



Tourism Development and Community Welfare: A Case Study of Local Entrepreneurs around Selong Belanak Beach, Central Lombok, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of tourism development on community welfare among local entrepreneurs operating around Selong Belanak Beach, Central Lombok, Indonesia. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the research aims to understand how tourism growth influences socio-economic conditions, employment opportunities, and local business sustainability. Data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation involving small business owners, local residents, and tourism stakeholders. The findings reveal that tourism development has significantly improved household income, increased employment, and encouraged the establishment of micro-enterprises such as food stalls, lodging, and handicraft shops. The multiplier effect of tourism has strengthened local entrepreneurship and reduced rural poverty. However, the study also identifies challenges, including environmental degradation, increased cost of living, and unequal participation between local and external actors. The results suggest that tourism should be managed through participatory and sustainable frameworks that integrate community involvement, environmental awareness, and local economic empowerment. By highlighting both positive and negative dimensions, this study provides insights for policymakers and practitioners to promote inclusive and sustainable tourism development that enhances community well-being.

KEYWORDS:

Tourism development; community welfare; local entrepreneurs; socio-economic impact; sustainable tourism; Selong Belanak; Central Lombok; Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become one of the most dynamic sectors of the global economy, contributing significantly to economic growth, employment, and community development. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2023), the tourism industry accounts for approximately 10 percent of global GDP and generates millions of jobs worldwide. In developing countries, tourism is often perceived as a strategic tool for reducing poverty, promoting regional development, and improving the welfare of rural communities. However, the rapid expansion of tourism also presents social and environmental challenges that require careful management to ensure that local communities are not marginalized in the process of destination development.

In Indonesia, the tourism sector plays a vital role in national and regional economic transformation. The government has designated several "super-priority destinations," including Lombok, as part of its sustainable tourism development agenda. Lombok, known for its pristine beaches, Islamic culture, and rich local traditions, has been promoted as a complementary destination to Bali. Among its many coastal attractions, Selong Belanak Beach, located in Central Lombok, has emerged as one of the most rapidly developing tourism areas. The region has experienced a surge in domestic and international visitors, driving infrastructure investments and the growth of local micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Tourism development in Selong Belanak has brought tangible economic benefits to residents. Many households that previously relied solely on agriculture or fishing have diversified their income sources through tourism-related activities such as opening homestays, food stalls, surfboard rental services,



and souvenir shops. The increase in tourist arrivals has stimulated a local multiplier effect that improves household income and enhances access to education and healthcare. These findings align with studies conducted by [Adiyoso \(2020\)](#) and [Benur and Bramwell \(2015\)](#), who argue that tourism can serve as a catalyst for rural development when managed inclusively and supported by community participation.

Nevertheless, the literature also emphasizes the duality of tourism's impact on communities. While tourism can generate income and employment, it can also lead to rising living costs, environmental degradation, and social inequality ([Sharpley, 2020](#)). In the case of Selong Belanak, uncontrolled development and limited government regulation have raised concerns about land ownership shifts, the displacement of local residents, and the dominance of external investors in the tourism economy. Similar challenges have been reported in other Indonesian destinations, such as Gili Trawangan and Kuta Mandalika, where local communities often experience uneven benefits from tourism expansion ([Prayudi et al., 2021](#)).

From a community development perspective, the sustainability of tourism depends on how effectively local stakeholders are integrated into decision-making and benefit-sharing mechanisms. Scholars such as [Su and Wall \(2022\)](#) highlight that *community-based tourism* (CBT) can enhance social equity and empowerment by enabling residents to participate actively in tourism planning and management. CBT approaches also promote the conservation of local culture and natural resources, ensuring that tourism contributes to long-term community welfare rather than short-term economic gain. In the context of Lombok, where local identity and Islamic values remain deeply rooted, tourism development must balance economic progress with cultural and environmental preservation.

