

ECO-HOMESTAY: DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT ON RURAL TOURISM-BASED CONSERVATION MODEL

(Study Case of Sidomulyo Village, Silo District, Jember Regency)

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Abstract

The purposes of this research were to assess the concept of Eco-Homestay in conservation-based tourism in rural area. A case study was set up at Sidomulyo Village, Silo District, Jember. A qualitative method in the form of in-depth interviews was performed as a tool to generate models. Informants in this study included the staff of the Department of Forestry and Plantation, lecturer of the Faculty of Agriculture and Polytechnic of Jember, State University of Jember, and Sidomulyo community in Silo Districts, Jember. The result showed that the purposes of eco-homestay can be reached by managing the structure of integrated development, structure of organizational management, structure of financial management, marketing strategies, operational strategies and physical building.

Keywords: conservation, eco-homestay, rural tourism, Sidomulyo

INTRODUCTION

Conservation village is one of the community-based model of biodiversity conservation that provides opportunities for surround communities near the protected areas. Such models actively involved community in efforts of conservation. This model also provides opportunity for the communities to gain secure access of land uses. Conservation village model ensure their long-term commitment to support forest conservation [1].

Involving rural area in conservation program is important. The number of villages in Indonesia are about 73.067 (Permendagri No. 6, 2008) [2]. Such rural area is potential to be developed into a tourism village, especially rural tourism. Rural tourism development able to support the efforts of rural poverty reduction by empowering local communities during the village's tourism development. In addition, tourism is a sector that holds crucial role in the region development process, i.e. contributing to the local and community income. This contribution give local governments an additional income in developing projects and other activities in the area [3,4].

Jember is an area which rich of tourism attractions. Rural area in Jember is home of numerous tourism attractions. The tourism attraction ranging from natural landscapes,

culture and arts. Tourism potentially can addressed to increase human prosperity. However, Jember significantly facing serious problems in human standards of live. This data supported by fact that of the 38 districts/cities in East Java, Jember occupied the highest number of poor people, reaching 237.700 inhabitants [5].

The dynamics of tourism development lead to some words to express the relationship of tourism to solve environmental problems and economic development. It is encompasses sustainable tourism development, village tourism and ecotourism [6]. These terms have similar meaning with protecting biodiversity and involving community in tourism development. The main realized formulation of rural tourism is the tourism village's lifestyle and life quality of society. Authenticity is one of the crucial issues and it is also influenced by economic, physical and social conditions of the rural areas (e.g. spaces, cultural heritage, agriculture activities, landscape, history and culture tourism services, and a unique and exotic experience typical of the region). Thus, modeling of community-based rural tourism in rural area in Jember is essential. The basic principles of such approach lies on the creativity to continue development which are able to maintain the identity or characteristic of the regions without overlook the sustainable environmental aspects. Therefore, we assessed the concept of Eco-homestay in the development concept of rural tourism-based conservation model. A case study was conducted at Sidomulyo Village, Silo District, Jember.

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ECO-HOMESTAY

Eco-homestay is an accommodation facility in the area of local eco-tourism destination that nuanced natural, clean, healthy, safe, orderly and environmental friendly. Development of eco-homestay attempts to diversify the income of local communities by implement limitations on the concept of ecotourism development [7]. Considering the operational strategy, the development of this accommodation is a technique to increase the number and the period of tourist visits. Furthermore, if eco-homestay managed properly, it will produce a positive additional value on the tourism marketing within the area.

Socialization of eco-homestay to the community started from provide counseling on the significance of clean and beautiful living environmental [7,8]. Many rural dwellers basically have poor understanding on the ecolodge principles and applications. Therefore, an intensive training and coaching to the community about the advantage of the eco-homestay management should be implemented periodically. However, few problems model of ecolodge is available. Some rural community has been established and tested the implementation of eco-homestay, but less has been reported.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

We used qualitative methods and obtained data by in-depth interviews, the process of obtaining information for research purposes in the form of questions and answers between the interviewer and the informant with or without the interview guideline. Informants in this study included the staff of the Department of Forestry and Plantation, lecturer of the Faculty of Agriculture and Polytechnic of Jember, State University of Jember, and Sidomulyo community, Silo Districts, Jember. In every interview, the informant was interviewed about 30-45 minutes. Interviews were conducted in Madurese, Javanese or Bahasa Indonesia depends on the informant background. Interviews data was recorded and stored for further descriptive analysis.

