



STUDY ON THE MANAGEMENT OF THE SACRED AREA OF TARO VILLAGE AS EDUCATIONAL TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the multifaceted challenges and impacts of tourism management in Taro Village, Bali, with a specific focus on sacred areas such as Gunung Raung Temple and the Lembu Putih Conservation Park. One of the primary challenges identified is the lack of financial incentives for the Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Group) administrators and field officers, which affects their motivation and service delivery. Despite these limitations, the village has established a distinctive revenue model—where Gunung Raung Temple operates on a donation basis, and the Lembu Putih Conservation Park charges admission, with profits reinvested in community development. The sacred areas play a significant role in promoting educational tourism, offering visitors insights into Balinese spiritual traditions and environmental conservation. Traditional ceremonies such as Tegenan, Mepada Agung, and Nyenuk are central to Taro's cultural identity and spiritual appeal. The study also evaluates the positive and negative impacts of tourism using various theoretical frameworks, including economic, sociocultural, environmental, and ethical tourism. While minor drawbacks exist, the predominant outcomes are positive, including improved environmental management, increased local employment, and strengthened cultural preservation. The findings underscore the importance of community involvement and sustainable tourism practices, aligned with the principles of Community-Based Tourism (CBT), to ensure long-term benefits for both the village and its sacred heritage.

Keywords : *Taro Village, tourism management, sacred area, Pokdarwis, educational tourism*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Cultural tourism in Bali, based on the Tri Hita Karana philosophy, is stated in (Perda Bali No 5, 2020). Tri Hita Karana represents the three causes of happiness, which emphasize a balanced and harmonious life, including devotion to God, service to fellow human beings, and care for the natural environment through sacred sacrifices (yadnya). Bali's Cultural Tourism is a tourism model rooted in Balinese culture, inspired by the philosophy of Tri Hita Karana, which is derived from cultural values and local wisdom, specifically Sad Kerthi, and is based on Taksu Bali. One of its elements, Wana Kerti, aims to maintain the sanctity and preservation of forests and mountains.

In Hindu cosmic spatial planning, there are three types of forests: Maha Wana, which refers to untouched, virgin forests; Tapa Wana, sacred forests where yogis establish meditation retreats or hermitages; and Sri Wana, forests utilized for economic prosperity. On a physical level, Wana Kerti is carried out by respecting, preserving, and maintaining the natural integrity of forests and mountains.

The purpose of Wana Kerti is to ensure that Bali's natural environment is not damaged or depleted due to greedy and irresponsible exploitation of forests and mountains, thus maintaining environmental and life balance. Wana Kerti is implemented through various ceremonies related to forest and mountain preservation in a spiritual manner (niskala) while also protecting temples, mountains, and sacred forests (alas angker). The goal is to maintain the positive energy vibrations of forests and mountains. Not only forests and mountains but temple areas within a certain radius also require protection, as stipulated in the Bhisama on Temple Sanctity issued by the Central Council of Parisadha Hindu Dharma Indonesia (PHDIP) in 1994.

A pura (temple) is a sacred place for Hindu worshippers, serving as a place for prayer to connect with Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa, the Supreme God. Besides being a place of worship, temples also serve as gathering places for community activities that enhance social bonds. (Koentjaraningrat, 2019) states that the origin of religious function in society arises from the question of why humans believe in supernatural powers that are considered higher than themselves and why they seek ways to communicate and connect with these supernatural forces.

In Gianyar Regency, there are many sacred areas that serve as tourist attractions (Daya Tarik Wisata or DTW), one of which is in Tegallalang District, specifically in Taro Village, where the sacred area of Pura Gunung Raung and the Lembu Putih Conservation Park hold historical significance related to the journey of Rsi Markandya from Java to Bali (Rahmat et al., 2017). This history serves as a point of interest for educational tourism.

The name Taro Village originates from the word Taru, meaning "wood." Geographically, Taro Village is part of the Munduk Gunung Lebah highland area, stretching north to south and flanked by two rivers: Wos Ulu Luh to the west and Wos Ulu Muani to the east. These two rivers merge at the western edge of Ubud, known as Campuhan Ubud.

Taro Village is bordered by:

1. North: Apuan Village, Kintamani District
2. East: Sebatu Village, Tegallalang District
3. South: Bresela Village, Payangan District
4. West: Puhu Village, Payangan District

Cultural tourism in Bali, based on the Tri Hita Karana philosophy, is outlined in Bali Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2020. Tri Hita Karana represents the three causes of happiness: a balanced and harmonious way of life through devotion to God, service to fellow human beings, and love for nature based on sacred sacrifice (yadnya). Balinese Cultural Tourism is a tourism

concept rooted in Balinese culture, inspired by the philosophy of Tri Hita Karana, and supported by the cultural values and local wisdom of Sad Kerthi, based on Taksu Bali.

