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Advancing Rural Development: Sustainable Tourism Practices in the Evolution of Cibeusi Tourism Village, Subang Regency, Indonesia

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Abstract

The global tourism landscape is witnessing a notable shift away from conventional mass tourism towards alternative forms that prioritize sustainability, authenticity, and meaningful local engagement. In Indonesia, this change is reflected in the growing focus on the Tourist Village model, defined as a rural area possessing unique natural attractions and distinctive cultural traditions. This research examines the development of Cibeusi Tourism Village in Subang Regency, West Java, which serves as a promising case study in aligning local initiatives with the principles of sustainable rural tourism. Effective management is crucial for maximizing community benefits, particularly through the dual strategies of community-based tourism and sustainable tourism. This study aims to analyze the focus and implementation of sustainable tourism-based development within Cibeusi Village. Employing a descriptive qualitative method, data was collected through semi-structured interviews with key informants (including the Village Head and BUMDes Chair), field observation, and documentation. The findings demonstrate a strong adherence to sustainability principles. Specifically, the Cibeusi community exhibits active participation in the design, management, and annual evaluation of tourism activities. Economically, this involvement has significantly boosted local welfare by creating formal and small-scale employment opportunities for residents, thereby reducing unemployment and dependence on agriculture. Furthermore, the village's ecotourism model, featuring attractions like Curug Ciangin and River Tubing Nusa Pelangi, strongly emphasizes environmental arrangement and conservation efforts, including annual tree planting and strict zone regulation to maintain ecological balance. This holistic approach positions Cibeusi as a successful model for resilient rural development.

Keywords: Tourist Village, Tourism Development, Sustainable Tourism

A. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the dominance of mass tourism has gradually shifted toward alternative forms of tourism that emphasize sustainability, authenticity, and meaningful experiences. Unlike mass tourism, which often leads to overexploitation of resources and homogenized travel experiences, alternative tourism highlights nature-based and cultural activities, including adventure tourism and village tourism, where visitors can directly engage with local communities and traditions (Aryani et al., 2019). Recognizing this shift, the Subang Regency Tourism, Youth, and Sports Office has introduced an initiative that identifies and promotes 15 potential tourist villages, each designed to preserve and showcase the unique cultural and natural assets of the region (Ramanayaka, 2024). The tourist village program is envisioned not only as a means of diversifying Subang's tourism offerings but also as a community-based strategy that generates positive social, cultural, and economic impacts. This initiative is in line with the national framework of the Indonesian Tourism Village Award (Anugerah Desa Wisata Indonesia/ADWI), launched by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy in 2021, which serves as a platform to strengthen the visibility and competitiveness of rural destinations. Through ADWI, the government aims to position tourism villages as drivers of local economic growth, enhancers of community welfare, protectors of the natural environment, and custodians of cultural heritage (Kemenparekraf/Baparekraf, 2021). By aligning regional initiatives such as Subang's tourist village program with the broader national

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agenda, the development of village tourism can foster sustainable tourism practices that empower local communities while enriching visitors' experiences with authentic cultural encounters.

Cibeusi Village, located in Subang Regency, has emerged as a promising natural tourism destination that combines scenic landscapes with cultural traditions. The village is home to notable attractions such as Curug Ciangin and Curug Cibareubeuy waterfalls, which offer eco-tourism experiences, alongside traditional agricultural practices like rice field plowing that allow visitors to engage with the daily life of local farmers. With a vision of building a prosperous, character-driven, and environmentally conscious community, Cibeusi positions itself as a model for self-reliant rural development. As emphasized by the Chairman of the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes), Mr. Sanib, the central objectives of Cibeusi Tourism Village include improving community welfare, creating sustainable employment opportunities, and ensuring the responsible management of natural resources. These goals reflect a broader alignment with national tourism initiatives, as demonstrated by the village's recognition in 2023 as one of the top 75 destinations in the prestigious Indonesian Tourism Village Awards (ADWI), a program designed to highlight and strengthen the role of villages in advancing sustainable tourism.

The development of tourism villages, as noted by Aryani et al. (2019), can generally be pursued through two interconnected approaches: community-based development, which prioritizes the participation and empowerment of local residents, and sustainable development, which emphasizes the responsible and efficient use of resources to balance economic, social, and environmental outcomes. In the case of Cibeusi, tourism development has increasingly leaned toward the principles of sustainable development, focusing on maximizing the benefits of its natural and cultural assets while minimizing potential negative impacts such as environmental degradation or cultural commodification (Serdamayanti et al., 2019). By embedding sustainability into its tourism framework, Cibeusi not only enhances its competitiveness as a rural destination but also ensures that tourism becomes a long-term driver of resilience and well-being for the local community. This dual emphasis on environmental stewardship and community empowerment positions Cibeusi Village as a significant example of how rural destinations can successfully integrate tourism into their development strategies while preserving their natural and cultural heritage for future generations.

The development of a tourism village inevitably brings both opportunities and challenges, generating positive as well as negative impacts that influence the social, economic, and environmental dynamics of rural communities (Banjari et al., 2021). On the one hand, tourism villages can stimulate local economic growth by creating new jobs, diversifying income sources, and encouraging entrepreneurship among villagers. They can also strengthen social cohesion by revitalizing local traditions, fostering pride in cultural heritage, and creating spaces for interaction between residents and visitors. On the other hand, if not carefully managed, the influx of tourism may lead to social tensions, commodification of culture, unequal distribution of benefits, and environmental degradation through increased waste, resource consumption, or disruption of ecosystems. For this reason, the measure of success for a tourism village should not be limited merely to quantitative indicators such as visitor numbers or the aesthetic appeal of attractions. Instead, it must be evaluated holistically through its tangible contributions to community well-being, including improved livelihoods, social empowerment, and long-term ecological balance (Wahyuni & Susilowati, 2020). Therefore, sustainability becomes a crucial foundation in developing and managing tourism villages, ensuring that the growth of tourism is aligned with principles of inclusivity, equity, and environmental stewardship. Only by prioritizing sustainable practices can

tourism villages function as resilient models of rural development that provide lasting benefits for the local community while safeguarding natural and cultural resources for future generations.

