

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN ENHANCING THE TOURISM APPEAL OF PAJAMBEN VALLEY IN BINANGUN VILLAGE, PATARUMAN DISTRICT, BANJAR CITY

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Abstract

This study was motivated by the suboptimal level of community participation in enhancing the attractiveness of Lembah Pajamben Tourism in Binangun Village, Pataruman District, Banjar City. This issue is reflected in the limited involvement of local residents in decision-making processes, the implementation of tourism management activities, and the utilization of tourism development outcomes. The study aimed to examine how community participation contributes to improving the attractiveness of Lembah Pajamben Tourism in Binangun Village, Pataruman District, Banjar City. A descriptive qualitative research method was employed. The study involved six informants selected through purposive sampling, consisting of the Village Head, a member of the Village Consultative Body (BPD), a community leader, a youth leader, a local entrepreneur, and a tourist. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

The findings indicate that community participation in enhancing the attractiveness of Lembah Pajamben Tourism has been implemented but remains suboptimal. In the decision-making aspect, community members have begun participating through deliberation meetings and by providing suggestions; however, their involvement is still limited. Regarding the implementation of activities, community members have participated in mutual cooperation (gotong royong), maintaining cleanliness, improving the surrounding environment, and contributing labor and ideas to tourism development, although the level of participation has not been evenly distributed. In terms of the utilization of development outcomes, the community has benefited economically through business activities and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) while also contributing to the maintenance of tourism facilities. Nevertheless, challenges remain, including the low level of awareness among some residents and visitors in preserving tourism facilities, as well as limited resource support.

In conclusion, community participation is a crucial factor in enhancing the attractiveness of Lembah Pajamben Tourism. Therefore, broader community involvement should be encouraged

through strengthened communication, community empowerment initiatives, and improved collaboration among the village government, tourism managers, and local residents to ensure the sustainable development of the tourism destination.

Keywords: Community participation, tourism attraction, tourism development, Lembah Pajamben.

A. INTRODUCTION

Tourism, in general, is a phenomenon involving travel undertaken consciously and temporarily by individuals or groups from their place of residence to another destination for the purposes of gaining new experiences, recreation, education, or business, supported by various facilities and services provided by the community, government, and private sector. The term *tourism* originates from two Sanskrit words: *pari*, meaning "many" or "around," and *wisata*, meaning "to travel" or "to undertake a journey." Over time, this concept has evolved, and tourism is now regarded as an essential component of social, economic, and cultural life that can generate benefits for local communities through increased income, employment opportunities, and the preservation of culture and the environment.

At the national level, the 2025 Report of the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy highlights the positive growth of the tourism sector, as reflected in the increasing number of tourist arrivals and the significant contribution of tourism villages as drivers of community-based economic development. This growth has been supported by digital promotion strategies and improved access to information, making Indonesia's tourist destinations increasingly recognized and attractive to both domestic and international visitors. The development of the tourism sector is also supported by the government's commitment to providing professional and effective tourism management, which contributes to increasing local government revenue, expanding employment opportunities, attracting investors, and promoting regional history and culture to wider communities (Hardianto et al., 2020). Furthermore, the complexity of tourism development is strongly influenced by the role and commitment of local governments in formulating and implementing policies that support tourism as a source of local revenue and sustainable development (Nur, 2024). The Indonesian Government has demonstrated its commitment to tourism development through Law Number 10 of 2009 on Tourism, which stipulates that tourism development should provide economic, social, and cultural benefits to local communities. Moreover, Regulation of the Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14 of 2016 concerning Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism Destinations emphasizes the importance of environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable tourism management. Based on these policies, effective destination management has become a key factor in enhancing tourism attractiveness and increasing visitor numbers.

Binangun Village, located in Pataruman District, Banjar City, is one of the areas with considerable potential for nature-based tourism, particularly through the Lembah Pajamben Tourism Destination. The attraction of this destination lies in its unspoiled natural scenery, cool

climate, and peaceful atmosphere, offering visitors a relaxing and tranquil experience. Community involvement plays a crucial role in the success of tourism destination management, as sustainable tourism development largely depends on the extent to which local residents participate in maintaining cleanliness, enhancing the surrounding environment, and providing friendly and welcoming services to tourists.

