

## Village community empowerment through Salosin Waterfall ecotourism in Sukahurip Village

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### Abstract

Sukahurip village people are familiar with ecotourism programs which are based on community empowerment. The village has an eco-tourism waterfall called Salosin that offers a view of the beauty of the mountains and the village people's hospitality in general. Salosin Waterfall has a beautiful ecosystem and the many trees make the area closely related to the green mountains. However, the lack of empowerment of the surrounding community in utilizing the beauty of Salosin Waterfall natural tourism is an important problem. This is the goal of efforts to achieve community welfare to achieve the ideals of development priorities in the economic sector for the surrounding community. The method of implementing activities in the form of assistance to the community in developing the potential around Salosin Waterfall economic potential so that people can get economic income. What happens in Salosin Waterfall ecotourism is the development and management of the tour. In contrast, the understanding of other potentials that can benefit from ecotourism for improving community welfare seems less touched so it requires encouragement and support for community empowerment so that it can increasingly have a positive impact on the people of Sukahurip Village.

**Keywords:** *Community empowerment; Ecotourism; Salosin Waterfall*

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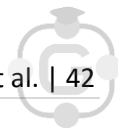
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## INTRODUCTION

The village development plays an important role in the national development sector. As described by Vipraprastha (2022), In the role of national development, the active role of villages is the spearhead of the national development sector. Village development is one of the important goals of every village government to organize village administration (Simbolon et al., 2021). In addition, village development is also an integral part of the district/city regional development planning system. By involving stakeholders, the development planning process in the village can be carried out in a democratic and participatory manner. And also by involving the community in the village (Moch. S, 2014).

Villages, as one of the most important parts of implementing sustainable development, are certainly able to create a conducive environment and environmental conservation is an urgency to reduce global warming. In line with the Village SDGs stated in the Regulation of the Minister of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration of the Republic of Indonesia Number 21 of 2020 concerning General Guidelines for Village Development and Village Community Empowerment, article 7 states that the SDGs aim to realize environmentally sound village consumption and production and villages that are responsive to climate change. Following Law No. 6 of 2014, the involvement of village communities through the utilization of local resources is a step to increase awareness of all elements of society in protecting and preserving the environment and improving the welfare of village communities. Although the Village Government's projections are still focused on improving the community's economy, environmental issues must still be a top priority. One of the factors that can help in improving community welfare is through economic factors where the level of economic growth that increases every year will certainly affect reducing poverty or reducing the level of poverty.



In today's big data era, tourism management based on ecotourism has been very much applied. Therefore, ecotourism must be developed in terms of management, the community around the tourist attraction, and even tourists must have environmental awareness and concern. Because ecotourism can have a positive impact both from ecological, economic, and socio-cultural factors. Ecotourism has a makna as a management and development activity for an environment to prevent the reduction of damage to environmental ecosystems (Agustin, 2007; Scheyvens & van der Watt, 2021).

The objectives of ecotourism are (1) as a principle of sustainability in ecotourism, namely activities that do not cause damage and environmental pollution in the local area. By using one of the ways to apply this principle is by using local resources that are energy efficient and managed by the community around the tourist attraction. Of course, tourists are also required to be able to respect and play an active role in the preservation of nature and culture in the area they visit; (2) with the concept of ecotourism, it is also required to have planning agendas that provide education as well. For example, through information that attracts attention about existing culture or religion or customs of local people's habits (Putri et al., 2023).

In essence, ecotourism is part of responsible travel about environmental sustainability and the welfare of local communities. Active participation in the management of ecotourism potential is very important because all-natural knowledge and cultural potential all have selling points as ecotourism attractions. The development of ecotourism ultimately has a close relationship with society in ecological, social, and economic aspects. Ecotourism also essentially has perspectives and dimensions that are the future face of sustainable and environmentally sound tourism (Rhama et al., 2020).

