatives in terms of groups);
- Stage 2: Develop new functions (not only increase services for members) but also develop the function of “playing an upward and or side-by-side” role, establishing relationships with wider parties;
- Stage 3: Group expansion (expanding the range of locations or forming new subgroups accordingly).

2.3. Element of Tourism

According to Pearce (10) the elements of tourism offers can be grouped into:

1. Attractions, which consist of: nature (landscapes, flora and fauna, climate, nature reserves); man-made (places of worship, monuments, historical heritage buildings, museums); culture (music, language, folk songs, dances, traditional ceremonies, traditional celebrations);
2. Accommodation consists of: hotels, motels;
3. Supporting facilities, which consist of: supporting services (shopping centers, souvenir shops); other facilities (pharmacies, restaurants, banks, hospitals);

4. Infrastructure, which consists of: transportation infrastructure (roads, ports, railway stations, airports); utilities (electricity, sewers, dirty water, clean water);
5. Transportation, which consists of: transportation routes, modes of transportation.

Meanwhile, regarding tourism demand, according to Mathieson and Wall (5), it consists of three types, namely:

1. Effective demand or actual demand of tourists who are enjoying tourism facilities e.g. people who are traveling;
2. Suppressed demand is all or part of the people who do not travel for some reason. The two reasons that make up the demand are withheld, namely: first; potential demand, those who want to travel but are not done because they do not have purchasing power at that time. If it is later to obtain an increase in revenue, this potential demand will turn into effective demand. Second; delayed request, where this group can afford to pay, but for some reason postpone the trip. If the reason for the delay does not exist, then this pending request will be an effective request;
3. No demand. Those who fall into this category are those who do not exist and do not want to travel (no demand)

3. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method by conducting interviews and observations as primary data sources and document studies for secondary data sources. The interview data collection technique used is a semi-structured interview data collection technique, namely the researcher is more free to conduct interviews and the researcher notes what the informant said with the informant alam waawancara is as follows.

The observation was carried out frankly and disguised with the researcher stating frankly to the relevant parties that the researcher is conducting research related to community empowerment in the tourism sector in disadvantaged areas as one of the efforts to advance tourism. The locus in this study is the office of the relevant agency according to the title of the research, namely the Tourism, Creative Economy and Culture Office and the Village Community Empowerment Office as well as the Welak District Government and local communities who are also actors in the tourism sector of West Manggarai Regency, NTT.

TABLE 1: Key Informant.

No	Location	Informant's Name	Position
1	Komodo District, West Manggarai, NTT	Stefanus Jemsifori, STP	Head of the Tourism, Creative Economy and Culture Office of West Manggarai Regency
2	Komodo District, West Manggarai, NTT	Pius Bolt, SE	Head of the West Manggarai Regency Village Community Empowerment Office
3	Welak District Office, West Manggarai	Avellinus Joni S.Fil.	Welak Sub-district, West Manggarai
4	Galang Village, Welak District	Francis Saoji	Manager of the Snake Cave Palace, Welak District
5	Galang Village, Welak District	Muhammad Guntur	Community
6	West Manggarai Regency	Kanisius Barut	The community and managers of Batu Cermin Cave tourist attractions

The flow of this research will begin by conducting a preliminary study with the aim of understanding the existing conditions in Welak District. It includes the analysis of secondary data on tourism potential, local economic structure, and relevant socio-economic issues and will be translated into the form of a research proposal that will be presented to the reviewer in accordance with the specific field of this research. After obtaining input for the improvement of research implementation, data collection will be carried out by field observation methods and interviews with local communities, tourism actors, local governments, and other relevant stakeholders to gain a deep understanding of their perceptions, needs, and aspirations related to tourism development and economic empowerment. The respondents who will be interviewed are the Head of the Tourism, Creative Economy and Culture Office, the Head of the Village Community Empowerment Office, Welak District, Tourism Awareness Groups and other related parties.

