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Policy and Strategies of Rural Tourism Development: Case of Sleman Regency Yogyakarta Province, Indonesia

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Background

Tourism is about welcoming visitors to attractive and stimulating places where they would like to spend their leisure time. The countryside, market towns and villages have much to offer the visitors, and are major factors in generating trips from within the country and from overseas. The countryside is enjoyed in the course of a wide range of activities from traditional country life pursuits such as fishing and local festivals, and more active enjoyment, such as walking or horse riding. Many people value the chance to get away from their daily schedule, to relax and revitalise themselves in the tranquillity, space and beauty of natural environs. These can only be enjoyed in the countryside and its great popularity brings significant levels of spending into rural areas, to rural businesses and services.

Tourism is lagging behind because of the lack of continuity in government strategies. Discontinuity in the implementation of the guidelines and programmes has been one of the impediments to the promotion and development of the tourism industry. Poverty alleviation through sustainable tourism development, should be given importance and priority. Spreading awareness among the common people across the country has also become very important.

Rural tourism is primarily characterised by its versatility and diversity and this has led to its confusion or substitution to several other concepts such as farm tourism, green tourism, outdoors, ecotourism or nature/wildlife tourism. In reality all these terms are specific forms of tourism activities taking place in rural areas (Sharpley, 1996). The confusion between those terms is certainly not surprising since de facto rural tourism is a very diversified sector that can be associated to an unspoiled/natural environment, wilderness, rural lifestyle and so forth. Lane (1994) indicates that this multi-faceted characteristic renders a definition problematic but nevertheless identifies four criteria to qualify rural tourism: rural tourism taking place in rural areas, built upon the specificities of the rural world (open space, rural heritage, etc.), rural in scale
(usually implying small scale) and representing the complex pattern of the rural world (environmental, economy, history and location). Lane’s definition is in fact particularly revealing since his indication that rural tourism is built ‘upon’ the multiple patterns of the rural world implies that consumers can consume this world in many ways. Hence: ‘Many forms of rural recreation are unique to the great outdoors and can be experienced in areas occupied by humans or in wilderness. It is the combination of environment, unique experiences and travellers expectations that makes rural tourism a separate and identifiable phenomenon (Getz and Page, 1997).

The concept of rural tourism has become important round the globe at present. It is thought that rural tourism can revitalise the conventional concepts and views on tourism, and bring in a new dimension in the sustainable development of tourism. It has been realised that society based tourism can play a fundamental role in poverty alleviation in rural areas. It is important to know that the way in which rural tourism is organised and the forms it takes vary from country to country. In some countries the government, or cooperative movement, is the main source of investment. In others it is private enterprise.

Several different types of tourism strategies, including: heritage tourism (sometimes referred to as cultural heritage tourism), nature-based tourism/ecotourism, agritourism, as well as partnership-based approaches, such as scenic byways and heritage areas.

Heritage tourism refers to leisure travel that has as its primarily purpose the experiencing of places and activities that represent the past. A principal concern of heritage tourism is historical authenticity and long-term sustainability of the attraction visited. Active local involvement is also typically a key component of successful heritage tourism endeavors. Baldwin’s (1994) study of a local heritage festival in northeastern Tennessee represents a good example of a successful heritage tourism program that fostered community involvement in an economically underdeveloped rural community. A different heritage tourism focus is provided by DeLyser’s (1995) article on ghost towns, which emphasizes that such towns in the West may have rich histories that can be attractive to potential tourists.

A second major type of rural tourism activity is nature-based tourism/ecotourism (sometimes called recreation-based tourism), which refers to the process of visiting natural areas for the purpose of enjoying the scenery, including plant and animal wildlife. Nature-based tourism may be either passive, in which observers tend to be strictly observers of nature, or active (increasingly popular in recent years), where participants take part in outdoor recreation or adventure travel activities. McDaniel’s (2001) article of southwestern Virginia, which highlights the tourism potential of the region’s scenic and abundant recreational activities, is a representative example. Guglielmino (1998) cautions that although ecotourism...
represents a viable economic development strategy for rural areas with natural resources, even successful ventures require patience for local communities. Also, as noted by King and Stewart (1996), undertaking ecotourism, unless managed carefully, can sometimes pit people against local natural resources. This suggests a strong need for pursuing sustainable development in ecotourism activities, as suggested by Lash (1998), who argues that the needs of the local community, visitors, and the environment can best be met through a synergistic approach between development and the environment that will not degrade the resource base.

