

## Best practice of green rural tourism: Lesson from Sangkan Gunung, Karangasem

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### Abstract

The objective of this study was to find out the best practice and the factors influence the best practice of Sangkan Gunung rural tourism operator in Karangasem Regency, Bali. The research method employed was structured observation, documents analysis and in depth interview. The findings reveal that, green initiatives help to cut down the running cost and Sangkan Gunung rural tourism adopts the best practice that suit its operation and environment. The Pilot project in Sangkan Gunung rural tourism proposes to regard sustainability issues in the context of rural tourism product quality, integrating sustainability aspects into a running and well recognized rural tourism quality scheme. Promotion of sustainable rural tourism products goes along.

Keywords: rural tourism, green operators, best practice

### Introduction

Tourism is one of the important pillars of many national economies. Practicing the tourism has a multiplier effect on several industries, being interdependent with the food industry, communications, and transport industry (Hibbert et al, 2013). Worldwide, all rural areas face the same problems: economic decline, environmental degradation, poverty of population or gradual loss of national identity. Its population is aged, young people preferring to migrate to cities. In this context, the villages are struggling to maintain its viability (Sales et al 2013; Adanacioglu, 2017; Ahmad et al, 2018; Chambers, 2018). Tourism is one of the sectors that can contribute to resuscitate villages. Practicing rural tourism was developed in response to human needs, subjected to daily increasing stress, to recreate the economic needs of these areas and the concern to preserve the environment and tradition (MIH, 2014).

This paper aims to analyze the trends and changes rural tourism in Bali, Indonesia, namely how tourism activity has evolved, but the direction it is going, too. For this, the existing data will be used and studied. Studying this theme is justified by the actuality of the topic, given that attempts to maximize the benefits

from tourism in a way that nature and heritage anthropogenic authentic to not suffer, but also the need to develop the localities and rural areas where only tourism and agriculture are productive domains (Stange & Brown, 2013; Pickel-Chevalier & Ketut Budarma, 2016; Astawa et al, 2018). Rural tourism is a viable alternative in a society preoccupied with sustainable development which is moving increasingly towards forms of ecotourism (Radic & Peri, 2015). In addition to protecting nature, heritage conservation and preservation of tradition and stimulating the authenticity of the village, rural tourism brings the socio-economic benefits for the local population (Zamfir & Corbos, 2015; Zhong & Morrison, 2015).

Rural tourism can meet tourist needs without harming the environment. It appears as a suitable alternative for the daily man increasingly stressed and pressured economic and social (Sipe & Testa, 2018). Rural tourism is a "strategy" viable recovery of the villages, from several points of view: attracting earnings in areas where it is practiced; generating employment; contributing to the development of rural areas; supporting the rejuvenating of villages population; preserving and protecting the natural environment; keeping alive tradition; meeting the needs of tourists (Blain & Ritchie, 2005). Tourism in general and in rural areas, in particular, is a springboard for other industries in that area, but also for society. Practicing this activity in rural areas can lead to economic development, but also to raising living standards and quality of life (Ali & Ryu, 2016). Facing the challenges of globalization and with uncertain economic conditions, rural tourism can be a "lifeline", under proper capitalization and promotion of effective heritage (Jenkins & Romanos, 2014). Therefore this study was conducted to determine the best practice of rural tourism in Sangkan Gunung Village, Sidemen District, Karangasem Regency, Bali-Indonesia.

Generally best practice means "any practice, know-how, or experience that has proven to be valuable or effective within one organization that may have applicability to other organizations" (Ali, et al, 2016). Best practice for one organization might be not considered as best practice for other organization due to several factors. This was further supported by (Ali & Amin, 2014) which informed "that no single practice work in all situations, and hence the word "best" is defined in context, is situational, and means only "best for you" ". Basically the factors influence the best practice of the operators are location or geographical condition, scale of lodging facilities, accessibility, availability of resources, policy intention, creativity of the operators and

market demand (Furqan et al, 2010). Due to limited numbers of study on this area, therefore this study was conducted to determine the factors that determine the best practice.

### Research methods

This study is adopting case study method and employed three research methods which are content analysis, in-depth interview using semi structured format and structured observation. According to (Konu, 2015) semi structured method is the best method to gather information because it provide focus on certain issues on the same time allows the degree of freedom in getting information.