Primary data collection is also intended regarding tourism potential, tourist profiles, market characteristics, and consumer preferences that can be collected through direct surveys, observations, and field observations. The collected data will be analyzed using qualitative methods to analyze all the data that have been collected, both primary and secondary data, and combine them in the relationship between relevant findings. Based on the findings of the analysis, a model or framework for economic empowerment through supporting tourism is formulated. This can include tourism destination development strategies, skills training, tourism promotion, infrastructure development, and others. The results of the study are compiled in a final report that includes findings, recommendations, and conclusions. This report can be disseminated to local governments,

non-governmental organizations, academics, and the general public through seminars, conferences, scientific publications, and other media.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Overview of Research Object (West Manggarai Regency)

West Manggarai Regency is one of the regencies in province East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. West Manggarai Regency is the result of the expansion of Manggarai Regency based on Law No. 8 of 2003. The process of establishing the West Manggarai Regency through thorough studies, regional potential, and community service approaches. The area of West Manggarai Regency covers land Flores Island the western part and several small islands around it, some of which are Komodo island, Rinca Island, Big Seraya Island, Small Seraya Island, Angel Island And Longos Island. West Manggarai Regency is located in the westernmost part of Flores Island in East Nusa Tenggara Province. The capital of West Manggarai Regency is Labuan Bajo. West Manggarai Regency is located between 8°14'– 9°00' South Latitude (S) and 119°21'–120°20' East Longitude (BT). {BPS West Manggarai Regency, In Figures, 2021. (Processed)}

The expansion of the West Manggarai Regency has existed since the 1950s. This idea was first put forward by Mr. Lambertus Kape, a Manggarai figure from Kempo, Sano Nggoang District who once sat as a member of the Constituent Assembly in Jakarta. In 1963, the aspiration to expand Manggarai Regency by forming West Manggarai Regency began to be fought for formally through the political institution of the Catholic Party, Manggarai Subcommissariat. In 1982, West Manggarai was given the status of the Assistant Working Area of the West Manggarai Regent with the Decree of the Minister of Home Affairs Number: 821.26-1355 dated November 11, 1982.

Through a thorough assessment process that takes into account the potential and area as well as the need for a service approach to the community, through the Plenary Session of the Indonesian House of Representatives on January 27, 2003, the aspirations and desires of the people of West Manggarai reached their peak with the ratification of Law Number 8 of 2003 concerning the establishment of West Manggarai Regency, so that West Manggarai Regency was officially formed.

On September 1, 2003, Drs. Fidelis Pranda was inaugurated as the Acting Regent of West Manggarai Regency, tasked with running the government and preparing for the

definitive regional head election. And then through a democratic process with direct regional head elections, Drs. Fidelis Pranda and Drs. Agustinus C. Dula were then appointed as the first Regent and Deputy Regent of West Manggarai. And in 2010, the second regional election process was held. From this process, Drs. CH Dula and Drs. Maximus Gasa became the second Regent and Deputy Regent.

The administrative area of West Manggarai Regency consists of 12 sub-districts, namely: {BPS West Manggarai Regency, In Figures, 2021. (Processed)}

1. Komodo District
2. Boleng District
3. Sano Nggoang District
4. Mbeliling District
5. Lembor District
6. Welak District
7. South Lembor District
8. Kuwus District
9. Ndosso District
10. Macang Pacar District
11. West Kuwus District
12. Pacar District

Administratively, the West Manggarai Regency borders several areas, namely the Flores Sea to the north, the Sumba Strait and Sawu Sea to the south, Manggarai Regency to the east and the Sape Strait and West Nusa Tenggara Province (NTB) to the west. The topography of West Manggarai Regency varies based on the form of relief, slope gradient and height above sea level. The height of the West Manggarai Regency area shows varying heights, namely the height class of less than 100 meters above sea level is 23%, 100-500 meters above sea level is 47%, 500-1000 meters above sea level is 25% and more than 100 meters above sea level is 3%. More than 75% of the height is above 100 meters above sea level, the slope gradient varies between 0-2%, 2-15%, 15-40% and above 40%. However, in general, the West Manggarai Regency area has a hilly to mountainous topography. {BPS West Manggarai Regency, In Figures, 2021. (Processed)}

