

COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM FOR NATURAL CONSERVATION IN POHSANTEN  
VILLAGE IN BALI

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**ABSTRACT**

This article discusses the role of tourism in conserving the natural environment in Pohsanten village, Jembrana regency, Bali province in Indonesia. It is developed based on review of publications, observation and direct participation during a community-based tourism (CBT) development and a trekking route development. The trekking to the waterfall is used as a main attraction by Pohsanten CBT. Mesehe waterfall trekking reinforces forest conservation as it is incorporated re-forestation; potentially creates additional work opportunities for locals, hence, a sustainable source of income; and tourism activities in the forest prevent illegal actions conducted in the forest that damage the environment. Thus, Mesehe waterfall trekking is an inclusive activity of conservation and business combined. It is expected that this article could enrich academic discourse on natural tourism and conservation, particularly involving CBT that use natural environment as attraction.

Keywords: Community-based Tourism, Tourist attractions, Natural Environment, Nature conservation, Trekking

**INTRODUCTION**

The contemporary practices including tourism venture related to using natural environment especially the forests need to be scrutinized to mitigate the critically decreasing number of forest areas in the world (Climate and Land Use Alliance, 2014). People especially the members of a more traditional community have a high dependency on their immediate natural environment in order to survive (Fennell, 2015); i.e. the fishermen on the sea, sometimes farmers and gatherers on the forest. Nonetheless this activities need to be carried out sustainably. At the earlier age of the civilization, activities were conducted within a small scale venture, handicraft in nature; nowadays, modern people are equipped with technology that enable them to undertake major alteration or mass production to supply large demands that trigger massive change to the ecosystem and degrade the inherent functions of the natural environment.

The agriculture revolution was started about 8000 years ago wherein human transitioned from hunters and gatherers to farmers and livestock breeders (Climate and Land Use Alliance, 2014). During this transition, the natural environment has been changed which include clearing forest in which 71% of global deforestation was carried out for commercial agriculture to supply the current 7 billion of the world population. It is predicted, in 2050 the world population will reach 9 billion, and with the current consumption pattern, 60% more foods will be needed to sustain. It is further discussed that the current patter of forest clearing for commercial purposed needs to be changed to conserve the much needed forest for the sustainability of living on earth. Shifting the commodity production from native forest and recognizing the right of the indigenous people and rural communities to manage the forest. It is also expected that farmers, local governments, local communities, and agricultural commodity traders collaborate to avoid deforestation and produce more efficiently.

In order to foster local people to manage the forest effectively, a mechanism need to be devised and put in place. A sustainable tourism development could become an effective tool which could function as an additional occupation and income source for locals and could also be used as a monitoring mechanism for the sustainable use of forest. Community-based tourism is a form of sustainable tourism that empowers local community. Butcher (2012) Weaver (2012) argue that CBT emphasises community participation, and is often related to conservation of the immediate natural environment. Fennell (2015, p. 101) posits a conservation model wherein local people are actively involved and gain benefits from a conservation project. He further discusses an ideal ecotourism, stating ‘... ecotourism, if developed and managed appropriately, can generate more revenue...’. Nonetheless, Novelli and Gebahardt (2007) are cautious in regards to the number of visitors and state that a growth number does not always lead to more benefits for the local community. This supports the idea of small scale principle in alternative tourism and CBT.

CBT development should observe the principle of Sustainable tourism. Lu and Nepal (2009) argue that Sustainable tourism attempts to manage resources for economic, social and aesthetic needs to be satisfied, while at the same time maintaining the cultural integrity, the biological diversity and the vital ecological processes. Thus,

nature conservation includes protecting bio diversity and ecological processes, which should be adhered in operating tourism.

Community-based tourism is a form of Alternative tourism which highlights local community involvement during planning and operation of the CBT project development. Brohman (1996) explored the active participation of host communities during the planning stage. Community participation during planning ensures their interest is represented in the development project. Community members to have a clear idea about sustainable tourism will assist during planning and operation, therefore, the community could utilize the nature and the wilderness as resources in a sustainable manner.

Community-based tourism could use natural environment and or traditional culture as main attractions (Ernawati, Sanders, Dowling, 2017). Natural environment as tourist attraction is related to Nature Tourism including Eco-tourism (Denman, 2001). Wearing and Neil (2003) discuss ecotourism as a form of alternative tourism that is oriented to environmental conservation and education. Recently, natural environment is incorporated into community-based tourism, as community members relied on their immediate environment for their survival and sustainability. The people live around the nature tourism site should not only use the area to sustain their living, but also should take the responsibility of preserving them. Fennell (2015) posits 'community conservation model' for the preservation on the natural environment in which local people are actively involved and benefitted from the conservation project.