One of its aspects, Wana Kerti, is an effort to maintain the sanctity and sustainability of forests and mountains. In Hindu cosmic spatial planning, there are three types of forests:

1. Maha Wana – Untouched, pristine wilderness.
2. Tapa Wana – Sacred forests where yogis establish hermitages or monasteries.
3. Sri Wana – Forest areas utilized as sources of economic prosperity.

In a tangible sense, Wana Kerti is implemented by respecting, preserving, and maintaining the naturalness of forests and mountains.

The purpose of Wana Kerti is to prevent the destruction or depletion of Bali's nature due to greed and irresponsible exploitation. It also serves as a guardian of environmental and life balance. The concept is practiced through various rituals to maintain the sacredness of forests and mountains, including the conservation of temples, mountains, and sacred forests (alas angker). The goal is to preserve the positive vibrational energy in forests and mountains.

Beyond forests and mountains, certain areas must be preserved within a specific radius, including temples, as stipulated in the 1994 Bhisama Kesucian Pura by the Indonesian Hindu Dharma Council (Keputusan PHDI, 1994).

A temple (pura) is a sacred place for Hindu worshippers to pray and connect with Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa, the Supreme God. Apart from being a place of worship, temples also function as gathering places and venues for communal activities to strengthen social bonds. (Koentjaraningrat, 2019) states that the origin of religious functions in society arises from fundamental human questions about supernatural forces believed to be greater than humans and why people seek ways to communicate and establish relationships with these forces.

The development of these two sacred areas within the village tourism package is managed by the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis), based on Taro Village Head Decree No. 141/22.4 of 2021 on the Establishment of the Tourism Awareness Group in Taro Village, Tegallalang District, Gianyar Regency. In the effort to develop the tourism village, the Taro Village Government recognizes the need for management and administrative skills with a critical and analytical approach, which requires the tourism village to be able to collaborate with the five elements of the pentahelix to improve long-term quality (Warka, 2022).

The Taro Village Pokdarwis was formed as a community-based organization, comprising local tourism stakeholders, particularly the residents of Taro Village. Its purpose is to enhance public awareness of the role of tourism in development and to foster a hospitable and responsible attitude among locals, ensuring that tourism is well-integrated into daily life and cultural practices (Yoeti, 2003).

According to I Wayan Gede Ardika, Chairman of Pokdarwis Taro, tourist visits to Taro Village increased between 2019 and 2020. However, there was a slight decline in 2021–2022 due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2023, a significant increase in visitor numbers was recorded.

Taro Village offers various tourism packages, including:

1. Pilgrimage tours (Tirta Yatra)
2. Village tourism packages
3. Comparative study tours

For visitors who do not purchase a full tourism package or have limited time, they can visit specific tourist attractions (DTW) instead. In relation to the necessity of administratively inventorying the needs of tourists, it is also closely connected to the need for service provision, which in this context can be referred to as public tourist services (Prasodjo, 2017). This flexibility accommodates visitors who cannot commit to longer package tours but still wish to experience the sacred and cultural sites in Taro Village.

This research aims to explore how Taro Village is able to manage its local community and the various impacts resulting from the presence of multiple tourist attractions within the village.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach, with the researcher serving as the primary tool for gathering and analyzing data (Sugiyono, 2018). The methods utilized include observation, interviews, and document analysis. Observations were conducted directly in the field, while interviews were informal and unstructured. Primary data was collected from firsthand sources, whereas secondary data was derived from literature reviews and document analysis. The documentary study involved gathering materials such as documents, photographs, or video recordings relevant to the research subject (Kaelan, 2005). For data analysis, the technique of data reduction was applied to generate more focused and detailed findings.

II. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Tourism Management Challenges

The Pokdarwis administrators and field officers responsible for managing the village tourism activities do not receive a salary or honorarium for their work. Only field members who escort tourists receive a daily wage from the tourist attraction (DTW) they visit.

One of the key challenges observed in the management of Taro Village Tourism is the lack of salaries or incentives for both the Pokdarwis administrators and field officers. This issue affects the motivation and enthusiasm of the team in delivering services and ensuring quality experiences for visitors.

