

**IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM FOR SAWAI
VILLAGE TOURISM IN CENTRAL MALUKU**

**IMPLEMENTASI PARIWISATA BERBASIS MASYARAKAT UNTUK
PARIWISATA DESA SAWAI DI MALUKU TENGAH**

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of Community-Based Tourism as a sustainable tourism development strategy in Sawai Village, Central Maluku. Sawai Village, renowned for its natural, marine, and cultural attractions, has seen active involvement from the local community in managing tourism assets, including beach, nature, and cultural tourism. The research utilizes a qualitative descriptive approach, collecting data through interviews with local stakeholders such as village authorities, POKDARWIS (local tourism group), community members, and representatives from the Central Maluku Regency government. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive qualitative methods to provide a structured overview of Community-Based Tourism practices and their impacts across economic, social, cultural, environmental, and political aspects. Results indicate that CBT empowers the local community, enabling economic growth, environmental conservation, and cultural preservation while fostering collaboration among stakeholders. The presence of POKDARWIS has proven effective in coordinating these efforts, ensuring that Sawai Village's tourism development aligns with sustainable practices. This study concludes that Community-Based Tourism is a viable model for fostering sustainable tourism and enhancing community welfare in rural areas.

Keywords: *Community-Based Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Sawai Village, Rural Development*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji implementasi Pariwisata Berbasis Masyarakat sebagai strategi pengembangan pariwisata berkelanjutan di Desa Sawai, Maluku Tengah. Desa Sawai yang terkenal dengan daya tarik wisata alam, bahari, dan budayanya, telah menunjukkan keterlibatan aktif masyarakat setempat dalam mengelola aset pariwisata, termasuk wisata pantai, alam, dan budaya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, mengumpulkan data melalui wawancara dengan pemangku kepentingan lokal seperti pemerintah desa, POKDARWIS (kelompok pariwisata lokal), anggota masyarakat, dan perwakilan dari pemerintah Kabupaten Maluku Tengah. Analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif untuk memberikan gambaran terstruktur tentang praktik-praktik Pariwisata Berbasis Masyarakat dan dampaknya terhadap aspek ekonomi, sosial, budaya, lingkungan, dan politik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa CBT memberdayakan masyarakat lokal, memungkinkan pertumbuhan ekonomi, konservasi lingkungan, dan pelestarian budaya sambil mendorong kolaborasi di antara para pemangku kepentingan. Kehadiran POKDARWIS terbukti efektif dalam mengkoordinasikan upaya-upaya ini, memastikan bahwa pengembangan pariwisata Desa Sawai selaras dengan praktik-praktik berkelanjutan. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa Pariwisata Berbasis Masyarakat merupakan model yang tepat untuk mendorong pariwisata berkelanjutan dan meningkatkan kesejahteraan masyarakat di daerah pedesaan.

Kata Kunci: *Pariwisata Berbasis Masyarakat, Pariwisata Berkelanjutan, Desa Sawai, Pembangunan Pedesaan*

INTRODUCTION

In the past 25 years, the global tourism industry has seen an astounding growth of nearly 500%, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). This growth brings with it a diverse set of

stakeholders, ranging from local communities and governments to tourists with varied needs. To guide the tourism sector toward focused and sustainable development, governments are implementing significant policies (Kadarisman, 2021). One such initiative

in Indonesia is the development of tourism villages to boost tourist visits and reestablish the prominence of local tourism. A popular model for this initiative is Community-Based Tourism (CBT). Häusler and Strasdas (2002) define CBT as a development approach that involves the local community, whether directly engaged in tourism or not. This approach allows rural communities to manage potential tourism resources while ensuring local involvement (Jamal & Stronza, 2009).

Research from various countries has shown that CBT can enhance community income, expand economic opportunities, preserve cultural heritage, and protect the environment while offering training and educational benefits (Chen et al., 2015). Implementing CBT requires a systematic, ongoing approach that starts with assessing the potential, capability, and willingness of local communities to participate in tourism development activities, alongside monitoring progress and evaluating potential negative impacts (Kiss, 2004). In Indonesia, CBT has gained traction, particularly in Sawai Village, Central Maluku. This village, known for its scenic marine, natural, and cultural attractions, represents a fishing community where the majority of residents earn their living through fishing. The tourism potential in Sawai Village is vast, covering marine, nature, and artificial tourism. The objective of CBT in this setting is not only to promote sustainable tourism practices but also to enhance social and economic welfare, ensuring long-term resource utilization (Sharpley, 2000).