A third major form of tourism is agritourism, which refers to the act of visiting a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural or agribusiness operation for the purpose of enjoyment, education, or active involvement in the activities of the farm operation. It includes taking part in a broad range of farm-based activities, including farmers’ markets, “petting” farms, roadside stands, and “pick-your-own” operations; engaging in overnight farm or ranch stays and other farm visits; and visiting agriculture-related festivals, museums, and other such attractions. Hilchey (1993) notes that long-term trends in consumer demand for tourism and recreation suggest that agritourism enterprises can help provide an important niche market for farmers throughout the Nation. He also notes that three factors are often the key to successful agritourism activities: social skills of farm-based entrepreneurs, farm aesthetics, and proximity of farms to urban centers.

In Indonesia, rural tourism has been developed mainly in the plantation areas of Sumatra and Java. Visitors stay in hotels, but visit farms to see activities such as rice planting or rubber tapping. Most of its heritage sites and international tourist spots are positioned around villages. These are intended for education as well as recreation. Sometimes rare plant or animal species are the main attraction, sometimes traditional food, handicraft or historic buildings.

The concept of rural tourism is still overlooked. Now is the right time to think of rural tourism development. Except rural tourism, all general attractions, like archeological sites, historical places, natural beaches are, more or less, getting importance.

Rural tourism is essential for the economic development. Its benefits will act as a catalyst in the overall development in rural areas. Rural tourism development will have the following outcomes: Gross Domestic Product growth, human resource development, poverty alleviation, originality in culture and heritage, development of riverine tourism and eco-tourism, development of rural livelihood, education and training for all, peace and happiness, promotion of local cuisine, and women employment.
Whatever the reason, policy for the planning, management and marketing is inadequate to advance the growth of this dynamic sector. A national policy producing integrated approaches to optimize the benefits of rural tourism for rural people and for tourists is needed. This policy would:

- Define rural tourism incorporating its various components of natural facilities, activities, and services.
- Develop a specific statistical database for rural tourism to help establish product availability, development possibilities and market information.
- Propose a strategic plan, which would set clear objectives and targets for rural tourism development and marketing.
- Integrate and co-ordinate the various agencies involved and identified clear areas of responsibility.
- Overcome duplication of effort and lack of clarity of message, which is seen as a reason for lack of marketing results.
- Address key issues of research, training provision, networking, quality product development, innovation and standards to maintain competitiveness.
- Develop functional links with key players in the market place and ensure measurable results from marketing efforts in rural tourism.

There are a number of critical factors which rural communities must seriously consider when examining the possibilities for rural tourism in the areas: 1. A critical mass to provide a holiday experience; 2. Co-operation and group development; 3. A strategic plan; 4. Focused marketing; and 5. Education and training.

The steps that have to be followed in progression in the development function are: Select area with potential; Develop local leadership, organize group for tourism development, establish close links with development agencies, conduct resource audit and select/prioritize areas for development, set a vision; Identify an image for the locality, draw up a development plan for each product and cost it in co-operation with specific interests and agencies, liaise with bodies and agencies for assistance, and liaise with marketing initiatives.

**Opportunities for Rural Tourism in Indonesia**

Tourism has been growing rapidly in Indonesia, and now it is a highly developed service industry, and a leading earner of foreign exchange for Indonesia. On a global scale, tourism employs directly more than 200 million people. It absorbs 11% of total consumer expenditure, 10.7% of total investment, and 7% of the world’s total tax revenues.
Tourism as a commodity is principally the fulfillment of tastes and preferences of consumers by both goods (commodities, products, souvenirs, etc.) and services (comfortable accommodation, scenic beauty, etc.). An important aspect is the specific location. Due to its unique characteristics, it is difficult to substitute one specific location for another which would be able to generate the same level of satisfaction.

