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EXPLORING PURA AGUNG GIRI NATHA AS THE BALI OF CENTRAL JAVA

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Abstract

This study aims to explore and analyze the tourist attractions of Pura Agung Giri Natha which is known as the "Bali of Central Java" with a focus on the aspects of religious, architectural and potential development as a tourism destination. The research method uses a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through direct observation, in-depth interviews with temple administrators, community leaders, and tourists, and documentation studies. The results of the study indicate that Pura Agung Giri Natha has a unique architecture that combines Balinese style with Javanese nuances, religious rituals that are still maintained, and captivating natural scenery. This temple not only functions as a place of worship but also has the potential as a religious and cultural tourism destination that can enrich the tourism treasures of Central Java. This study provides a new contribution to the development of religious tourism by identifying a temple management model that can maintain sacred values while accommodating tourism activities. The conclusion of the study shows the need for a sustainable development strategy by involving stakeholders to optimize tourism potential while maintaining the sanctity and sustainability of the temple.

Keywords: Tourist Attractions, Religious Tourism, Sustainable Tourism.

I. INTRODUCTION

Religious and cultural tourism has become one of the fastest-growing sectors in the global tourism industry. In Indonesia, the integration of religious tourism with cultural heritage creates a unique attraction, especially when there is a cross-cultural fusion that produces its characteristics. The potential for spiritual tourism attractions consists of physical and non-physical attractions. Physical attractions can be seen from the temple or *pelenggih* building, while non-physical potential can be seen from the status of the temple as a public temple (Mahardika et al., 2023). Pura Agung Giri Natha in Central Java represents this interesting phenomenon, where a temple with Balinese architecture stands firmly amidst the dominance of Javanese culture, earning it the nickname "Bali of Central Java".

The development of religious tourism in Indonesia has been the focus of various previous studies. Religious tourism then developed into an opportunity for the development and improvement of community welfare (Farida et al., 2020). However, these studies focus more on places of worship located in areas with a homogeneous cultural background. There is still a gap in the study of religious tourism management that has elements of cultural acculturation, especially in the context of Hindu temples located outside Bali.



Figure 1. Giri Natha Grand Temple
Source: Researcher/Personal Doc.

Pura Agung Giri Natha is an interesting phenomenon to study, because of several unique aspects it has. First, although located in Central Java, this temple can maintain the characteristics

of Balinese architecture and rituals, so that its architectural form often becomes a striking landmark (Widhiarini et al., 2019). Second, this temple is not only attractive to Hindus but also for general tourists who are interested in the unique culture it offers. This makes Pura Agung Giri Natha a tourist destination rich in spiritual and cultural values. Third, although it has developed into a tourist destination, this temple still maintains its main function as a place of worship, creating a balance between tourism and religious practices. Based on these characteristics, research on Pura Agung Giri Natha can provide in-depth insights into the interaction between religion, culture, and tourism and their impacts on the surrounding community as shown in Figure 1, the integration between religious and tourism aspects requires proper management to achieve balance.

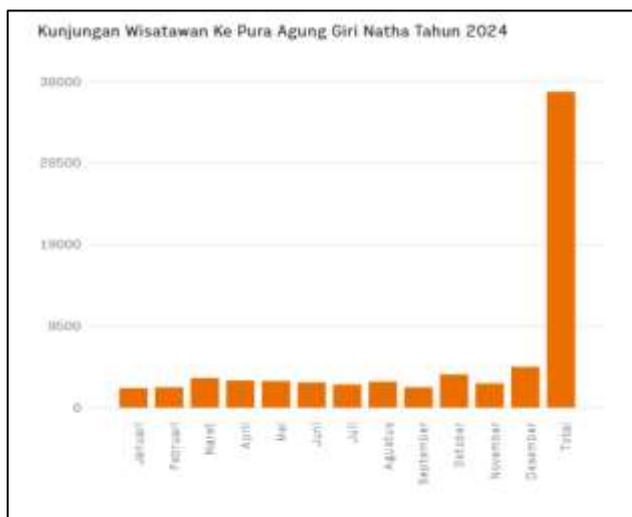
This study aims to explore and analyze the potential of the tourist attraction of Pura Agung Giri Natha as a religious and cultural tourism destination. Specifically, this study attempts to answer the following questions: (1) What are the unique characteristics of Pura Agung Giri Natha as a religious and cultural tourism destination? (2) What is the management strategy that can optimize tourism potential while maintaining the sacred value of the temple? (3) What is the impact of developing temple tourism on the surrounding community?