However, based on preliminary observations, community participation in enhancing the attractiveness of Lembah Pajamben Tourism in Binangun Village, Pataruman District, Banjar City, has not yet been optimal. Several key issues were identified. First, community involvement in the decision-making process remains limited, as evidenced by the low level of participation in community meetings and discussions concerning the planning and development of Lembah Pajamben Tourism. Second, community participation in tourism management activities is still insufficient. This is reflected in the limited involvement of local residents in environmental maintenance, tourism area management, site improvement, and other supporting activities. Third, community participation in benefiting from tourism development outcomes has not been fully optimized. Many residents have not yet maximized the economic opportunities created by the tourism destination, nor have they actively participated in maintaining and preserving the tourism facilities that have been developed.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies have extensively examined community participation in tourism development. Pratiwi et al. (2025) investigated community participation in developing the tourism potential of Sungai Kinjil Beach. Their findings indicate that local communities actively contributed to tourism development through the provision of labor, ideas, expertise, and support for the management of the tourism area. According to Cohen and Uphoff, as cited in Hutagalung, S. S. (2022, p. 10), participation refers to involvement in decision-making processes, program implementation, program evaluation, and the acquisition of benefits. Community participation, therefore, is defined as the active involvement of community members in activities that support the achievement of development goals through decision-making, program implementation, and evaluation.

Furthermore, according to Efendi (as cited in Irene, 2015, p. 58), participation can be classified into two forms:

- Horizontal Participation: Community members or groups take the initiative to participate collaboratively with one another on an equal basis.
- Vertical Participation: Community members participate through interactions with higher-level authorities or institutions in the development process.

According to Yadav, as cited in Hutagalung, S. S. (2022, p. 11), community participation consists of three principal forms:

- Participation in Decision-Making: Community involvement in determining development programs, including the utilization of local resources and budget allocation. In many cases, development programs have traditionally been determined by the central government, often

reflecting the interests of a small ruling elite rather than the broader needs and aspirations of the community.

- Participation in Program Implementation: Community involvement during the execution of development activities or projects. Participation may take the form of contributing labor, financial resources, materials, or ideas to support project implementation.
- Participation in the Utilization of Development Outcomes: Community involvement in utilizing and maintaining the benefits of a project after its completion, ensuring that the outcomes continue to provide long-term value.

Based on these perspectives, community participation in development can be broadly categorized into three key forms: participation in decision-making, participation in program implementation, and participation in the utilization of development outcomes. These dimensions emphasize the importance of providing opportunities for communities to contribute throughout the entire development process—from policy formulation and project implementation to the sustainable maintenance and utilization of development results.

Regarding tourist attraction, according to I Gusti Bagus Rai Utama (2017, p. 141), a tourism attraction must fulfill three essential requirements: something to see, something to do, and something to buy. A tourist attraction is defined as anything possessing uniqueness, beauty, and diverse value, whether derived from natural resources, cultural heritage, or human-made creations, that serves as a destination for tourists. Based on this perspective, a tourist attraction can be concluded to be any unique, attractive, and valuable natural, cultural, or artificial feature that motivates visitors to travel to a destination.

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a scientific approach that is rational, empirical, and systematic, used to conduct research within a particular field of study (Tersiana, 2018). Rational means that the research process is carried out through logical and reasonable procedures; empirical indicates that the methods employed are observable and verifiable through human senses; and systematic refers to the use of structured and sequential research steps. Research methodology encompasses the procedures, techniques, instruments, research design, duration of the study, data sources, and the methods used to collect, process, and analyze the data.

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research method. According to Abdussamad (2021), qualitative research is a method used to investigate natural settings, where the researcher serves as the primary research instrument, data are collected through triangulation techniques, analysis is inductive, and the findings emphasize meaning rather than generalization. Furthermore, descriptive research aims to describe, explain, and validate the phenomenon under investigation (Ramdhan, 2021, p. 7). This approach is intended to provide a comprehensive description of existing phenomena by analyzing and interpreting the meaning of the collected data. Accordingly, this study applies descriptive analysis to examine current issues related to community participation in enhancing the attractiveness of Lembah Pajamben Tourism.

The data consisted of primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through interviews with selected informants, while secondary data were collected from documents, scientific journals, books, and other relevant literature. Informants were selected purposively based on their involvement in the management and development of the Lembah Pajamben tourist destination. They included the Head of Binangun Village, members of the Village Consultative Body (BPD), community and religious leaders, youth leaders/Karang Taruna representatives, business operators in Lembah Pajamben, and tourists or visitors.

