

The Role of Pokdarwis in the Development of Air Sempiang Tourist Village, Kabawetan Sub-District, Kepahiang District

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to describe the role of Pokdarwis in developing tourist villages starting from the stage of forming Pokdarwis members, community mobilizers, beneficiaries and popularizing Sapta Pesona using qualitative methods. The research location was carried out in Air Sempiang Village, Kabawetan District, Kepahiang Regency, Bengkulu Province. Determining informants uses a purposive sampling technique, which means it has a purpose. The informants in this research consisted of 9 people, namely, the village head, BumDes, Chairman of the Pokdarwis, 2 members of the Pokdarwis, 2 members of the community, visitors to the tourist village, and business people. Data collection used non-participant observation techniques, interviews using semi-structured techniques and documentation. Data obtained from the field was analyzed using data reduction, data presentation, pictures and narratives, then drawing conclusions. This research uses the Structural Functional theory proposed by Talcott Parsons. The results of this research show the role of the Air Sempiang Village Pokdarwis in developing business products to improve the community's economy, empowering the community, managing Air Sempiang Village based on local wisdom as a tourist destination, establishing collaboration with stakeholders. The role of Pokdarwis in developing tourist villages can be seen from 4 (four) dimensions in developing tourist destinations, including economic dimensions, political dimensions, social dimensions and environmental dimensions.

Keywords: *Tourism Village, Development of Tourist Villages, Role of Pokdarwis*

1. INTRODUCTION

Bengkulu as one of the provinces located on the island of Sumatra which has a diverse culture, language and ethnicity. Bengkulu has a charm of beauty that really makes the eyes spoiled, especially in the field of tourism, but it's a shame considering that even the surrounding community still has minimal knowledge of tourist attractions in their area, because it is not explored like a silent tour without a place of recreation on vacation time for refreshing. Based on these problems, there should be innovation to explore these tours, in 2022 the Bengkulu Provincial Tourism Office held a tourism village competition to find villages spread across several districts that have the potential to be developed so that they

can become tourist villages that can be attractive tourist destinations, and can encourage the existence of tourist villages, on the agenda the Bengkulu Provincial Tourism Office is looking for the 10 best tourist villages in the Regency of Bengkulu Province. The results of the curation of the tourist village competition in Bengkulu Province in 2022, Air Sempiang Village located in Kepahiang Regency was chosen as the first winner of the tourist village competition.

The visitor data for Sempiang Water Tourism Village for 3 years from 2020-2022. Every year the number of visitors to village tourism changes, the largest number of visitors in 2022 was 1600 people. Most of the visitors are adults, then after the selection of tourist villages and the determination of being the winner of the tourist village competition, this village is increasingly developing as seen from the cooperation between Pokdarwis whose public information is very good and the high level of tourism awareness of the community. So that until now Pokdarwis together with the community are able to manage and develop the tourism potential in their village so that it can develop and compete with other tourist villages both through the activity programs contained therein. To see the success of the sempiang water tourism village, there are seven activity programs that have been running, including coaching and grant assistance, MSMEs, sale of processed pumpkin leaf chips, sale of honey bees (honey houses), management of tourism objects, horse kepanjang art performances, and management of "homestay" houses. The majority of Pokdarwis administrators and members have low levels of education and are unemployed, but they are able to achieve achievements in Bengkulu Province. This can be a motivation for the members of the management, even though the majority of them have a low education, they can prove themselves through their achievements so that they are able to make achievements in Bengkulu Province.

Air Sempiang Tourism Village provides several tourist destinations which include honey house tour, black hill campaign ground, savanna hiking or savan camp, hot spring crater hiking, dutch pipe waterfall, bidadari waterfall, two princess waterfall, climbing equipment rental, grilled menu, village culinary, homestay etc. In its development, Pokdarwis can be a partner of the government in the development of the village. Of all these tourist destinations, the Head of Air Sempiang Village formed a community organization, namely the tourism awareness group (Pokdarwis), which aims to be directly involved in the process of developing the Sempiang Water Tourism Village. In its development, Pokdarwis can become a government partner to increase public awareness in the field of tourism, improve human resources, encourage the realization of Sapta Pesona, improve product quality and tourism in order to increase competitiveness and restore tourism as a whole (Andiani and Widiyastini, 2017).