The focus of this study is on Sawai Village, located in Central Maluku, specifically in Seram Utara District. The village, situated along Sawai Bay, is a well-known fishing community with a rich blend of natural and cultural

attractions. The tourism potential in Sawai Village encompasses three main sectors: marine tourism, nature tourism, and artificial or cultural tourism. Marine tourism in Sawai includes diving, snorkeling, and other water-related activities that showcase the area's biodiversity. The natural tourism attractions consist of scenic landscapes, waterfalls, and dense tropical forests, while cultural tourism highlights local customs and traditions, offering tourists a unique experience in rural Indonesian life.

Sawai Village's residents are primarily involved in fishing, making it an authentic representation of a traditional fishing community. By implementing Community-Based Tourism, the aim is to manage these resources sustainably, ensuring the community's active involvement and benefit. The involvement of locals in tourism management creates opportunities for social and economic empowerment while preserving their cultural and natural heritage. This approach aligns with Sesotyaningtyas & Manaf's (2015) findings, which emphasize the importance of local participation and sustainable resource management. However, the success of this approach requires a commitment to systematic community empowerment programs that build capacity, promote autonomy, and enhance economic opportunities for the local population. In this way, CBT in Sawai Village serves as a model for sustainable rural tourism development in Indonesia.

The tourism industry in Indonesia is increasingly recognizing the importance of sustainable practices that benefit local communities, particularly in rural areas like Sawai Village. The rise in demand for authentic travel experiences has contributed to the popularity of Community-Based

Tourism (CBT). Current data highlights that, in areas where CBT models are applied, local economies see a significant improvement in income levels. For instance, in Bali, a similar CBT model has led to a 20% increase in local income, according to recent statistics from Indonesia's Ministry of Tourism (Ministry of Tourism, 2022). In Central Maluku, tourism initiatives have gradually gained momentum, as evidenced by a steady increase in tourist visits to Sawai Village. These visits are drawn by the unique blend of natural landscapes and traditional culture, providing an ideal environment for community-based tourism.

The sustainable tourism model in Sawai emphasizes resource preservation, encouraging low-impact tourism that minimizes environmental degradation. Current efforts also involve training locals in tourism-related skills, from guiding to eco-friendly practices, which not only enhance visitor experience but also ensure the preservation of the natural surroundings. The challenges, however, include balancing economic growth with environmental conservation, as increased tourist numbers can place strain on local resources and infrastructure. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are essential to ensure that tourism remains sustainable, with economic benefits that trickle down to all community members. As studies show, CBT is an effective model for community development in tourism settings (Chen et al., 2015), particularly in areas rich in cultural and natural assets like Sawai Village.

While Community-Based Tourism has demonstrated positive outcomes in numerous rural areas globally, there remain critical research gaps specific to Indonesian contexts, such as Sawai Village. First, there is limited empirical research on how local cultural values

influence CBT implementation (Kiss, 2004). This gap is significant because local cultural perceptions can either facilitate or hinder community engagement in tourism development. Secondly, while financial outcomes have been widely studied, there is a lack of comprehensive research on the environmental impacts of CBT, particularly concerning ecosystem degradation (Sharpley, 2000). Another gap identified is the lack of long-term assessments on the effectiveness of community empowerment initiatives within CBT frameworks (Chen et al., 2015). Research focusing on economic outcomes often overlooks social factors, such as community cohesion and cultural preservation, both of which are essential for sustainable CBT practices (Jamal & Stronza, 2009).

Furthermore, few studies have addressed the potential for CBT to foster education and skill development among youth in rural communities. This aspect could be pivotal in ensuring that CBT not only provides immediate economic benefits but also prepares future generations for sustainable tourism management (Sesotyaningtyas & Manaf, 2015). By addressing these research gaps, future studies could offer more holistic insights into how CBT can be optimized to benefit communities while preserving local resources and culture. These gaps underscore the need for more diversified and longitudinal studies to fully understand the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of CBT in Indonesian settings.

The primary objective of this research is to examine the application of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) as a strategy for sustainable tourism development in Sawai Village, Central Maluku. Specifically, the study aims to assess the impact of CBT on the local economy, community empowerment,

and environmental preservation. This research seeks to explore how CBT contributes to the economic welfare of Sawai's residents by creating income-generating opportunities and promoting local entrepreneurship. Additionally, the study will evaluate the role of CBT in preserving cultural heritage, analyzing the extent to which local customs and traditions are integrated into tourism activities.