Profit from the Management of Taro Village Tourism

In Taro Village, particularly in the sacred areas of Pura Gunung Raung and the Lembu Putih Conservation Park, the tourism management system operates differently:

1. Pura Gunung Raung does not require an entrance ticket; visitors may donate voluntarily (dana punia). Traditional Balinese attire is provided for visitors, allowing them to enter the temple. The Pokdarwis members guide tourists inside the temple.
2. Lembu Putih Conservation Park requires visitors to purchase tickets, either on-site or through the village-owned enterprise (Bumdes) Taro.
3. Revenue Allocation and Community Benefits
4. 90% of ticket sales revenue from the Lembu Putih Conservation Park goes to the foundation managing the conservation park.
5. 10% is allocated to Bumdes Taro, which becomes part of the village's original revenue (PAD).
6. This 10% share was reinvested in community development following discussions in the 2023 Village Assembly (Musdes), ultimately returning to the foundation managing the conservation park for further development.
7. The revenue generated from these two sacred sites is collected into the treasury of Desa Adat Taro Kaja, supporting the development and preservation of these heritage sites.
8. The Taro Village tourism initiative is widely supported by the community. Since its designation as a tourist village, the benefits have been directly felt by the locals, leading to:
9. Cleaner environments and improved waste management through the TPS3R waste processing facility.
10. Job creation in private businesses owned by Taro Village residents that collaborate with Bumdes Taro.

The Role of Sacred Areas in Taro Village as Educational Tourism

Legal and Cultural Significance

According to **Bali Provincial Regulation No. 2 of 2023 on Bali's Spatial Planning for 2023–2043**:

1. Sacred areas surrounding temples must be protected within a certain radius according to the Bhisama Kesucian Pura of the Indonesian Hindu Dharma Parisadha (PHDIP, 1994).
2. Temples (Pura) are places of worship for Hyang Widhi Wasa, the Supreme God, and Atma Sidha Dewata, or sacred ancestral spirits.
3. Nature Reserves within sacred areas serve as protected ecosystems that require conservation efforts to ensure their natural sustainability.

Spiritual Attractions of the Sacred Area in Taro Village

According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language), an "attraction" is defined as something that draws attention, a spectacle, or a performance. A spiritual attraction refers to a physical performance or movement presented as part of a spiritual activity. As for the spiritual attractions in Taro Village, the Bendesa Adat (Customary Village Leader) of Taro Kaja, I Nyoman Tunjung, explains as follows:

a. Tradisi Tegenan



Figure 1.

Tradisi Tegenan

Source: Youtube Junaedi Bali tahun 2024

Unique Traditions in Taro Village

A unique tradition in Taro Village is held every six months at the Gunung Raung Temple in Taro. It takes place during the piodalan (temple festival) on Buda Keliwon Ugu. During this event, all the male members of the Taro Kaja Customary Village gather together to bring banten Tegenan (traditional offerings), which are made using natural products or traditional Balinese delicacies. This tradition is an expression of gratitude to Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa (the Almighty God) for all the blessings bestowed upon the people of the Taro Kaja Customary Village.

Mepada Agung Tradition

Mepada Agung is a religious ceremonial procession in the Taro Kaja Customary Village. It is a sacred ritual that involves circling the Gunung Raung Temple with offerings of consecrated animal sacrifices, such as pigs, goats, and buffaloes. These animals are prepared and used as part of ceremonial banten (offering arrangements). This tradition is performed during major temple ceremonies at the Gunung Raung Temple, located in Taro Village.

Nyenuk Tradition

The Nyenuk tradition is an ancestral ritual passed down through generations in Taro Village. It is conducted whenever a grand ceremony is held in the village. Nyenuk is part of a series of rituals associated with the Dewa Yadnya (ceremonies dedicated to the gods), which involves the participation of the entire community.

Positive and Negative Impacts of Managing the Sacred Area of Taro Village

The development of tourism can, in essence, bring various benefits to local communities. As stated by (Soekadijo R.G., 2011), the benefits of tourism for local communities include: tourism enables contact between people from the most distant parts of the world, encompassing a wide range of languages, races, beliefs, ideologies, politics, and economic levels. Tourism facilitates cultural exchange, creates job opportunities, and helps reduce unemployment (Gayatri, 2005). Tourism facilities such as hotels and travel agencies are labor-intensive businesses that require significantly more workforce than many other industries.