Agriculture has played a significant role in the economic development of Indonesia. It plays an important role in providing a food supply for Indonesia’s massive population and raw materials for the industrial sector. Increasingly, it is also becoming a potential source of foreign exchange through tourism and export crops. Under current regional and global free trade agreements, Indonesian agricultural products are expected to succeed competitively in international markets. Prospective or actual export commodities include coffee, rubber, tea, palm, cocoa, shrimps and tuna.

As yet, rural tourism is not widespread, but some facilities exist and the numbers are increasing. Indonesia as a tropical country has own potential resources for rural tourism, including cash crops such as rubber and oil palm on large estates, food crops and horticulture on a smaller scale, livestock production and fisheries. Any of these may be used as a tourist attraction, and have a multiple role for agricultural production as well as tourist promotion and the earning of foreign exchange.

Rural tourism can be expected to play an important role in the growth of both agriculture and tourism simultaneously. This involves a valuable synergy for both sectors, both of which emphasize their goal as value-added improvement.

The complex and highly competitive native of the current global economic situation demands a high degree of efficiency. This in turn requires the application of advanced technology, the improvement of managerial ability, and professionalism in the management of both agribusiness and rural tourism. Appropriate technology, business information and promotion, and a sound marketing strategy all have all become important components.

Rural tourism cannot succeed without the participation of rural society. The aim should be to promote a type of rural tourism which will have a multiplier effect on rural society: rural tourism can help develop the rural economy and improve rural incomes by: providing employment for people in a village; providing a new market for foods such as eggs, fruit, vegetables and rice, all of which can be produced by local farmers, and supporting small businesses such as restaurants and art shops. Not
only will the economy of the village grow, but the government will be able to collect many kinds of taxes.

Rural Tourism, Case of Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta Province

Sleman Regency is a part of the special district of Yogyakarta Province with 547.82 km² in width or about 18% of total width of DIY. From north to south spans 32 km, and east to west 35 km. Geographically, Sleman regency is strategically located, to be between the main tourism objects of DIY and Central Java comprising Borobudur temple, Yogyakarta Sultan Palace, Malioboro street and Prambanan tempel. Thus, Sleman has an opportunity to develop its tourism. Sleman is located on 7°34'5" – 7°47’03" of south latitude and 107°15’03" -100°29’30" of east longitude. The topography of Sleman regency varies from flat, hilly to mountainous altitudes ranging from 100 m – 2500 m above the sea level. Sleman territory gets flatter to the south with sloping degrees varying from 8 to 0%. Sleman regency is governmentally divided into 17 sub-districts (kecamatan), 86 villages (desa) and 112 sub-villages (dusun).

Sleman Regency has effort to creat area of surrounding Mount Merapi as a tourism area with making strategies i.e. develop and recover the potentials of tourism to make Mt Merapi become one of the tourism destination in Yogyakarta province, reform and develop tourism by keeping the economic, social cultural, religious, educational dan bio-environmental, and developing area of Mt Merapi to be a tourism object which can be interesting tourist flow both domestic and international.

Rural areas where located in the surrounding Mt.Merapi have a lot of potensial in developing as tourism area. All the components such as physical, social and cultural environment have created specific system. This is a consideration as supporter for formation rural tourism. Moreover this area supported by existing local environmental, natural resource, socio cultural conditions which was fully rural nuance.

Business in travel agencies in Sleman regency increased quite rapidly from 44 agencies in 2003 became 113 agencies in 2007. this is related to several factors such as:

1. stating Adisucipto airport in to the International Airport, so that there have possibility of direct flights from abroad to Yogyakarta.
2. the opportunities to a wider travel from the bureau to sell the tour package
3. the expectation from the community of Sleman and Yogyakarta to travel, so that tour agency sells package tour regular visits independently.

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Among the types of tourism developed, rural tourism appear as icon of a new tour that has prospect to the long term. To commemorate the anniversary 92nd year of Sleman as a district, in 2008, Sleman even hold a festival of rural tourism. The best villages in Sleman included in this festival such as Tanjung village, Pentingsari village, Petung village, Plempoh village, Brayat village, Kembangarum village, Malang village, and Tunggularum village. The emergence of dozens of rural tourism is Sleman blessing at the same time the challenge is to develop the potential to be able to sustain the life of the population. Village tourism is expected to be able to buffer the economy. On the other hand, be able to bridge the wisdom to maintain the value of the local in Yogyakarta in general and Sleman in particular.