Content analysis method is used to identify the area of green initiatives and interviews were used to verify the area of best practice. Content analysis was carried out on secondary data to identify area and factors of practice in hospitality industry. The sample of literature was confined to leading hospitality journals, some online articles and website which provide relevant information regarding the operators green initiatives. Areas that emerged from content analysis was listed and used to prepare the interview questionnaire. The areas of green practice are listed below;

- Application of green products and materials
- Waste reduction management
- Energy management
- Water management and conservation
- Community service
- Indoor environmental quality
- Sustainable site planning and management

The interview questions were designed in relation to the main objective of the study which is to determine the best practice of the operator resorts. The interview questionnaire contained of several questions based on the area of green practice. Interviews were conducted face to face and lasted for one hour. Responses were digitally recorded and structured observation of the green initiatives was carried out using checklist method and supported with visual aid such as photographs and video recording.

Three case studies were selected for this study. The case studies were selected based on their green contribution to the rural tourism development. The case

studies were “Gites de France” as the cradle of rural tourism in France, “green holidays” and its main component agro tourism in Italy, mountain glaciers and crystalline lakes in Austria, “white villages” in Andaluzia, South of Spain. The case studies were located in different countries in Europe. As for this study approval for disclosing the name of the rural tourism was obtained.

While this study achieved its objectives, it is subjected to several limitations. The first limitation is time constraints in which the evaluation was conducted. Second limitation is numbers of case studies was selected are smaller. This is to focus into in-depth study of the individual case study in view of the various issues of sustainability. Third limitation was scholarly information regarding factors of best practice is still limited and in an ongoing research.

### Discussion

This study attempts to analyze the qualitative data from the answer of the research question from the whole observation, in-depth interview, and literature review of implementing green approach in developing tourist village of Sangkan Gunung. The research questions in this study were concerned about how green approach is be able to be implemented for developing the Sangkan Gunung rural tourism. This tourism development can be utilized by travel agents that are conducting tour programs to Eastern part of Bali including Kelungkung and Karangasem Regencies. The travel agents can bring the tourists to the area for hiking with marvelous view of rice terraces which can be handled by the local tour guides and stop in Bukit Tegeh temple, Belatuk waterfall, Sudamala spring water, and agro tourism with coffee, clove, cocoa plantation and process of making virgin coconut oil (VCO) by the local farmers. Additionally, the villagers at present have a very positive attitude to tourism, believing that tourism is strengthening cultural values and can elevate the community's prosperity.

### *Background and green policy of the rural tourism*

The findings show that the green policies of the rural tourism are distinctive from each other. However the main aim of the policy was similar which is to lessen the impacts of the operation on the surrounding environment. Each rural tourism received different green recognition such as sustainable, ecofriendly and green rural tourism based on their resource conservation, location and design factors. However,

Bali's tourism industry has undergone a serious makeover since the Netherlands have started promoting tourism in the Colonial times. Not much of the artistic Bali and its distinctive Hindu culture, for which the island became famous, have remained in Bali's main tourist areas. Over the last decades, tourist numbers have increased dramatically and culturally interested tourists from overseas have given way to mass tourists. Balinese artists became mass producers of cheap souvenirs, rice fields were replaced with resorts and villas, and the increased welfare of the island attracted unskilled labor to immigrate to entertain tourists.

Large-scale investment in the realm of mass-tourism continues to this day even though many government officials raise cultural tourism. The development of tourism has led to the proliferation of pragmatic lifestyles among the people to sell their land for short-term interests. This happens also due to government policies in the field of taxation with a policy of adjusting tax objects where each tourist area has a strategic value so that land and building taxes are high. This situation has caused the loss of the agricultural system in Bali with its traditional irrigation system known as subak as a base for Balinese culture. Indeed, tourism developed in Bali is based on the uniqueness and differences that the island has. The unique nature and culture of Bali, caused Bali to be admired by the world which caused tourists to come to Bali.

While standards of living and welfare in Bali have increased through tourism and many Balinese are satisfied with the development, tourism in its current form has also brought many economic, social and environmental problems. Limited and unequal benefits for the Balinese, economic fragility through overdependence on tourism, commoditization of culture and some environmental issues. There is a long-term need for the island to foster competitiveness, market development and innovation in other sectors than tourism, particularly in regions where tourism is not an essential contributor to the economy. Only the diversification of the economy can minimize negative impacts on tourism demand – which are caused by external influences – and thus strengthen the economy. Therefore, developing more alternative forms of tourism like rural tourism could help to achieve a more equal demand and thus a more stable income.