The study of tourism development and its impact on community welfare in Selong Belanak is therefore timely and necessary. Despite its growing popularity, limited academic attention has been devoted to understanding the real socio-economic effects of tourism in this area, particularly from the perspective of local entrepreneurs. This study seeks to fill this gap by addressing the following research questions: (1) How does tourism development influence the socio-economic welfare of local communities in Selong Belanak? (2) What are the main benefits and challenges experienced by local entrepreneurs as tourism expands? and (3) How can tourism policies be designed to ensure sustainability and inclusiveness in community development?

By answering these questions, this study contributes to both theoretical and practical discussions on sustainable tourism and rural development. The findings provide insights for policymakers, tourism planners, and local stakeholders to develop more equitable and participatory frameworks that integrate local knowledge, environmental stewardship, and economic inclusivity. Furthermore, the research supports Indonesia's broader vision of sustainable tourism that aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goals 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism development and community welfare have been widely discussed in academic literature, particularly within the context of developing economies. Scholars argue that tourism serves as a crucial driver of local economic growth, employment generation, and social transformation when it is managed in an inclusive and sustainable manner. The relationship between tourism and community welfare can be analyzed through several theoretical perspectives, including the *community-based tourism* (CBT) model, the *sustainable livelihood framework*, and *social exchange theory*. These frameworks collectively explain how tourism can enhance the well-being of local communities while ensuring that benefits are equitably distributed among stakeholders

The *community-based tourism* model emphasizes local participation and empowerment in the planning and management of tourism activities. [Su and Wall \(2022\)](#) argue that CBT ensures that tourism benefits flow directly to residents through employment, entrepreneurship, and capacity building. Similarly, [Okazaki \(2008\)](#) notes that CBT provides opportunities for communities to maintain control over their cultural and natural resources while enhancing economic independence. In the context of rural Indonesia, CBT has been implemented in various destinations such as Lombok, Yogyakarta, and Bali, with mixed success depending on the level of government support and community organization ([Utami et al., 2021](#)).

From a socio-economic perspective, tourism can significantly influence household welfare. The *sustainable livelihood framework* developed by [Chambers and Conway \(1992\)](#) identifies five forms of capital—human, social, natural, physical, and financial—that contribute to community resilience. Tourism affects each of these assets by providing income, education opportunities, and infrastructure improvements. For instance, research by [Benur and Bramwell \(2015\)](#) demonstrates that tourism product diversification enhances local economic sustainability by reducing dependence on single-sector income sources. However, these benefits are often accompanied by structural challenges such as inequality and cultural commodification ([Sharpley, 2020](#)).

Empirical studies across Southeast Asia show that the success of tourism development depends on the interaction between government policy, market demand, and community readiness. In Indonesia, the expansion of tourism destinations—particularly in Lombok—has been associated with both opportunities and risks. Studies by [Rofiyanto \(2014\)](#) and [Mintayu \(2018\)](#) highlight that local communities often experience income growth but also face rising living costs and environmental pressures due to unregulated development. Similar findings were observed in Tulung Agung and Bunaken, where tourism growth improved employment yet intensified socio-environmental strains.

The literature also underscores the importance of institutional frameworks in sustaining tourism's positive impacts. According to [Suharto \(2006\)](#), community empowerment requires systematic collaboration among government agencies, educational institutions, and civil society organizations. Institutional coordination can ensure that tourism policies integrate local aspirations, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability. The integration of Islamic ethical principles—such as fairness (*adl*), responsibility (*amanah*), and community benefit (*maslahah*)—into tourism practices further strengthens the moral foundation for equitable development, especially in predominantly Muslim regions like Lombok.