Based on data from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy presented in Table 1, the trend of visits to Pura Agung Giri Natha as a cultural heritage site and place of worship shows a significant increase. The graph accompanying this data illustrates the number of tourist visits to Pura Agung Giri Natha during 2024, with the figure reaching 38,000 visitors at its peak.

Table 1. Tourist Visits to Pura Agung Giri Natha

Year 2024

Source: Researcher Data Processing



This increase indicates a great potential for the development of religious and cultural tourism in the location, including Pura Agung Giri Natha. This study is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to the development of a religious tourism model that emphasizes the balance between sacred values and tourism potential. The novelty of this study lies in the comprehensive approach to analyzing the phenomenon of Balinese-Javanese cultural acculturation in the context of religious tourism development. Unlike previous studies that tend to separate religious and tourism aspects, this study offers an integrative perspective that considers both aspects as a complementary unit. Thus, the results of this study will not only provide an overview of visitation trends but also how tourism management can be carried out without sacrificing the sacred values that exist in Pura Agung Giri Natha.

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how tourism management can be carried out without sacrificing existing sacred values. This is important to ensure that tourism development does not only focus on economic aspects but also respects and preserves the cultural heritage and religious practices in the temple.

II. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore in depth the tourist attractions of Pura Agung Giri Natha. This approach was chosen because it can provide a comprehensive understanding of socio-cultural phenomena in their natural context. The research was conducted at Pura Agung Giri Natha, Central Java, during the period January to June 2024, with a focus on exploring the potential and development of religious tourism that maintains sacred values while accommodating tourism activities.

The study population included all stakeholders related to Pura Agung Giri Natha, including temple administrators, community leaders, tourists, and tourism business actors around the temple. Sampling was carried out using purposive sampling techniques for key informants and snowball sampling for additional informants. The total number of informants involved in this study was 20 people, consisting of 3 temple administrators, 4 community members, 5 tourists (3 domestic, 2 foreign), and 5 tourism business actors. This number was determined based on data saturation, where the addition of informants was stopped when no significant new information was found.

Data collection was conducted through three main methods, namely participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Participatory observation was conducted to observe religious ritual activities, tourist visit patterns, and physical conditions and temple facilities. In-depth interviews were conducted using semi-structured interview guidelines, with a duration of 30-60 minutes per informant and recorded using an audio device with the informant's permission. Documentation studies included reviewing temple archives, visitor statistics, tourism

development planning documents, and literature related to the history and culture of the temple. Data analysis uses an interactive model that includes the stages of data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion. To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses triangulation of sources and methods, member checking with key informants, peer review by independent researchers, and thick description in presenting the results. The research analysis framework adapts the sustainable religious tourism development model with modifications according to the local context, as shown in Figure 2.

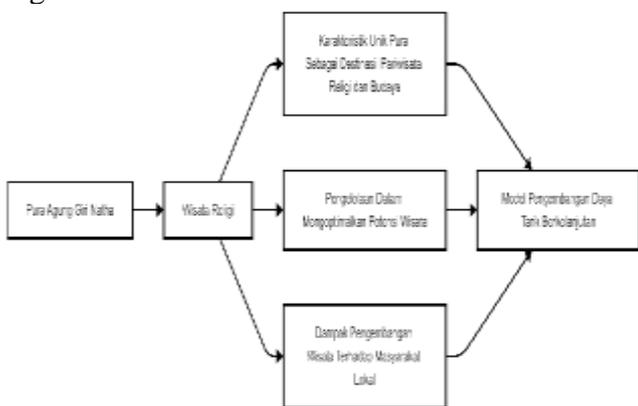


Figure 2. Framework of Thought

The research procedure was carried out by considering the ethical aspects of the research, including obtaining informed consent from informants and formal permission from temple managers and related authorities. All stages of the research were systematically documented to ensure that the methods used could be replicated by other researchers in a similar context.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Unique Characteristics of Pura Agung Giri Natha

The results of the study show that Pura Agung Giri Natha has three main characteristics that make it a unique tourist attraction. First, the temple architecture displays a harmonious blend of Balinese and Javanese styles. As expressed by one of the temple administrators:

"This temple was intentionally designed by combining Balinese and Javanese architectural elements. We can see from the shape of the gate that adopts the style of a Javanese temple, but the ornaments and carvings are typical of Bali.