The farmers with their activities of tourism in Sleman can do two activities in one time that is working and touring. They work because of the demand to develop the rural tourism, and they have chance to know the diverse of tourists’ culture who visit in their village. They always face the natural authenticity which educate moral values and local wisdom. By doing so, the tourist activities can have another means, i.e., demand and encourage the farmers to be able to manage intelligently to their natural village, in line, to serve the tourists.

There is a new idea that should be built. Tourism is not always synonymous with industry that destructed the rural values. Otherwise, rural tourism can become local tourism objects which serve and offer the natural authenticity. Tourist can do learning by doing, basically, tourism activities is learning activities to understand other community cultures. The originality of village nuance in Sleman is the assets that should not be designed to be other urban pattern and model which can cause brittleness value of local wisdom. Rural tourism in Sleman includes culture, agriculture, fauna, handicraft, and Mount Merapi tourism.

For some community, village or rural area is a room for offering a lot of ideas. Noise and life competition in the urban can be countered by feeling to natural nuance and originality of rural area. In another side, many tourists who purpose to visit rural area to relax their thinking and mind. In the concept of live-in tourism, tourist can stay in rural area in a certain time. The model can be formed in participant tourism based on learning by doing. Visitors/tourists can do activities as if they are a local people who stay and live in that area. They can adapt to the condition of rural life and life style of local people. Naturally, tourists who always life and used to live in urban environment, can see how much wise the local people have. The pattern of this kind of tourism can be well managed with a good planned and programmed through rural
institutions. One of the program is to design the tour package with a complete infrastructure including facilities and service.

Tourist can stay for a month with local people to see the maintenance of agricultural products. They can participate to hoe, to plant, and to harvest. How such a pattern will cause a more live tours, creative and useful. Visitors/tourists are no longer passive, but active in developing tourism. According Spillan (1991) tourists divided into two groups, namely passive tourist and active tourist. Passive tourists showed their stress and self-submission to the environment. By this submission, psychological and physical tension can be solved by tour and recreation, while active tourists will decrease the tension by the physical activities. Values of local wisdom are expected can be adopted and sustained although live in urban environment.

Tourism activities have been separated from their roots, culture that construct and become the national identity. Culture is one of basic capital and therefore it becomes main factor for supporting tourism industry.

**Policies and Strategies of Tourism Development in Sleman Regency**

One goal of regional development in current situation in line with regional autonomy is to develop local potentials, such natural, social cultural and economic potencies. In the economic development, the regency of Sleman focus on developing tourism sectors which more intensive on other sectors such as tourism and trade and services which supported by strongly agricultural sector. In relation to those targets, development activities have been done by using local potencies, i.e. strategic location, fertile soils, center education and culture, center public services, and accessibility of investment development.

In the basic pattern of local development, Sleman Regency has policies, i.e. (1) development of tourism objects such as natural tourism, cultural tourism, conventional tourism, youth tourism, rural tourism, agrotourism included improving the accommodation and other facilities; and (2) Improvement of promotion activities in the form of tourism packages and professionally managed, interesting capability, and sustainability in the line with tourists needs.

In a bid to stimulate the economic growth and improve the quality of the commun its life, the government of Sleman Regency applies place marketing strategy that is focused on the potentials of eduction, tourism, and investment (ETI). The
strategy is needed as the value indicator that will convey a strong message to stakeholders.

The tourism attraction of Sleman Regency is a mixture of strong natural character and archeological history and culture. Existing cultural heritage is competitive advantage for the tourism industry in Sleman Regency.

Natural tourism in Sleman Regency is focused on the existing of Mount Merapi volcano (2,996 meters) as the source of inspirations. Being 1,500 meters above the sea level, the slope of Mt.Merapi offers beautiful panorama. A wide range of tourist objects and attraction has been created in the resort including a golf course, recreational parks, tracking tours, rock climbing activities, any many others. Mt Merapi also possesses a magical value with regards to the Javanese philosophy and believe saying that there is an immaginary line connecting the South Sea and the volcano passing through to Yogyakarta palace. This immaginary line of Yogyakarta is perceived as the line of the process that leads to the perfections on tourism business variations by establishing natural restaurants, villas, natural tours, village tours and others.