Another advantage is that tourism contributes to the balance of payments, as tourists spend money in the countries they visit. The theory of tourism impacts is a conceptual framework used to understand and analyze the various effects or impacts generated by tourism activities on a destination or local community. These theories assist in systematically identifying, measuring, and managing those impacts. Below are several key theories commonly used in the context of tourism impacts:

Economic Tourism

This theory examines the contribution of tourism to local and national economies, including tourist income, job creation, infrastructure investment, and its stimulating effects on other sectors.

Sociocultural Tourism

This theory focuses on the impact of tourism on the culture, social values, and social structure of the host community. It includes changes in lifestyle, cultural identity, intercultural interactions, and preservation of cultural heritage.

Environmental Tourism

This theory evaluates the environmental impacts of tourism, including environmental degradation, ecosystem damage, pollution, and resource consumption. It also highlights conservation efforts and environmental sustainability.

Political Tourism

This approach analyzes the influence of tourism on public policy, political structures, and local governance. It includes tourism regulations, distribution of economic benefits, and its impact on environmental and social policy.

Psychological Tourism

This theory explores the psychological effects of tourism experiences on individuals, such as feelings of well-being, self-identity, and perception of the destinations visited.

Ethical Tourism

This framework investigates moral and ethical aspects of the tourism industry, including social and cultural responsibility toward local communities, cultural preservation, respect for indigenous rights, and equitable use of resources.

Based on the points above, governments, the tourism industry, and local communities can take steps to maximize the positive benefits of tourism while mitigating its negative impacts. It is essential to enhance sustainability efforts and promote inclusive development to ensure the long-term well-being of both the environment and society. Community involvement in supporting management becomes a potential for increasing regular income from the community in accordance with the principles of Community Based Tourism (Rembrantari et al., 2024).

III. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the discussion of the research results in Chapter IV, Taro Village is an ancient village that remains pristine and deeply rooted in its traditions, with its own unique characteristics. The sacred area included in the tourism package managed by the local tourism awareness group (Pokdarwis) consists of Gunung Raung Temple and the White Cow Conservation Park (Taman Konservasi Lembu Putih). This sacred area is historically tied to the spiritual journey of Rsi Markandya to Bali. The conclusions from the analysis in Chapter IV are as follows:

1. The management of the sacred area in Taro Village as a tourist attraction is overseen by the Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Group) of Taro Village. This is one of the efforts to maintain and preserve the sacred area, especially in terms of environmental cleanliness, so that its sanctity remains intact. Beyond cleanliness, the management of this sacred site also brings economic benefits to both Taro Village and the Taro Kaja Customary Village.
2. The sacred area of Taro Village plays a significant role in the village's tourism activities, particularly in educational tourism. Visitors can learn about spiritual and religious traditions, cultural heritage, tourist destinations, and environmental conservation. It also provides opportunities for academic research and educational fieldwork.
3. The impacts of tourism activities in Taro Village include both positive and negative effects. However, the predominant impact has been positive. This initiative has delivered numerous benefits to the community, such as enhancing human resources, preserving the environment, and generating contributions to the local economy. Negative impacts exist but are relatively minimal and insignificant in scale.

Due to its rich historical significance, many universities from outside Bali conduct comparative studies at this site. Moreover, government officials have shown interest in visiting Taro Village, and international tourists continue to increase in number. Some visitors come merely for sightseeing, while others are interested in purchasing tourism packages offered by Pokdarwis, which include: Tirta Yatra Packages (spiritual pilgrimage), Village Tourism Packages, and Comparative Study Packages.

With the growth of tourism activities, the natural environment of Taro Village has been increasingly well-maintained—from the organization of the sacred area and environmental

preservation to the improvement of waste management systems. Employment opportunities for the residents of Taro Village have expanded, with many local businesses partnering with the Pokdarwis. Even those not formally partnered have experienced increased income through the sale of souvenirs, food, ceremonial offerings (dulang), and various micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

This initiative also brings benefits to the Taro Administrative Village (Desa Dinas Taro) by contributing to the village's original income (PAD). Likewise, the Taro Kaja Customary Village (Desa Adat Taro Kaja) benefits from the management of the sacred area, as it receives contributions that support the development of the White Cow Conservation Park.

- The Pokdarwis of Taro Village involves various components, including:
- The Village Head (Perbekel) of Taro as advisor and supervisor,
- The Chair of the Village Consultative Body (BPD) of Taro as advisor and supervisor,
- The Chairperson of Pokdarwis as the leader of Village Tourism,
- The Customary Leader (Bendesa Adat) of Taro Kaja as a cultural figure

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