

Potential and Challenges of Ecotourism Development in West Sinjai District, Sinjai Regency

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Potential and Challenges of Ecotourism Development in West Sinjai District, Sinjai Regency

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Abstract. One of the great potentials in Terasa Village to become an ecotourism area is a culture that has its own characteristics, mutual cooperation that is still active, and has a tourist area of Laliako Waterfall. This area has attractiveness and uniqueness, such as biophysical potential and cultural potential. The beauty of the natural panorama, the diversity of flora, fauna and diverse ecosystems and the challenges of the terrain are often the main attraction, as well as the cultural diversity of the Terasa Village community. The government can further assist the development of ecotourism by providing both tangible (capital) and intangible (security, knowledge) support. This condition encourages local communities to manage their tourism potential. One of the developments is the Laliako Waterfall tourist attraction which can be an alternative to community visits on weekends, as well as local culture that is still well preserved as one of the cultural preservation by the Terasa Village community located in Pattiro Hamlet and Laha-laha Hamlet.

Keywords: ecotourism potential, challenges and development

1. BACKGROUND

Ecotourism is a tourist trip to a natural environment, either natural or artificial, and the nature of the culture that is still participatory and informative aims to ensure the sustainability of nature and socio-culture. Bjork states that ecotourism is a human activity (tourist) who visits a natural area to study the characteristics and enjoy the beauty of nature and does not utilize existing resources, but contributes to the sustainability of the environment and resources. So it can be said that ecotourism activities are a form of tourism that is managed with a conservation approach. (Wahyuni et. al, 2023)

Ecotourism as an economic indicator according to the Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs Number 33 of 2009 which states that nature tourism activities in the region can improve the economy of the local community and have both good and bad impacts on the other side. The good impact is in the form of increasing community welfare with the existence of business opportunities in the tourism sector, while the bad impact if you do not care about the open natural environment, it will damage the culture of the community that is uncontrolled. (Dewi et. al, 2021)

One of the great potentials in Terasa Village to become an ecotourism area is the culture that has its own characteristics, active mutual cooperation, and has the Laliako Waterfall tourist area. This area has attractions and uniqueness, such as biophysical potential and cultural potential. The beauty of the natural panorama, the diversity of flora, fauna and diverse

ecosystems and the challenges of the terrain that often become their own attractions, as well as the cultural diversity of the Terasa Village community.

The government can further assist in the development of ecotourism by providing both tangible (capital) and intangible (security, knowledge) support. This condition encourages local communities to manage their tourism potential. One of the developments is the Laliako Waterfall tourist attraction which can be an alternative for people to visit on weekends, as well as local culture that is still well maintained as one of the cultural preservation by the Terasa Village community located in Pattiro Hamlet and Laha-laha Hamlet.

The traditional house is still often visited by the people of Terasa Village in Pattiro Hamlet and Laha-laha Hamlet every year as a form of belief in the customs of their ancestors by bringing several forms of special offerings to be submitted to the traditional house. In ensuring the preservation of nature in Terasa Village, each community of 8 Hamlets actively carries out community service activities every week to maintain the cleanliness and sustainability of the environment in the Terasa Village area, West Sinjai District. Laliako Waterfall is also a waterfall that still has a freshwater ecosystem, with natural conditions with tropical rainforests and overgrown with trees that make the scenery more aesthetic. The charm of Laliako Waterfall in Tonrong Hamlet has been widely known by the wider community and has become one of the popular destinations in Sinjai Regency.

Although Terasa Village is a tourist destination, it also has several weaknesses, so the number of tourists visiting is relatively small compared to other areas. These weaknesses include the considerable distance from the capital, as well as winding roads and the lack of tourism promotion strategies. Narrow and winding road access is also a shortcoming in the development of ecotourism. Plus if the weather is not friendly, the road to the remote hamlets is very slippery which will be dangerous for tourists who will visit there.

Ecotourism basically has an important role as a foreign exchange earner, increasing employment opportunities and increasing community income. Ecotourism development requires integrated steps and strategic plans in tourism development activities, in order to improve the quality and preservation of natural tourist attractions, especially in Terasa Village. This research is expected to provide real contributions to the government and the community regarding the potential for ecotourism development in Terasa Village.