The development of Sempiang Water Tourism Village is inseparable from the role of Pokdarwis who take part in tourism development, which involvement is related to the concept of tourism development whose driving actors are the Village Community.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The research method on the role of Pokdarwis in the development of this tourist village uses descriptive qualitative methods. According to Silalahi (2010: 77), qualitative research is an investigative process to understand social problems based on creating a complete holistic picture formed with words, then reporting the views of informants in detail and structured in a scientific setting. As Denzin and Lincoln (in Anggito, 2018: 7) say if qualitative research is research that uses a scientific background, the intention is to interpret the phenomena that occur and is done by involving a variety of existing methods. As Denzin and Lincoln (in Anggito, 2018: 7) say if qualitative research is research that uses a scientific background, the intention is to interpret the phenomena that occur and is carried out by involving a variety of existing methods. According to Yusuf (2014: 45), the qualitative approach emphasizes the importance of individual subjective experiences and social reality which is seen as a personal event that is subjectively constructed because it is the focus of qualitative research on a person's case.

This research method was chosen for the purpose of attempting a study that provides a systematic, accurate, factual description of the various facts of an event and the nature of certain characteristics. So, according to researchers, this method is very suitable for this research because it can describe and know the problem systematically about the role of tourism awareness groups in developing the Sempiang Water tourism village.

3. DISCUSSION

Formation of Pokdarwis in Air Sempiang Village

The formation of Pokdarwis members is a process that involves steps to gather individuals who have interest, motivation, and commitment to the development of a tourist village. The process of recruiting members for Pokdarwis Air Sempiang takes an inclusive and transparent approach, meaning that selection does not only look at background or academic qualifications, but also considers the interests, motivations, and skills that prospective members can contribute. Recruitment of labor for Pokdarwis in Air Sempiang Village involves the following stages:

1. Socialization

The process begins with a village meeting led by the Village Head, where the vision and development plan of the tourism village is introduced to the community. The community is made aware of the benefits of joining Pokdarwis and the role they will play in the development of the tourism village.

2. Establishment of Criteria and Requirements

Criteria and requirements for potential Pokdarwis members are established, including factors such as age, village residency, occupation, and ideal criteria such as specialized skills. This ensures that the selected members have a good fit with the vision and mission of the organization.

3. Selection

Potential Pokdarwis members fill out an application form with relevant personal information, motivation, and skills. The selection team evaluates the application form and invites eligible candidates for an interview. The interview provides a deeper understanding of the prospective member's motivation and experience.

4. Announcement of Selected Members

The selection results are announced in a village meeting, and the selected members are chosen with pride. This motivates the entire community and marks the beginning of Pokdarwis' journey in developing Air Sempiang tourism village.

During the entire recruitment process, there were no significant challenges or obstacles due to the support and high awareness of the community and the commitment of the village government towards the development of the tourism village. This recruitment process reflects the active collaboration between the village leadership, Pokdarwis Chairperson, and the community to achieve the vision of sustainable and attractive tourism village development.

The Role of Pokdarwis in Air Sempiang Village

Pokdarwis is a form of self-help and self-directed community that emerges from local community initiatives. Pokdarwis board members work voluntarily and have a strong commitment to their responsibilities in managing and developing tourism destinations. The following is the role of Pokdarwis in the development of Air Sempiang Tourism Destination (DWT) based on four dimensions:

1. Economic Dimension

Pokdarwis of Air Sempiang Village has succeeded in improving the community's economy through business product development (UMKM) and empowerment. Initially, this initiative came from young men and women who wanted to develop the village's tourism potential. They received support from the village government, Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMdes), and the Tourism Office. Their success is evidenced by their victory in the tourism village competition in Bengkulu Province.