Another key objective is to investigate the environmental impact of CBT in Sawai Village, focusing on resource management practices that aim to minimize ecological degradation. This research also intends to develop a framework for continuous community engagement, emphasizing capacity-building initiatives that equip locals with skills necessary for managing tourism sustainably. Through these objectives, this study will contribute valuable insights to the broader discourse on sustainable tourism in Indonesia, with practical implications for policymakers and tourism developers. By focusing on the unique context of Sawai Village, this research aims to provide a replicable model for sustainable rural tourism that aligns with the principles of Community-Based Tourism.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study is conducted in Sawai Village, Central Maluku, focusing on understanding the implementation of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) strategies. The research gathers qualitative data from primary and secondary sources to analyze the development of Sawai as a tourism village. Primary data are obtained through direct interviews with relevant stakeholders, including village authorities, local tourism groups (POKDARWIS), community members, local businesses, and representatives

from the Central Maluku Regency government, who are all actively involved in CBT. Secondary data include documents, reports, and studies on the subject to provide a comprehensive context for CBT strategies. This qualitative approach aims to create an in-depth understanding of how Sawai Village implements CBT strategies for sustainable tourism development, emphasizing the local community's involvement and perspectives. This method is consistent with established guidelines in qualitative research, as it enables researchers to gain nuanced insights from participants' lived experiences (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2020).

For data analysis, this study employs a qualitative descriptive analysis method, where the collected data are systematically organized and presented in a structured narrative format. This approach allows researchers to detail the practical strategies used in implementing CBT in Sawai Village. Descriptive qualitative analysis is particularly valuable in tourism research because it provides a framework for interpreting complex social phenomena, such as community involvement in tourism, in a structured manner (Echtner & Jamal, 2023). By focusing on the perspectives of multiple stakeholders, this research aims to uncover the challenges and successes of CBT strategies, shedding light on how local involvement contributes to sustainable tourism outcomes. This method aligns with previous studies that emphasize the role of local communities in tourism and highlight the socio-economic benefits that CBT can bring to rural areas (Simpson, 2020). Ultimately, this structured, qualitative approach aims to provide actionable insights for policy development in similar rural tourism contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The implementation of CBT in Sawai Village, Central Maluku, serves as a sustainable tourism strategy that actively involves the local community in tourism management and development. From the outset, the local community has been the driving force behind the village's tourism initiatives, especially in managing the attractions, such as Sawai Beach. This initiative highlights the core of CBT, where local communities living alongside tourist destinations are integral to the ecological system of tourism (Suansri, 2003; Sunaryo, 2013). One community member noted, "Our village has always taken pride in the natural beauty here. By managing it ourselves, we ensure that Sawai remains beautiful for both residents and tourists." The residents of Sawai Village engage in environmental conservation efforts by reducing plastic waste, reflecting their commitment to maintaining a clean and attractive environment. Sustainable planning is emphasized to balance the needs of tourism with environmental preservation, an approach aligned with global principles of sustainable tourism development (Dangi & Jamal, 2020).

CBT in Sawai is structured around five essential pillars: economic, social, cultural, environmental, and political aspects. Economically, the tourism sector has begun to yield benefits for locals, as evidenced by the rise of small businesses, lodgings, and dining establishments around Sawai Beach. A local business owner shared, "The tourism growth has allowed me to expand my cottage business. I'm now able to support my family better and even hire a few employees from the village." This growth provides income opportunities and stimulates the local economy. Socially, the active involvement of locals instills a sense of pride and ownership in tourism

initiatives. By participating in programs organized by government and independent entities, community members gain valuable skills and knowledge, enhancing the tourism experience in Sawai Village. Culturally, CBT emphasizes preserving Sawai's heritage, ensuring that traditional knowledge and customs remain integral to the tourism offerings. The village leverages local wisdom to promote cultural tourism, attracting visitors with a unique experience rooted in Sawai's identity (Maturbongs et al., 2019).

Environmentally, CBT supports a clean and eco-friendly destination. Community members take responsibility for waste management, a practice that raises environmental awareness and protects the village's natural assets. According to a local environmental advocate, "We each do our part to keep the beaches clean. Waste management is everyone's responsibility, and it has made a real difference in maintaining Sawai's natural beauty." Politically, CBT fosters institutional consolidation within the village, with organizations like Pokdarwis playing a crucial role in resource management. The strategy also seeks to increase local participation in decision-making, reflecting a politically inclusive approach that strengthens the village's tourism governance (Rozemeijer, 2021). The challenges Sawai Village faces include limited funding, marketing constraints, and the need for capacity building. Addressing these barriers and reinforcing local engagement are key to ensuring the long-term success of CBT in Sawai.

Economic Aspects of CBT in Sawai Village

The economic impact of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in Sawai Village has been evident with the growth of local businesses and

enterprises directly tied to the tourism sector. One cottage owner remarked, “Thanks to tourism, I have been able to expand my business and provide better services. Visitors appreciate authentic experiences, and that’s what we offer.” Small businesses, such as beach cottages, boat rentals, and local restaurants, are on the rise around Sawai Beach, offering visitors an authentic village experience while generating income for locals. This emerging market allows residents to transform natural and cultural resources into income opportunities, stimulating the local economy (Sharpley, 2020). The concept of “new money,” or the fresh revenue brought by tourists, supports the financial well-being of Sawai, where tourism expenditure positively affects the village economy. Each visitor’s spending on accommodations, food, and souvenirs contributes directly to the village’s economic health, encouraging further business growth.