Like other regions in Indonesia, West Manggarai Regency has a tropical climate with a type tropical wet and dry which is marked by two clear seasonal differences, namely

rainy season and dry season. The rainy season influenced by the westerly monsoon winds that bring a lot of water vapor and humidity occurs from November to April with an average monthly rainfall in those months of more than 150 mm/month. Meanwhile, the dry season influenced by the dry easterly monsoon winds occurs from May to October. The air temperature in the West Manggarai region varies between 22°–34 °C, especially in coastal and lowland areas, while in the highland areas the temperature is usually less than 25 °C. The humidity level in this region also varies between 60% and 90%. {BPS West Manggarai Regency, In Figures, 2021. (Processed)}

Viewed from the cultural aspect of West Manggarai, Mabar is another synonym that is also a popular name for this region that has a variety of interesting cultures so that it can be a tourist destination. One form of diverse culture is the various dances owned by the Mabar region, including the ndundu ndake dance (dance to welcome guests), rangkuk alu dance (dance for traditional games), and caci dance (test of courage and fighting skills). The pacar pu'u traditional house is the traditional house of the Manggarai people. The roof of the house is cone-shaped with walls that have many windows. Kampung Maleo is one of the traditional villages that has been designated as a tourist village. This village has a wealth of art and culture as well as beautiful nature. The Manggarai tribe is one of the indigenous tribes in Indonesia, some of whom live in West Manggarai Regency.

The potential of West Manggarai Regency is very large when viewed from the tourism sector. Labuan Bajo, which is one of the areas in Komodo District, is a national super priority area designated as New Bali or in other words a leading tourist companion in Indonesia besides Bali Island. In addition, the tourist attractions in Labuan Bajo are Sylvia Hill, Padar Island, Pink Beach, Taka Makassar, Kanawa Island, Gili Lawa, and Manta Point. Here, tourists can enjoy beautiful beaches and hills. Many tour packages use boats to take tourists to these tourist attractions. Tourism potential is also supported by the existence of the Marina area as an open space and creative activity space for the community and tourists.

The GRDP Value at Constant Prices by Business Field of West Manggarai Regency in 2020 was 4,792,099.00 billion rupiah. In the pandemic year, the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors played an important role with a contribution of 40.92% of the GRDP of West Manggarai Regency. The rate of GRDP ADHK of West Manggarai Regency in 2020 was -4.28%, down 10.30% from the previous year and this was due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There were 7 sectors that experienced negative growth rates with the most severe recession in the Corporate Services sector (-44.31%). Meanwhile, the

sector that experienced the largest positive growth during 2020 was the Information and Communication sector 12.55%. {BPS West Manggarai Regency, In Figures, 2021. (Processed)}

Through the employment profile in West Manggarai Regency, it was found that 78.52% of the population in West Manggarai Regency is the workforce with 3.72% of them being unemployed. Meanwhile, the non-workforce population is dominated by women (27,350 people) and the largest in West Manggarai Regency are residents who take care of households (11.25% of the total population). %. {BPS West Manggarai Regency, In Figures, 2021. (Processed)}

The poverty picture in West Manggarai Regency during 2013-2020 can be seen in the graph. The number of poor people has fluctuated until in 2020 it reached 49,400 people (17.71% of the total). The fluctuating development is also seen in the poverty depth and poverty severity indexes, which in 2020 reached 3.09 for the poverty depth index (lower than the NTT Provincial average of 4.15) and 0.79 for the Poverty Severity Index (lower than the NTT Provincial average of 1.24). %. {BPS West Manggarai Regency, In Figures, 2021. (Processed)}

West Manggarai Regency has a Final Disposal Site (TPA), namely TPA Kaper in Golo Bilas Village with the status of the right to use of the West Manggarai Regional Government. The area reaches 1 ha with an open dumping waste processing system with a distance from the nearest settlement of 1.5 km. The waste management network system as stated in the RTRW of West Manggarai Regency consists of:

- TPA is located in the district capital and in all sub-districts in the region;
- TPS are spread around residential areas that meet the technical requirements for determining their location and space requirements; and
- waste management from households to landfills
- temporary (TPS) to the Final Processing Site (TPA) using integrated management {BPS West Manggarai Regency, In Figures, 2021. (Processed)}