Data collection was conducted through library research and field research. Library research involved reviewing books, academic publications, and other relevant references related to the research topic. Field research was carried out directly at the research site through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation enabled the researcher to directly examine activities, situations, and conditions relevant to the study. Interviews were conducted with selected informants to obtain comprehensive information regarding community participation in tourism development. Documentation involved collecting written materials such as archives, reports, official records, photographs, and other supporting documents related to the research object. These documentary sources complemented and validated the findings obtained from observations and interviews.

Data analysis followed the qualitative data analysis procedures proposed by Abdussamad (2021, p. 103). The analysis involved carefully reading and reviewing all collected data, including observation notes, interview transcripts, and supporting documents, to identify emerging themes and patterns. Rather than relying on quantitative analysis, qualitative data were explored interpretively to understand the meanings embedded within the participants' experiences. The analytical process began with organizing and examining all available data from interviews, field observations, personal and official documents, photographs, and other relevant materials. The data were subsequently reduced, categorized, interpreted, and synthesized to generate meaningful conclusions regarding community participation in enhancing the attractiveness of Lembah Pajamben Tourism.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Participation is defined as “*the taking part in one or more phases*”, meaning involvement in one or more stages of a process, particularly the development process (Hoofstreed, 2022). The forms of participation can be categorized into five types:

- Direct participation through physical involvement and face-to-face collective activities.
- Participation in the form of financial or material contributions to participatory activities. Ideally, funds and facilities should originate from the community itself, while external support should only serve as temporary assistance.
- Participation in the form of support.
- Participation in the decision-making process.

- Representative participation by entrusting authority and responsibility to representatives, organizations, or committees.

According to Priyadi (2016, p. 44), tourist attraction greatly influences the selection of a tourism destination. Individuals are generally unwilling to visit destinations with limited attractions because traveling requires both financial expenditure and time investment to gain meaningful tourism experiences.

The theory applied in this study refers to Yadav, as cited in Hutagalung, S. S. (2022, p. 11), who identifies three forms of community participation:

- Participation in decision-making.
- Participation in the implementation of activities.
- Participation in utilizing the results of development.

Participation in Decision-Making

Participation in decision-making is one of the primary forms of community involvement in the development planning process. Through this form of participation, community members are provided with opportunities to express ideas, suggestions, criticisms, and opinions regarding programs or policies to be implemented. Such involvement ensures that development policies reflect the needs, potentials, and aspirations of the community, thereby improving the effectiveness and relevance of implementation. In the context of tourism development, participation at this stage also fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among local residents toward the sustainable management and development of tourist attractions. Based on this concept, participation in decision-making can be assessed through several indicators, including: **(1)** community involvement in meetings or deliberations related to tourism development; **(2)** opportunities for community members to provide suggestions, recommendations, and criticisms during tourism planning; and **(3)** transparency of information regarding tourism development policies and programs.

Community Involvement in Meetings or Deliberations on Tourism Development

Based on field observations, the researcher found that the Binangun Village Government regularly conducts meetings and deliberations during every stage of planning for the development of Lembah Pajamben Tourism. Community members or their representatives participate in these meetings and are given opportunities to express their aspirations. The researcher analyzed this indicator using the theory of community participation proposed by Cohen and Uphoff, as cited in Hutagalung, S. S. (2022, p. 10), which defines participation as involvement in decision-making, program implementation, benefit-sharing, and evaluation. Referring to this theoretical framework, it can be concluded that community involvement in meetings and deliberations concerning tourism development has been implemented relatively well. This is evidenced by the active inclusion of community members in deliberative forums that function as platforms for expressing aspirations and participating in collective decision-making.

Opportunities for the Community to Provide Suggestions, Recommendations, and Criticisms in Tourism Planning

Based on the research findings and field observations, the researcher analyzed that the indicator concerning opportunities for the community to provide suggestions, recommendations, and criticisms in tourism activity planning aligns with Yadav's theory, as cited in Hutagalung, S. S. (2022, p. 11). According to this theory, development programs—including the utilization of local resources and budget allocation—are often determined by central authorities, which tend to reflect the interests of small elite groups rather than the broader needs of society. Therefore, community participation in development should be strengthened by establishing forums that enable the public to participate directly in decision-making processes. In this context, community members participate by offering suggestions, recommendations, and criticisms during organized meetings. Based on this theoretical perspective, it can be concluded that this indicator has been implemented effectively. This is demonstrated by the openness of the village government in accommodating community aspirations through various communication channels, ensuring equal opportunities for all residents to participate in planning the development of the tourism destination.