In summary, previous research has consistently shown that tourism development can improve community welfare through inclusive economic participation, capacity enhancement, and improved access to services. However, its sustainability depends on effective governance, equitable benefit distribution, and community participation. This study builds upon these theoretical and empirical insights to examine the specific case of tourism in Selong Belanak, where local entrepreneurship, government support, and environmental management collectively shape the outcomes of tourism-driven development.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to examine the relationship between tourism development and community welfare in Selong Belanak, Central Lombok. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of social phenomena, particularly how individuals and communities experience, perceive, and respond to changes brought about by tourism. In the context of rural Lombok, where socio-cultural values, livelihoods, and community cooperation form the foundation of daily life, qualitative inquiry provides the most suitable lens for capturing nuanced realities that quantitative methods might overlook. The descriptive design

also enables the researcher to present an accurate and systematic portrayal of ongoing conditions, behavioral patterns, and socio-economic transformations among local entrepreneurs and households affected by tourism development.

The research was conducted in Selong Belanak Beach, located in Praya Barat District, Central Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province. This area was selected purposively because it represents one of the most dynamic coastal destinations experiencing rapid tourism growth, where the interplay between tourism investment, local entrepreneurship, and social welfare is highly visible. The community around Selong Belanak consists largely of small-scale business owners, including food stall vendors, homestay managers, surfboard rental operators, souvenir sellers, and transportation service providers. Their direct involvement in tourism-related activities makes them ideal informants for understanding how tourism shapes local welfare, employment patterns, and cultural practices.

Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observation, and document analysis. The interviews were conducted using semi-structured guides to ensure consistency while allowing flexibility in exploring participants' individual perspectives. The main informants included twenty local entrepreneurs, five community leaders, two tourism officials, and three representatives of local organizations involved in destination management. The interviews explored issues such as income changes, employment opportunities, environmental concerns, and perceptions of tourism sustainability. Field observations were carried out over several weeks to document daily business operations, interactions between locals and tourists, and community initiatives aimed at maintaining environmental cleanliness and cultural authenticity. Document analysis included reviewing reports from the Central Lombok Tourism Office, statistical publications by the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS, 2023), and previous studies on tourism development in Lombok.

The data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014), which involves three interactive stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the reduction phase, data from interviews, observations, and documents were categorized into key themes such as economic empowerment, social change, and environmental sustainability. The categorized data were then displayed narratively to identify relationships and patterns that reveal how tourism affects community well-being. In the conclusion phase, interpretations were derived through iterative reflection, comparing empirical findings with theoretical frameworks such as *community-based tourism (CBT)* and the *sustainable livelihood approach*. This analytical process allowed the researcher to capture both tangible outcomes, such as income growth and job creation, and intangible impacts, such as changes in community cohesion and cultural adaptation.

To ensure research credibility and validity, several techniques were employed. Data triangulation was achieved by cross-verifying information from interviews, observations, and official documents. Member checking was performed by presenting preliminary findings to selected participants, allowing them to validate and refine interpretations. The research also adhered to ethical principles by obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring confidentiality, and presenting findings objectively. In addition, the study adopted reflexivity, acknowledging the researcher's position as an observer within a culturally sensitive context.

This methodological framework is particularly relevant for rural regions like Lombok, where tourism is intertwined with community identity and social dynamics. The approach enables a holistic understanding of tourism as not merely an economic phenomenon but as a socio-cultural transformation process that affects community values, livelihood structures, and local governance. By employing a qualitative descriptive method supported by rigorous data collection and ethical procedures, the study provides a reliable and contextually grounded analysis of how tourism development shapes community welfare in Selong Belanak, Central Lombok.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Socioeconomic Conditions of the Local Community

Selong Belanak Village, located in Praya Barat District, Central Lombok Regency, is a coastal area with a population of approximately 5,987 people distributed across 11 hamlets. Most of the residents

depend on traditional livelihoods such as farming and fishing. However, in the past decade, the area has experienced a rapid shift toward tourism-based economic activities. The development of Selong Belanak Beach as a tourism destination has attracted both domestic and foreign visitors, leading to the emergence of new economic opportunities for the local community.

