

Optimizing Ecotourism Elements to Strengthen the Tourism Attraction of Kerta Village, Payangan, Gianyar

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ABSTRACT

Kerta Village has ecotourism potential that has not been optimized, such as the potential of waterfall attractions, MSME products, and agrotourism potential of orange plantations. The problems faced are the optimal management of the potential owned, the lack of supporting infrastructure, and the limited capacity of the community in managing potential. This service activity aims to optimize the ecotourism potential of Kerta Village to strengthen tourist attraction. The methods used include field surveys, master plan planning, and community assistance. The results show that with the master plan for the establishment of water attractions can strengthen the tourist attraction of Kerta Village. synergy between ecotourism development and MSME empowerment is important in order to create a mutually reinforcing economic ecosystem.

INTRODUCTION

Kerta Village is one of the villages located in Payangan District, Gianyar Regency, Bali Province. Kerta Village is directly adjacent to Kintamani District, Bangli Regency. With an area of approximately 1714 hectares or 17.14 km², Kerta Village has an undulating topography and is located at an altitude between 600 to 950 meters above sea level. The area includes 1393.2 hectares of sloping land, 44.20 hectares of watershed, and 257.130 hectares of ravine protection area. Geographically, Kerta Village is located in the middle of Bali Island, which is known for its two main seasons, the rainy season and the dry season. These climatic conditions provide excellent soil fertility, making Kerta Village an ideal area for agricultural activities. The natural potential of Kerta Village includes agricultural, plantation, forestry, cultural and other artificial potentials. The most prominent potential is in the field of citrus fruit plantations, coffee, and vegetables which are the main commodities of the village. In addition, Kerta Village also has natural tourism potential that has not been fully explored, such as beautiful waterfalls, and plantation areas that have the potential to be developed into agro-tourism destinations. In order to encourage regional development and people's welfare, the tourism sector can be developed (Pambudi & Putri, 2022).

Despite having a lot of potential, Kerta Village faces several challenges in the process of developing existing potential. Among these are the lack of adequate infrastructure to support tourism, especially related to the management of natural resources such as waterfalls, not optimal promotion and data collection of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and still not optimal agro-tourism development. In developing tourism in a village, obstacles are usually found, such as the low level of human resources available and inadequate infrastructure (Budiyah, 2020). In terms of supporting tourism infrastructure, the existing infrastructure is not yet adequate to support tourism development. Regarding the potential of MSMEs, especially those engaged in processing agricultural products and handicraft products, they have not received adequate attention in terms of promotion and data collection. This has resulted in limited market access and a lack of community knowledge about the potential of village MSMEs. In relation to the potential of agritourism, the development of agritourism has not been maximized. This is due to the lack of community understanding about sustainable agritourism management. The development of this tourism village requires professional guidance so that later the community can manage the potential of the region on their own (Gautama et al., 2020).

In connection with these existing conditions, community service activities were carried out through the KKN-PMM (Real Work Lecture - Community Learning and Empowerment) program implemented by Warmadewa University in 2024 in Kerta Village. This community service activity is expected to be a solution to these challenges. The focus of this service activity is the optimization of ecotourism elements to strengthen the tourist attraction of Kerta Village. Local community empowerment is an important foundation in the development of a sustainable tourism village (Suswanto et al., 2019). This activity is also in line with efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in

goal 8 “Decent Work and Economic Growth” and goal 15 “Protect, Restore, and Encourage Sustainable Use of Terrestrial Ecosystems”. Sustainable tourism product development is a very important aspect in an effort to increase the attractiveness of tourism villages (Simanjuntak et al., 2023). Through the optimization of ecotourism potential, it is expected that Kerta Village will not only be able to increase sustainable tourism attractiveness, but also encourage inclusive and sustainable local economic growth.

IMPLEMENTATION AND METHODS

Community service activities to optimize ecotourism elements to strengthen tourist attractions in Kerta Village have a general description, namely optimizing tourism potential through waterfall tourism infrastructure planning, optimizing creative economic potential through data collection and education of MSMEs, and optimizing agro-tourism potential through data collection and promotion of community-owned gardens. The method of implementing this community service activity will be carried out through several strategic stages which include participatory, collaborative, and sustainable approaches. This approach aims to ensure that every activity carried out can be accepted, implemented, and optimized by the Kerta Village community independently.

The participatory approach was carried out by involving the Village Head, Village Apparatus, and the people of Kerta Village directly in every stage, from planning to implementation. Active participation of the community and related agencies is very positively correlated with the development of a tourist destination, especially village tourism (Mahendra & Althalets, 2022). Active participation was facilitated through focus group discussions (FGDs). A collaborative approach was taken by involving various stakeholders, including the village government, community leaders, MSME players, and other related parties. This collaboration aims to strengthen the synergy between various parties in developing village potential. The sustainable approach will be designed by considering sustainability aspects, both in terms of environmental, social, and economic aspects. The programs implemented will be designed so that they can be continued by the local community after the KKN-PMM program ends.

