Community Empowerment for Environmentally Sustainable Tourism based on Local Perspectives (Case Study of Anakoli Village, Nagekeo)

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Abstract. Community empowerment is an important part of sustainable development. It is generally accepted that this will have both social and environmental impacts, including environment degradation. Anakoli village is one of the potential tourism object in Nagekeo regency. It has not really optimized as sustainable tourism in the area but there is an interest to develop it as one of the main tourism area. The objective of the research is to identify and assess system for tourism development in Anakoli community as well how ready they are to manage the tourism potential in their area. The research combined in-depth interviews with community representatives. The finding shows four communities that have distinct processes of community empowerment. It shows that there is lack of synergy between communities. Hence, the diversity of the community in Anakoli becomes a factor supporting environmentally sustainable tourism development. Each community plays an important role in developing the area.

1. Introduction
Community empowerment is the activity that values and optimizes human potential to achieve three basic human goals, which is to be self-sustaining, to be valued and to be free from servitude [1]. It relates to all aspects of society including health, education, economy, social life, and so on. The World Health Organization (WHO) describes the term as the ability of the people to increase control over the factors and decisions that affect their lives. This leads to a series of actions to achieve control through resources, collaboration and networking, access to knowledge and skill, as well as funding.

According to Laverack [2], there are nine organizational areas of influence on community empowerment in a programme context including participation, leadership, problem assessment, organizational structure, resource mobilization, link to others, asking why, programme management, and the role of outside agents. These nine approaches are used in the analysis of healthcare to community development in general, as activities to empower communities in achieving better social and economic access. It demonstrates the relationship between individual control, trust, and community as well as aspects outside of people’s control including political, socio cultural and economic circumstances.
Sustainability is widely viewed in terms of three pillars: social, economic, and environmental. In the past, environmental management has been based on failed “top-down” approaches [3]. However, a community-based approach has been found to be a more effective tool in sustainable development [4]. Managing land and resources in an environmentally-sustainable way can be achieved in collaboration with all stakeholders in a community. Similarly, community-based tourism - also known as rural tourism, sustainable tourism, and eco-tourism - is the active participation of the community to maintain and organize tourism in a more sustainable way. Building policy from a bottom-to-top approach ensures the sustainability of the policy and its implementation in the community.

East Nusa Tenggara is one province targeted for tourism. It was recently introduced as the new Bali. Based on World Travel and Tourism, Indonesia’s tourism sector contributed 6% to the nation’s gross domestic product (GDP) in 2018, since the government has been promoting the tourism sector to investors. This brings up concerns regarding environmental sustainability. Having learned from Bali that tourism has led to environment degradation, labor exploitation, cultural erosion and ownership problems [5], it is crucial to analyze the new developments in East Nusa Tenggara. Recently, concern about economic growth in East Nusa Tenggara has increased as the area has been lagging behind for years. There has been no significant change in the province’s economy in 25 years [6]. However, the election of Joko Widodo as president has led to investment in basic needs such as water, health and education as well as development of tourism areas. In Nagekeo regency, Anakoli village along the north coast has been included as a tourism area, because it offers white sandy beaches and white cliffs for watching sunsets. It is well known among locals, and the area has recently started booming as the community has been promoting the area nationally and internationally [7] through community festivals and ceremonies [8]. Although agriculture and livestock remain the main sources of livelihoods for households, the existence of strategic tourism resources in Anakoli have gained attention of the local government, who calls for more development in the tourism sector by the government, public as well private sectors in order to spur economic development (Village Longer Term Planning 2016-2021).

It is important to note that social, economic and environmental sustainability are interconnected. For a community to achieve economic growth, it must use all resources including themselves (human resources) and their environment [9]. The sustainable development goals (SDGs) as they relate to the tourism sector (SDGs, p13) focuses on community development, livelihoods and community and their understanding of environmental sustainability. Based on a voluntary review of the SDGs in 64 countries, the SDGs with the strongest links to tourism are decent work and economic growth (Goal 8), responsible consumption and production (Goal 12) and partnership for the goals (Goal 17). Thus, this is an urgent call to local communities that natural resources can be optimized to increase livelihoods, but economic growth must be balanced with a harmonious relationship with the environment. In this article we identify and analyze the needs of the local people of Anakoli in developing their resources as a community in a sustainable way. It includes exploring, through the perspective of tourism, how communities understand their resources and uses it to increase their livelihoods: 1) How do the Anakoli people interpret the notion of community empowerment? 2) How do the Anakoli people implement the notion of community empowerment to their community? 3) How do the people of Anakoli imagine and interpret notion of environmentally sustainable tourism? Furthermore, the study aims to identify and assess a system for tourism development in Anakoli community as well how ready local stakeholders are to organize a new system in their area.