#### *Best practice of sangkan gunung rural tourism*

The development of a formulated tourism village should be as much as possible a representation of community participation in every aspect. Likewise, the

hopes of the Sangkan Gunung community in developing tourism village in accordance with the potential of the village in the future are (1) Development of Sangkan Gunung rural tourism as much as possible involving the community as a concept of community-based tourism development (CBT) involving all components of community members actively involved in development village tourism potential becomes a tourist destination; (2) Community Based Tourism (CBT) which emphasizes more on the economic side should also be based on *Tri Hita Karana* (THK) and *Sad Kertih* (SK) local wisdom. THK is the balance of relations between the 3 elements in Sangkan Gunung village community in carrying out their lives as an effort to create a peaceful, harmonious and happy life, namely the community's relationship with the creator, the harmonious relations of fellow citizens, and harmonious relations between the community and the environment (Astuti et al, 2019; Ginaya, 2018; Mudana et al, 2018). The three harmonious relationships that led to this happiness and the six elements in the SK will foster a sense of "*paras paras sarpanaya salulung sabayantaka*" or the appreciation of the rights of local communities and to preserve the environment in the village of Sangkan Gunung. Figure 1 shows a model for developing Sangkan Gunung tourism village.

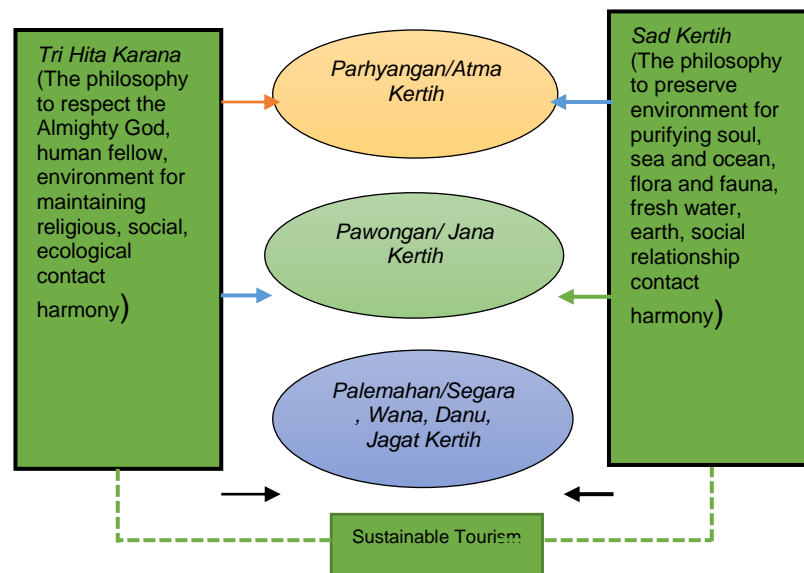


Fig. 1. The philosophical concept of THK and SK  
Source: Astuti, et al, 2019

The problem identification for achieving sustainability development target, which is based on the values of THK and SK local wisdom in the development of Sangkan Gunung tourism village is based on the internal and external factors. In

general, the problems of developing Sangkan Gunung tourism village can be broadly classified into, namely limited access to the market; limited human resources in management, administration and operational competencies; limited physical facilities. Table 1 shows the internal and external potential factors influencing in sustainable development of Sangkan Gunung tourism village.

Table 1. The Potential Factors influencing in sustainable development of Sangkan Gunung tourism village

<b>Factors</b>	
<b>Internal</b>	<b>External</b>
The beauty of natural resources	There are visits of foreign and domestic tourists
The uniqueness of natural resources	Strategic location from other tourist objects
Preservation of natural resources	The existence of proven legal certainty Sangkan Gunung Village is designated as a tourist attraction based on Decree of the Karangasem Regent No. 470/1998
The growth of creative economic activities of the local community	There is a policy of Bali Provincial government to embody green tourism
Tourism activities create opportunities for the emergence of new sources of income for local communities	The need for alternative tourist destinations
Accessibility	The cooperation of government, investors, communities and Support of tourism actors.
Friendly community attitude	Regional autonomy imposed by the government
Security of the authorities	Cultural values of the local community have taken root in the community such as mutual cooperation, trust, language, and customs

All the potential factors shown in table 1 prove that Sangkan Gunung village which is located in Karangasem Regency has great potential to be developed as a tourist village. In Bali, if people hear the name of Karangasem Regency, the thing that comes up is the tourist destination area that has already gone global, namely tourist destination of Besakih Temple which is known as the “Mother Temple of Bali”, Taman Ujung and Tirta Gangga spring royal palace. In fact, Karangasem still has a lot of tourism spots that have not been honed but are very potential. One of the



unmarked green gems is Sangkan Gunung Village. This village has a view of rice fields and Telaga Waja River as it is shown in figure 2.