We enrich the discussion with a number of literature and supporting documents obtained from various sources, encompasses library of Meru Betiri National Park and Office of Agriculture, Jember Regency. The data is analysed using interactive model of Miles and Huberman [9] that consisted of four stages: data

collection, data reduction, data display and conclusion.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Profile and Potential of Sidomulyo

Vision and Mission

The vision of the villages is the creation of creative, clean and respectable civil services realizes a prosperous, religious and beneficial society. The mission action to realize the vision operationally, include:

1. Organize best governance practices
2. Empowering the education and improving the community health
3. Optimally developing the potential of the village
4. Reducing the level of poverty and unemployment
5. Strengthening the facilities and infrastructure of the development

Sidomulyo Community

In Sidomulyo, the majority of ethnics come from Madurese and Javanese. There are also Chinese and Arabic ethnic, but the number is quite low. Most of the populations are Moslem; therefore plenty boarding schools and mosques were easily found to hold Islamic religious education. The community is traditional peasant with medium and small size of agricultural lands.

Geographical and Physical Conditions

Sidomulyo is the 9th village in Silo District; a fraction of the Garahan Village in 1990 and became the definitive village in 1994. Sidomulyo village lies at altitude of 560 m above sea level. Sidomulyo Village area is a mountainous region, and mostly consists of dry land. The topography of the village consists of an area of 2357 ha of plains, hills and mountains of 2636 hectares. Sidomulyo is the center of the coffee, avocado and petai plantation crops. The rainfall of the area is 2000 ml per year [9].

Village Potential

1. **Trade and Industry;** Trading sector strongly support Sidomulyo village because the local market was in the village center, Krajan Sub-village. Besides marketing their tofu and soy cake to surround village, they also breed goat and broilers.
2. **Small and Medium Enterprises (SME);** sufficiently developed SME is Household Industry of Chips made of Cassava, Gadong and Bananas in Krajan Sub-village.

3. **Agriculture**; Paddy are the major agriculture commodities besides corn, soybeans and peanuts. There are also vast tobacco field found in Sidomulyo
4. **Orchards product**; encompasses coconut, coffee. For fruits, Sidomulyo is a supplier of avocado, coffee and coconut which marketed to Jakarta [9].
5. **Livestock and Fisheries**; local chickens especially preferred as popular livestock besides goats and cows.



Figure 1. Accessibility to Sidomulyo Village, Silo District to Meru Betiri National Park [10]

Description: → = Sidomulyo Village; → = Meru Betiri National Park.

Eco-Homestay Concept in Sidomulyo

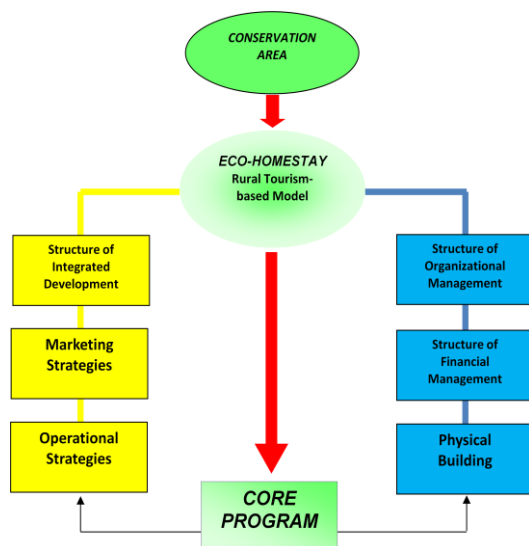


Figure 2. Eco-homestay Concept in Sidomulyo

Core Program

Sidomulyo has abundant potential resources. Located nearby the Meru Betiri National Park

(MBNP), the establishment of eco-homestay programs in such village's area becomes strategic. In order to developed eco-homestay program, several point which are related to community activities are found during this study. These is called core program of activity. Such programs of community development included agro tourism, agriculture, crafts, education and natural reforestation.

The initial stage of eco-homestay development can be started from community member as voluntary activity. These will become the pilot project for next eco-homestay in the village. Establishing pilot project is not an easy activity. The key success is close to the commitment of rural people who are a member of conservation society in the villages. In Sidomulyo, the existence of conservation society is related to the effort of government, particularly Meru Betiri National Park, to involve local community in national park conservation programs. As far, there is benefit with the society conservation program to enhance the biodiversity conservation in Meru Betiri national Park [11].