In Nagekeo, generally, local perspectives are considered the strongest aspect of community, according to Daniel Dhakidae in “Rancang Bangun Nagekeo” [10]. Three institutions are considered to have distinct local perspective in Nagekeo: local government, traditional court, and church. Formally, the local government elects a village leader and officers to help run the community. Development plans are discussed and set out in the Village Development Planning Document. Traditionally, Flores in general has a clear structure of hierarchy or traditional court where they govern their own community, such as the land, harvesting seasons, and ceremonies. Religiously, the Catholic Church in Nagekeo also has quite a powerful influence on community life. This leads to the
participation of the people in the community work. As part of “masyarakat adat” and as a member of the church, each person is obliged to take part and join meetings or work.

2. Methodology
The methodology used in this research is qualitative. A case study of the Anakoli community was developed from August to October 2019. Semi-structured individual interviews and group discussions were conducted to assess feelings, perceptions and attitudes toward community and environmental sustainability. The interview was conducted with key persons such as the village leader (local government), young people and women groups. Data was also generated from Village Longer Term Planning Document 2016-2021 as an important resources of the analysis. The data analysis used the Laverack analysis considering nine aspects related to community empowerment including participation, leadership, problem assessment, organizational structure, resource mobilisation, links to others, asking why, programme management, and the role of outside agent.

3. Results and discussions

3.1. Interpretation and integration of community empowerment for environmentally sustainable tourism based on anakolian people’s perspective

Our research found four communities that have distinct processes of community empowerment. Hence, the diversity of the community in Anakoli becomes a factor supporting environmentally sustainable tourism development. Each community plays an important role in achieving that goal. In this discussion, we will analyse community empowerment in Anakoli as a process, using Laverack’s theory of community empowerment and how it relates to the community’s perspective on environmentally sustainable tourism [2].

3.1.1. Komunitas adat anakoli (indigenous community). Nagekeo is a regency with a combination of ethnic groups. There is also a sub-tribe considered as a cultural organization called Woe or Suku in Anakoli. In that village, there a lot of Woe which is marked by the existence of Sa’o (Traditional House). Sa’o is not just about a physical building but becomes the identity of Woe. The role of the Woe community is important in Anakoli. People still tie the principles of the culture and its structure, such as the social organization and cultural ceremonies, to the ownership of the land. As Tule’s research shows, there was no landlord in the early society of Nagekeo. There was only the guardian of the land [10]. But the system of colonialism that Holland applied changed the rules of agrarianism [10]. Subsequently, every sub-tribe or Woe incorporated the hegemony of land into their ownership.

Land is sacred in Nagekeo. There is a term “Ine Tana Ame Watu” which means “Ibu Tanah, Bapak Batu”. Land is honorably called “The Mother”. Even upon a person’s death, the people of Nagekeo say ‘Tama Tuka Ine’ (Enter the womb of mother). That means that the land should be respected and protected like a mother. It can be seen that the traditional thought of the Anakoli people presents a direct relationship between people and their affiliation with land. The concept of the land itself aligns naturally with the concept of environmentally sustainable tourism: the people of Nagekeo will protect the land as they respect their mother as well.

3.1.2. The community of mama-mama pengrajin anyaman lontar (woven craftswomen). Some women in Anakoli are referred to as ‘mama-mama pengrajin anyaman’. They have the ability and knowledge to make daily living tools and handicraft from Palmyra palm leaves and other natural ingredients. They have made a lot of handicrafts such as hats, bags, mats, and boxes of tissue in order to sell. Kerajinan anyaman are known by the people of Nagekeo as a heritage of culture in every tribal and religious community, because the practice has been passed down from their ancestors. Only
women have the ability and responsibility to pleat. They use kerajinan anyaman in daily life, such as bags called So’o Bae, Gabha, Sobha Nata, Wati, Sobha. Moreover, according to Tule’s research, kerajinan anyaman is important in cultural ceremonies. It symbolizes the social organization or the structure of tribal communities [10].