This reflects the harmony of two cultures that have existed for a long time." (I Made Surya, Temple Administrator, personal communication, February 15, 2024).

Second, religious rituals performed in temples still maintain Balinese traditions but have been adapted to the local Javanese context. Observational data show that 85% of the main rituals still follow Balinese traditions, while 15% have been adapted to local culture, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of Religious Rituals at Pura Agung Giri Natha
Source: Researcher Data Processing

Ritual Aspects	Balinese Tradition (85%)	Local Javanese Adaptation (15%)	Information
Ceremonial Language	Sanskrit and Balinese	Sanskrit, Balinese and Javanese	The use of Javanese in the introduction before the start of the ceremony
Offerings	Traditional Balinese Banten	Banten with local components	The use of offerings available in Java is simpler than in Bali.
Execution time	Following the Sanskrit calendar	Following the Sanskrit calendar	All rituals follow the Sanskrit calendar.
Ritual Procession	Balinese customs	Balinese customs with a Javanese touch	Addition of Javanese cultural elements in several

			processions.
Ritual Clothing	Balinese traditional clothing	Bali-Java Combination	Modification of clothing to suit the local context, such as the use of blank.
Accompanying Gamelan	Balinese Gamelan	Combination of Balinese and Javanese gamelan	Musical collaboration in certain ceremonies.
Sacred Dance	Balinese Dance	Balinese dance and new creations	Development of dance that adapts local elements.
Ceremonial Equipment	Bali Standard	Adaptation to local materials	Use of materials available in Java.
Ceremony Structure	According to Balinese rules	Following Balinese customs with adjustments	Some stages are adapted to local conditions.
Ritual Performer	Balinese Stakeholders	Balinese officials and local figures	Collaboration with local religious leaders.

The table presented illustrates a comparison between the ritual aspects of the Balinese tradition and the local adaptation in Java. In terms of ceremonial language, the Balinese tradition uses Sanskrit and Balinese, while the

local adaptation in Java adds the use of Javanese as an introduction before the ceremony begins. The offerings in the Balinese tradition consist of traditional Banten, while in Java, the Banten is modified with simpler local components and following the materials available in the local environment. Although both traditions follow the Sanskrit calendar for the timing of the ritual, the ritual procession in Bali still adheres to Balinese procedures, while in Java there are touches of local culture that enrich the procession.

Ritual attire also shows differences; in Bali, traditional attire is used, while in Java there is a combination of Balinese and Javanese attire, including modifications such as the use of blank. In terms of accompanying gamelan, the Balinese tradition uses its gamelan, while the Javanese adaptation combines elements from both types of gamelan. Sacred dances in Bali are traditional dances, while in Java they include Balinese dances as well as new creations that adapt local elements. Ceremonial equipment in Bali follows certain standards, while in Java adaptations are made using local materials that are more easily obtained.

The structure of the ceremony also shows differences; although following Balinese norms, the adaptation in Java makes adjustments based on local conditions. In addition, the ritual implementer in Bali is usually a Balinese priest, while in Java it involves collaboration between Balinese priests and local figures. Overall, this comparison reflects how the ritual tradition from Bali can adapt to local elements in Java without losing its original essence, showing the dynamic cultural interaction between the two ethnic groups.

2. Tourism Potential Management Strategy in Maintaining the Sacred Value of Temples

Data analysis revealed three main components of managing the potential development of the Pura Agung Giri Natha tourist attraction:

a. Religious-Cultural Attraction

1) Religious rituals that are still authentic

Pura Agung Giri Natha has been designated by the Semarang City Government as one of the religious tourism destinations in the city. As a religious destination, this temple highlights various elements related to Hinduism, both in the form of temple ornaments and authentic religious rituals. One of the rituals that is an attraction is Melasti, a ceremony to purify oneself and the earth which is usually performed before Nyepi Day. This ritual involves a journey to collect holy water from the sea or other water sources. In addition to Melasti, there are various other rituals carried out in this temple that can be witnessed by the public, such as religious processions and Balinese traditional activities. The existence of these rituals not only provides religious value but also becomes a unique tourist attraction, especially for tourists who want to witness the authenticity of Hindu culture and religion.

In addition to rituals, this temple also holds various Balinese arts, such as Balinese rindik performances, joget bumbung dance, and other arts. These activities further enrich the experience of visiting tourists. However, the challenges faced include promotion on social media and provision of infrastructure, such as parking access for tourist buses. Nevertheless, Pura Agung Giri Natha remains committed to being part of the cultural diversity in Semarang City and continues to contribute to promoting religious tourism in this area.