One important step was the introduction of parking fees for tourists, which provided income to the parking attendants and village revenue. The Agro-Ecotourism (CBT) program helps train the community in sustainable MSME development, and online media, such as Facebook and Instagram, are used to promote local products through "Rumah Promosi." The Promotion House in Air Sempiang village plays an important role in advancing MSME products, providing food products and handicrafts offered to tourists. Revenue from sales is shared between BUMdes and PAD for village development and human resource improvement.

Pokdarwis Air Sempiang also empowers youth as tour guides and motorcycle taxis, providing opportunities for the community to increase income. Cooperation with Kopراسي

Wanita Mandiri in culinary also supports the empowerment of village women. Honey production at Rumah Madu "Cipto Rossa" is also a successful example of promoting local products. All of these initiatives improve the community's economy, provide new jobs in the tourism sector, and support the sustainable use of natural resources, while strengthening the village economy.

2. Social Dimension

The community in Air Sempiang Village still places great importance on traditional values and maintains a high level of religiosity. Local traditions and the spirit of gotong royong and respect for one another are still very strong within the community. This allows for good communication and close relationships, and enables them to work together collectively. This spirit of gotong royong has been embedded in their culture for centuries and is the main principle they apply in the development of the village community.

The uniqueness of this tourist village lies in the combination of social and cultural activities of the community reflected in customary values, traditional culture, local policies, the way of life of the villagers, and the various activities enhanced by the villagers. One of the activities organized by Pokdarwis in the social dimension is the "Sedekah Bumi" Festival. The Sedekah Bumi Festival is an annual festival, a tradition passed down from the ancestors, to celebrate the Hijri New Year and introduce the village to outside tourists. The people of Sempiang village conduct the Earth Alms Festival with various events such as shadow puppet shows as an expression of gratitude to Allah SWT for blessings, health and sustenance. The Pokdarwis and village youth are the core committee in the activities of the Earth Alms Festival where to support the success of this event the entire community of Air Sempiang donates both money, thoughts and energy. Each household contributes funds for the festival. The community of Air Sempiang donates labor by working together for a certain period of time, including during the preparation of the Earth Alms Festival.

3. Political Dimension

Pokdarwis of Air Sempiang Village has been successful in developing tourist destinations through close cooperation with various parties, including the Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMdes), the Association of Indonesian Tourism Travel Companies (ASITA), and the Association of Indonesian Tourism Actors (ASPPI). They also establish partnerships with companies as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs to help develop tourism villages.

Pokdarwis in collaboration with BUMdes brings benefits in the form of the Rabbit Tourism Park, which adds to the attractiveness for tourists by offering to play with rabbits. The entrance fee for the park is Rp. 5,000 per person. The cooperation is based on a profit-sharing system with a period of 5 years and can be extended if the business unit is still adequate.

In addition, Pokdarwis also works with ASITA, ASPPI, and companies to build a timeline to support the development of Sempiang Water Village. All these efforts are carried

out with passion and enthusiasm for the development of tourist destinations, as well as providing economic benefits for the local community.

Pokdarwis' success in developing the destination in Air Sempiang Village is the result of effective collaboration between the Pokdarwis board and the local community. They prioritize principles such as improving members' knowledge of the tourism industry, developing talent and expertise in tourism management, and inspiring the community to become quality tourism hosts. Pokdarwis also collects and manages tourist information to disseminate to visitors and locals and provides advice to authorities in the tourism industry.

4. Environmental Dimension

Pokdarwis of Air Sempiang Village plays an active role in preserving the environment along with natural resource management. They collaborate with local communities to protect the environment, especially in Bukit Hitam Nature Park (TWA). This collaboration began with community meetings where villagers, environmentalists and hikers discussed measures to protect the environment while providing a safe hiking experience.

