

Community Empowerment through Community-based Tourism Management

A Case Study conducted in Bongo Village, Batudaa Pantai Sub-district, Gorontalo Regency

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Abstract: Empowering community means giving an authority to the community to perform something which actively involves in economic activities, such as tourism management. This research aims at providing a community empowerment model through tourism management, such as lodgings and rental vehicles, souvenir shops, and tour guides. The research employs a qualitative method with the following stages: (1) collecting the secondary and primary data through field interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observations (2) sorting the data by selecting those related to economic activities and tourism site management as well as how tourism management integrated with the economic activities and English learning is (3) displaying the data by explaining types and models of economic activities to integrate the tourism site management, economic activities and English learning (4) drawing conclusion by verifying the presented data. The data are then analyzed using a triangulation combination design between the source and method. The finding shows that the communities may empower their life through a tourism management model of Community- Based Tourism. The implication of this finding for theories of community empowerment based on community tourism is discussed.

1 INTRODUCTION

Bongo village is located at the eastern part of the south coastal area of Batudaa Pantai sub-district, Gorontalo Regency, Gorontalo Province, lying on 0029°57.99' South Latitude and 12302°0.90' East Longitude, approximately ± 12 km from Gorontalo city center, ± 8 km from the sub-district capital of Batudaa Pantai, ± 22 km from Gorontalo Regency, and ± 15 km from Gorontalo province. To reach the destination, it takes for about 15 minutes from Gorontalo city center by motor vehicle. Bogo village is one famous tourism destination site in Gorontalo province. However, its development is not yet maximally optimized due to the less professional management system that its existence has not yet provided positive impacts to the surrounding communities' life. People do not realize that their tourism potentials may provide various contributions for the community welfare. Thus, an integrated empowerment pattern is greatly necessary to manage the tourism potentials. The surrounding communities should be involved in tourism management, such as

providing lodgings, small restaurants, souvenir shops, and tour guides.

Empowerment has the function to give an authority or power to someone to perform something (dictionary.com). Bryant & White, (Syafri Harto, 2017) asserts that empowerment is one effort to foster a greater power and authority for the poor. In the other definition, Freire (Sutrisno, 1999), (safriHadi, 2017) proposes that empowerment is not only providing people opportunities to use the developed resources and costs, but also encourage them to find ways to create their independence from the existing structures. Article 4 of the Village Law Year 2014 mentions that empowerment is defined as a supporting activity for the communities to develop their independence and welfare. Community independence and welfare may only be achieved through the development of knowledge, skills, characters, ability, and awareness by exploring the natural sources in meeting the communities' needs regarding to their main arising problems and priorities.

The community empowerment integrated to the tourism management employs the Community-Based Tourism (CBT) approach (H. Hermawan, 2018; S. Arietta, 2010; VK Muzha, 2013; DNP Rorah, 2012; N Purbasari and A Asnawi, 2014; LesegoSenyana Stone & TibaboMoren Stone, 2008; SyafriHarto, 2017). Community-Based Tourism is a concept of tourism development approach emphasizing on the active roles of local communities' (either directly involved in tourism industries or not) in the form of providing opportunities regarding to the tourism management and development, including the tourism activities' even profit sharing for the local communities. Thus, Community-Based Tourism is defined as (1) a tourism form which provides opportunities to the local communities to control and involve in the tourism management and development; (2) the communities who do not directly involve in the tourism businesses may also obtain various benefits (3) a politically and democratically demanding community empowerment to the poor in small villages and islands.

As focusing on the assisted community empowerment, this research is conducted hand in hand with the communities in identifying their potential sources and planning the strategic activities in order to be implemented in the empowerment programs. Community-Based Tourism approach is utilized as a foundation focusing on the tourism forms which provide opportunities for local communities to control and involve in the tourism management and development. In addition, this research is the implementation of empowerment system to mentor the communities dealing with their activities by providing the tourism management and English mastery trainings by involving a higher education institution (Sultan Amai State Islamic Institute of Gorontalo [IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo]) as one Gorontalo provincial government partner to implement one of their development programs.

This research aims at providing a community empower model integrated to the tourism management, such as lodgings and rental vehicles, souvenir shops, and tour guides. The research problem is how the community empowerment model is integrated with the tourism management, such as lodgings and rental vehicles, souvenir shops, and tour guides.

2 METHOD AND DATA ANALYSIS

This research employs a descriptive-qualitative method. The data are collected through field observation by directly coming to the research location for the primary data collection related to the tourism site and surrounding community conditions. In addition, the researchers also collect the secondary data in the forms of supporting documents related to the undertaken research. An in-depth interview to the village head is performed to figure out the village government roles in tourism management and to obtain the data of human resources belonging to the related village. Informal interviews are also conducted to the community groups to obtain the data related to their needs and involvement forms. In addition, focus group discussions are also made to obtain the data related to the programs should be implemented in achieving the research objectives. The data are then analyzed using a triangulation technique combining the sources and methods by synchronizing the data obtained through interviews, focus group discussions, and the documents collected.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The mentoring forms implemented in Bongo Village, Batudaa Pantai Sub-district, Gorontalo Regency, Gorontalo Province are by giving reinforcement, trust, and authority to the surrounding communities directly involving in the tourism site management (Fitri Ismail *et al.*, 2016; Leliya, 2016; and Syafriharto, 2017). The Community-Based Tourism approach is conducted with the following four stages:

1. Identifying the stakeholders and their roles
2. Identifying the resources
3. Preparing the strategic planning
4. Implementing the plan (AnangMuftiadi, 2017; Regina Scheyvens and Etsuko Okazaki, 2008; Lesego S Sebele, 2010).