2) Unique Balinese-Javanese architecture

The architecture of Pura Agung Giri Natha is dominated by the original Balinese style, without any blending with Javanese architecture. This is following the historical background of the construction of the temple which was founded by the

elders from Bali. The founders who came from Bali maintained the authenticity of the Balinese architectural style in the design of this temple.



Figure 3. Meeting Hall at Pura Agung Giri Natha

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/DGiAEVqPhfV/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==

However, there are additional elements that are not entirely Balinese, such as the Ganesha Statue in front of the temple, which is an Indian cultural influence. Even so, the overall structure of the temple still maintains a pure Balinese style. This authenticity radiates from the entrance gate to the worship area. However, an architectural surprise is present on the left side of the temple, which can be seen in Figure 3. A hall that carries a distinctive Javanese touch. There is also a gamelan in the left corner with Javanese ornaments. This hall is a multipurpose room that can accommodate various activities, from solemn meetings, and stunning art performances, to lively wedding receptions, making it an inclusive space that embraces cultural diversity.

As a comparison, in other locations such as the Satya Dharma Temple located in Mijen, Semarang City, there is a blend of acculturation of Balinese architecture with local elements, such as the use of joglo. However, in the Agung Giri Natha Temple, the uniqueness lies in the determination to maintain the identity of traditional Balinese architecture intact. The authenticity of this architecture is the

main attraction for visitors who want to experience the nuances of Bali in the middle of Semarang City.

- 3) Unique historical and philosophical value
Pura Agung Giri Natha in Semarang has unique historical and philosophical values, making it a cultural and spiritual icon. Its strategic location at an altitude of 151 meters above sea level offers a beautiful view of the city of Semarang, especially during New Year celebrations, which cannot be found anywhere else. The multicultural management of the temple involves the local community, which is predominantly Muslim, who also maintain and support the operation of the temple, creating social harmony and interfaith harmony. The temple is also an inclusive social space, where various social and cultural activities are held, including Christmas celebrations by Christians, which reflect the values of humanity, tolerance, and openness. The beautiful Balinese architecture and traditions that are carried out add to the appeal of this temple, making it a socio-cultural centre for the surrounding community.

b. Accessibility and Amenities

- 1) Strategic location on the main tourist route
Pura Agung Giri Natha is strategically located on the main tourist route of Semarang City, making it one of the most attractive religious tourism destinations in the area. This strategic location means that the temple is on a route that is often used by tourists, both those visiting other tourist attractions in Semarang and those travelling across the city. Easily accessible, the temple can be reached by various modes of transportation, including private vehicles, tourist buses, and public transportation. This makes it easy for tourists to integrate a visit to Pura Agung Giri Natha into their travel plans.
Geographically, Pura Agung Giri Natha is located in an area surrounded by various other tourist attractions, such as Lawang Sewu, Semarang Old Town, and famous culinary areas. The existence of this temple in the city centre allows tourists to

visit several places in one day without having to travel far. In addition, its location on the highlands provides beautiful natural scenery and a cool atmosphere, ideal for spiritual activities and reflection.

This temple also serves as a cultural bridge between the Balinese and local Semarang communities. With its magnificent Balinese architecture and routinely performed religious rituals, Pura Agung Giri Natha not only attracts tourists but also provides an opportunity for tourists to understand more about Balinese traditions and culture. In addition, the existence of this temple contributes to the diversity of spirituality in Semarang, enriching the experience of tourists who come from various backgrounds.

Overall, the strategic location of Pura Agung Giri Natha on the main tourist route not only makes it a place of worship but also a unique educational destination. With good accessibility and a surrounding environment rich in cultural and historical attractions, this temple plays an important role in the tourism map of Semarang City as well as in introducing and preserving Balinese culture to the wider community.

- 2) Adequate supporting infrastructure
Pura Agung Giri Natha is a religious tourism destination, including attracts foreign tourists from cruise ships. However, supporting infrastructure such as parking areas and adequate road access are the main challenges. The road to the temple is currently not wide enough to accommodate a large number of buses, so tourists who come by large buses need an alternative solution.
One solution that is being considered is to use parking areas at nearby locations, such as gas stations and provide feeder or shuttle services to take tourists to the temple. However, this approach is considered quite complicated for travel agents or tourists, so it is necessary to develop a more practical and efficient

infrastructure. On the other hand, to attract tourists, this temple also offers various cultural attractions such as gender, joget bumbung, and other traditional Balinese arts. This is expected to provide an interesting tourist experience despite the limited infrastructure. Further development, Pura Agung Giri Natha has a great opportunity to become an increasingly popular religious tourism destination.