The nature that currently left to balance the areas that have been used for people's dwelling and settlement have become precious assets that need to be retained and conserved. The use of the forest and wilderness should incorporate the purpose of conservation and avoid the use of nature that degrade their quality or destroy their existence. People should use the natural environment wisely considering the vital role it plays in in keeping a healthy ecosystem and sustaining the earth.

Tourism could take this role of using the wilderness whilst the tourists enjoy nature. Tourism could prevent the nature and forest destruction (Ernawati, Torpan, & Voda, 2018; Voda, Torpan, & Moldovan, 2017; Voda & Negru, 2015; Voda, Moldovan, Torpan, & Henning, 2014; Voda, 2013). Often, abusive to nature is done quietly without

anyone knowing it, this for example the illegal logging. Moreover, involving locals in the effort will harness a synergy, wherein the people could use the activity as a source of living and at the same time guard the forest. This is also the case in Pohsanten Village located in Jembarana Regency Bali Province in Indonesia. Apart from culture, the natural environment including the waterfall is used as tourist attraction in a CBT type of tourism development in Pohsanten village. This article aims at describing the used of nature particularly the waterfall as tourist attractions to support forest conservation.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This article presents a discussion on the role of tourism in conserving the natural environment in Pohsanten village, Jembrana regency, Bali province in Indonesia. It is a qualitative study. The article is developed by analysing and synthesising data which are collected through: literature review on the related topic, observation and direct participation during a community-based tourism (CBT) development and a trekking route development. The geographical information systems allowed researchers to map the study area and use the coordinates for geotagging (Figure 1). Local community learned to use PIC2Map interface for the points of interest location and online mapping (PIC2Map, 2019). Hence, the trekking route information is constantly updated and development initiatives easily monitored.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Mesehe Waterfall Trekking for CBT Pohsanten**

Trekking to Mesehe waterfall becomes the main attraction for CBT Pohsanten. This trekking consists of 4 stops which takes about 4 hours to arrive in the trekking terminal point. These stops include: The first point is Pasatan temple, the outer side of the temple is used as a starting point and the reception area of Mesehe trekking. Apart from the place to pray the temple is also a meditation center. Many local people received blessing from the temple Goddess, and certainly the temple gives an ambiance that stillness is induced to the mind.

Post 1 is the first resting area, it takes about 30 minutes to arrive at this point from the starting point. It is located in the river crossing which heading to the Mesehe waterfall. This place could be a terminal point for amateur trekkers. Simply enjoy the quietness of the forest with only the sound of river flow that shoots our mind. The river itself has ample of slate stones big and small along the river which could serve as resting area, and a picnic place for a small group of friends or family. Tourist activities of the area could include: river gazing and bathing, tasting the stone baked sweet potatoes served with coffee.