4.2. Department of Tourism, Creative Economy and Culture

The development of West Manggarai Regency towards a leading tourism destination in Indonesia, of course, is not only focused on marine tourism, but also on other tourist spots that certainly have extraordinary potential and natural wealth. One of them is

the development of tourist villages. The development of tourist villages as a leading alternative destination is currently the main choice for both the central, provincial and regional governments in maximizing every potential of natural resources, traditions and culture. In this way, it is hoped that it can provide a positive multiplier effect on economic growth that can be directly felt by the community. Tourism villages have also become one of the main options in driving the sluggish economy of the community after being hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Head of the Service agrees with various parties who have assessed that West Manggarai Regency is not ready to compete in the tourism sector. Even so far, the area dubbed the super premium destination seems to have no clear direction for tourism policy. "If the tourism sector in West Manggarai Regency can be managed well, tourism can guarantee the preservation of nature and culture, as well as the provision of jobs for local residents." For example, the waterfall tourist attraction in Wae Lolos tourist village actually has the potential to generate PAD for West Manggarai Regency, where there is a development priority from the West Manggarai Regency Government, namely the development of tourist villages. "We believe that tourist villages have the potential to increase PAD for West Manggarai, considering that one of the development priorities in West Manggarai is the Development of Tourist Villages and Tourist Infrastructure.

The problems that are still felt by tourism village managers are: marketing implementation that is still not focused, environmental empowerment innovation is still low and economic impact measurement that has not been recorded properly. This can be seen from what will be offered for tourism in West Manggarai, whether it is a natural, culinary, educational, sports, business or cultural tourism destination, where the concept offered is still unclear.

4.3. Village Community Empowerment Service

The success in empowering village communities in West Manggarai Regency cannot be separated from the condition of its infrastructure. As an illustration, although Labuan Bajo has now been designated as a super premium tourist destination, the infrastructure to tourist attractions in Labuan Bajo is still concerning, including: the condition of the road to the Sano Nggoang Lake tourist attraction; the road to the Snake Palace; and the condition of the road to the Cunca Wulang waterfall. In fact, travel agents in Labuan Bajo always promote the tourist attraction.

The West Manggarai Regency Government must prioritize the development of supporting tourism infrastructure so that Labuan Bajo is not abandoned by tourists, due to accessibility factors. The development of road infrastructure will use the budget of the West Manggarai Regency Government to the central government, according to the status of the road. It is like the road to the Snake Palace tourist attraction in Welak District must use the district budget. The same thing also applies to the road to the Cunca Lolos waterfall and Sano Nggoang Lake tourist attractions in Sano Nggoang District must use the West Manggarai APBD II budget.

Road infrastructure in West Manggarai Regency based on BPS data, the length of the West Manggarai Regency road section is 1,146.90 km, of which 83.92% are district roads. Most of the roads already use asphalt, but there are still gravel, dirt, and other roads amounting to 46.64%. When viewed from the condition of the road, there are 44.30% of roads that are categorized as severely damaged. {BPS West Manggarai Regency, In Figures, 2021. (Processed)}

In addition to road infrastructure, Labuan Bajo City as a tourist destination, there are still many things that need to be fixed, such as: the arrangement of inner-city roads, the arrangement of street lights, and the arrangement of the environment. Until now, these three problems have not been maximized. It was found that many main roads that are often passed by tourists every night, without street lights. The inner-city roads are already damaged and the environment is not green and there is a lot of garbage.

In fact, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy is currently preparing 200 tourist villages in West Manggarai, to support the Super Priority Tourism Destination (DSP) in Labuan Bajo. The progress of tourism villages must involve the community and of course open up as many job opportunities as possible for the community in the tourism village itself. Furthermore, the super priority destinations in Labuan Bajo must also be able to be present to empower the community and tourism villages are a very relevant concept to drive the people's economy. Indeed, additional development is needed in the villages visited to support tourism, starting from animal pop dances that are enhanced with local wisdom.

Tourism villages are one of the icons of accelerating national economic recovery at the village level. The existence of money circulation that can be generated, including losses that are the risk, so its management must be under the supervision of BUMDes. Many villages improvise to build tourism villages. The way of thinking to realize a tourism village must consider its impact, not the way of thinking to obtain goals. Tourism villages

must rely on natural potential. The goal is environmental improvement. Not creating a tourism village, but the impact of the improvement alone. In fact, realizing a tourism village is not difficult, because it has beautiful nature.