Figure 2. The view of paddy fields and Telaga Waja River

Another potential to be explored in Sangkan Gunung Village is the tour package for making VCO. So, tourists can follow the process of making VCO from the coconuts harvested on their trees in the village.



Figure 3. The process of making VCO in Sangkan Gunung Village

Sangkan Gunung village also has a waterfall which is called Belatuk Waterfall to be developed as a tourist attraction. Currently the access to the waterfall is still wild so it needs a construction that make it easier to be accessed. There are also several springs for *malukat* or purification rituals in the village, such as Sudamala fountain and Tunjung Kuning. Figure 2 below is a local resident who uses Sudamala spring for purification or cleaning up activities.





Figure 4. Purification *Malukat* ritual in the spring of Sudamala

Not only that, Sangkan Gunung Village also has the Bukit Tegeh, of a very steep set of stairs (moreless 350 steps) that offers tremendous views, a scenic river flowing through the valley floor and ample opportunity for both trekking. While other spots are more convenient, visitors can organize an ascent of Gunung Agung from Sideman and just more easy-going wanders through the rice fields.



Figure 5. The Bukit Tegeh Temple surrounded by tropical forest and paddy fields

Another unique tradition practiced in Sangkan Gunung Village is the “Megibung” or eating together. This together meal is unique. There is no difference, sitting in togetherness. Usually, the people who come in a celebration of traditional invitations are local people. So, in one sele, they already know each other. They eat together occasionally while joking and brainstorming. The impression is so relax, enhance friendships and get to know more, and the rice eaten together is a natural thing to be added back, while the side dishes are not allowed. So, eating together in *megibung* way ensures the participants will be very satisfied. There is no doubt or embarrassment to add more.

At the time of eating, as much as possible in order not to splatter, let alone scattered on the tray is not allowed. So, the impression does not eat the rest of the food sprinkling others. Even if the food is spilled, it must be outside the tray. Although there are no written rules in the traditions or *megibung* events, the *megibung* participants also should not spit, sputter, sneeze, yell, laugh loudly, etiquette and other manners, including when one *megibung* participants are full, cannot leave the place, start together and end together. To preserve this *megibung* event or tradition, on June 15, 2019, the Semseman Hamlet, Sangkan Gunung Village, held a *megibung* event in the hamlet village hall. It involved all components and layers of society and invitation from Tourism Department, Politeknik Negeri Bali for holding a social service in Sangkan Gunung village. In line with the implementation of green tourism campaigned by the Tourism Department of the higher vocational education is that the use of organic ingredients in making the Balinese cuisine and plastic free in serving the meal. Instead of using plastic, the green banana leaves is used to serve the typical Balinese tradition food as it is shown in figure 4.



Figure 4. Green concept of “Megibung”

## Conclusion

The development of Sangkan Gunung Tourism Village has implemented best practice of green rural tourism along with the onslaught of massive modernization and globalization in Bali as an endeavor to counter the discourse of cultural tourism has transformed into mass tourism. While the development of tourism has brought welfare, it also led to a vulnerable economy over-dependent on tourism, unequal distribution of income across the island, commoditization of culture, pollution, waste problems and water scarcity. To achieve sustainable tourism, the management of

Sangkan Gunung Tourism Village puts forward such the efforts of the best practice green rural tourism in order to maintain natural balance such as preserving nature as a tourist attraction with activities that are oriented to nature conservation and waste management; in the socio-cultural field by maintaining local culture that includes in the daily life of local communities.

If those conditions are met, positive synergies have shown that green approach in rural areas can minimize some negative effects which lead to failure of community-based tourism. Firstly, green rural tourism is based on participating in locals' everyday life activities in their usual environment. This intangible capital keeps financial resources needed to develop tourism at a minimum as no large investments or additional infrastructure are necessary. Therefore, dependence on external financial support is small and communities are involved in the planning and implementation of tourism and directly reap the rewards. Secondly, low volume tourism with little adaptation and high participation and interaction is more likely to maintain the initial enthusiasm of locals. Thirdly, the interest of tourists in the everyday lives of locals reinforces their cultural identity and motivates villagers to learn about their own culture, helping to preserve culture and traditions. Furthermore, by strengthening the green rural tourism in the village, the culture can be enriched and new jobs created. Fourthly, the fact that tourists come to the village to interact with locals, participate in their lives and learn from them, shifts more power to the locals. Thus, best practice of green rural tourism changes the role of locals from 'servant' to 'patron' and contributes to a more equal power distribution between hosts and guests.

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