2. THEORETICAL STUDY

⁹ According to Hakim et al. (2023) , tourism development is a series of actions that are planned and implemented to increase the potential appeal of a particular location or area to become an attractive tourist destination for visitors. This development involves various aspects, such as infrastructure, facilities, promotion, environmental conservation, and empowerment of local communities. The goal is to create a positive experience for visitors, provide economic benefits to local communities, and at the same time preserve nature, culture, and the environment.

⁵ According to Arida (2017) , said that the development of ecotourism in Indonesia has good prospects because it is supported by the potential of biodiversity including cultural diversity as the basic capital for the development of ecotourism. Based on the opinion of Isdarmanto (2017) , said that tourists expect on their tour to get new experiences and knowledge that they do not get in their own country. Thus, tourism managers must be able to understand what they need (*need*), want (*want*) and expect (*expectation*) , with the presentation of facilities, infrastructure, amenities, excellent services that are very much needed by tourists. Although each nation has different attitudes, cultural behavior and characters, in preparing the tourism products offered must be able to manage according to the quality standards they expect.

According to Copper in Hanum et. al, (2021) , there are 4 components of a tourist destination that need to be understood before developing a strategy for the destination. The elements in tourism development are: *Attraction* (Attractions) are all the beauty, uniqueness of nature, local culture, historical relics and artificial attractions that are the main products of a destination. Attractions in a destination should cover three aspects, namely things that can be done (*what to do*), things that can be seen (*what to see*) and things that can be bought or become souvenirs (*what to buy*). *Accessibility* (Accessibility) is all the facilities and infrastructure needed both before arriving and being at a destination. For example, highway access, availability of transportation facilities and signs. *Amenities* (Amenities) is the availability of basic facilities that are the basic needs of the destination. For example, the availability of roads, transportation, accommodation, information, service providers and others. *Ancillary* are facilities that support basic facilities. For example, the existence of an organization or destination management body, cooperation partners and others.

According to Kusumawardhani Yuviani (2017) , said that multi-sectoral tourism is a container that provides a very big opportunity to encourage conservation efforts to the global level. While on the other hand, most bio-conservation experts see that a community-based approach is one solution in reducing the degradation of natural resources towards

sustainability. This causes tourism opportunities to be wide open, as a bridge to create business opportunities for the community and at the same time efforts to preserve natural resources. According to Zilfana (2021) , one of the innovative activities and action programs that can be developed in the tourism sector to control the impacts that will occur on tourism areas is the development of ecotourism investment potential. According to Firdaus & Tutri (2018) , the Definition of Ecotourism according to the Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs No. 33 of 2009 concerning Guidelines for Ecotourism Development, ecotourism is a nature tourism activity in a responsible area by paying attention to elements of education, understanding, and support for natural resource conservation efforts, as well as increasing local community income . According to Dewi et. al, (2021) , it is stated that environmental damage caused by human activities has given rise to a new idea in the world of tourism, namely ecotourism. According to Firdaus & Tutri (2018) , the definition of ecotourism according to the Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs No. 33 of 2009 concerning Guidelines for Ecotourism Development, ecotourism is a nature tourism activity in a responsible area by paying attention to elements of education, understanding, and support for natural resource conservation efforts, as well as increasing the income of local communities.

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3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach research method. The qualitative approach focuses on revealing phenomena that occur, but cannot be calculated or explained in numbers as in quantitative methods. This research was conducted in October-November 2023. Thus, this qualitative approach is expected to describe the potential and challenges of ecotourism development in West Sinjai District, Sinjai Regency . The location of this research is in Terasa Village, West Sinjai District. The data collection techniques are observation, interviews, and documentation.

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4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Coaching and Training for Ecotourism Managers

In ecotourism management, one of the important things is the ability of the community, both in terms of ability and knowledge of ecotourism skills and the way of thinking and perspective of the community towards sustainable ecotourism management. Thus, the implementation of coaching and training for ecotourism managers is very important in the development of ecotourism. This is because the implementation of coaching and training is

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very much needed by ecotourism managers in Terasa Village about how to maintain the sustainability of culture and tourism in Terasa Village. that the target of the government in optimizing ecotourism potential is the community, village government and speakers who want to provide training so that the training process greatly influences the smooth running of ecotourism development to achieve an optimal tourist village .

