



Enhancing Tourism Awareness and Community Engagement in Wasur National Park, Papua, Indonesia: A Qualitative Exploration

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to empower local residents, enabling them to be an important part of efforts to increase awareness of the tourism potential in their environment, as well as being friendly hosts to visitors.

In developing a tourist village, there are criteria that must be considered, such as the uniqueness of tourist attractions, natural aspects, and superiority factors compared to other tourist attractions. Apart from that, the factor of community empowerment is also key, which invites local communities to participate in managing tourist attractions in their area.

Wasur National Park (TNW) is located in Merauke Regency, Papua, and is a habitat for various indigenous tribes. TNW management follows the principles of national parks, which include research, science, education, cultivation, tourism and recreation purposes. Tourism village development activities in TNW involve local communities, especially the younger generation, to achieve sustainable development goals.

The research method used is qualitative with data collection through observation, interviews and document analysis. Training, outreach and development of tourist villages are carried out through various methods such as surveys, tutorials, discussions and evaluations.

The results of this research describe the steps for developing the Wasur National Park tourist village and emphasize the important role of local communities in this effort. Apart from that, the criteria for developing tourist attractions that attract visitors are also stated. Overall this research provides a comprehensive view of the development of tourist villages and nature conservation in Wasur National Park.

Keywords: Tourism Village, Community Empowerment, Local Wisdom, Wasur National Park

INTRODUCTION

The Tourism Village in Wasur National Park creates a rural atmosphere that shows the authenticity of rural life, including socio-economic, socio-cultural aspects, customs and daily activities. The region also features distinctive traditional architecture and unique economic activities, giving it great potential for tourism development. The Tourism Village aims to empower local residents, allowing them to be an important part of efforts to increase awareness of the tourism potential in their environment, as well as being friendly hosts to visitors (Mulyana et al., 2022).

To be categorized as a tourist village, there are several factors that must be considered, such as the uniqueness of the tourist attraction which is not found anywhere else (rarity factor), naturalness (naturalness factor), and having advantages compared to other tourist attractions (uniqueness). Apart from that, the factor of community empowerment is also key, which invites local communities to participate in managing tourist attractions in their area (Syahrudin et al., 2023) (Ririhena et al., 2020).

In developing a tourist village, there are criteria that must be met, namely 4A + 1C, which include superior tourist attractions (Attraction), supporting facilities (Amenities), adequate infrastructure (Accessibility), additional services and institutions (Ancillaries), as well as involvement local community (Community Involvement) (Tjilen et al., 2023).

National parks in Indonesia are natural conservation areas that were first implemented after the 3rd World National Parks Congress in 1982 in Bali which took place from 11 to 22 October 1982. Initially, there was the establishment of the first five national parks, namely Mount Gede Pangrango, Komodo, Ujung Kulon, Gunung Leuser, and Kerinci Seblat. Until 2010, the number of national parks throughout Indonesia had reached 50, and the total area reached 16,384,194 hectares. The definition of national parks in Indonesia is regulated in Law no. 5 of 1990 concerning Conservation of Biological Natural Resources and Their Ecosystems. National parks are natural areas that have unique ecosystems, managed using a zoning system for the purposes of research, science, education, supporting cultivation, tourism and recreation. The government is responsible for managing national parks through the National Park Office or National Park Office.

Wasur National Park (TNW) is located in Merauke Regency and covers four sub-districts, namely Merauke, Jagebob, Sota and Naukenjarai. This region is home to four indigenous tribes, namely the Yeinan Tribe, Marind Tribe, Marori Mengey Tribe, and Kanume Tribe. This park is often referred to as a "garden with two faces" because it experiences changes in the climate of the monsoon season with two different periods. The dry season in TNW lasts from June or July to December, while the rainy season starts in January and lasts until June or July. In September, the season changes in the park, where previously waterlogged swamps begin to dry out, leaving behind puddles of water and cracked ground. (Kosmaryandi, 2016).

Wasur National Park is a source of livelihood for the Kanume tribal community in Merauke Regency (Phoek & Tjilen, 2019). They inherited the tradition of protecting and preserving nature, because their food comes from nature. Therefore, maintaining and preserving Wasur National Park is the key to their survival. Wasur National Park, also known as TNW, is located in Papua and is known to have the largest wet savanna forest in Indonesia and even all of Asia. Such natural conditions make it a place rich in various types of flora and fauna (Tjilen, Ririhena, et al., 2021).