The people of Anakoli still maintain this culture, especially the ‘mama-mama pengrajin’. In fact, kerajinan anyaman is like a necessity in the home because every woman in the house should at least have items such as Gabha for the man to use in the garden or Wati to save rice for rituals. Unfortunately, nowadays fewer women have the ability and skills of kerajinan anyaman. Mrs. Pr one of the mama-mama with this ability and habit in her daily life, even earning her living by selling anyaman. She is well-known as an activist of anyaman. She tries to motivate other mama-mama or young people to preserve mengayam as a heritage of their culture. In early 2019, she and other mama-mama obtained an opportunity from Du’Anyam, a social entrepreneurship community, to supply anyaman. Du’Anyam will then promote and sell the items. Finally, the mama-mama agreed to create a community of mama-mama pengrajin. Sometimes they gather and share knowledge of menganyam.

With tourism being developed in the area, Mrs. Pr and her community of mama-mama pengrajin have pinned their hopes on mengayam as a new potential vehicle for economic growth in their villages, even as young people lack interest in this vocation. She and her fellow mama-mama had previously offered to teach menganyam in schools, but response was poor. Nevertheless, Mrs. Pr supports the development of tourism based on community empowerment and environmental sustainability, stating that efforts so far have been on the right track. For example, during the event ‘Parade Kebangsaan’, they cooperated with the Youth Catholic Community by providing trash cans anyaman made of Palmyra palm leaves. In the future, if the number of visitors grow, Mrs. Pr and her community have plans to make more bags for visitors. As Mrs. Pr claimed, “It’s an alternative way of reducing the use of plastic. By using anyaman bags, visitors is avoid us more plastic at the beach.”

The perspective of environmentally sustainable tourism from the community of mama-mama pengrajin has, in fact, been constructed by local wisdom.

3.1.3. Orang muda katolik (the youth catholic community). Anakoli is a station, a part of Wekaseko Parish. Within the church, there is a young community named Orang Muda Katolik. This community is mostly comprised of young unmarried people who actively contribute to the church not only through spiritual activities but also in society.

As K, a senior of the Youth Catholic Community, says “We are part of society. Actually, OMK is youth Catholic Community but it doesn’t mean that finally we become so exclusive. This becomes the spirit of all young people even we get motivation from the Parish Priest.” He said that young people should be pioneer in the middle of the world, especially in society around. Y, one of the leaders in the Youth Catholic Community elaborates on how OMK contributes to the church activities and the local community. “We have participated in many activities in the Parish program. We were trusted to participate in church such as bringing choir at the mass, working in the area of Parish and also organising sharing sessions about the problems of young people. For these activities, sometimes we have to provide the funding ourselves. In such moments, all the members of the youth community should collect money, Rp. 10,000 and a glass of rice per person for the program done. All of the young people are willing and enthusiastic to engage in all program even though we have no budget from the Parish. ”

OMK recognizes that they too have a responsibility to develop tourism as a leading sector of economic growth in their village. K explains “We believe that Kotajogo Beach and Kinde Island will become assets for society to earn for living. That’s why all of us were so enthusiastic about working and preparing for Parade Kebangsaan even though we were not paid a fee”. The social consciousness of this youth community is interesting because even though they come from a church organization, they do not limit themselves to church activities, but also serve the common good.

“Parade Kebangsaan” was an event the Youth Catholic Community of Wekaseko Parish held on 16th August 2019, Indonesia’s Independence Day, at Kotajogo beach and Kinde Island, to promote
tourism at these two destinations. There was ‘a long march of young people wearing tenun ikat Nagekeo while holding Indonesian flag’, a parade of boats to Kinde island and many other.