Regarding the development of information technology, it is expected that the rapid internet can help inform the real conditions of existing tourist villages. However, so far, BUMDes is still constrained by Human Resources, especially those who understand information technology. Therefore, in the future, support from the West Manggarai Regency Government (Pemkab) is needed in order to support the development of village tourism.

4.4. Welak District

Welak District is one of the districts located in West Manggarai Regency with tourism potential that has characteristics that are almost similar to Labuan Bajo with Komodo, namely exotic snake hunting tourism which is a class of reptiles. Welak District is located between Sano Nggoang, Lembor and Macang Pacar districts with the capital city of Orong. Welak District has an area of 29,948 Ha and consists of 16 villages. The population of Welak District in 2020 was 21 thousand people with almost the same proportion based on gender. Plantation crop commodities in Welak District are coffee, horticultural crops are chili and bananas for fruit plants. There are only 16 small industries and 11 home craft industries with a total workforce of 18 people each owned by this district. Meanwhile, there are no large-scale trading companies/business sectors and there are only 4 medium and small scales each. There is only 1 facility and infrastructure in the form of a market with a semi-permanent building in Welak District, namely in Orong Village because it is also the capital. This is valid with the information conveyed by the Head of the Village Community Empowerment Service of West Manggarai Regency.

Welak District is one of 12 districts in West Manggarai Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province (NTT), Indonesia. List of sub-districts and villages in Welak District, West Manggarai Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province (NTT), Indonesia. Welak District has 16 villages:

1. Dunta Village
2. Galang Village
3. Golo Ndari Village
4. Golo Ronggot Village

5. Gurung Village
6. Lale Village
7. Pengka Village
8. Pong Welak Village
9. Orong Village
10. Racang Welak Village
11. Rehak Village
12. Robo Village
13. Semang Village
14. Sewar Village
15. Watu Umpu Village
16. Wewa Village

4.5. Tourism Awareness Group

The emergence of various tourist villages in West Manggarai Regency is prone to triggering conflicts in the community of the tourist village. For that, community management is needed from the beginning before the tourist destination develops. If there is no management in the community, then conflict will clearly occur. So a joint effort is needed to organize the tourist village from the beginning.

In order to realize the dream of West Manggarai Regency in developing tourist villages. It is necessary to have an even and effective arrangement. The arrangement of tourist villages must prioritize the welfare of the community in line with cultural values that are in accordance with the expectations of the community. All tourist village development programs must not sacrifice or ignore other basic development.

The basic needs that must be prioritized in building a tourist village are the needs for education. Education with qualified human resources and the availability of adequate facilities to encourage the generation how important education is to face a bright future. In addition to education, health services are also a very important element to be improved so that it is expected to be able to create a healthy and intelligent society.

Furthermore, the arrangement of community behaviour, including the grand plan or grand design of the tourism village must also involve residents. Thus, there will be responsibility for the problem of the development of the tourism village. If the community

is involved, then conflict can be avoided. On the other hand, if it only benefits a handful of people, then conflict can easily occur. From the experience of arranging the Cunca Wulang tourism village area, the involvement of residents in the initial planning is very important. In addition, all kinds of problems are solved together by considering various socio-cultural aspects in the community.

Head of the Tourism, Creative Economy and Culture Office of West Manggarai Regency, explained: "To develop regional potential including tourist villages, a Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) is needed. The existence of Pokdarwis is expected to be able to manage existing potential more optimally and can mediate and reduce conflicts," he said. For one tourist village, he said, it should only be managed by one Pokdarwis. With this pattern, if there is a conflict, the way to reduce it is by involving all Pokdarwis members. "If it is managed by many parties, then the potential for conflict is great, the resolution is also more complicated," said the Head of the Tourism, Creative Economy and Culture Office of West Manggarai Regency.

