

## TOURIST VILLAGE : THE ROLE OF YOUTH AS ACTIVISTS IN SOCIETY IN THE ERA OF DIGITALIZATION IN DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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### ABSTRACT

*Sustainable tourism development can be realized by developing tourist destinations from the smallest unit, namely the village level, this is because most of the tourism activities are there. Destination development is carried out by transforming the village into a tourist village. The idea of Sumberteguh Tourism Village is 5 pioneering tourism villages in Kudu District with the potential of the Marmoyo River, Sumberjo Reservoir, and parks. Some of the obstacles include budgeting funds from local governments, not knowing how to utilize village assets, and the lack of utilization of digitalization being the main factors. This Community Empowerment Activity uses a descriptive method with a qualitative approach and the results are in the form of site analysis. The development of research instruments consists of the Development of the Tourism Village Concept, supporting factors for biophysical conditions, socio-economic conditions, culture and Ecotourism principles which are then entered into a table of potential and constraints and then adjusted to community perceptions so as to produce development options that are appropriate to the conditions in the Village. The results of this community empowerment activity show that Sumberteguh Village has tourism potential that can be developed into a tourist area, divided into a core zone, a facility zone and buffer activities. The site analysis is divided into five (5) supporting factors in the table of Potential and constraints along with development options from these tourism potentials, resulting in four (4) types of tourism activity planning and Tourism Village Development concepts in the form of themes, activities, tourism facilities, institutional elements with development planning.*

## INTRODUCTION

A tourist village is a village that thrives independently, relying on its own potential and is able to market its various attractions as tourist attractions without involving investors. Based on this, the development of tourist villages is a realization of the Regional Autonomy Law (Law No. 22/1999), so each regency needs to develop a tourism village development program to increase regional revenue and explore village potential. Sumberteguh Village is located in the north of Jombang Regency, within Kudu District. It covers an area of 2.4 square kilometers with a population density of approximately 1,000 people per square kilometer. Sumberteguh Village has a population of 3,471, including 1,750 males and 1,721 females, with 1,431 heads of

families spread across five hamlets: Caben, Pateguhan, Teguhrejo, Sumberjo, and Maron Lor. The majority of Sumberteguh Village residents work as farmers, as Sumberteguh Village is located in a lowland and rain-fed area. In this millennial era, development is crucial for a village's progress.

Sumberteguh Village was once a plot twist in the development of a tourism integrity zone by the Kudu District. Sumberteguh's location in the eastern part of the village makes it ideal for use as the main entrance. The proposed area is named "KAMPUNG PECINAN." This utilizes neglected village assets (TKD) such as reservoirs, parks, and the Marmoyo River area. Sumberteguh Village, the third largest village in the Kudu District, has a very high youth population. This makes Sumberteguh Village a productive village in the future if it can utilize existing resources with support from the village government, community leaders, and young people in general. Management or development of tourism activities is essential to retain tourists, encourage them to stay longer in the destination and maximize their spending. Utilizing and preserving each potential is crucial, integrating these potentials into a single tourist attraction.

Rural tourism development is feasible, particularly to encourage non-agricultural activities, which in turn will support village diversification. Rural tourism is certainly different from urban tourism in terms of its objects, location, function, scale, and character. This certainly has consequences for its planning and development. Aspects such as the role of tourist villages in location specialization and the availability of attractions and facilities deserve attention in the development of tourist villages, which are expected to support rural diversification.

In tourist villages, residents still uphold authentic traditions and culture. Supporting activities such as farming systems, gardening, and traditional cuisine also contribute to the village's existence. In addition to these factors, a pristine and well-maintained environment is crucial for a tourist village. According to the Regulation of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, a tourist village is a unified form of accommodation, attractions, and supporting tourism facilities and infrastructure presented in a unified manner.

## RESEARCH METHOD

A research method is a planned and systematic way of conducting research to facilitate its implementation. Therefore, research methods are vital in research, as they guide data acquisition, analysis, and interpretation. This research uses a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Mixed methods research is a research approach that combines or associates qualitative and quantitative approaches. Therefore, in its implementation, this research used both qualitative and quantitative approaches to collect and analyze data. Community Empowerment Article Group 03 Community Empowerment Journal 5 data, and incorporates the functions of each approach, with the belief that the overall research strength is more in-depth and comprehensive than either qualitative or quantitative research. Essentially, both qualitative and quantitative approaches have their own advantages and disadvantages. Qualitative research is a method for exploring and understanding the meaning that

individuals or groups ascribe to social or humanitarian issues, while quantitative research is a method for testing specific theories by examining the relationships between variables.