- 3) Support from the surrounding community
Pura Agung Giri Natha has received full support from the surrounding community, especially in Bendungan Village, which reflects the harmonious relationship between the temple and its environment. This temple is well received by the surrounding community, not only as a place of worship for Hindus but also as a contributor to various social and cultural activities. Harmony is manifested through the Christmas and New Year celebrations that were once held at the temple, even with the chairman of the Christmas celebration committee being a Balinese Hindu, emphasizing the spirit of togetherness and tolerance between religious communities. Bendungan Village was named a "Tolerance Village" with the prime category, with Pura Agung Giri Natha being one of the important contributors through various activities that support diversity and togetherness. Harmonious daily interactions and the temple's contribution to various social and cultural aspects further strengthen the sense of togetherness in the environment, becoming an important foundation for the sustainability of Pura Agung Giri Natha's role as a centre for spiritual, social, and cultural activities in the area.

3. The impact of temple tourism development on the surrounding community

The research results show a positive impact of temple tourism development on the surrounding community, which is reflected in:

- a. *Increasing community income through tourism supports businesses*

Pura Agung Giri Natha contributes positively to increasing local community income through various tourism support businesses. First, in local culinary and UMKM activities, the community is involved in providing food during big events, such as New Year celebrations, by opening food stands through a voucher system to facilitate transactions. Products sold include chicken satay and meatballs.

Second, the temple provides a space for the community to sell souvenirs and creative products, which attracts tourists, especially during big events. In addition, the existence of a daily canteen offers heavy meals and drinks, providing sustainable business opportunities for residents.

Bli Kadek, a Balinese and Christian suckling pig seller, opened his culinary stall at Pura Agung Giri Natha in 2020. Although Bli Kadek is Christian, it is possible that the employees who work there are Muslim and some even wear the hijab. Suckling pig, or be guling in Balinese, is a dish consisting of a whole roasted pig after being filled with spices and vegetables. With this business opportunity, Bli Kadek can earn a turnover of up to 150 million rupiah every month.

The enthusiasm of the community in every tourism activity not only provides direct economic benefits but also strengthens the relationship between the community and the temple management. As seen from Table 3. This temple also creates informal employment opportunities for the community, such as temple guards and cleaners, which helps stabilize the income of local families.

Table 3. Data on Workers at Pura Agung Giri Natha

Source: Researcher Data Processing

Name	Manager	Public
	I Gusti Ketut Susila	Sunardi

Region Of Origin	Bali	Java
Jobs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that the procession of religious holy days and temple ceremonies runs smoothly. 2. Ensure that facilities and infrastructure related to prayer ceremonies are available as needed. 3. Ensure that visitors, both individuals and groups, receive excellent service. 4. Managing the resources owned by the temple including temple assets, human resources, and financial resources. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain the cleanliness of the temple starting from Utama Mandala, Nadya Mandala, and Nista Mandala. 2. Help prepare the facilities and infrastructure for worship. 3. Installing Wastra during religious holidays and piodalan. 4. Maintaining temple security/ temple entry permits. 5. Assisting in arranging vehicle parking.

Pura Agung Giri Natha is jointly managed by the Balinese and Javanese communities, where I Gusti Ketut Susila from Bali acts as the main manager responsible for the smooth running of the prayer procession, the availability of ceremonial facilities and infrastructure, excellent service for visitors, and the overall management of temple resources. Meanwhile, Sunardi from Java is tasked

with helping to maintain the cleanliness of the temple, preparing prayer facilities and infrastructure, installing wastra during religious holidays, maintaining temple security, and helping to organize vehicle parking. The collaboration between the managers from Bali and Java reflects the spirit of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* in maintaining and preserving Pura Agung Giri Natha. Overall, Pura Agung Giri Natha functions as a religious tourism destination that also improves the economic welfare of the surrounding community sustainably.