4.6. Snake Palace Cave Community

Galang Village is geographically located from the Goa Ular Palace which has a relatively close distance to the Welak District office, which is around 15 KM and 72 KM when compared to the distance to the capital of Labuan Bajo Regency. The population of Galang Village when compared to other villages in Welak District is ranked 3rd largest. Galang Village and all villages in Welak District are also considered not to have the potential to experience natural disasters so that disaster mitigation has not been a priority for the local government. There is only 1 type of industry in this village, namely the wood goods industry. Regarding the facilities and infrastructure of shops and grocery stores, which only number 10 in the entire Galang Village, there are no restaurants/eateries, let alone mini markets and lodging and financial facilities.

The Snake Cave Palace tourist attraction in Galang Village, Welak District was opened several years ago, but tourist interest in visiting the tourist destination is not yet normal. In addition to only being visited by domestic tourists and local tourists from Labuan Bajo, visits by foreign tourists are very few. Tourist visits to the Snake Palace in 2023 are still quiet. Every week, maybe only two local tourists visit, "said Dionisius Maun, Head of Galang Village.

With the completion of the construction of access roads to the Snake Palace, it will have an impact on the level of tourist visits. The Galang Village community is ready

to welcome tourists by providing local food. The arrangement of the Snake Palace tourist destination has been carried out by the Galang Village Government. Such as the arrangement of parking access and stairs to the mouth of the Snake Palace Cave. The community hopes that in 2024, the level of tourist visits to the Snake Palace will increase, so that it can have a positive impact on improving the economy of the village community.

According to the Research Team, the Snake Palace Cave tourist attraction is actually quite promising. However, it needs to be supported by elements of amenities and accessibility, for example, preparing a rest area and a place to eat. In addition, local products need to be developed such as weaving, traditional processions, and local cuisine. It is also necessary to think about the trekking route to the cave, both in terms of infrastructure and security and safety. Furthermore, it is necessary to realize how important collective work and patience are in tourism development, because tourism activities are not something that is instant, but rather gradual and does not require support from all stakeholders.

The research team during a visit to the Snake Palace Cave accompanied by local traditional figures and local guides assessed that the Snake Palace Cave is a natural stone cave that is the habitat of various species of snakes, both those that have been documented and those that have not been captured by camera lenses. The various snakes are believed to have inhabited the cave for a long time. In addition to the various snakes, the cave is also home to thousands of bats, and the cave has a river flowing in it. Of course, this quite promising snake palace tourist attraction needs to be supported by elements of amenities and accessibility, for example, providing a rest area and a place to eat.

4.7. Data Analysis

There are two approaches related to the application of planning principles in the context of tourism. The first tends to be associated with formal planning systems and places great emphasis on the potential benefits of tourism, the second is associated with the term participatory planning which is more directed at the provision and regulation of a balance between development and controlled planning, this approach places more emphasis on sensitivity to the natural environment as an impact on tourism development Garrod (2001:4).

For both approaches, especially from the formal planning side, the West Manggarai Regency Government has had a plan in terms of development, especially for its local community. This is proven by the existence of training activities involving local communities with the aim that their communities can develop the potentials owned by their respective regions in accordance with the existence of natural resources that are a gift to the area. In addition, the process is intended to achieve potential benefits from tourism.

Regarding participatory planning, it seems that this is still a big homework for various parties to continue to collaborate in terms of advancing tourism in their respective regions. This is evidenced by the explanation by the manager of the Goa Ular Palace in Welak District who was interviewed by the research team stating that the Goa Ular area has been handed over to the government since 2014 with the intention of getting attention in terms of infrastructure development. This has happened with the construction of access roads to the Goa Ular Palace which currently when the research team observed directly, the condition was very sad. The path is overgrown with wild plants so that it is very difficult to access the tourist spot. Can be seen in Figure 4.1.

Regarding the elements of successful participatory tourism planning, according to Garrod (2001), which focuses on effective leadership (having credibility as someone who understands, empathizes and cares about stakeholder opinions) has been shown by the very open welcome to the research team who intend to explore the potential of the Snake Palace Cave and immediately providing access for the team to meet and communicate directly with related parties. Although when viewed from the perspective of someone who has the expertise needed in the area, it seems not yet optimal because he is not a local son with an educational background that is less appropriate even though he has the ability to identify real and unreal problems and has the ability to manage participants and no less importantly is willing to develop groups can be shown by the highest leader in Welak District based on the results of observations and document reviews that are published publicly in the village office.