The researcher's reasoning for choosing a mixed method approach is that the focus of this study is community empowerment. Community empowerment is a process of improving the welfare and independence of communities, making them more empowered. Therefore, researching it requires a suitable and comprehensive approach for accurate measurement. Community empowerment cannot be comprehensively understood using a quantitative approach, which typically involves numbers or presentations alone. Similarly, using only a qualitative approach is less effective, as it is closely related to the researcher's subjectivity and relies heavily on the researcher's research skills. Based on these considerations, this study used a mixed method approach, hoping that community empowerment can be studied and analyzed more deeply and comprehensively using both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The researcher's goal in using this concurrent triangulation strategy is to understand how community empowerment improves the ability to utilize village assets that could potentially become tourism villages. In this study, quantitative research using a questionnaire instrument was used to gather data on the influence of community empowerment through community awareness of the importance of asset utilization, and to gather numerical or statistical data based on the focus and problem formulation. Simultaneously, community empowerment will be explored using a qualitative approach through interviews and observations of research participants, particularly those living in areas where village assets are poorly maintained.

## **PROBLEM**

Based on the background description above, various problems occur in Sumberteguh Village. Therefore, the problem formulation is as follows:

1. Problems and utilization of abandoned or poorly maintained assets
2. The young men and women of Sumberteguh village have minimal contributions to asset management and underutilize technology as a tool for asset/tourism management.

The above issues are classic problems that occur in community life. These issues can be resolved or solutions can be found to create or make villages more advanced in this highly competitive era of progress.

## **PROBLEM SOLVING OBJECTIVES**

Tourism development is a comprehensive and integrated plan involving government, private sector, community, and academic stakeholders to review the constraints and internal and external environmental conditions of tourist attractions so that they can become sustainable and highly competitive tourism destinations. Rural tourism development is a result of changes in tourist interest in tourist destinations. The growing trend and motivation of specific tourists seeking a return to nature, interaction

with local communities, and an interest in learning about the uniqueness of local culture has encouraged the development of rural tourism. Tourist attractions in rural areas are villages that have facilities to support tourism activities and are being developed into new tourist attractions. Before developing a tourist village, several aspects must first be considered. Attractions are the main product of a tourist destination. This relates to what tourists can see and do when visiting the tourist location. Things that can be seen and done in the tourist village here are as follows The natural beauty and uniqueness of the area, photo booths, play areas, relics of legends, and unique village attractions, such as arts and culture, traditional ceremonies, local culture, local language, local specialties, etc.

Accessibility refers to the infrastructure and facilities that will lead visitors to the tourist destination. These include transportation, road access, and directions to the destination. Many tourists are disappointed because access is inadequate. Amenities are supporting facilities to fulfill tourists' needs during their visit. Tourist villages can provide accommodations/homestays, food stalls or grocery stores, restrooms, parking, clinics, places of worship, and other facilities to provide convenience to tourists. These facilities are expected to be located far from the natural destinations, as they are concerned about disrupting the uniqueness of the natural environment. Managers must be able to map the destinations with these public facilities

Ancillaries are the people directly involved in the administration and management of tourist village locations. Managed by people who are committed to the village, tourists and visitors will flock to the area because the services and uniqueness of these 8 locations are so appealing.

A tourist village is a rural area that offers authenticity in terms of socio-cultural aspects, customs, daily life, traditional architecture, and village spatial structure, presented in an integrated form of tourism components, including attractions, accommodations, and supporting facilities. A tourist village is a rural area that offers an overall atmosphere that reflects the authenticity of the village, encompassing socio-economic life, socio-cultural life, and daily customs. It also has distinctive building architecture and village spatial structure, or unique and interesting economic activities. It also has the potential to develop various tourism components, such as food and beverages and other tourism needs.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Results***

Sumberteguh Village has several assets that are relevant for tourism development. These include a reservoir, parks, and the Marmoyo River. However, due to a lack of attention, these assets have become dilapidated and poorly maintained. Through this community empowerment program, the causes and solutions to address these problems. Steps taken to address these issues include:

- The first week

In the first week of November, an introduction was held as a courtesy to the Village Government and the surrounding community. It was discovered that there was an area that was very suitable for development as a tourist destination. In Sumberjo Hamlet, Sumberteguh Village, there are two potential areas: the Reservoir Area and the Park Area. According to information from the village government, it was discovered that the Kudu District had previously proposed making Sumberteguh Village one of five tourist villages. This plan failed due to the COVID-19 outbreak, which cut off funding from the local government. Had this been realized, it could have had a significant impact on the local economy and increased the village's regional revenue (PAD) in general. After an interview with the Acting Village Head, a site survey was conducted the following day. Sadly, the once-beautiful park was now in disrepair, as were the rivers and reservoirs, which were overgrown with weeds and silting. A lack of active community and youth involvement in maintaining these assets was also observed.



*Figure 1. Self-introduction and program delivery activities*

- Second Week

Following a survey of neglected assets, a socialization process was conducted to explain the role of the community, particularly youth, in the development and advancement of village tourism. The community's active participation in this session was excellent, including the idea of normalizing and cleaning rivers and reservoirs. This led to special outreach and training for youth on village tourism and online marketing methods. Regarding the normalization and cleaning of rivers and reservoirs, the village government, in collaboration with UT students, is expected to immediately send a letter to the relevant authorities to expedite the normalization and cleaning of rivers and reservoirs.



*Figure 2. Asset Survey in the Reservoir Area*



*Figure 3. Asset Survey in Sumberjo Park*

- The third week

Socializing tourism villages with young people has sparked considerable interest in developing them. This is evident in their support and commitment to making Sumberteguh Village a key part of the program's plot. This could generate new economic income for the community and the village in general.



Figure 4. Socialization and training for youth



Figure 5. Socialization to young community leaders

### ***Implementation Results***

Sumberteguh Village is located in the Kudu District of Jombang Regency. The village covers five hamlets: Caben, Pateguhan, Teguhrejo, Sumberjo, and Maron Lor. The Sumberteguh tourist village is located in the eastern part of Jombang Regency and is approximately 30 km from the center of Jombang Regency. Geographically, Sumberteguh Village borders Bakalan Rayung Village to the west, Randuwatang to the south, Kudubanjar Village to the east, and Made Village to the north. Sumberteguh Village has significant potential for tourism development. This potential includes the

Brantas River, a reservoir suitable for tourism, and residents who take the initiative and participate in the development and planning of the tourism area. The Public Works and Public Housing (PUPR) Department's swift response to the request is demonstrated by the initial normalization along the Marmoyo River, which will continue to the reservoir.



*Picture 6. River cleaning excavator control*

## **SELF REFLECTION**

Sumberteguh Village has strong potential for community empowerment and the utilization of assets for tourism. With a population density of approximately 1,000 people per square kilometer, Sumberteguh Village has a population of 3,471, comprising 1,750 males and 1,721 females, with 1,431 heads of households. This presents a significant opportunity.

The government and residents are quite enthusiastic and passionate about realizing this plan. However, many young people lack digital literacy, which has a significant impact on current development patterns. Through content creator training, it is hoped that this can bridge the gap between young people and technology and social networking. Another obstacle to realizing this plan is that the Sumberteguh area is classified as a rain-fed area, which can cause drought in the reservoir area during the dry season, significantly hampering the implementation of this plan. This is a major challenge to realizing this plan. Another challenge faced is the significant funding that has not been allocated to the program. The village government has made various efforts to realize this goal, but it has not yet been achieved.

It is hoped that the community and youth will play an active role in supporting and contributing to development, particularly in the tourism sector. This is because this sector will become a new economic zone that can elevate the village's reputation, maintain economic stability, and bolster village revenue.

## **CONCLUSION**

Optimizing outreach and training can boost the enthusiasm and broaden the knowledge of residents and youth in Sumberteguh Village. This is to realize the programs and initiatives formulated by the village government. Planning helps youth and organizations focus on goals, optimally utilize resources, and avoid future problems by anticipating change and minimizing risk. In this case, planning can be achieved through various outreach activities highlighting the importance of youth contributions as activists and empowerment in the village. Training for digital creators and learning about asset utilization to create a well-managed business opportunity are provided within the asset area.

## **SUGGESTION**

Here are some recommendations to increase the positive impact of optimizing underutilized village assets: 1) Reformulate funding for developing tourist villages. 2) Add facilities to the park area to make it look beautiful and lush. 3) Increase and involve youth in village development. 4) Increase promotion through various media, both offline and online.

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