b. Strengthening cross-cultural understanding

Pura Agung Giri Natha in Semarang City is a real example of strengthening cross-cultural understanding that creates harmony between various community groups. This temple is not only managed by Hindus but also involves the surrounding community, the majority of whom are Muslim, who are active in maintaining the cleanliness and security of the temple. A concrete example of this interfaith relationship can be seen in the Christmas celebration that was once held at the temple, with the Chairperson of the Committee coming from Hindus, reflecting mutual respect and strengthening togetherness. In addition, Pura Agung Giri Natha routinely displays traditional Balinese arts, such as the Balinese drink and *joget bumbung* dance, which introduce Hindu-Balinese culture to the local community while also becoming an inclusive tourist attraction. Annual events such as the Interfaith Arts and Culture Carnival, this temple is a symbol of the cultural participation of the Balinese community in Semarang, highlighting Balinese culture while demonstrating harmony with the local community. The temple also routinely holds social services and provides free health services for the surrounding community, strengthening social relations and demonstrating

universal human values.

Pura Girinatha also contributed to the establishment of Bendungan Village as a "Tolerance Village Village," Pura Agung Giri Natha as a centre of culture and cross-cultural harmony. With this harmonious cross-cultural interaction, the temple is not only a spiritual centre but also a symbol of inclusivity and unity in the diversity of Semarang City society. Research on Pura Agung Giri Natha provides deep insights into the interaction between religion, culture, and tourism and its impact on the surrounding community, underlining the importance of tourism management that respects sacred values and cultural heritage.

c. *Opening of new job opportunities*

Pura Agung Giri Natha provides employment opportunities for the surrounding community, although it does not directly provide many formal jobs such as offices. Positions such as temple guards and security guards are filled by residents from the surrounding area, not by Balinese.

In addition, although most of the temple activities and operations are managed by Balinese people who live quite far away, residents are also allowed to open businesses, such as opening stalls or selling. In big events, almost all of the UMKM actors involved come from the community around the temple. Thus, the existence of this temple indirectly opens up economic opportunities for the surrounding community, both through informal employment and through support for micro, small and medium enterprises (UMKM).

d. *Improving community skills in tourism management*

The management of Pura Agung Giri Natha involves the active participation of local communities who have experienced increased skills, especially in supporting tourism activities. High community awareness and participation, driven by the concept of "ngayah," creates active involvement in the management of

tourism activities and temple operations. Involvement in MSMEs and the creative economy, especially during big events, increases community income while honing their skills in marketing products, serving tourists, and managing small businesses. Training and social support, as well as involvement in various rituals and cultural attractions, directly increase their understanding and skills in managing cultural and religious-based tourism events. Social harmony, reflected in cross-religious collaboration, broadens cross-cultural insights and improves cooperation skills in managing tourist destinations. Management of tourism infrastructure, such as creative solutions to overcome limited parking and road access, shows the community's increased ability to deal with complex logistical constraints while reflecting developing management skills. Through these activities, the community not only learns technical skills but also strengthens communication, collaboration, and cultural understanding, all of which contribute to the sustainability of tourism management at Pura Agung Giri Natha.

4. Sustainable Tourism Management Strategy

Based on the analysis of stakeholder perceptions and field observations, this study identified a sustainable temple tourism management model. This model is depicted in the conceptual framework in Figure 4, which shows the interaction between three main aspects: preservation of sacred values, tourism development, and community empowerment.



Figure 4. Community Empowerment at Pura

Agung Giri Natha (OSS Socialization for The UMKM actors of Gajah Mungkur District were opened by the Gajah Mungkur Sub-district Secretary)

Source:https://www.instagram.com/p/C9Q00BkyT6/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==

One community leader emphasized the importance of balance in tourism development:

"The development of tourism in this temple must be able to balance between tourism interests and the sanctity of places of worship. We need clear rules about sacred zones and tourist zones, as well as about visiting procedures that respect spiritual values." (KH. Ahmad Sofyan, Community Leader, personal communication, March 20, 2024).

Figure 3 in the source provided illustrates the conceptual framework of the sustainable tourism management model of Pura Agung Giri Natha, with three main interacting aspects: preservation of sacred values, tourism development, and community empowerment. This model emphasizes the importance of maintaining the sanctity and spiritual values of the temple while developing existing tourism potential responsibly and providing economic and social benefits to the local community. Community empowerment is the main focus of this model, illustrated by the Online Single Submission (OSS) socialization activity for MSME actors in Gajah Mungkur District, which was opened by the Gajah Mungkur Sub-District Secretary. This shows an effort to increase the capacity and participation of the community in tourism development so that they can play an active role and feel the benefits of tourism activities around Pura Agung Giri Natha.