Regarding the empowerment of local communities, this has happened, although not optimally. Residents who own the land of the snake cave palace are also shamans when tourists visit the cave. The researcher's documentation while in the snake cave charmer's house can be seen in Figure 4.2.

Shamans tasked as a person who will perform traditional offerings as a form of cultural preservation will be directly involved in tourism activities. However, other things such



Figure 1: Access roads to the Goa Ular Palace. *Source:* researcher documentation, 2024.

as the availability of stalls or places to eat or even lodging have not been done by the community.

4.7.1. Community Based Tourism (CBT)

In responding to community involvement, in this case community empowerment in underdeveloped areas with a Community Based Tourism (CBT) approach with the following approach points:

1. The existence of economic sustainability

This has not happened in Galang Village. Seeing the current situation that Goa Ular seems to be not well maintained, both in terms of road access, stairs to the



Figure 2: The residence of Mr. Frans, the snake cave shaman. *Source:* researcher documentation, 2024.

mouth of the cave, conditions inside the cave and various supporting facilities such as transportation that is still difficult, the lack of places to eat, stalls and even lodging, then the sustainability of this economy is still very far from community involvement in enlivening tourism in terms of supporting economic sustainability.

2. Pay attention to the surrounding community and continue to maintain the integrity of the culture so that it does not change or mix with other cultures.

In terms of cultural preservation, this is still something that is still maintained by the community around the snake cave. This is indicated by the fact that the activity of asking permission from nature by performing a special ritual before tourists enter the cave is still firmly held. This could be one of the attractions for tourists to visit if only it was packaged in an interesting and fitting presentation. In accordance with its type as an exotic animal, such as the Komodo dragon in Labuan Bajo which must always be accompanied by a ranger using a long stick is an interesting attraction and could be an attraction for tourists who will visit. As can be seen in picture 4.3 below.

3. In terms of focusing on paying attention to the surrounding community, there are steps that can be linked to the formation of groups as one of the efforts in community empowerment. The phases starting from the initiation phase, formation, action, group development based on the results of interviews with related parties both from the Tourism, Creative Economy and Culture Office, the Village Community Empowerment Office and the Welak District government and the results of observations in the field, the assessment of Community Empowerment in Underdeveloped Areas, namely in Goa Istana Ular, Galang Village, Welak District, West Manggarai Regency, East Nusa



Figure 3: Permission ritual when entering the Snake Palace Cave. *Source:* researcher documentation, 2024 .

Tenggara Province (NTT) is still classified as the initiation phase which is marked by the following:

- **Stage 1: Awareness of the existence of a problem and an opportunity for progress** (internal and external).

This is actually marked by the handover of the land/site of the Snake Palace Cave to the government in 2014. This arose from the awareness of wanting to advance the surrounding area but was constrained by the lack of support for resources, both capital and power, because the area was relatively far from the entrance to West Manggarai Regency, both by air and sea.

- **Stage 2: Unification of attention to problems and opportunities** (informal discussion among parties who are aware of the problem).

It has happened when the land was handed over, but after that the activities focused on solving problems to create opportunities tended to be slow and not progressing quickly. The Regency Government has tried to concrete the stairs to reach the edge of the cave, but the access before that which is currently not yet tidied up has become an obstacle to smooth transportation because it is located in the forest.

- **Stage 3: Recognition of the existence of groups in society** (more broadly as well as village heads, informal figures and related agencies.)

At the Welak sub-district government level, in fact, the recognition of the parties and community groups who are believed to own the land of the snake palace cave is fairly conveyed, to the point that the appointment of the snake palace cave manager is still in the hands of the original family who owns the land. However, at the district government level, this has not been maximized. The district government tends to focus on each of their plans if there is a will to be able to grow and progress and is visible from the district level.

- **Stage 4: Seeking further infrastructure support**(especially community leaders, change agents, capital owners, etc.).

The search for support for further facilities and infrastructure was the initial motivation for land owners to hand over their land to the government. Because they were aware of the conditions that were less supportive for them to manage themselves because with all the limitations of access, it was certain that large resources were needed, not only in terms of material, but also for community empowerment assistance.