The stages of implementing community service activities are as follows.

1. **Observasi dan Analisis Situasi**

Conduct observations through field surveys to understand the actual conditions of Kerta Village, including ecotourism potential, infrastructure conditions, and the situation of existing MSMEs. This survey will also be used to identify community needs and barriers. Furthermore, a situation analysis was conducted to determine the conditions and situations faced by partners.

2. Problem Identification and Problem Solution Formulation

Problem identification is carried out after analyzing the situation experienced by partners. The results of problem identification resulted in three problems related to optimizing the potential of Kerta Village, namely the lack of infrastructure for water attractions, the lack of maximum development of handicraft MSMEs, and the lack of maximum development of agro-tourism. Problem solutions were formulated based on the results of problem identification. There are three areas of activity that can be carried out, namely optimizing tourist attraction infrastructure, optimizing MSMEs, and optimizing agro-tourism potential.

3. Problem Solution Implementation

The implementation of problem solutions begins with the formation of an implementation team, coordination with stakeholders, socialization of activities, and implementation of activities. The activities carried out are as follows.

a) Optimizing the Infrastructure Potential of Water Tourism Objects

The activity begins with surveying and mapping the location where the water tourism object will be created. Furthermore, a master plan for structuring the infrastructure of the water tourism object, the area around the tourist site, which includes plans for developing road access, public facilities, parking areas, and other supporting facilities. The results of the master plan that has been made are then coordinated with the village head and stakeholders to get feedback from various points of view.

b) Optimizing the Potential of MSMEs as a Community Creative Economy

The activity began with a survey and data collection of MSMEs in Kerta Village. The data collection process includes products produced, business scale, and development potential. Furthermore, education is provided to MSMEs related to business management, digital marketing, and product packaging. This training will also include material on business sustainability and increasing product competitiveness.

c) Optimization of Plantation Potential for Agritourism Development

The activity began with a survey and data collection of citrus and coffee plantations in Kerta Village, including land area, productivity, and potential development as an agro-tourism destination. Furthermore, counseling was conducted to farmers and plantation owners regarding the concept and practice of agritourism. Training materials will include sustainable farming techniques, farm management as a tourist attraction, and marketing strategies.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

Conduct regular monitoring to measure the progress of activities, evaluate the effectiveness of the program, and identify challenges that arise during implementation. Next, conduct a final evaluation to assess the overall results of the activities, including the impact on the Kerta Village community, and develop recommendations for program sustainability. After the activity ended, continued by compiling reports and documenting the entire process

and results of the service activities, which will be used as a reference for similar activities in the future.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Optimizing the Infrastructure Potential of Water Tourism Objects

The location survey and mapping stage at the beginning of the activity produced an initial description that included topographic details, road access, parking areas, and the location of public facilities needed. The location of the water tourism object to be built is adjacent to the “yellow bridge” which is one of the interesting places in Kerta Village. The master plan includes an accessibility development plan for water tourism, including the design of the road to the location, and the design of the arrangement of the water tourism area. The design for the area around the water tourism includes the development of a viewing area to enjoy the view, seating area, photo area, selling area, changing area, toilet, adult pool area, children's pool area, garden arrangement, and placement of trash bins.



Figure 1. Location Survey Activity of Water Tourism Object Plan

In detail, in the adult pool area there is a toilet with a stacked pyramid roof, aiming not to lose the impression of Balinese architecture but modernized so as not to be monotonous. There is a “bale bengong” and a sitting area to relax and enjoy the view of the waterfall. In the children's pool area, made shallower than the adult pool, there is also a slide as a medium of entertainment for children. In the water tourism area there are also lockers with a stacked circular roof shape, using an exposed bamboo structure by utilizing existing bamboo in the existing location. This exposed structure becomes the aesthetic of the building itself. And there is a sitting area resembling terracing by utilizing the slope of the land contour with a direct view of the waterfall. The results of the infrastructure master plan design have received feedback from the village head and stakeholders. The master plan design has considered various important aspects such as accessibility, environmental sustainability, and visitor comfort.



Figure 2. Master Plan Design Result of Water Tourism Object

Although this activity showed positive results, some challenges arose during the implementation of the activity. The obstacles faced were related to the geographical conditions that were quite steep and bumpy and the limited ability of human resources which became an obstacle in the process of infrastructure design planning. Human resource development in the tourism industry should also include a deeper understanding of sustainability (Yulianah, 2021). The results of this activity open up opportunities for further development, such as the development of integrated tour packages that combine ecotourism and agrotourism. Kerta Village has great potential to become an attractive tourist destination with various natural and cultural uniqueness. For this reason, further efforts are needed in terms of promotion, development of tourism products, and increasing the capacity of the community in managing tourism professionally.