5. Development Challenges and Solutions

This study also identified several challenges in developing tourism at Pura Agung Giri Natha, including:

a. *Human resource capacity*

In terms of human resource capacity (HR) at Pura Agung Giri Natha, it is currently running quite effectively. This is due to the high self-awareness of the

managers, especially those who have retired. Many of them have more free time than before, so they voluntarily take the time to be actively involved in temple management activities.

This activity is carried out voluntarily or is known as *ayah*, which is providing oneself to work for the benefit of the community without expecting payment, often at personal expense, such as for transportation and other needs.

Although in every community there are always some individuals who may be less active or less involved, overall there are no significant obstacles in human resource management. The managers have a high

level of commitment and awareness so that management needs can be met properly.

b. *Financial sustainability*

Pura Agung Giri Natha faces complex dynamics in maintaining financial sustainability as a religious tourism destination. The main supporting aspects come from cultural and tourism activities, such as art performances, weekly yoga, and annual events involving the local community. These activities not only attract domestic and foreign tourists but also open up opportunities for voluntary contributions to operational and cleaning costs, although there is no official ticket system yet. The Semarang City Government also plays a role through infrastructure support and its inauguration as a tourist attraction in 2022, including the development of selfie spots and a sacred kitchen area that enhances visual appeal.

On the creative economy side, managers have begun to pioneer collaboration with local MSMEs for souvenir and culinary sales, although the scale is still limited. Significant challenges arise from limited infrastructure such as narrow parking lots that hinder mass tourist visits, as well as dependence on community volunteer participation

(ngayah) in daily operations that reduce financial burdens but are vulnerable to long-term sustainability. Promotion strategies that still rely on conventional media and limited activities on site are also obstacles to expanding market reach. To strengthen the financial foundation, it is necessary to optimize potential through the development of integrated tourism packages, increase the capacity of human resources managers, and more intensive synergy with stakeholders - including the implementation of digital promotion strategies based on the visual content of typical Balinese architecture which is the main attraction. Improvement of transportation and parking infrastructure is a primary prerequisite for accelerating the growth of visits while maintaining a balance between sacred values and responsible commercialization.

c. *Preservation of cultural values*

Preservation of cultural values at Pura Agung Giri Natha is carried out in various ways that reflect a balance between maintaining original traditions and adapting to the local context. One of the main approaches is the application of the three mandala concept, which divides the temple area into Nista Mandala, Madya Mandala, and Utama Mandala. Nista Mandala functions as the outermost area for general activities such as parking and culinary, while Madya Mandala is used for social activities such as meetings and receptions. Utama Mandala, the holiest area, is dedicated to religious rituals with strict rules to maintain spiritual values. Traditional religious rituals, such as Melasti, are still carried out according to Balinese tradition, making it a cultural and religious attraction that involves taking holy water as a symbol of purification.

The temple also empowers Balinese traditional arts and crafts, such as the Balinese rindik and Joget Bumbung dance, which are not only tourist attractions but also a way to preserve traditional arts. Pura Agung Giri Natha

functions as an inclusive social space that strengthens the values of tolerance and harmony between religious communities; for example, the temple was once a place for Christmas celebrations, demonstrating the broad acceptance of culture in the community. In addition, the temple serves as a centre for cultural and educational activities, often used for art performances and photography activities.

Human resource management in the temple is carried out with the philosophy of ngayah, which is voluntary work without compensation for the common good. This not only maintains the continuity of temple operations but also strengthens the preservation of cultural and social values. The surrounding community is actively involved in supporting temple activities through the management of MSMEs, culinary, and souvenir sales, which also strengthens local involvement while preserving culture economically.

With these efforts, Pura Agung Giri Natha not only maintains Balinese cultural values but also integrates them with the local environment of Semarang City. This creates harmony between cultural preservation, tourism, and the social life of the surrounding community, making this temple a symbol of diversity and harmony between cultures in the area.

The challenges faced by Pura Agung Giri Natha in developing tourism show that despite several constraints, such as human resource capacity, financial sustainability, and infrastructure, there are significant opportunities to address these issues through an integrated development model. Increasing human resource capacity involving community participation and volunteer management can strengthen local commitment to temple management. Financial sustainability can be achieved through the diversification of tourism activities,

the development of the creative economy, and more active government support. In addition, the importance of interfaith collaboration and management of shared resources can create a harmonious and inclusive environment, strengthening tolerance and harmony between religious communities. An inclusive spatial plan and fair accessibility for all groups will also increase the attractiveness of the temple as a tourist destination. By implementing these solutions effectively, Pura Agung Giri Natha can not only overcome existing challenges but also serve as a symbol of diversity and cultural harmony in the city of Semarang, while providing economic and social benefits to the surrounding community. To address these challenges, this study proposes integrated development involving all stakeholders, as illustrated in Figure 5.