Linking the community empowerment approach with tourism development intended through the CBT approach, there are several points that can be used as references, one of which is regarding tourism demand and supply. According to Pearce (10) tourism supply elements can be grouped into:

1. Attractions, consisting of: nature (scenery, flora and fauna, climate, nature reserves). The snake palace cave has the main attraction of nature, namely fauna, the climate based on observations in March 2024 is wet because it is still raining.
2. Accommodation consists of: hotels, motels. There is no accommodation within a radius of at least 50 KM. Residents' houses have not been directed to be used as tourist accommodation. Accommodation is still concentrated in the capital of West Manggarai near the airport and port.
3. Supporting facilities, consisting of: supporting services (shopping centers, souvenir shops); other facilities (pharmacies, restaurants, banks, hospitals). There are no supporting facilities yet. According to BPS data and field observations, places to sell or souvenir shops are only found in Labuan Bajo.
4. Infrastructure, consisting of: transportation infrastructure: access roads approaching the cave cannot be passed by vehicles, it is necessary to walk about 1 KM with the condition of the road covered in wild plants, previous access roads had many holes with large rocks. When the research team tried to reach the sub-district office, the car they were riding in almost skidded. The nearest port and airport are 72 KM away. There is no train station in West Manggarai. Regarding utilities in the form of electricity, it is stated in the BPS report that it already exists.
5. Transportation, consisting of: public transportation routes and modes of transportation do not yet exist, tourists must rent a vehicle at least for safety on very difficult terrain with shadows such as the Figure 4.4 below.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of field research by interviewing key informants mentioned above, by also conducting direct observation and comparing it with existing secondary data that can be accessed publicly, the village community, especially in Galang Village, Welak District, West Manggarai Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province is still in the initiation phase. This is indicated by several points in this phase that are in accordance with the supporting points, namely the awareness of problems and opportunities to advance both internally and externally, which is indicated by the awareness of measuring one's own abilities and handing over land to the government to be developed. Another thing is that there has been a unification of attention to problems and opportunities,



Figure 4: Access road is rocky and full of holes. *Source:* researcher documentation, 2024.

informal discussions have been held between parties who are aware of the problems of limitations that occur, carried out by land owners with the Welak sub-district government.

Another thing about the recognition of the existence of groups for the wider community as well as village heads, informal figures and related agencies has been directly shown by the sub-district leaders so that this is an important point that can show that the community has actually tried to participate even though it has not been maximized. And the last thing is an effort so that the tourism potential that might be directed to become supporting tourism for Labuan Bajo as a super priority destination with the

tagline New Bali can be realized, one of which is with the existence of supporting tourism for Labuan Bajo's main tourism, Komodo, although other attractions that are no less interesting, namely the existence of the sea/waters, cannot be said to be able to compete or are suitable to support this natural tourism. This is realized in the last stage of this initiation phase, namely seeking further support for infrastructure (especially from community leaders, change agents, capital owners, etc.)

6. Suggestions

Based on the conclusions outlined previously, suggestions will be divided according to the responsible party, namely:

1. The Welak District Government is requested to pay attention and always be active in encouraging the attention of the West Manggarai Regency Government by always coordinating with related agencies, in addition to the tourism agency, village community empowerment can also be done with the public works agency, Bappeda so that portions are given according to shared priorities.
2. To the village community, especially Galang Village, Welak District, they can continue to take the initiative in conducting promotions, for example through social media owned by local residents or offering tour packages to tour package providers that are widely available in Labuan Bajo. And start to be consistent in opening stalls, for example, offering houses as tourist accommodation, for example, or being more active when there are tourists visiting for whatever reason, even though they do not relax their guard against the assets they own. Another thing is to participate independently in maintaining the infrastructure that has been created by the government.
3. To the Government in Manggarai Regency, so that they can also pay more attention to tourism potential that could become supporting tourism for fauna, the same as Komodo dragons, and added to the unique culture that local people still maintain by carrying out rituals that are packaged in a more attractive way so that tourists can be interested and also increase the length of stay of tourists in Labuan Bajo is currently still focused on visiting Komodo and carrying out activities in the waters around Labuan Bajo only.

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