Disclosure of Information to the Community Regarding Tourism Development Policies or Programs

Based on the research findings and observations, the researcher analyzed the indicator of public access to information regarding tourism development policies and programs by referring to the theory of Club du Sahel and Mikkelsen, as cited in Budiardjo (2004, p. 31), which identifies several approaches to promoting community participation. One of these is the passive approach through training and information dissemination, which assumes that external parties possess greater knowledge, technology, skills, and resources. The findings indicate that the dissemination of information regarding tourism development policies and programs has been implemented quite effectively. This is demonstrated by the openness of the Binangun Village Government in communicating tourism-related policies and development programs through various communication channels. Nevertheless, the dissemination of information still needs to be expanded to ensure that all community members have equal access to relevant information.

Participation in the Implementation of Activities

Participation in the implementation of activities refers to the involvement of community members during the execution stage of planned programs or activities. At this stage, the community is not merely a beneficiary but also an active contributor to the success of the program. Such participation may take the form of labor, ideas, financial support, or material contributions according to each individual's capacity. In the context of tourism development, community participation in implementation is essential for supporting the management, maintenance, and continuous development of tourist attractions, thereby ensuring that the planned objectives are achieved effectively. Based on this concept, participation in implementation can be measured through several indicators: (1) community involvement in tourism management and development activities; (2) community participation in maintaining cleanliness and organizing the tourism environment; and (3) community contributions in the form of labor, ideas, or other resources to tourism-related activities.

Community Involvement in Tourism Management and Development Activities

Field observations revealed that community members have directly participated in various tourism management and development activities at Lembah Pajamben Tourism. The researcher analyzed this indicator using the participation theory proposed by Karwati (2019, p. 11), which states that every member of society is expected to contribute not only financially but also through labor, ideas, and materials. This contribution is reflected in the concept of the 4Ms: *manpower*, *money*, *material*, and *mind*. Based on this theoretical framework, it can be concluded that community involvement in tourism management and development activities has not yet been fully optimized. Although community members have participated in several activities, their involvement remains inconsistent and has not yet reached all segments of the local community.

Community Participation in Maintaining Cleanliness and the Tourism Environment

Based on the research findings and observations, the researcher analyzed this indicator using Yadav's theory, as cited in Hutagalung, S. S. (2022, p. 11), which explains that community participation at the implementation stage involves contributing labor, financial resources, materials, or ideas during project execution. The findings indicate that community participation in maintaining cleanliness and organizing the tourism environment has been relatively effective. Local residents actively participate in environmental clean-up activities and landscape maintenance within the tourism area. However, participation remains uneven, as some community members and visitors still lack sufficient awareness of the importance of preserving the cleanliness and sustainability of the tourism environment.

Community Contributions in the Form of Labor, Ideas, and Resources

Field observations indicate that community members have contributed according to their respective capacities through labor, ideas, and other available resources. However, these contributions have not been evenly distributed across the entire community. Some residents remain less actively involved due to limited time, low awareness, insufficient tourism management skills, limited business capital, and inadequate coordination in channeling ideas and suggestions. Consequently, while community contributions have supported tourism development, greater efforts are needed to encourage broader and more equitable participation.

Participation in Utilizing the Results of Development

Participation in utilizing the results of development refers to community involvement after a development program or project has been completed. At this stage, community members not only benefit from the outcomes but also participate in maintaining, preserving, and further developing these achievements to ensure their long-term sustainability. Such participation may include providing labor, financial support, or other forms of assistance to operate and maintain the facilities that have been established. In the context of tourism development, this stage is particularly important because it ensures that the economic and social benefits generated by tourism continue to be enjoyed by the local community. This dimension can be assessed through indicators such as (1) community involvement in utilizing economic opportunities generated by the tourist attraction and (2) community participation in maintaining and preserving tourism facilities.