The first stage is identifying the stakeholders and their roles conducted by interviewing the village head as the stakeholder. The interview results show that the tourism site management located in Bongo village is entirely handled by individual parties with family business management. This tourism site is

not yet maximally utilized as one representative tourism site since there are no supporting facilities, such as lodgings, rental vehicles, restaurants, souvenir shops and tour guides. The tourism site has actually been quite popular at the local, regional, and even national level. It is shown with approximately 300 tourists come to visit the location each month and the number even increases twice bigger in *Muharram* (the first month of Islamic lunar calendar) regarding to the commemoration prophet Muhammad SAW's birthday. The annual cultural festival has been officially inaugurated as cultural tourism based on the Governor decision of Gorontalo province signed on May 9, 2004. However, the stakeholders' involvement is only in holding the event instead of managing the tourism site.

The next stage is identifying the sources belonging to Bongo Village, both natural and human resources. The results of informal interviews to 5 public figures covering one village staff, one hamlet head, one *karangtaruna* (village youth organization) leader, one teacher and one customary head show that the tourism potentials in Bongo village are classified into 2 categories. First category is natural tourism, covering Bubohu Park located in the center of community Settlements and a mosque with Golden Vault (*MesjidKubahEmas*) located at the top of the hill in Bongo village, 10 km from the center of community settlements. The second category is cultural tourism namely *Walimah* festival, a commemoration of the prophet Muhammad SAW's birthday, which implementation includes Gorontalo cultural elements. The included cultural elements cover the Gorontalo Typical food contained in *Tolanga* trays carried in a carnival. **Tolanga** trays and **Kolombengi** cookies are the special characteristics of the carnival.

Bongo village has community organizations which may be empowered to manage the tourism site in the village. There are 2 active community organizations: *karangtaruna* (village youth) organization, dan women Family Welfare Motivator organization (known as *PengerakKesejahteraanKeluarga/PKK*). In village government system, both organizations actively support the implementation of village development programs (Village Law No. 4 Year 2014).

The next stage is preparing the strategic planning. This is the third stage of Community Based Approach (anangMuftiadi, 2017; Etsuko Okazaki, 2008; and Lesego S Sebele, 2010). Forum Group Discussion is a facility to collect people's opinions and inputs due to their needs on the

programs planned. The forum directly involve the village, sub-district, and regency government as well as private parties, such as tourism business actors, including travel and flight agents, lodgings, tourism schools, and higher education institution elements as the expert team. The forum results in the planning scheme to use in empowering the communities through tourism management. The forums also received an idea to have English mastery training to all *karangtaruna* members to prepare the young generations in Bongo village to become the tour guides. It is based on one consideration that Bongo village has the tourism potentials to be internationally introduced.

The prepared strategic planning includes:

1. Establishing the tourism management business groups in the field of simple lodgings and small restaurants, as well as souvenirs which are provided by the women groups. Thus, tourism management and handicraft making training are held.
2. Providing tourism guiding based-English mastery training to *karangtaruna* group.

The last stage of Community Basic Approach is implementing the plan. Based on the prepared plan, there are 2 kinds of training provided for both women and *karangtaruna* groups. The training results show that both women and *karangtaruna* groups are able to implement the materials obtained during the training proven by a house utilized as a simple lodging; 2 housewife groups have established small restaurant businesses; 1 women group makes souvenir businesses; whereas 3 *karangtaruna* groups, each consisting of 5 persons, are ready to become the tour guides.

Due to the generated results from the implemented trainings, people's awareness is improving. Their involvement in tourism management is considered greatly essential not only for their economic welfare but also to introduce a friendly and inexpensive tourism village.

To implement the community empowerment activities, it is necessary to first understand the local communities' strong or potential sectors (Etsuko Okazaki, 2008; and SyafriHarto, 2017). Thus, empowerment is not only to give people awareness, consciousness, authority, and knowledge but also to realize the implemented activities. SutoroEko (2002) explains that empowerment is a process of developing, establishing, encouraging independence, strengthening the bargaining position of low

economic level communities dealing with the driving forces at any field and sector of life. Meanwhile, the Government Regulation of the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia no. 7 of 2007 on Community Empowerment Cadres, states that community empowerment is a strategy used to develop the communities as one effort to realize their ability and independence in social, national, and state life (article 1, paragraph 8).

The strategic plan should be first implemented through need analysis that it is in accordance with the people's needs and ability. Community empowerment aims at providing knowledge to the society in determining their life direction that a model is required to be created as guidance and is utilized by the communities. In tourism management concept, the provision of facilities is greatly essential (SyafriHarto, 2017). All parties, especially village communities should involve themselves in tourism management and feel the impacts of the existence of tourism site in their own areas. Article 33 of the constitutional Law of the Republic of Indonesia paragraph (1) states that the economy shall be organized as a common endeavor based upon the principles of the family system. Meanwhile, paragraph (4) states that the organization of the national economy shall be conducted on the basis of economic democracy upholding the principles of togetherness, efficiency with justice, continuity, environmental perspective, self-sufficiency, and keeping a balance in the progress and unity of the national economy. The natural resources managed by individuals and disregarding to the society is considered as a violation of the 1945 constitution. Thus, the community empowerment through the tourism site management is the best pattern to implement.

4 CONCLUSION

The community empowerment pattern or model based on the tourism site management focuses on the tourism management forms intended to provide opportunities for the local communities to control and involve in the tourism management and development. A Community-Based Tourism approach is implemented through for stages: (1) identifying the stakeholders and their roles, (2) identifying resources, (3) preparing strategic planning, and (4) implementing the plan. When those four stages are systematically implemented, the empowerment purposes may also be well

implemented and achieved. The tourism facilities provided, such as lodgings, rental vehicles, small restaurants, and souvenir shops greatly require the surrounding communities' participations since the impacts are not only for the people's welfare but also the bargaining position of that tourism site.

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