Ciamis Regency has the potential diversity of natural resources that can certainly be utilized as a land for nature conservation and nature-based eco-tourism. By maintaining the balance of ecosystems and ecotourism as part of the Regional Original Income (PAD) from the tourism sector. One of the natural potentials that is well known in Ciamis Regency is Salosin Waterfall located in Sukahurip Village, Cihaurbeuti District which provides natural beauty dominated by beauty, friendliness, and tranquility in general a tourist waterfall that many tourists visit (Nurwanda, 2018).

What happens in the Salosin Waterfall ecotourism in Ciamis Regency is the development and management of the tour while the understanding of other potentials that can benefit from ecotourism for improving community welfare seems less touched so that it requires encouragement and support as community empowerment so that it can increasingly have a positive impact on the people of Sukahurip Village in general. The community is given an understanding of the ecological and economic aspects that they can do and have an impact on their welfare as part of the goal of ecotourism that is environmentally sound and sustainable. Thus, community involvement is one part of the benchmark for the success of community empowerment through ecotourism at Salosin Waterfall.

## METHODS

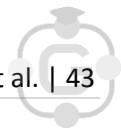
The target audience or partners in this activity are community groups in Sukahurip Village, Cihaurbeuti District, Ciamis Regency. The partners were chosen based on the same desire to have the motivation to improve family welfare through ecological understanding and business empowerment economics. The steps taken in this service activity are as follows:

### 1. Beginning evaluation

At this stage, the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) method was carried out to find out the potential of the target community in developing economic potential to improve the welfare of the surrounding community. This economic potential is in the form of products with selling value as business media so that it can be determined what products will be used as business media. The FGD involved the target community, village government, and other related parties.

### 2. Mentoring

Community empowerment needs to be promoted to improve the family economy. The formation of economically independent community groups equipped with skills and expertise as well as additional innovations regarding local specialty food products is expected to improve the standard and welfare of people's lives. This is where the role of outside motivators who function to carry out social preparation becomes important. This stage is carried out with a mentoring method in running the business. The



community is given strategies and ways to manage these products so that they have high selling value and of course can achieve the main goal of improving the standard and quality of life of the underprivileged community.

### 3. Final evaluation

This stage is to evaluate the sustainability of the business that the community has carried out. Difficulties and problems encountered by community groups are given solutions so that business training with innovations can still run smoothly and can be of high value.

### 4. Specific monitoring for sustainability

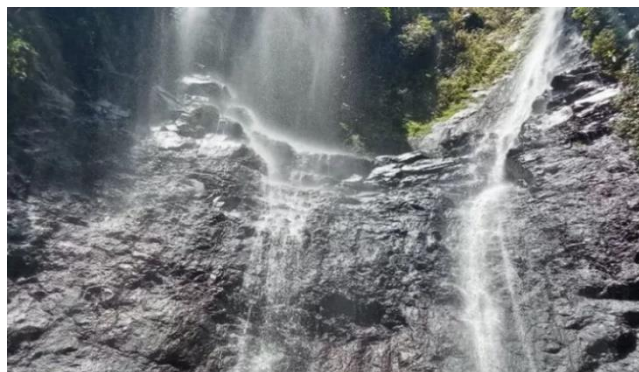
This stage is carried out to determine the level of motivation of partners to continue entrepreneurship. Partners are expected to continue to have high fighting power in developing business creativity and innovation in the products to be made, of course, by not losing the characteristics of local products owned by them.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Salosin Waterfall is located in Palasari Hamlet, Sukahurip Village, Cihaurbeuti District, Ciamis Regency, as for the appointment of Sukahurip Village is a tourist village, because it has a lot of economic, tourism, and cultural potential that can be managed properly by the surrounding community (Lestari & Herlina, 2019).

Salosin Waterfall has natural beauty that can attract local and national tourists to come and visit to see this beauty, this provides a great opportunity for the local community to increase income to fulfill their daily lives. Furthermore, it can increase regional income. Seeing this potential, Salosin Waterfall can become one of the village's economic potentials that can encourage the development and income of the village community.