Field observations reveal that most of the new small businesses are family-owned enterprises, including food stalls, homestays, handicraft shops, and surfboard rental services. These micro-enterprises serve as the backbone of the local economy, providing employment and income diversification for households that were once dependent on seasonal agriculture. Interview results indicate that tourism has improved living standards, especially in terms of daily income stability, access to education, and healthcare affordability. A local business owner explained that before tourism development, income was irregular and mostly dependent on agricultural cycles, but tourism provided a more consistent source of revenue.

The data align with previous studies by [Benur and Bramwell \(2015\)](#) and [Sharpley \(2020\)](#), who found that tourism often revitalizes rural economies by introducing service-oriented income streams. However, it also introduces new forms of vulnerability, particularly dependence on fluctuating visitor flows and market seasonality. In Selong Belanak, these dynamics are apparent, as many local businesses face revenue declines during the off-season or when external shocks such as pandemics disrupt travel.

Community Participation and Empowerment

The success of tourism in Selong Belanak is closely linked to community participation. The interviews and field data show that the management of the beach is largely community-driven, supported by the collaboration between residents, private investors, and the district tourism office. Local entrepreneurs have organized informal cooperatives to coordinate waste management, maintain cleanliness, and manage parking services. Such participatory arrangements represent a form of *community-based tourism* (CBT), where local people are both beneficiaries and stewards of tourism resources.

Community empowerment has also been evident in the growing number of local youths who have acquired new skills such as English communication, digital marketing, and hospitality management. Some have received training from local NGOs and universities that partner with the tourism office. This empowerment process strengthens human capital and aligns with [Su and Wall's \(2022\)](#) argument that community engagement is essential for equitable tourism outcomes. Nevertheless, the study found that empowerment remains uneven. Women and older residents tend to have less access to training and capital, limiting their participation in the more profitable segments of tourism.

Despite these gaps, the existence of self-organized community groups illustrates local agency and adaptation. Villagers perceive tourism as an opportunity to enhance welfare while preserving traditional values such as cooperation (*gotong royong*), fairness (*adl*), and stewardship (*amanah*). These ethical principles, deeply rooted in Islamic teachings, serve as moral foundations that guide economic behavior and ensure that tourism growth does not compromise cultural integrity.

Economic Impacts and Local Business Transformation

The economic effects of tourism in Selong Belanak are multifaceted. Interview data indicate a substantial increase in household income, with many families earning up to three times their pre-tourism income. The circulation of money in the local economy has expanded through tourism-related services, fostering the growth of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Furthermore, the demand for local products—such as traditional foods, woven fabrics, and agricultural commodities—has stimulated backward linkages between tourism and other local industries.

However, economic transformation also introduces new challenges. Rising land prices have encouraged some residents to sell their property to investors, resulting in a gradual shift of ownership and control. This phenomenon, also observed by [Prayudi et al. \(2021\)](#) in Lombok's other tourism zones, poses a risk of marginalization if not addressed through policy interventions. Local respondents

expressed concerns about the dominance of external businesses that sometimes exclude villagers from higher-value opportunities.

From a policy standpoint, these findings suggest that equitable benefit distribution remains a key issue in sustainable tourism. Governments and tourism stakeholders must establish mechanisms such as community-based cooperatives, profit-sharing schemes, or destination management organizations (DMOs) that protect local interests. As argued by [Suharto \(2006\)](#), empowerment requires not only economic access but also institutional support that ensures long-term community control over tourism assets.

Environmental and Cultural Implications

The environmental dimension of tourism in Selong Belanak presents both progress and pressure. On one hand, the increased awareness of cleanliness and environmental responsibility among locals has led to collective efforts to manage waste and protect the beach ecosystem. On the other hand, the growth in visitor numbers has caused waste accumulation, limited freshwater availability, and unregulated construction of lodging facilities along the coast. These issues illustrate the ecological trade-offs inherent in tourism expansion.

