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Community Empowerment in Tourism Development in Tanjung Lesung Special Economic Zone

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ABSTRACT

Tourism development is one of the government's strategies in increasing national economic growth while accelerating regional development. The Tanjung Lesung Special Economic Zone (SEZ) has been designated as a national priority tourism area which is expected to be able to encourage investment, create jobs, and improve community welfare. However, the success of tourism area development is not only determined by infrastructure development and investment, but also by the involvement of local communities in the development process. This study aims to analyze community empowerment in tourism development in the Tanjung Lesung Special Economic Zone. The research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method through literature studies and policy analysis. The results of the study show that community empowerment is carried out through increasing the capacity of human resources, strengthening local institutions, developing micro-tourism businesses, and increasing community participation. However, community empowerment still faces obstacles in the form of limited community capacity, limited access to capital, dominance of external investors, and suboptimal community participation in decision-making. Therefore, a collaborative community empowerment model between the government, the private sector, and the community is needed to realize sustainable tourism development in the Tanjung Lesung SEZ.

Keywords: *Community Empowerment, Tourism, Tanjung Lesung SEZ, Community Based Tourism, Sustainable Development.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of the tourism sector in Indonesia is carried out through various strategic policies, one of which is through tourism-based Special Economic Zones (SEZs). SEZs are areas with certain boundaries that obtain special facilities to encourage economic growth, increase investment, accelerate infrastructure development, and strengthen the competitiveness of tourist destinations.

One of the implementations of this policy is the Tanjung Lesung SEZ in Pandeglang Regency, Banten Province, which was stipulated through Government Regulation Number 26 of 2012. This area was developed as an integrated tourist destination by relying on the potential of marine, natural, and cultural tourism. The advantages of Tanjung Lesung lie in the white sandy beaches, the beauty of the natural landscape, and the rich culture of the coastal communities. In addition, its location adjacent to Ujung Kulon National Park and Mount Krakatau further strengthens its attractiveness as a leading destination.

The development of the Tanjung Lesung SEZ is expected to be able to increase investment, create jobs, and encourage the welfare of the local community. Infrastructure support such as the construction of the Serang-Panimbang toll road, airport development, and tourism facilities are important factors in supporting the growth of this region.

However, the development of tourism based on large investments also faces challenges, especially related to the equitable distribution of economic benefits for local communities. There is a potential gap between investors and the community, so community empowerment is a crucial aspect. Empowerment aims to increase capacity, economic independence, and community participation in local resource management.

This empowerment concept is in line with community-based tourism, which places the community as the main actor in destination management. This

approach is also linked to the principle of sustainable tourism that balances economic, social, and environmental aspects.

However, the implementation of empowerment in the Tanjung Lesung SEZ still faces various obstacles. Community involvement in regional development is still limited, with the dominance of external investors making the community play more of a role as a workforce. In addition, limited human resource capacity, lack of skills in the tourism sector, and limited access to capital are the main obstacles to local business development.

Public participation in decision-making is also still minimal, so their strategic role is not optimal. Therefore, an integrated empowerment strategy is needed through capacity building, institutional strengthening, and local economic development. This research is important to provide policy recommendations to encourage inclusive and sustainable community-based tourism development.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Concept of Community Empowerment

Community empowerment is a key concept in participatory development that puts the community as the main subject. According to Kartasasmita, empowerment is an effort to improve the ability of the community to be independent through the creation of a conducive climate, strengthening potential, and protection from powerlessness. In line with that, Sumodiningrat [1] emphasized that empowerment includes increasing economic, social, and institutional capacity so that the community is able to manage resources optimally. Ife and Tesoriero [2] added that empowerment is a process of providing strength so that people can control their lives and make decisions independently.

Chambers [3] sees empowerment as a community-oriented approach to development, emphasizing participation, independence, and sustainability. Meanwhile, Narayan [4] identified four main dimensions of empowerment, namely access to information, participation, capacity of local organizations, and accountability as indicators of the success of community-based development.

2.2. Comunnity Based Torism (CBT)

In the context of tourism, the concept of Community Based Tourism (CBT) is a strategic approach. Murphy [5] stated that CBT involves the community in the planning and management of destinations so that the community becomes the owner as well as the main actor. Suansri [6] emphasized that CBT aims to provide direct economic benefits to local communities while preserving culture and the environment. Timothy added that this approach is able to reduce the gap between large investors and local communities.

Scheyvens [7] suggested that community-based tourism encourages empowerment in four dimensions: economic, social, psychological, and political. Economic empowerment is reflected in increased income, while social empowerment is shown through increased community participation.

Community participation is also explained through Arnstein's theory with a "ladder of participation" consisting of eight levels, ranging from manipulation to citizen control. Arnstein grouped participation into non-participation, tokenism, and citizen power. Tosun [8] complements it with three forms of participation, namely spontaneous participation (community initiative), induced participation (government encouragement), and coercive participation (pseudo-participation).