Development of tourist villages around Wasur National Park can be done with certain steps. First, it is necessary to map the area to identify the natural, social and cultural potential that exists in the village. Second, efforts to improve the physical nature of the village, including improving public facilities, improving housing, and managing waste, especially plastic, are very important. Third, preparation of Human Resources, formation of institutional structures, and network development including tourist village management regulations, management bodies, short, medium and long term program planning, as well as collaboration with various parties (Syahrudin et al., 2023).

To make tourism attractive to visitors, there are four criteria that need to be met in its development. First, a tourism destination must have an attraction that can be enjoyed or become an attraction for visitors. Second, tourist destinations also need to provide opportunities for visitors to participate in fun activities, such as vacationing, playing, or enjoying regional culinary specialties. Third, tourist destinations must provide shopping facilities that reflect the identity or iconicity of the area, so that visitors can take home mementos. Fourth, tourism destinations must also provide educational elements to visitors (Tjilen, Fitriani, et al., 2021).

The community, especially the younger generation, has a very important role in developing the tourist village of Wasur National Park. The main objective of this business is to make tourist villages independent, improve the welfare of their residents, and contribute as a forum for community service for academics, which is one of the pillars in the tri dharma of higher education. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to provide training and assistance to increase the capacity of existing resources in the village, according to the talents and potential of the youth and village community who want to play a role in developing the tourist village.

METHOD

The approach used in this research is qualitative with data collection carried out through observation and interview methods. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with 3 village leaders, 3 traditional leaders, 6 people from the Forestry Service, 6 people from the Tourism Office and 30 local community members who were members of the Marind Tribe, the Marori Mengey Tribe, and the Kanume Tribe, National Park Tourism Village Wasur in the Merauke Regency area took part in this activity. Apart from that, field observations and document analysis were also carried out to support data collection to identify efforts to make tourist villages independent, improve the welfare of their residents, the Wasur National Park Tourism Village in the Merauke Regency area. Research locations, namely Merauke, Jagebob, Sota, and Naukenjarai, Merauke Regency, South Papua Province.

This activity is carried out with direct physical interaction and includes field assessment training in tourist villages (Kosmaryandi et al., 2012). During the implementation of this activity, information is provided through various methods, namely:

1. Survey Method: The survey was used to gain an understanding of the environmental conditions at the PKM location, the character of the Marind Tribe, Marori Mengey Tribe and Kanume Tribe, as well as coordinating with Village elements such as the Village Head.
2. Socialization Method: Material is presented to provide an understanding of the concept of the Wasur National Park tourist village, the principles of tourism awareness, and local tourist attractions.
3. Data Collection Methods: Data collection activities involve collecting information about the people who will take part in the training. The target training participants include village communities involved in business and work in the tourism sector, such as homestay owners, tour guides, noken craftsmen, farmers and entrepreneurs.
4. Tutorial Method: The instructor uses video and image examples to illustrate the uniqueness and attractiveness of the Wasur National Park tourist village, with the aim of inspiring participants, stimulating their creativity, and providing insight into developing their own tourist village.
5. Discussion Method: Participants were given the opportunity to participate in a question and answer session, which helped them understand more deeply about the management of Wasur National Park tourist villages and allowed them to share relevant experiences they had.
6. Training Methods: Training activities cover various aspects, such as understanding tourism awareness, planning tourist destinations, administrative and financial arrangements for tourist village products, providing quality services rooted in local wisdom, competency in foreign languages for cultural tourism guides, sustainable management of tourist destinations, preparation of travel packages, marketing strategies based on digitalization, management of tourism products based on local wisdom, development and packaging of local products that

are able to compete in the global market, governance arrangements within tourism awareness groups, cultural tour guides, and arrangements for homestay accommodation and food services- drink.

7. Evaluation Method: At the end of the activity, an assessment is carried out to what extent the participants understand the material that has been presented. They are also given the opportunity to provide input and suggestions that can be useful for improving training activities in the future.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The material on managing tourist villages in Wasur National Park is a very interesting topic for the participants in this training. More than that, this training opened the participants' insight into how to effectively manage a tourist village, including encouraging the participation of the entire community to improve their welfare and make a positive contribution to village development. (Ririhena et al., 2020). Even though most of the participants may not have a higher educational background, especially in the tourism sector, they show high enthusiasm in their efforts to advance their region. (Syah, 2017).