The assistance of numerous parties, including staff of Meru Betiri National Park can be important. The program is to educate community to build home that natural, clean, healthy and environmental friendly. When the house established, the house can generates fund. The owner can earn money from the rental of rooms for tourists. In addition, the rest of the home-garden area could be planted with short period crops such as vegetables, cassava and maize that also support the income of the plantation sector. This program is an application of the conservation values on the environment.

The role of the guide (MBNP officer) only acted as a facilitator for the management, marketing and other related to monitoring systems and evaluation activities. The staff of Meru Betiri National Park actively establish workshop on tourism development and management whit the objectives to increase capability of Sidomulyo villages as tourism destinations. Transportation groups also should be prepared to manage their member in rental vehicles for tourists to go to the main attractions of MBNP, while the guide were provided in cooperation with Meru Betiri officer.

Structure of Organizational Management

The community members choose 5 persons in every 3 months to act as:

1. Front office and cashier.
2. Food and Beverage and housekeeper.
3. Maintenance and environment monitoring.

Structure of Financial Management

Funds for the development come from local community members self. 50% funds can be used as an operating cost and the remaining 50% must be saved as backup [11] to the development/ construction of others eco-homestay. Any revenue from eco-homestay should be set aside for cash contributions of local community groups.

It is expected in a couple of years later, members of the group can have its own eco-homestay in their each homes with the same concept but different services (e.g. an eco-homestay provides *garahan pecel* rice diet, while the other provides roasted rice, etc).

Physical Building

Building for the development of eco-homestay highlighted special features of the local community. Therefore, if the eco-homestay will be built in the Sidomulyo village – which is majority Madurese and Javanese – the building should be designed with Madurese and Javanese architectural and equipped with a balcony to enjoy the outdoors scenery.

The concept to accommodate and use local architectural style in eco-homestay is one of the principal spirits of ecotourism implementation in the world [6]. Through the promotion of local architectural building, there is benefits aspect in tourist education to know the local traditions.

Operational Strategy

On the operational strategy, the eco-homestay was operationalized following three ecotourism principles, namely:

1. Promoting the consistency on the definition of ecotourism and environmental carrying capacity study in its implementation
2. Increase facilities and attractions for the activities, to increase the tourist number and length of tourist visits
3. Improving the quality of the human resources with intensive training in an attempt to excellent service for visitors

Marketing Strategy

Marketing is the principles of sustainable business, and developing competitive marketing is crucial in order to generates consuments [12]. Following the basic principles of marketing, the

marketing strategy was run following basic strategy:

1. Establish partnerships with existed and abroad operators in the market
2. Networks utilization of existing information and marketing

As far, these strategies seem effective to generate market. Number of visitor is still limited, but in the first stage of development it is become crucial to attract community to develop eco-homestay which is able to support biodiversity conservation.

Support from various parties to build community's interest and motivation to start business in tourism sector is necessary. Besides contain the concept of travel, it also includes the values of environment conservation. Therefore, socialization of eco-homestay development and management should be aggressively done by involving various stakeholders [11], so that the benefits of eco-homestay can be reviewed from various perspectives.

Opportunities for Other Regions

The concept of eco-homestay can be applied in other villages that have the potential of natural plantations, scenery and other potentials that can be developed based on the conservation aspect to foster conservation-based sustainable rural tourism.

CONCLUSION

Development of eco-homestay is useful to develop local revenue while maintaining the concept of ecotourism development and environmental conservation. In terms of operational strategy, the development of this property is a technique to increase the number and duration of tourist visits and invites tourists for further potential areas through natural nuanced conservation. If the eco-homestay is managed by professionals, it would be positive impacts on the implementation of tourism-based conservation within the area.

SUGGESTION

Government were expected to give more attention and provide pro-community policies and open market access and investment to explore the potential areas that would ultimately impact on improving people's welfare via conservation-based eco-homestay program.

Academics were expected to contribute sustainable new ideas and mediate community

with government, the community to marketing actors and financial institutions. Community could strengthen their entrepreneur spirit with potential in their region, to improve their welfare by the concept of eco-homestay in line with the aspects of environmental conservation.

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