2.3. Sustainable Tourism

From a sustainability perspective, UNWTO defines sustainable tourism as development that pays attention to economic, social, and environmental impacts in a balanced manner. Sharpley [9] emphasized that tourism should improve the well-being of local communities, while Hunter [10] emphasized the importance of community involvement to prevent social conflict and maintain resource sustainability.

Thus, the integration of these theories shows that community empowerment, active participation, and community-based approaches are the main foundations in realizing inclusive and equitable sustainable tourism.



Figure 1. *Sustainable Tourism*

3. METHODS

3.1. Research Approaches and Methods

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze community empowerment in tourism development in the Tanjung Lesung SEZ. This approach was chosen because it is able to understand social phenomena in depth based on the theory of empowerment, community participation, and *community-based tourism*. The literature study method is used by reviewing books, scientific journals, research reports, and policy documents. Policy analysis is also carried out to assess the role of the government in supporting regional development and local community empowerment.

3.2. Location and Source of Research Data

The research focuses on the Tanjung Lesung SEZ in Pandeglang Regency, Banten, as a national priority destination with potential for marine, cultural, and creative economy tourism. The data used is dominated by secondary data, such as government documents, tourism statistics, and regional development reports, which serve to strengthen conceptual analysis.

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

Data collection was carried out through literature studies and documentation. Data analysis uses the Miles and Huberman model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. This approach allows for the systematic and comprehensive compilation of findings.

3.4. Data Sources

The data sources in this study consist of primary data and secondary data. Although this study primarily uses a literature study approach, primary data was obtained from government policy documents and official tourism development reports.

Primary data was obtained from government policy documents related to the development of the Tanjung Lesung SEZ. Primary data also comes from tourism area development reports.

Secondary data was obtained from: Scientific books on community empowerment, national and international journals, Previous research reports, Government documents, Tourism statistics data, Scientific articles, Tanjung Lesung SEZ development reports.Secondary data were used to strengthen the research analysis.

3.5. Data Collection Techniques

The data collection technique in this study was carried out through literature studies and documentation studies.

The literature study was carried out by examining the theory of community empowerment, the theory of community-based tourism, community participation, and sustainable tourism. The literature used comes from scientific books and academic journals.

3.6. Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis technique used in this study is descriptive qualitative analysis. Data analysis is carried out through several stages.

Data reduction is carried out by selecting data that is relevant to the research. Irrelevant data is set aside.

The data that has been reduced is presented in the form of a descriptive narrative. The presentation of data was carried out systematically based on the research theme.

Conclusions were obtained based on the results of data analysis. The conclusion explains community empowerment in tourism development in the Tanjung Lesung SEZ. Miles and Huberman stated that qualitative data analysis consists of three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. This stage is used in research.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The development of the tourism sector in Indonesia is undergoing a transformation towards a more inclusive and sustainable approach. The Tanjung Lesung Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Pandeglang Regency, Banten Province, is one of the concrete representations of the policy direction. This area is not only designed as a national leading tourist destination, but also as a strategic instrument in encouraging community-based regional economic growth.

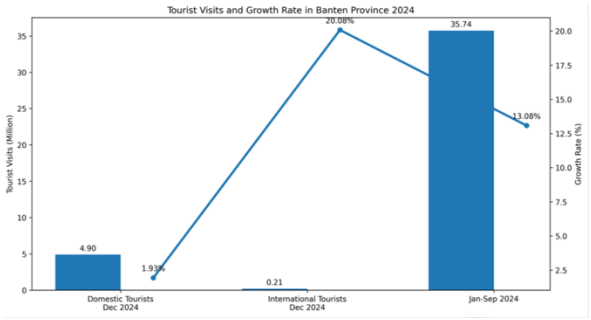


Figure 2. *Tourist Visits and Growth Rate in Banten Province 2024*

The local government emphasized that the success of tourism development is not only measured by the increase in the number of tourists and investment, but also by the extent to which local communities are able to actively participate and obtain direct economic benefits. This perspective reflects a development orientation that places the welfare of the community as the main goal.

4.1. Strategic Potential of Tanjung Lesung SEZ

The Tanjung Lesung SEZ has significant geographical and cultural advantages. This area offers the beauty of the beach, the richness of the coastal ecosystem, and the diversity of local culture that is a tourist attraction. Its relatively close proximity to economic centers such as Jakarta and the West Java region strengthens its position as a potential destination.

The Regional Secretary of Banten Province, Al Muktabar, assessed that the excellence of this area does not only lie in the natural aspect, but also in the strength of the culture and local wisdom of the community. This is an important foundation in building sustainable tourism destination competitiveness.

4.2. Community Empowerment as a Development Strategy

Community empowerment is the main strategy in the development of the Tanjung Lesung SEZ. Al Muktabar as the Regional Secretary of Banten Province emphasized that the local community must be positioned as the main actor in tourism development. This approach aims to ensure a fairer distribution of economic benefits.

The Head of the Banten Provincial Tourism Office, Al Hamidi, said that the tourism development paradigm has undergone fundamental changes. The community is no longer seen as an object of development, but as a subject that has an active role in determining the direction of the development of tourist destinations.