In an effort to convey this material, the method used is to arrange the material in a structured manner, while providing examples that are relevant to everyday life. In addition, participants were given the opportunity to discuss and ask questions to the speaker. This approach is intended to ensure better understanding and provide a clearer picture to participants (MPOC et al., 2020). In this way, it is hoped that participants will more easily understand and apply the concepts that have been presented in the context of tourism village management, including in relation to Wasur National Park.

The tourist village of Wasur National Park has great potential for development, because it can be a vital source of income for Merauke Regency (Ririhena et al., 2021), programs for the development and exploitation of resources and tourism potential in villages have the potential to have a positive impact on the welfare and economy of their residents.

Wasur National Park, which is located in Merauke Regency, is one of the tourism destinations that has been favored by the Merauke Regency government. Wasur National Park has a variety of interesting potential resources to be developed as a tourism attraction, including its natural beauty. The natural resource management system implemented by indigenous communities in this area has been proven to be adaptive to existing natural environmental conditions (Phoek et al., 2021). The formation of these systems is the result of a learning process that has taken place over many years by indigenous peoples in responding to the environmental conditions in which they live.

Therefore, these systems tend to have distinctive and unique characteristics in each traditional territory. This uniqueness can be an added value in national park management and supports the criteria for determining National Park Areas regulated by statutory regulations, which emphasize uniqueness in terms of flora, fauna, ecosystems and natural phenomena. (Ririhena et al., 2020). Adopting natural resource management systems that have been used by indigenous communities in national park management can also significantly simplify management which has so far been limited in terms of data regarding biodiversity and its role in ecosystems and human life. (Tjilen et al., 2018). So far, the general reason is limited budget and human resources in regional management which is the main basis for management, even though data regarding the potential and benefits is very important. However, this information can be found through the knowledge of indigenous peoples and can be integrated with them. In this way, budget constraints and human resources are no longer the main obstacles in implementing national park management.

Indigenous communities in the Wasur National Park (TNW) area have traditionally divided and utilized their traditional territories in accordance with their customs. Mapping of important places for indigenous peoples has been carried out by WWF Wasur involving the participation of tribal leaders. The challenges faced involve a lack of harmony between various stakeholders in society, a decline in local wisdom, a lack of a clear tourism village development concept, a lack of knowledge regarding tourism product innovation among managers and the community, and a lack of efforts to market tourism products with adequate attractiveness. . The impact of these challenges includes a decrease in the number of tourist visits, both domestic and international (Tjilen et al., 2019).

To overcome this problem, community service and empowerment efforts in managing the Wasur National Park tourist village are very essential. This will have a positive impact on the development of the tourism sector in Wasur National Park, increasing its competitiveness, attracting more tourist visits and creating job opportunities. Apart from that, this initiative will also help the Wasur National Park tourist village management group to improve the quality of human resources in the tourism sector, develop better service standards, and improve community welfare. (Masriana, 2019). These efforts include training to improve service quality, communication skills in foreign languages, cultural tourism guides, as well as increasing efficiency in administrative and marketing management for the community and managers of Wasur National Park tourist villages.

According to (Wardani, 2022) The objectives of this community service and empowerment activity include:

1. Increasing the competitiveness of the tourism sector by improving the quality of service in the management of homestays in the Wasur National Park Tourism Village.
2. Improve skills in guiding tourists in the Wasur National Park Tourism Village.
3. Improving human resource capabilities in managing the administration and promotion of tourism products in the Wasur National Park Tourism Village.

Thus, the benefits of this research include:

1. Increase public understanding regarding the development of the Wasur National Park Tourism Village which is rooted in local wisdom.
2. Encourage cooperation between Tourism Village managers and external parties in the context of developing the Wasur National Park Tourism Village.
3. Improving the technical competence of the community and Tourism Village managers, so that tourists can obtain satisfactory tourism information and a satisfying travel experience in Wasur National Park Village.
4. Improving community welfare in the Wasur National Park Tourism Village.