The concept of ecotourism is a form of tourist travel to natural areas carried out to conserve the environment and preserve the lives and welfare of residents (Yanuar, 2017). Another opinion says that ecotourism is a tourist trap that is responsible for the preservation of nature, and culture, and contains elements of education (Ridlwan et al., 2017). Therefore, the concept of ecotourism is a unified concept about the balance between sustainability and natural beauty and efforts to maintain it with educational elements for the welfare of the local population. Rhama (2019) said that in terms of management, ecotourism can be defined as the organization of responsible tourism activities in natural places and or areas that are made based on natural and economically sustainable rules that support efforts to preserve the environment (nature and culture) and improve the welfare of local communities. By looking at this, Ecotourism is the future of environmentally sustainable tourism which creates awareness in the community about maintaining the values of the natural environment. Thus, in principle, managing the potential of ecotourism is important because natural knowledge and cultural potential have a selling point as an ecotourism attraction (Kunjuraman, 2022).



**Figure 1.** Source: Sukahurip Village Profile, 2023



## Ecotourism Development

The design of ecotourism development begins with the legal basis of the tourism development master plan and reflects the National Standard for Nature Tourism Management, and ecotourism development instruments at least divided into six important things, namely ecotourism attractions, accessibility, facilities and infrastructure, marketing, management and spatial, as in table 1 (Nafi et.al., 2017).

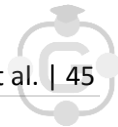
**Tabel 1.** Ecotourism Development Instrument

Variable	Sub Variable	Sub-sub Variable
Attractions	Ecotourism	Natural Uniqueness Value
		Cultural Value
Accessibility	Transportation infrastructure	Educational element value
		Road, Parking, Signage
Amenities	Transportation facilities	Public Transportation
		Main tourist facilities
	Tourism facilities	Complementary tourism facilities
		Tourist support facilities
	Economic infrastructure	Water supply
		Electricity
		Waste management
		Telecommunications
	Social infrastructure	Education
		Health
Market and marketing	Market	Security
		Banking
	Promotion activities	Market segment
		Traveler length of stay
		Tourist visit
		Type of promotional activity
		Promotion actors
		Scope of promotion area
Management	Tourism management	Tourist attraction management institution
		Tourist attraction management system
		Forward Linkage
Spatial	Regional linkages	Backward Linkage

(Source: Nafi et.al., 2017)

## Beginning evaluation

It started with Focus Group Discussion (FGD) activities between the community around Salosin Waterfall, the village government and also other related parties. The goal is to have a common goal in developing economic potential to improve the welfare of the surrounding community. Starting to inventory the economic potential in the form of products with selling value as a business medium, so that it can be determined what products will be used as business media. There is a lot of economic potential that can be developed from the ecotourism sector that aims to improve people's welfare (Herman & Supriadi, 2017).



**Figure 2.** Focus Group Discussion (FGD) activity with the stakeholders

One of the economic products that have attractive selling power is a culinary package that can be offered to visitors and this is certainly a part of the management of tourist attraction management. Culinary packages are one option that does not require a large budget and capital so that it can be easier for the community to implement. Establishing interaction and communication between tourists and tourist transportation entrepreneurs, culinary business owners, souvenirs, and tourist lodges or homestays, will certainly make the existence of Salosin Waterfall increase. Assisted by promotions that can be done through social media, of course, it will facilitate the promotion of tourism from Salosin Waterfall. Managing a tourist destination does not avoid utilizing existing resources as a supporting factor in developing a tourist destination. (Yuni & Artana, 2017).