Community Involvement in Utilizing Economic Opportunities

The findings indicate that the existence of Lembah Pajamben Tourism has created economic opportunities for the surrounding community. The researcher analyzed this indicator using the theory of community participation proposed by Huraerah, as cited in Taufik and Eprilianto (2022), which identifies participation through ideas, labor, property, and skills. Based on this framework, it can be concluded that community participation in utilizing tourism-related economic opportunities has not yet been fully optimized. Economic benefits are still concentrated among only a portion of the local community, while many others have been unable to take advantage of these opportunities due to limited capital, insufficient entrepreneurial skills, and fluctuating visitor numbers.

Community Role in Maintaining Tourism Facilities

Field observations revealed that most facilities within the Lembah Pajamben Tourism Area remain in good condition and are accessible to visitors. Community members, tourism managers, and cleaning staff have actively participated in maintaining and preserving these facilities. The researcher analyzed this indicator using Yadav's theory (2022, p. 11), which explains that participation at the utilization stage involves community involvement in operating and maintaining completed development projects through labor and financial contributions. Based on this theoretical perspective, it can be concluded that the community's role in maintaining tourism facilities has been relatively effective. This is demonstrated by the active participation of local residents in preserving, maintaining, and responsibly utilizing tourism facilities to ensure their long-term sustainability.

Perceived Economic or Social Benefits of the Tourist Attraction for the Community

Based on observations of the indicator concerning the economic or social benefits perceived by the community from the existence of the tourist attraction, the researcher found that the presence of Lembah Pajamben Tourism has generated various economic activities around the tourism area, including the establishment of food stalls, parking services, and employment opportunities for local residents. In addition, the community has demonstrated cooperation in supporting tourism development.

Based on the research findings and observations, the researcher analyzed that the indicator of the economic or social benefits perceived by the community from the existence of the tourist attraction is consistent with the theory proposed by Sappawali, Saleh, and Suriani (2023, p. 30). They define a tourism destination as a distinct geographical area within one or more administrative regions that encompasses tourism attractions, tourism facilities, accessibility, local communities, and tourists, all of which are interconnected and complementary in supporting tourism activities. Attractions that have not yet been developed remain potential resources and cannot be considered tourism attractions until they undergo a certain level of development. Tourist objects and attractions constitute the fundamental basis of tourism, as tourism development is difficult to achieve in the absence of attractive destinations.

Based on the above theory, it can be concluded that the indicator concerning the economic or social benefits perceived by the community from the existence of the tourist attraction has been implemented fairly well. This is reflected in the tangible economic and social benefits experienced by local residents. However, these benefits have not yet been distributed evenly across the entire community, indicating that the objective of improving community welfare through tourism development has not been fully achieved.

E. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study on Community Participation in Enhancing the Tourist Attraction of Lembah Pajamben Tourism in Binangun Village, Pataruman District, Banjar City, it can be concluded that community participation has not yet been fully optimized, although local residents have been involved in various stages of tourism development, including decision-making, implementation of activities, and utilization of development outcomes. This is evidenced by the fact that several participation indicators have not been implemented to their fullest extent, resulting in uneven community involvement. In the decision-making dimension, some community members were still inactive in attending village meetings, lacked confidence in expressing suggestions, opinions, and criticisms, and did not receive equal access to information regarding tourism development policies and programs.

Furthermore, in the implementation dimension, several obstacles were identified, including limited funding, insufficient human resources with tourism management expertise, low public awareness of maintaining cleanliness and preserving the tourism environment, and the suboptimal contribution of community members in terms of labor, ideas, and other resources. In the dimension of utilizing development outcomes, the economic benefits generated by the tourism destination have not been distributed evenly among the community due to fluctuating visitor numbers, limited business capital among local residents, and the relatively low level of community participation in taking advantage of available economic opportunities and maintaining tourism facilities on a sustainable basis.

To address these challenges, the Binangun Village Government has implemented several initiatives, including conducting open village meetings, providing opportunities for community members to express their aspirations, disseminating information through various communication channels, organizing community mutual assistance activities (*gotong royong*), offering tourism management training and capacity-building programs, collaborating with Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), higher education institutions, MSME communities, and other stakeholders, strengthening tourism promotion, improving supporting facilities, educating the public about the importance of maintaining cleanliness and tourism facilities, and encouraging greater community participation in utilizing the economic opportunities created by Lembah

Pajamben Tourism. These efforts are expected to ensure that the benefits of tourism development are distributed more broadly and sustainably throughout the local community

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