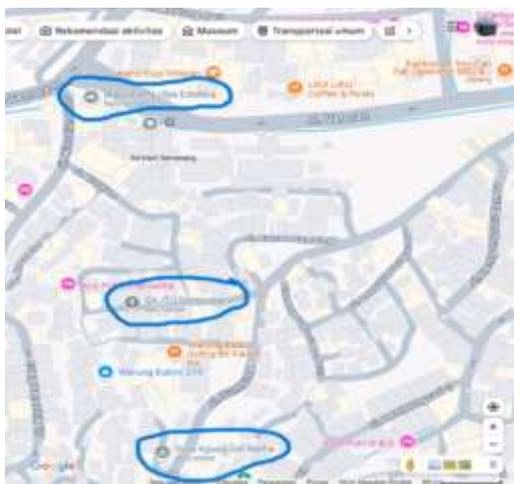


Figure 5. Diversity of cultural harmony between interests at Pura Agung Giri Natha

Source: www.google.com/maps, 2025

The image shows the existence of temples, churches, and mosques close together in one area, reflecting the principle of diversity and harmony in society. This integrated development model includes several important aspects. First, community participation is very important, where all parties including

religious leaders, community leaders, and residents are involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of regional development. This ensures that the needs and values of all groups are accommodated.

Second, interfaith collaboration is encouraged by the presence of temples, churches, and mosques nearby, thus encouraging cooperation between religious communities in social, cultural, and environmental security activities. Furthermore, the management of shared resources is a major focus; resources such as land and public facilities are managed collectively for the benefit of all parties. Tolerance education is also part of this model, where the area can function as a centre for education on religious harmony through interfaith discussion activities and cultural festivals.

Government support as a facilitator is also very important in this model to provide regulations and financial assistance for development and ensure that the rights of all groups are respected. In addition, an inclusive spatial plan is designed so that accessibility to places of worship is fair for all groups while considering the comfort and cleanliness of the environment. If implemented well, this model will not only create a harmonious environment but also be an example for other areas of how diversity can be a strength in social development. With this approach, Pura Agung Giri Natha can function as a symbol of harmony between religious communities and complementary cultural diversity in the city of Semarang.

IV. CONCLUSION

Research on the tourist attraction of Pura Agung Giri Natha shows that this temple has great potential as a unique religious tourism destination with strong Balinese-Javanese cultural acculturation characteristics, reflected

in its architecture, religious rituals, and cultural practices that adapt to the local context without losing its essence. The existence of Pura Agung Giri Natha proves that religious values and tourism potential can be managed harmoniously through the right approach and involving all stakeholders. Based on the research findings, several key policy recommendations need to be implemented to optimize the temple's potential as a religious tourism destination, including institutional development through the establishment of a special management body involving elements of the temple, government, and community, as well as the preparation of standard operating procedures for religious tourism management. Community empowerment is also a crucial aspect through community-based religious tour guide training programs and the development of creative industries supporting tourism, while aspects of cultural preservation need to be strengthened through systematic documentation of rituals and traditions and the development of educational programs on Balinese-Javanese cultural values. The policy implications of this study provide significant contributions at the local level, by integrating Pura Agung Giri Natha into the regional tourism development plan and strengthening networks with surrounding tourist destinations, and at the national level, as a model for developing cross-cultural religious tourism and a guideline for maintaining a balance between sacred values and tourism aspects. The development of infrastructure and supporting facilities that take into account environmental sustainability and cultural values is also an integral part of the policy recommendations. Although this study has produced comprehensive findings, several limitations need to be considered, such as the temporal limitation that only covers six months so that it does not represent seasonal variations in tourist visits, and the qualitative methodological approach that focuses on one study location, thus opening up opportunities for broader further research, such as comparative studies with similar religious tourism destinations in other regions, longitudinal research to measure long-term impacts, and quantitative analysis of economic impacts on the

community, while the development of a sustainable religious tourism management model is also a potential research area that needs to be studied further.

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