Ecotourism as an economic indicator under the Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs Number 33 of 2009 which states that natural tourism activities in the region can improve the economy of the local community and have both good and bad impacts on the other side. The good impact is in the form of increasing the welfare of the community with the existence of business opportunities in the tourism sector, while the bad impact if you do not care about the natural environment, will indirectly damage the uncontrolled culture of the community. Moreover, the role of the community itself who do not understand the importance of environmental sustainability such as littering, and the potential for the emergence of a tourism business that takes over the function of the natural resource environment uncontrolled.

The principles of ecotourism include caring for and maintaining the authenticity of the tourist environment, loving culture, and local wisdom such as the culture of cooperation while still providing education and economic benefits (Yusrini & Eviana, 2018). Characteristics of eco-tourists in the form of returning to nature, having sustainability not only for a moment, caring for the biological environment, providing educational and economic benefits, and impressing tourists so that they feel satisfied traveling to that location (Dewi et al., 2021).

The concept of ecotourism is unique because it can enjoy the beauty of the outdoors while experiencing the culture of the local community in daily life. However, it must still be understood by the community that there are certain rules and principles for ecotourism activities (Andari, 2023). Ecotourism activities in Indonesia are regulated in regulations, namely the Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs Number 33, 2009, which categorizes tourism into five categories, namely, scenic tourism, adventure tourism, cultural and historical tourism, research tourism, and conservation and education tourism (Dewi et al., 2021).

### ***Mentoring***

Tourism potential in general is very likely to be raised as a tourist lure to visit the area. Boredom in past forms of tourism with the concept of mass tourism is an opportunity for the emergence of the concept of ecotourism which provides more opportunities to mingle interact and communicate directly with local communities (Andriyani et al., 2017).

After it was agreed that it would start with a culinary package that could be offered to visitors and promoted through social media, the relevant parties began to develop plans and assistance that would be



carried out immediately. The community around the waterfall began to be given training on how to present an attractive culinary package while still lifting the existing local wisdom. Identified the types of visitors who often come, so that they can be analyzed regarding the sustainability of the plan to be implemented.

The training was given on how to cook according to health composition and immediately packaged in an attractive culinary package. The promotion department was also given training on social media management. Social media is important because it will attract outsiders to come and visit Salosin Waterfall. There must be consistent tourism management in reviving Salosin Waterfall.



**Figure 3.** Community empowerment and BumDes of Sukahurip Village in creating souvenirs for visitors

The private sector as a tourism travel entrepreneur is also given the opportunity and cooperation to help increase the number of visitors. Not only that, the community and BumDes of Sukahurip Village are also empowered in terms of typical tourist souvenirs from Curug Salosin so that visitors have typical souvenirs that follow existing local wisdom. Community empowerment from the age side as part of the Youth Organization is also carried out so that the young men and women of Sukahurip Village actively participate in the promotion of ecotourism-based Curug Salosin tours.



**Figure 4.** Social media marketing optimization

After the assistance is carried out and runs according to a predetermined period, an evaluation is carried out as far as the implementation of this community empowerment goes. Evaluation is carried out on an ongoing basis following the initial objectives. Private investors starting from travel tourism investors to even long-term investors regarding the provision of natural homestays which are now increasingly in demand by the community based on homestays back to nature (Dewi et al., 2021).





**Figure 5.** Source: Sukahurip Village Profile, 2023

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the village community empowerment activities at Salosin Waterfall, Sukahurip Village is that with the participation of the surrounding village community, it can improve the economy of the surrounding community and the welfare of the community. As for starting with a small business that is easier and simpler, namely with the management of Salosin Waterfall management in the economic field, namely culinary packages, cooperation with travel tourism investors also needs to be done. Promotion on various social media platforms will also increase the number of visitors so that it is in accordance with economic assistance and will be more well organized about improving the welfare of the community around Salosin Waterfall.

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## Statement and Declarations

R.R.G, A.A.S, O.H.T designed the community service, R.R.G, A.A.S, O.H.T collected the data R.R.G, A.A.S, O.H.T wrote, revisaed, and approved the manuscript. The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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