

Traditional Knowledge Based Ecotourism in Bali

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Abstract

The global tourism industry has been slow to respond to major environmental changes and critical conservation needs of the 21st. The Balinese industry is no exception. It is poorly equipped to deal with environmental change. But it is critical that it does so. The industry is dependent on a high quality and sustain environment. It is time for the industry to invest in skill and competencies to underpin sound environmental management.

As the famous tourist destination in the world, Bali tries to create traditional knowledge based ecotourism concerning with the government planning in 2009 about creative economic, because by these activities, ecological, cultural, and economic sustainable can be expected.

Keywords: traditional, knowledge, ecotourism and sustainable.

I. Introduction

Tourism industry is one of “T” in global issues in the 3rd millennium. The other T are: Transportation, Telecommunication, and Technology. For Indonesia, especially Bali, the tourism industry is the only priority sectors which can compete in globalization. Because of the various unique Balinese culture are considered to be a famous tourist attraction in the world. Concerned with this condition Balinese government from the beginning introduces tourism as “Cultural Tourism” with the soul of Hindu Religion.

According to Gareth Shaw and Allan M. William (1997) in Ardika (2003) that in tourism activities there are ten (10) cultural elements which become tourist attractions those are:

1. Handicraft
2. Tradition
3. The history of a place
4. Architecture
5. Local/traditional food
6. Arts and music
7. The way of life of the society
8. Religion
9. language
10. Local/traditional costume

These cultural elements seem very relevant with the type of tourism which is developed in Bali that is cultural tourism. Moreover, Bali is one of a prominent tourist destination in the world. The main reason of tourist to choose Bali as a destination is because of cultural uniqueness (>67%) (Dalem, 2001). Among the important factors in defining tourism sustainable in Bali, other than culture is everlasting environment.

II. Environment and Tourism in Bali

A. Environment in traditional knowledge view point

Balinese thinks of the environment as “*manic ring cacupu*”(fetus in a womb). Any damages to fetal environment, will expose fetus to die. Therefore, if not willing to cause the

succeeding generation to live in a seriously deteriorated environment, it is obligatory for us to preserve environment (Dalem, undated).

Good environment management in Baali applies the philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana* that refers to a harmonious relationship to pursue happiness and welfare of man with God (*Parahyangan*), with fellow being (*Pawongan*) and with his environment (*Palemahan*).

The success of *Parahyangan* relationship is observable from the man's will to observe God's teaching with increasingly sincere devotion, not from extravagant religious ceremonies that can not prevent man from sinfulness.

In a *Pawongan* relationship man is suppose to cultivate humanity and positive values in interacting with his fellow, such as: *Tat Twam Asi* (you are me), *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity) and *Desa, Kala Patra* (to act in accordance with time place, and circumstance).

In *Palemahan* relationship are reflected in spatial use that highlights the concept of *ri Mandala* (Upper, middle, and lower zone). Beside that in this relationship we also appreciate our environment by giving ceremonies such as:

Tumpek Kandang (ceremony for the creatures/animals)

Tumpek Uduh (ceremony for plants)

Tumpek Landep (ceremony for every human working instruments which the materials mde of iron, include today's sophisticated technology instrument such as: car, motorbike, computer, laptop, refrigerator, TV, etc

Balinese attention to the environment also can be seen from some experts' opinions, there are:

1. Gregor Krauss (1988: 15) said that Balinese people "*reverence in the face of surrounding nature*"

2. Covarobias (1936:13) said that Bali is the only one tribe who is so harmony replace themselves in environment, and no other race gives the impression of living on such close touch with nature, creates such as feeling of harmony between the people and its surrounding. He continued that Balinese people "*regulate every act of their lives so that it shall be in harmony with the natural forces*"(1936:260)

3. DeZoete & Walter Spies (1973:2) who had come to Bali since 1927 and become pioneer of Balinese arts, also said that *“the Balinese is so perfectly in harmony with his surroundings* (Pitana 1999:67).

B. Environment and tourism

Operationally, Bali tourism development tend to 6 cases which are disharmony with the concept, there are:

1. The limitation of resources
2. The environment pressure
3. The unbalance economic
4. Cultural disturbance
5. The weakness of management
6. Weakness in financial,(the result of BTB questioner in 1999).

The environment pressure in Bali is in serious condition, because Bali is a small island with wide approximately 560,000 ha and a high land conservation development, so the existence of opened land and rice fields tend to more and more narrow. These conditions will reduce/lose the tourism attraction which is source from natural scenery such as terrace rice field, hill natural views, and the flora and fauna attraction. The boundaries of village called “bengang” (green belt) also eroded.

The prospect of Balinese tourism in future is depend on the ability of Bali to protect the uniqueness of the attraction beside the safety and comfortable condition.