At the same time, the Youth Catholic Community believes that a clean environment is a supporting factor for tourism, as the beauty of Kotajogo beach will be broken when there is more litter. The Youth Catholic Community learned about the problem of littering and its solutions from Dr. Martha Lamanepa, a member of local organisation Trash Hero. As a result, during “Parade Kebangsaan”, they did not serve mineral bottled water but instead asked all participants to bring their own drinks.

3.1.4. Pemerintahan desa anakoli (the local village government). Anakoli was defined as a village in 2000 when Nagekeo was still part of Ngada regency. The village has several sources of income: agriculture, fishery, animal husbandry, forestry, and tourism. In the RPJMDes 2016-2021(The Village Medium-term Development Plan), the local government of Anakoli Village has focused on Kotajogo beach as a site for tourism. The leader of Anakoli village (2019-2023), Yosep Laka Rani stressed that in his period of leadership, he has focused on developing tourism at Kotajogo beach. Together with the staff, he has designed a budget for its development, utilising funds from the government-provided Village Fund (Anggaran Dana Desa).

In the case of community empowerment, the local government can be considered bridge and supporter that connects the needs of every community. Therefore, the local government should have ability to manage communities. But communication with communities like the young community, mama-mama pengrajin and even Woe community are still poor. The young people interviewed said that the new leader had yet connected with their community. Yet the opposite was expressed by the local head, who hoped for more initiative from the young people and would fully support them once they started. In this case, both sides have limited communication and even miscommunication. There is still expecting each other principle. That can inhibit the process of community empowerment.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings and analysis, communities in Anakoli have the initiative to develop their own resources. They are aware and understand the natural resources and willing to develop it to improve their livelihood. Tourism is seen as one way to increase their daily incomes. Based on the village longer term planning, this development still depends on other parties such as relevant government agencies and the private sector. However, there is an initiative from the young people and some figures to drive development of the area by the community, for the community. But in order to achieve community-based tourism, more empowerment to community is needed. Considering the existing situation based on Laverack’s the nine aspects of community empowerment, each aspects should be more actively addressed. Participation and initiative for more members of communities are still lacking as well as the lack of leadership in managing the resources. At the same time, not all members of the community have fully understood environmental sustainability approach. Since the focus has been more on the economic side, the environmental approach has not been given sufficient attention. Besides, there has yet to be a big problem of environment degradation in their community compared to other more developed tourism area. Thus, in order to develop the community based tourism which is more sustainable, it is needed to understand the current situation of the community and empower them to achieve the goals.

The young people expressed hope for more youth communities in the village instead of religious community like OMK. They suggested that the local head should take the initiative to establish a youth organization (Karang Taruna) as soon as possible. They believe that young people will be fully committed if the local government provides support not only through wise words but with budgeting. As been discussed before, the young community has self-correction about the lack of networking with outside agents and also the way of leadership. It would be beneficial for them to learn from other communities that have been well-organized. This can be done through comparative study.
Among the communities identified, the Mama-Mama Pengrajin Anyaman community have more specific needs. As a community, they have been running well from the perspective of a community empowerment process. But a physical space like Sanggar anyaman for working and sharing together would enhance their activities, since they spend most of their time making anyaman in each other’s house. Moreover, this Sanggar Anyaman can become their own shop for selling anyaman. It can also be developed as a centre of anyaman learning for visitors or the young people. It is a way of educating about the local wisdom and the perspective of environment.

As the main public policy maker in Anakoli Village, the local government should not just play a role in making rules and planning budgets. More than that, in accordance with the process of community empowerment, the government should be ‘the bridge’ for each community as mentioned in the discussion. In other words, local government should have community management abilities so that every community will be empowered to leverage its interests and strengths to achieve the goal of tourism development. In fact, each community has its own unique role in the village. If it is well managed, it will be as social asset for future development.

In the past, Woe became the ruler of the village community for they had a hegemonic structure. But nowadays, the government has taken over the task of the public sphere. But it doesn't mean that the Woe community is marginalized in their authority. They still have socio-cultural hegemony to align the common interests of society. Nevertheless, the role of Woe community is important. Cultural practices such as Babho or traditional-together discussions could be raised as a public forum in solving the problem of all society from a socio-cultural perspective. The government as the policy maker should hold together the Woe community as a partner in public policy making.

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