Optimizing Community Participation in Ecotourism Activities

The involvement of local communities in becoming tourism actors is a prominent feature in ecotourism development efforts, and the next role of the government is to encourage local communities to participate in ecotourism development . Community participation is an absolute must in the development of Ecotourism Areas. The level of community participation is quite high, but because the name of development requires a certain stage, especially in the concept of ecotourism in this Village. I hope that community support and participation will be maintained

Table 1. List of routine social services in Terasa Village

No	Hamlet	Day of implementation	Information
1	The flower of Kalelembang	Thursday	implemented
2	Pattiro and Kasimpurang	Sunday	Implemented
3	Center	Sunday	Implemented
4	Rumbia and bontosunggu	Thursday	Implemented
5	Tonrong and Laha-laha	Sunday	Implemented

Source: Terasa Village Office, 2023.

Procurement of Facilities and Infrastructure in Accordance with the Ecotourism Concept

In providing ecotourism facilities and infrastructure, it must be adjusted to the required criteria. The available facilities and infrastructure services need to be adjusted to those that are environmentally friendly. This is so that ecotourism activities that focus on efforts to preserve nature and the environment can be carried out optimally.

Table 2. Achievements Laliako tourism facilities and infrastructure

Infrastructure	Procurement date	Budget sources	information
Gazebo	January 11, 2021	ADD	Implemented
Gate	May 20, 2022	ADD	Implemented
Toilet	July 15, 2023	ADD	Implemented

Source: Terasa Village Office, 2023.

The level of community participation in Terasa Village is no longer in doubt in terms of ecotourism development and development. Because we feel that it is our obligation as a community for the common interest. Actually, community participation is already good but because in our village it is difficult to develop because access to enter the ecotourism area is quite difficult. So I think that is what needs to be developed first

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The provision of ecotourism facilities and infrastructure is our hope. Because it is an asset in an ecotourism area where if the facilities in it are complete it can automatically increase the interest of visitors to come to the ecotourism area. The provision of facilities and infrastructure, especially in Laliako Waterfall Tourism, we do in stages. Some buildings will be built later after the village fund budget has been disbursed. Because we see that the level of visitor satisfaction depends on what is seen in the Tourism area.

Improving Ecotourism Accessibility

Good accessibility to an ecotourism area is a key element in optimizing ecotourism potential and increasing the attractiveness of the destination. Even if it is built with stunning facilities, if access to the place is poor, it can reduce its attractiveness and potential benefits.

Table 4. Accessibility development of Terasa Village in 2021-2022

Type of building	location	Execution time	information
Concrete rebate	The flower of Kalelembang	November 30, 2021	Village Fund (DDS)

Making embankments	The flower of Kalelembang	March 13, 2022	Village Fund (DDS)
Deckers	Rumbia	December 24, 2021	Village Fund (DDS)

Source: Terasa Village Office, 2023.

The ecotourism attraction in Terasa Village is the waterfall and cultural tourism in Pattiro Toa and Laha-laha which are visited every year. But back to access to this area, the complaints felt are the same of course but we as the Village government already have a strategy in its development but this is gradual like the development of other Villages.

Improving Security Around Ecotourism Destinations

Security and safety management at tourist destinations must be carried out consistently and all parties have the same commitment to ensure sustainable ecotourism. It should be noted that safety issues are sensitive issues in the world of tourism and require a lot of effort to gain the trust of tourists to return to a tourist destination. There needs to be a security sector that is formed such as linmas in each hamlet must be ready at every hamlet boundary for the sake of security in our area, with the hope that security in the ecotourism area can be guaranteed, therefore I hope the government will continue to pay attention to this.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The potential for ecotourism development carried out by Terasa Village has not been running optimally because the process of developing strategies from the Terasa Village government has not reached the community. Based on the development of potential in Terasa Village, it has not been running well, both in terms of implementing coaching and training for ecotourism managers, optimizing community participation, providing facilities and infrastructure, increasing ecotourism accessibility and increasing security around ecotourism destinations. It is recommended that the village government can create a good ecotourism development strategy to optimize the ecotourism potential in Terasa Village . It is recommended that the village government provide training to the community related to problem solving in facing the challenges of developing the ecotourism potential they have.

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