III. Issues in Future

In future environment issues are more and more important concerned with the desire of community with healthy and everlasting environment. Since the advancement of science and technologies begun, more people realize that the World can be this small. We can realize that any activities in one place can cause impacts in other part of this earth, from economical, social up to environmental issues.

The global environment crisis is also caused by tourism activities. Nonetheless, tourism also will be disturbance if the global environment damage and carrying capacity collapsed. Nowadays, it is clear that how and where we should develop the tourism. Tourism is not only for economic benefit, but it also keeps ecosystem and to rich the life and fertilizes human life qualities.

One form of tourism which has gained much attention in recent years is **ecotourism**, the sub-component of alternative tourism. Although there are several definitions of this term, there is general agreement that in ecotourism the physical environment is the focus of the touristic activity.

The common issues seen by tourism society in Bali which are care about environment in future are: autonomy in Indonesia, globalization, and free trade. By regency autonomy, it gives the more chances to the regencies in managing buildings, and it is expected to minimize conflicts among the regencies, because in ecotourism implementation we should refer to Korten's opinion (1986:5 in Pitana:1999) in community based management that are:

Local variety means, local life variety or different life need a different management system, it can not be given a similar treatment and the local community knows a lot about the local condition.

Local Resources means traditional resources belong to the local community and need local management because they have the nearest moral relationship with the resources.

Local Accountability means, local management is usually more accountable because their direct activities will influence their life directly.

Moreover, viewed as a form of alternative tourism, the emphasis of ecotourism development should be on small-scale, locally owned activities (Weaver 1991, in Cater 1997). This has three important repercussions for beleaguered third world economies.

Firstly the facilities in terms of infrastructure and superstructure are simpler and less expensive than those demanded by conventional mass tourism.

Secondly, locally owned and operate businesses are not enmeshed in the need to conform to the operate Western identity of the multinational tourism concerns, and, therefore, can have a much higher input of local products, materials and labor. This not only has greater multiplier effects throughout the local economy, but also reduces import leakages and remittances from expatriate labor which result from large-scale, foreign-owned, operations.

Thirdly, the profits made should accrue locally instead of following back to the parent country. In the capital-scare situation of most Third World countries, this is a particularly attractive prospect (Cater 1997).

Concerning the 10 cultural element which become tourists' attraction, so the suitable ecotourism develop in Bali is *Traditional Knowledge Base Ecotourism* (is under the communal system of common proprietary and common use with the perpetual desire to always be that way) (Greeners, 2007:35).

Even though it is a "new concept" in Bali, some expectations can be relied upon these activities because of the following reason:

1. It creates jobs and applicable in economic crisis situation

Based on ecotourism concept, the activities should involve and supported by local community (Anonymous, 1997, Sunarta, 1998 in Dalem, 2002), at least the people around the ecotourism destination. Besides that, some of these activities do not require high capital because use local materials, local labors with their traditional knowledge, and small-scale local management.

2. It benefits the local community

Another important issue related to ecotourism is economical aspects enjoyed by the local community around the ecotourism destination area (Sudarto, 1998, in Dalem, 1998). There has been commonly believe that many people around "mass tourism developed areas" especially in Bali, are only marginally benefited out of the projects (Anonymous, undated). In ecotourism concept, public involvement in the projects is important. Beside that it should bring benefits to local communities (Anonymous, 1997).

In Monkey Forest, Padangtegal, Ubud, the management efforts to return the benefits of the tourism object to the local community by some activities such as: give contribution to the every pass away community, contribution to the village building, give loan with soft interest, etc. (Harmini,2005).

3. It is a tool for the nature conservation

Ecotourism projects should follow the environmental and tourism rules or law so that the people use the resources in a sustainable way (Anonymous, 1997). Beside that `education value` leading to

appreciate nature to promotes conservation (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1993) is also very important in ecotourism.

4. *It conserves cultural diversity and minimize conflicts*

One of the ecotourism principal is that it should not damage the cultural and religious values of the people in ecotourism areas (Wiana,1999). The ecotourism projects should be based on local social cultural background and should not contradict the local people`s culture (Anonymous, 1997; Kleden, 1996 in Dalem 1998). As a result, conflict could be minimized, and cultural diversity can be maintained.

All visitors when watching white egrets at Petulu Village, Ubud-Bali, for example, “should” be given an explanation not only the ecology of the egret but also what the local believes of the creatures so that the visitors also being expected not to disturb the animals (Boemer, 1992 in Dalem, 1998).

The local community may make a special ceremony such as *Tumpek Kandang* and *Tumpek Uduh* (Sudibya, 1998) to respect animal and the plants in their surroundings. Visitors and outsider should respect the local attitudes and the local way of treating their environments. By traditional knowledge based ecotourism, ecological, economical, and cultural sustainable can be perpetually made.

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