Community service and empowerment activities in the Wasur National Park Tourism Village, as shown in Figure 1 below, have the aim of improving the economic and social welfare of the residents of Wasur National Park Village. Through active community involvement, a tourism village management approach based on local wisdom not only provides benefits from tourist visits, but also provides opportunities for the community to preserve and maintain local natural, artistic and cultural wealth which is the basis for the development of the Wasur National Park Tourism Village. (Prihasta & Suswanta, 2020)



Gambar 1. SKemema Community Service Activities in the Wasur National Park Tourism Village

a. Training Program

1. Through collaboration with the Village Government, management groups, and the Wasur National Park Tourism Village community, the training program held includes the following (Kamaruddin et al., 2019).
 - a. Increasing the competitiveness of the tourism sector with a focus on improving service quality. This training includes an understanding of the concept of conscious tourism and Sapta Pesona, with elements of Sapta Pesona (Safe, Orderly, Clean, Cool, Beautiful, Friendly, Memories). Apart from that, the training also seeks to improve the quality of service based on local wisdom, which is translated into the Catur Sewaka concept which is a concept consisting of Jemet (diligent, alert and fast service to tourists), Tresna (politeness, cheerful smile and friendly towards guests), Asih (affectionate service towards guests), and Bhakti (humble attitude and actions that build guest trust).
 - b. Wasur National Park tourist destination planning training covers various aspects, including attractions that include natural, cultural and artificial tourism potential, as well as accessibility to villages and tourist attractions. This program also includes supporting facilities such as accommodation, places to eat and tourism support services in the Wasur National Park Tourism Village.
 - c. Homestay training, including accommodation management and food and beverage services. This training includes a demonstration of Towel Folding, beverage serving which includes attractive beverage appearance, appropriate aroma, taste quality, proper nutrition, cleanliness, and safety. Apart from that, training also concerns food presentation which involves an attractive appearance,

quality taste, appropriate decoration, and cleanliness and sanitation standards. The food ingredients used in the training come from local or traditional plants available in the area.

2. Peincreasing human resource capabilities(Crystallography, 2016)
 - a. The administration and financial management of Wasur National Park tourist village products involves tasks such as identifying various types of tourism products, maintaining transparency in the use of funds, managing investments, and preparing capital-based budget plans (RAB).
 - b. A digitalization-based marketing strategy involves creating a website and preparing a Business Model Canvas as a step in increasing marketing effectiveness.
 - c. Management of tourism products based on local wisdom involves activities such as making token, cooking classes and typical souvenir products by creating a brand that reflects a special level of quality.
 - d. Developing and preparing local products so they can compete in the global market involves analyzing products from other regions that have achieved success and excellence, with the aim of comparing and improving local products.

b. Outer

In its implementation, the understanding of Tourism Villages in this program is based on synergistic efforts between experts from the Tourism Institute and the Wasur National Park Village Government, management groups, and the Wasur National Park village community. This program aims to create collaborative cooperation between universities and communities under the coordination of the local Village Government. The focus of this program is on developing skills and increasing insight in managing tourist villages, with results in the form of creating a village profile and creating an attractive environment as a guide for village development. The hope is that these results will provide direction for the development of the Wasur National Park Tourism Village which always emphasizes community participation and local wisdom.

Conclusion

1. The material on managing the Wasur National Park Tourism Village attracted the interest of the training participants, and this training broadened their insight into the effectiveness of managing tourist villages. This initiative also encourages participation of the entire community in improving welfare and making a positive contribution to village development.
2. The material is delivered through a structured method by providing relevant examples in everyday life. Participants are also given the opportunity to participate in discussions and ask questions, which contributes to improving their understanding.
3. Wasur National Park has great potential as an important source of income for the area. This is caused by the management of natural resources that have adapted to environmental conditions. This allows management of national parks with richer potential data, derived from indigenous knowledge.
4. Problems such as lack of synergy between stakeholders, decline in local wisdom, and lack of concept for developing tourist villages have caused a decline in the number of tourist visits. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out community service and empowerment actions in managing the Wasur National Park Tourism Village.
5. The aim of community service and empowerment activities is to improve the quality of services, techniques for guiding tourists, administration and marketing of tourism products. This is expected to improve community welfare and the competitiveness of the tourism sector.
6. Involving the community in managing tourism villages based on local wisdom allows them to care for and preserve local natural, artistic and cultural heritage. This also plays a role in the development of sustainable tourist villages. Therefore, community service and empowerment activities aim to improve the economic and social welfare of the community in Wasur National Park Village through sustainable tourism village management based on local wisdom.

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