The results of the environmental impact study identified trails that could have minimal impact, avoid sensitive habitats, and reduce soil erosion. Local communities and Pokdarwis members then designed new hiking trails that are safe and environmentally friendly. They also installed educational information signs about biodiversity and protecting nature. Environmental education programs were also organized for visiting hikers. In addition to the development of hiking trails, Pokdarwis and local communities monitor tourist attraction activities in the TWA. They ensure visitors comply with the rules and provide explanations to those who break the rules in a friendly and educative manner. This approach has successfully raised visitors' awareness of the importance of preserving the natural environment and the positive impacts on village communities. This collaboration has created a shared understanding of the importance of maintaining the sustainability of the natural environment and positive behavior change among visitors.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The role of Pokdarwis in the development of Sempiang Water Tourism Village is very important and multifaceted. Based on the results of the research and the previous discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. In the economic dimension, they have succeeded in developing business products to improve the community's economy through the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) development program. They also empower the community by involving youth as tour guides and motorcycle taxis to support tourism in the village. This has had a positive impact on the community's economy and opened up employment opportunities in the tourism sector.
2. In the social dimension, Pokdarwis Air Sempiang maintains traditional values and the spirit of gotong royong in the community. The "Sedekah Bumi" festival is a concrete example of this spirit of gotong royong, where Pokdarwis Air Sempiang invites the

community to jointly contribute their resources and time to organize the event. This reflects the unity and strong communication among villagers.

3. In the political dimension, Pokdarwis cooperates with various parties, including village-owned enterprises (BUMdes) and tourism associations. Through cooperation with BUMdes, they have been able to develop tourist attractions and activities with a profit-sharing system. Meanwhile, cooperation with tourism associations helps improve tourism infrastructure in the village.
4. In the environmental dimension, Pokdarwis plays a strong role in preserving the natural environment. They have conducted environmental impact studies, identified sustainable hiking trails, and run monitoring programs for tourist attraction activities. The communication and education approach they apply has been important for nature conservation.

Overall, Pokdarwis Air Sempiang acts as a prime mover in increasing community awareness and involvement towards sustainable tourism destinations in Air Sempiang Tourism Village. Through their roles in economic, social, political, and environmental dimensions, they have succeeded in creating positive and sustainable developments in the development of their tourism village.

5. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of the research conducted by the researcher and the experience gained from the field, the researcher conveyed several suggestions for the development of Air Sempiang village:

1. Pokdarwis and the village government are required to be able to increase the diversification of business products in the MSME sector. Pokdarwis can collaborate with local communities to develop other products and crafts that can be sold to tourists, such as regional specialties, handicrafts, or local agricultural products. Continue to encourage youth participation as tour guides or in other roles in the tourism sector. May consider training and certification programs to improve the quality of tour guides.
2. The Pokdarwis of Air Sempiang should consider organizing more social and cultural events, such as festivals, art exhibitions, and workshops, which can strengthen relationships between residents and introduce local culture to tourists.
3. The tourism manager of Air Sempiang Village (POKDARWIS) is required to expand cooperation with more related parties, such as government agencies, non-government organizations, and educational institutions that can support the development of tourist villages. And hold regular meetings with stakeholders, including BUMdes and tourism associations, to discuss strategies for sustainable development of tourism villages.
4. Pokdarwis and village governments are required to continue strengthening efforts to conserve the natural environment. Consider developing a more detailed and strategic environmental governance plan. As well as developing broader environmental education programs, including education to tourists about the importance of

protecting nature. This can help change tourist behavior and increase their awareness of the environment.

In addition, Pokdarwis can also consider monitoring the evolving economic, social, political and environmental impacts of their efforts. By understanding the outcomes of their actions, they can continue to adapt and improve existing programs according to the needs of the villagers and tourists.

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