Cultural adaptation is another significant aspect. Tourism has facilitated intercultural exchanges that promote tolerance and openness, yet it also introduces cultural homogenization risks. Some local elders noted a shift in youth behavior and lifestyle influenced by interactions with foreign tourists. The challenge lies in preserving local identity while integrating with global tourism markets. According to [Smith and Duffy \(2020\)](#), cultural sustainability requires communities to assert agency in representing their traditions authentically rather than as commodified spectacles.

In Selong Belanak, cultural authenticity remains relatively preserved due to the strong presence of Islamic norms and communal solidarity. Rituals and festivals continue to be observed, though adapted to accommodate visitors. This reflects a form of cultural resilience where tourism becomes a medium for heritage revitalization rather than erosion.

Governance, Collaboration, and Policy Challenges

Effective tourism governance in Selong Belanak depends on multi-stakeholder collaboration. Interviews with tourism officials reveal that the local government supports infrastructure development—such as road improvement, lighting, and sanitation—but still faces budget limitations and regulatory inconsistencies. Coordination between local authorities and the community often lacks continuity, leading to fragmented implementation of development plans.

Collaboration between the public and private sectors remains essential to sustain tourism's growth. Private investors contribute capital and marketing resources, while residents provide labor and cultural assets. However, the absence of a formal destination management body limits strategic planning and monitoring. Establishing such an institution could facilitate transparent decision-making, equitable benefit-sharing, and environmental regulation.

These governance findings resonate with [Rahman et al. \(2023\)](#), who emphasize the need for participatory policy design in tourism management. Sustainable tourism requires more than physical infrastructure; it necessitates institutional frameworks that balance economic ambition with social justice and ecological stewardship. For Selong Belanak, this means embedding sustainability principles into every stage of planning, from zoning and licensing to training and revenue allocation.

Synthesis of Findings

Overall, the results demonstrate that tourism development in Selong Belanak has substantially improved community welfare through economic diversification, job creation, and social empowerment. The integration of community participation and local entrepreneurship has fostered a sense of ownership and pride among residents. However, the benefits remain uneven due to structural constraints such as unequal access to resources, gender disparities, and weak institutional coordination.

The findings reinforce the idea that tourism can be both a driver and a disruptor of local welfare. To sustain its positive impacts, development efforts must be guided by inclusive governance, environmental sensitivity, and respect for cultural identity. The Selong Belanak experience thus offers a model of grassroots-driven tourism development that, while imperfect, provides valuable lessons for other rural destinations in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that tourism development in Selong Belanak, Central Lombok, has brought profound changes to the socio-economic structure, culture, and environment of the local community. The qualitative analysis shows that tourism functions not only as a source of income but also as a catalyst for social transformation and empowerment. Through the emergence of small-scale enterprises, tourism has significantly increased household income, diversified employment opportunities, and stimulated local economic growth. Community participation plays a crucial role in sustaining these developments, as residents directly engage in managing tourism facilities, providing services, and promoting environmental cleanliness.

However, alongside these positive effects, tourism has also generated several challenges. The increasing cost of living, rising land prices, and limited local control over tourism assets have caused concerns about social inequality and cultural dilution. Moreover, the lack of professional management skills and regulatory oversight threatens the sustainability of the destination. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that integrates economic planning, environmental protection, and social inclusion. The establishment of community-based cooperatives and destination management organizations (DMOs) can ensure equitable benefit-sharing and maintain local ownership of tourism development.

In the broader context, the Selong Belanak experience demonstrates that sustainable tourism is achievable when community empowerment, cultural preservation, and environmental responsibility are harmonized. Policy interventions should emphasize capacity-building programs, participatory governance, and partnerships among government, private sector, and civil society. By embedding ethical and inclusive principles in tourism management, Selong Belanak can serve as a model for other rural destinations in Indonesia seeking to balance economic growth with social well-being and environmental sustainability.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest related to the publication of this study.

Data Availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Author Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the design, data collection, analysis, and writing of this manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final version of the paper.

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