The Local government build synergy in the efforts to develop regional tourism. In developing regional tourism authorities will not be able to do much without the participation of the tourism stakeholders. Therefore it hopes the tourism stakeholders seem to (Indonesia Hotels and Restaurants Association (PHRI) can develop and optimize their respective roles. The ranks of Yogyakarta PHRI ready to build cooperation and synergy with local governments to build and develop tourism in Yogyakarta in many ways including training programs and tourism promotion programs. Given that tourism stakeholders when their own ways just will not bring optimal results. It is very necessary for the existence of togetherness between the parties.

The concept of district as a center of cultural preservation and development as it has been endorsed by the Regent of Sleman in the year 2007 should be implemented for real. Given the implementation of these concepts will certainly provide a broad space for the district in an effort to encourage the growth of cultural arts in their respective areas. Added that the concept of district as the center of cultural preservation and development is not only limited to the utilization of the physical building as the district office where the cultural development activities. Appropriate district office as the only window to the potential of art and culture developed significantly in the respective districts. What is even more important is the realization of the dynamics and the implementation of cultural activities in all communities in these districts. The district as a center of cultural preservation and development implies that the sub is
positioned as a place that provides space for the permanent preservation of existence and growth of the local culture based on cultural values of local communities.

In accordance with the mission of Culture and Tourism Office of Sleman there are 3 (three) important things related to the conservation, development and utilization of culture. Preservation of cultural meaning as a revitalization of cultured life, which in this case the preservation of culture is a process to revive the cultural values in public life. Development of culture meant as cultural transformation as a process with the target culture itself. In this cultural development is the process of researching, studying, selecting, sorting, and redefine cultural values in accordance with the times and the needs of the future. So the value contained in the culture can be understood, accepted and implemented by the community. While the results concerning the use of culture and the preservation process applied to cultural development in various dimensions of community life, including in the management of tourism. So that it can create a civilized society. For successful implementation as the central concept of conservation districts and cultural development is not separated and there is need for synergy between the various parties, ie between the district government, district government, village government, Padukuhon (sub-village) and society itself. In this case also while providing facilitation to the development of culture, or government officials known as civil service needs to apply the attitudes and patterns of behavior patterns in managing the government. Including by implementing the concept nyawiji (unity), and lost interest. Besides it is no less important is the modeling aspect of government officials should be upheld. Similarly, the community should also be able to build classified gilig attitude to maintain the existence and the cultural values.

Conclusion

Rural tourism cannot be limited simply to farm tourism but should include all the aspects of tourism that its physical, social and historical dimensions allow it to develop. This implies that the consumers, in a way, create tourism in rural areas by perceiving, consuming and using the rural space according to their own needs and wants. For this reason, in this peace of research the denomination of ‘tourism in rural areas’ will be preferred to that of ‘rural tourism’ in order to avoid any confusion. Since virtually most forms of tourism can take place in a rural environment, then its definition needs to exceed its physical characteristics to also include its psychological perceptions and images conveyed. In this line of thought, it has been argues that beyond its rural characteristics, tourism in rural areas owes its strong identity form its contrast with the urban world.
Farmer beginning a tourist enterprise can benefit very much for outside support. They need information and guidance in deciding whether their farms are suitable for tourists, what facilities they can offer, and what return they can expect. Once decision to develop is taken, they need training in management and hospitality, and sometimes they also need credit. Finally, they need to be part of some system of marketing and advertisement, and benefit greatly from some system of feedback and customer response. A national system of accreditation or licensing is also an advantage. Rural tourism cannot succeed without participation of the local community. The aims should be understood to promote a type of rural tourism which will have a multiplier effect on the rural community. Rural tourism can help develop the rural economy and improve rural incomes by providing employment for people in the village, providing a new market for food such as eggs, fruits, vegetables and rice, all of which can be produced by local farmers, and supporting small business such as restaurants and art shops.

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