Optimizing the Potential of MSMEs as a Community Creative Economy

Based on the data collection, there are 41 micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Kerta Village. These MSMEs cover various sectors, while the dominant sectors are livestock, handicrafts, and agriculture. Each MSME was documented in detail regarding the products produced, business scale, development needs, and challenges faced. After the data collection, MSME players were given education related to business management, digital marketing, and product packaging. As a result, some MSMEs have been able to improve the appearance and attractiveness of their products through better packaging and more professional branding. The education provided has succeeded in increasing the capacity and skills of MSME players, especially in terms of business management and marketing. Many MSME players who previously did not really understand the importance of financial management and marketing strategies are now more prepared and confident in managing their businesses. Human resources still need to be more innovative in order to create various advantages of the creative economy being run (Niode & Rahman, 2022).



Figure 3. UMKM Survey and Data Collection Activities

Optimizing MSMEs through this activity has an impact on opening up insights into business development for MSME players in Kerta Village. With increased insight, it is expected that MSME players can develop their businesses which in the future can increase sales, open new market access, which in turn will contribute to the welfare of the village community as a whole. The sustainability of this program is certainly a concern for the future. It is important to ensure that the training and capacity building that has been provided can continue to be implemented by MSME actors in the long term.



Figure 4. MSME Education Activities

Follow-up programs such as ongoing mentoring and access to financial resources need to be considered to ensure the sustainability of MSME development. On the other hand, there are still several challenges faced by MSME actors. One of the main challenges is limited access to capital to develop businesses. In addition, the level of digital technology adoption among MSME players also still needs to be improved, especially for those who are not familiar with technology. Lack of understanding of technology makes the potential of human resources less than optimal (Dwimawatiet al., 2019).

Optimizing Plantation Potential for Agritourism Development

Visits and observations of community plantations have been conducted and resulted in two plantation areas that have the potential to be developed as agritourism, namely citrus plantations and ornamental plant nursery plantations. These two plantations were recommended based on their natural beauty, accessibility, and the commitment of the plantation owners to be involved in the agritourism program. As part of the preparation for agritourism development, the tourist trails within the citrus plantation and ornamental plant nursery need to be laid out in a way that makes it easier for visitors to explore the plantation. These paths also need to be equipped with information boards that provide an explanation of the types of plants and the process of planting to harvest. In addition, it is also necessary to prepare an educational program on how to cultivate citrus and ornamental plants, from planting, maintenance, to harvesting, which has then been prepared and is ready to run as part of an agritourism package. This program involves local farmers as tour guides who will provide direct education to visitors.

Some integrated tour packages can also be developed that combine agritourism to orange groves (orange picking tours) or ornamental plant gardens with other attractions in Kerta Village, such as the yellow bridge, water tourism, and waterfall views. Through optimizing the potential of agritourism and combining it with other attractions in Kerta Village, it will create additional sources of income for farmers, communities, and villages. The development of sustainable tourism products such as ecotourism or agritourism can be a way to protect the surrounding environment and create sustainable sources of income (Sukariyanto & Susila 2023).



Figure 5. Kerta Village Community Plantation Survey Activity

Agritourism allows farmers to directly benefit economically from the visits of tourists, who not only buy products but also pay for a unique tourism experience. Several challenges are faced in developing this agritourism potential, including infrastructure issues that still need to be improved, human resource readiness, as well as challenges in promoting this new destination to a wider market. Knowledge and management skills are essential in the quest to develop village tourism (Rahmawati et al., 2023). In addition, weather changes that can

affect agricultural yields are also a challenge that needs to be anticipated in the long term.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Community service activities in Kerta Village have succeeded in strengthening the design of Tourism Attractions in Kerta Village with a master plan for the establishment of a water tourism object. The support of this water tourism object master plan is expected to be continued to the development stage which will later become a new tourist attraction in Kerta Village. This activity supports the development of ecotourism that prioritizes environmental preservation and local culture. The agro-tourism developed not only provides a unique tourist experience, but also provides education to tourists about sustainable agriculture and the importance of preserving nature. The synergy between ecotourism development and MSME empowerment in Kerta Village has created a mutually reinforcing economic ecosystem. Tourists who come to enjoy agritourism also become consumers of local products, which ultimately increases community income and strengthens the village economy. This activity is also in line with efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in goal 8 "Decent Work and Economic Growth" and goal 15 "Protect, Restore and Encourage Sustainable Use of Terrestrial Ecosystems".

To increase tourist attractiveness, it is recommended that village and local governments continue to develop supporting infrastructure, such as road access, public facilities, and environmental arrangements around tourism attractions. Good infrastructure will increase tourist comfort and support the development of ecotourism in a sustainable manner. To support the sustainability of ecotourism, it is recommended that communities continue to be empowered through continuous training in tourism management and local product development. This training should include aspects of service, environmental management, and creative product development that can support ecotourism. Collaboration between the government, community, academia and the private sector needs to be strengthened to ensure the sustainability of ecotourism programs. This partnership can include tourism product development, environmental management, and community capacity building in managing and utilizing local potential.

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