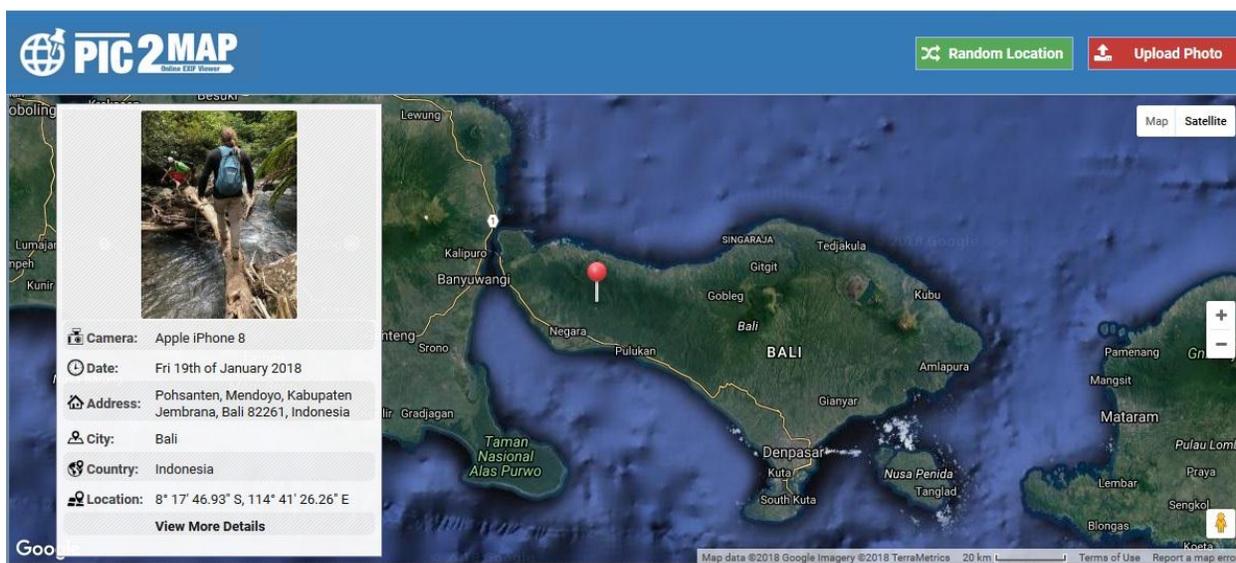


Figure 1: Mesehe trekking location

Post 2 is the middle point of the trekking route; this location offers stunning view of the valley down. The vegetation become more varied, and the area is filled with trees which are the typical of tropical forest trees. Beyond Post 1 is the route for professional trekkers as it has more difficult and steep trek and involve more challenging substance.

The terminal point is the magical Mesehe waterfall. The waterfall is closely and spiritually connected with Pasatan temple as the waterfall is the bathing place of the Goddess dwells in the temple. In the old days people had their purification in Mesehe

before praying in the temple. This practice ceased and the route becomes lost. This time, the villagers want to re-establish this ritual and integrating the activity with tourism. Mesehe trekking provides an experience of exploration deep to the forest for professional trekkers and a lighter and relax trekking experience for the amateurs.

### Conservation activities

The conservation effort is also express in a stone inscription describing the characteristics of eco-tourist (Figure 2). The use of a temporary structured as a resting place in Post 1 (Figure 3). The future structures built in the area will consider the element of sustainability.

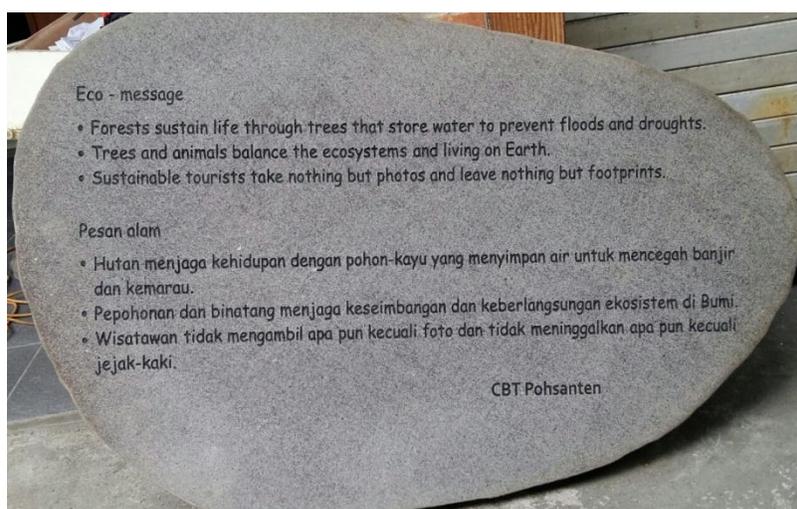


Figure 2: Mesehe trekking - Post 1

With the involvement of the local people in sustainable tourism activities, it is expected that the understanding of the principle of conservation is adopted thus practiced. The misuse of forest for farming cultivated plants will be reduced. Farming will be focused on cultivating trees type of plant such as fruits- durian and candle nuts. The native forest zone will be kept, as these nature friendly activities in the forest will trigger a wise and sustainable use of the forest, and shy away the illegal logging activity, and wild animal hunting. The management of CBT Pohsanten also places in their agenda the planting of trees for re-forestation, which could also become an activity for the trekkers.



Figure 3: Mesehe trekking - Post 1

In order to maintain the tranquility of the forest that effects the visitors' experience, CBT Pohsanten will apply limit to the number of visitors using Mesehe trek. This limit is applicable to the both trekking routs either for the amateur or the professional.

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

A well-managed tourism development that observes the principles of sustainable tourism could become an alternative for the sustainable use the natural environment by the local people. Tourism could raise the awareness of locals' appreciation toward natural environment around them. Tourists' appreciation to nature could become an inspiration of conservation for locals; whilst, eco-tourists are bound by the ethic of 'Take nothing but photos leave nothing but foot-prints'. Selling tourism products incorporating nature elements could become a sustainable source of income without damaging the natural environment, thus conservation in Pohsanten village is patronised by local communities. It is expected, this study could enrich the existing reference on CBT and conservation, and could inspire nature preservation within CBT communities especially in Pohsanten village.

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