Empowerment programs are carried out through various forms of training and mentoring, including in the fields of homestay management, tour guides, catering, and business management. This effort aims to increase the capacity of human resources to be able to compete in the tourism industry.

4.3. Strengthening MSMEs as Local Economic Drivers

The development of MSMEs is an integral part of the community empowerment strategy. The Head of the Banten Provincial Cooperatives and MSMEs Office, Agus Mintono, emphasized that MSMEs are the

economic backbone of the community around the tourist area. The growth of the tourism sector directly encourages an increase in MSME economic activity.

MSME strengthening programs include improving product quality, packaging, digital marketing, and business management. Thus, local business actors can increase competitiveness and expand market reach.

The existence of tourists also creates opportunities for the development of regional products as souvenirs, which at the same time strengthens local cultural identity.

4.4. Social and Economic Transformation of Communities

The development of tourism in the Tanjung Lesung SEZ has brought significant changes in the economic structure of coastal communities. Communities that previously depended on traditional sectors such as fisheries began to switch to the tourism service sector.

The development of tourism in the Tanjung Lesung SEZ has brought significant changes in the economic structure of coastal communities. Based on community perspective data recorded in development reports:

1. **Rahmat**, a fisherman from Tanjungjaya Village, noted that tourism provides a more stable alternative income compared to traditional fishing alone.
2. **Nurhayati**, a local culinary entrepreneur, reported an increase in revenue through the sale of regional specialty foods to tourists.

Rahmat, a fisherman from Tanjungjaya Village, described that the presence of tourism provides an alternative source of more stable income. Meanwhile, Nurhayati, a local culinary business actor, felt an increase in income through the sale of special foods to tourists.
These changes show that tourism can serve as a catalyst for economic transformation, while improving people's quality of life.

4.5. The Role of Women and the Young Generation

Tourism development also opens up a wider space for participation for women and the younger generation. Siti Aminah, a member of the village women's business group, explained that women are now involved in culinary and handicraft businesses, which contribute to the family economy.

On the other hand, the younger generation such as Suhendi, a local tour guide, and Andi, a member of a tourism youth group, play a role in the management of community-based tourism activities. Their involvement is an important factor in driving innovation and sustainability in the tourism sector.

4.6. Infrastructure Challenges and Community Readiness

Despite having great potential, the development of the Tanjung Lesung SEZ still faces various challenges. Rudi Hartono, a local tourism transportation business actor, highlighted that accessibility to tourist areas is still the main obstacle.

In addition, the readiness of the community in facing economic changes is also a challenge. Hasan, a local community leader, emphasized the importance of communication between the community and the area manager so that development remains on the side of the local community.

4.7. Collaboration between Government, Investors, and the Community

The success of the development of the Tanjung Lesung SEZ is highly dependent on synergy between various parties. The Director of Operations of PT Banten West Java Tourism Development, Poernomo Siswoprasetijo, stated that this area is designed as an integrated tourist destination that is able to become a driver of the regional economy.

The chairman of the Pandeglang local tourism association, Ahmad Yani, added that community involvement is the key to creating sustainable tourism. Collaboration between investors and the community can create mutually beneficial relationships and strengthen the sustainability of tourist areas.

4.8. Culture and Environment-Based Tourism

The development of tourism in Tanjung Lesung is also directed at the use of local culture as the main attraction. The Head of the Banten Provincial Education and Culture Office, Tabrani, emphasized that the region's cultural wealth has great potential to be developed in the tourism industry.

On the other hand, public awareness of the importance of preserving the environment is increasing. Efforts such as maintaining beach cleanliness and the development of conservation-based tourism are part of the sustainable development strategy.

The development of the Tanjung Lesung SEZ shows that community empowerment is a fundamental element in sustainable tourism development. Active community involvement, strengthening MSMEs, and increasing the capacity of human resources are the main factors in creating an inclusive economic impact.

Although it still faces various challenges, especially in terms of infrastructure and community readiness, this area still has great potential to be developed. With strong collaboration between the government, the private sector, and the community, the Tanjung Lesung SEZ has the opportunity to become a successful model for community-based tourism development in Indonesia.

5. CONCLUSION

Community empowerment in tourism development in the Tanjung Lesung Special Economic Zone has proven to be a fundamental strategy in encouraging sustainable and inclusive tourism development. This study shows that empowerment efforts through skills training, institutional strengthening, and the development of micro businesses and creative economy are able to increase the capacity and participation of local communities in various stages of tourism management. This involvement has direct implications for increasing income and opening up new job opportunities.

However, the distribution of economic benefits has not been even due to limited human resource capacity, access to capital, and the dominance of external

investors. From the social side, empowerment encourages awareness of environmental and cultural conservation, even though it has the potential to trigger changes in people's lifestyles. The main supporting factors include government policies, tourism potential, and infrastructure, while the obstacles lie in the internal limitations of the community.

Overall, a collaborative approach between government, the private sector, and society is an effective model. Therefore, community empowerment needs to be carried out in a sustainable manner so that the community plays a role as the main actor in the development of competitive and sustainable tourism.

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