However, while the increase in tourist spending is beneficial, the economic sustainability of these initiatives requires ongoing support. Research indicates that small rural tourism businesses face challenges related to scalability, market access, and operational capacity (Holladay & Ormsby, 2021). One community member explained, “Our businesses are growing, but we still struggle to reach bigger markets. We need more support to promote Sawai beyond our village.” In Sawai, small businesses must navigate challenges such as limited access to larger markets and resources, which are often addressed through collaborative community efforts and government assistance. The establishment of local cooperatives and partnerships can help Sawai businesses reach broader audiences and improve product quality, thereby enhancing the village’s tourism appeal and resilience in the market.

Social Aspects of CBT in Sawai Village

The social impact of CBT in Sawai Village highlights the community’s active role in tourism development, instilling pride and fostering a sense of ownership among residents. As a driving force behind Sawai’s tourism initiatives, the community has embraced the role of tourism stewards, actively participating in planning and management activities. A village elder mentioned, “Our community takes great pride in what we have achieved. Tourism has allowed us to take control of our village’s future.” This engagement strengthens the social fabric, empowering locals to view themselves as integral contributors to the village’s sustainable development (Dangi & Jamal, 2020). The establishment of Pokdarwis, a local tourism organization, exemplifies this approach by offering a structured platform for residents to collaborate on sustainable tourism initiatives.

Educational programs provided by government agencies, NGOs, and academic institutions have further supported the community’s social development. These programs focus on capacity building, aiming to improve residents’ skills in tourism management, environmental conservation, and customer service. One participant in a training program stated, “Learning new skills has been empowering for all of us. We are now better prepared to handle visitors and preserve our resources.” Enhanced education and training not only prepare locals for active tourism roles but also increase their awareness of sustainable practices, ensuring the tourism sector’s long-term viability (Beeton, 2021).

Cultural Aspects of CBT in Sawai Village

Cultural preservation is central to CBT in Sawai Village, where tourism activities are designed to celebrate and protect local heritage. By engaging in CBT, the residents of Sawai are empowered to highlight their customs, traditions, and local wisdom as essential elements of the tourism experience. A local artisan shared, "Through tourism, we can showcase our heritage to the world, while preserving it for future generations." This approach allows cultural expressions, such as traditional dance, storytelling, and crafts, to become integral parts of Sawai's tourism offerings, which not only attract visitors but also instill pride within the community (Tolkach & King, 2020). The intertwining of cultural identity and tourism ensures that the benefits of tourism are felt deeply within the community, creating a sense of ownership over the cultural resources.

In addition, cultural tourism in Sawai is rooted in sustainable practices that respect the spiritual and historical significance of local traditions. A community leader stated, "Our customs are sacred, and tourism gives us a way to share them without losing what makes them special." The Sawai community's traditional knowledge and practices are incorporated into tourism activities, reflecting the cultural and ecological symbiosis that has sustained the community for generations. Studies suggest that culturally-focused CBT not only attracts tourists interested in authentic experiences but also supports the transmission of cultural knowledge across generations (Harrison & Lapointe, 2021).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Sawai Village has emerged as a growing tourist destination in Central Maluku, showcasing its natural, marine, and cultural attractions. While the

village's tourism potential is significant, continued development and management are essential to optimize its appeal. The tourism management strategy in Sawai is rooted in a community-based approach, involving various community elements and fostering collaboration among local stakeholders. The establishment of POKDARWIS (a local tourism awareness group) has been instrumental in this collaborative effort, as it brings together the village government, local institutions, and community members, each playing an active role in tourism development. This community-based tourism (CBT) model has been well-received, as it empowers the local population to manage and benefit from tourism activities directly. The involvement of the community spans economic, cultural, environmental, and political dimensions, with residents actively participating in the preservation of local heritage, sustainable environmental practices, and economic initiatives that promote self-sufficiency. For instance, local businesses have thrived through small-scale enterprises that offer accommodations, boat rentals, and dining options, providing income to the community and enhancing the visitor experience. Culturally, the village upholds its traditional customs and integrates them into the tourism experience, fostering a sense of pride and identity among residents. Environmentally, Sawai's commitment to conservation is evident in the community's efforts to manage waste and protect natural resources. Politically, the inclusive structure allows for transparent decision-making and represents the interests of all stakeholders involved. This CBT approach is expected to remain an effective strategy for sustainable tourism development, promoting economic resilience, cultural preservation, and

environmental stewardship. By prioritizing these values, Sawai Village stands as a model for sustainable rural tourism, showcasing how local empowerment and community collaboration can drive lasting benefits for both the residents and the tourism industry.

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