According (Serdamayanti et al., 2019) a tourist village is a tourism activity that aims to improve the quality of life of the community through the development of village facilities and infrastructure, encourage economic growth, manage village resources, and preserve nature and culture. Meanwhile, tourist village is one of the tourist attractions that can be developed and provide positive contributions to the community (Gautama et al., 2020). In the context of rural tourism, a tourist village is a tourism asset based on rural potential with all its uniqueness and appeal that can be harnessed and developed as a tourism product to attract tourists to the village location (Sudibya, 2018). In developing a tourist village, community participation is an important prerequisite for the implementation of development (Sidiq & Resnawaty, 2017). Development that does not involve the community tends to marginalize the community itself. In developing a tourist village, what is important is a commitment between the government and village officials, community leaders, and village organizations to make the village a tourist village.

The development of a tourist village cannot be separated from the active involvement of the local community, as their participation is essential in every stage of the process—ranging from planning and decision-making to implementation, management, and supervision (Dewi et al., 2013). Without meaningful community engagement, tourism development risks becoming top-down, potentially leading to resistance, unequal benefits, or even cultural erosion. Community empowerment, therefore, is not only a strategy to ensure inclusivity but also a means of strengthening the cultural resilience of the region. For instance, through tourism village initiatives, local cultural practices—such as archery in certain communities—are preserved, revitalized, and promoted as tourism attractions, thereby reinforcing local identity and pride (Istiyanti, 2020). Beyond cultural preservation, empowerment fosters adaptability in social values and environmental awareness, enabling communities to align tourism development with sustainable living practices. Furthermore, (Wahyuningsih S et al., 2021) highlight that the transformation of an ordinary village into a recognized tourist village must meet several key criteria: the village should possess distinctive and appealing tourist attractions, be supported by strong community acceptance and commitment, have adequate local human resources capable of supporting tourism activities, maintain viable access to tourist markets, and provide space and infrastructure for the development of tourism facilities. These interrelated elements illustrate that the success of a tourist village is not merely dependent on natural or cultural assets but equally on the readiness, capacity, and collective will of the community to embrace tourism as a driver of sustainable local development.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the author focuses on data obtained through interviews and observations to provide an overview of the conditions of the research objects and subjects. In this study, the author used triangulation techniques for data collection. According to (Sugiyono, 2018), triangulation is a data collection technique that combines three data collection techniques, namely interviews as a medium for obtaining data, where the author interviewed Cibeusi village officials, tourism managers (BUMDes, POKDARWIS), attraction managers, and local communities. The interview method used in this study is a semi-structured interview technique, supplemented by observation or monitoring to support the interview data, as well as documentation as supporting data and an overview of the research object. Additionally, observation techniques are used to cross-check the validity of the data obtained from field

findings, and documentation techniques are employed through the author's observation of the research object, which is derived from documents or other printed media.

The analysis of the author's findings uses the qualitative data analysis model method (Miles & Huberman, 2014), in which the data analysis technique is divided into four stages, namely data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusions.

The following criteria of source person are: 1), Government officials of Cibeusi Village who are managers and persons in charge of village tourism activities, namely the Village Head of Cibeusi and the Chair of BUMDes Cibeusi; 2). Members of the Cibeusi Village community who are involved in the development of Cibeusi Village Tourism.

Below are the profiles of the informants interviewed by the author in this study.

Table 1. Source Person

No	Informant Name	Status	Role
1	Wawan Aripin	Head of Cibeusi Village	Head of Cibeusi Tourism Village
2	Topan Hendrawan	The Community of Cibeusi Village	Operations Manager, Muara Jambu
3	Nana	The Community of Cibeusi Village	Head of Curug Ciangin Management
4	Sanib	Head of BUMDes	Head of Cibeusi Tourism Village
5	Iwan Setiawan	The Community of Cibeusi Village	MSME actors in Cibeusi Village

Source: Data Analysis, 2024

The data on Table 1 above obtained from the interviews with informants was then processed through three stages, namely open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Finally, the findings of the study were as follows:



Figure 1
Tourism Village Development

C. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The planning for Cibeusi Tourism Village began in 2010, focusing on road access through the PNPM program to develop tourism potential such as Curug Ciangin. In 2014, a study tour program to Yogyakarta inspired the development of the tourism area, including Curug Ciangin and Muara Jambu. Tourism management involves the community and government by establishing tourism zones that are off-limits to development. Cibeusi Village is divided into three hamlets, each with its own tourist attractions, such as Curug Ciangin and River Tubing Nusa Pelangi. Cibeusi Tourism Village was officially established through a village regulation in 2017 and a governor's regulation in 2023. In the same year, it was included among the 75 Best Tourism Villages in the Indonesian Tourism Village Awards (ADWI). Tourism resource development is carried out through training sessions organized by the Subang Regency Tourism Office, with the village head inviting tourism managers to participate. Annual evaluations of tourism activities are conducted every December, though they were postponed during the COVID-19 pandemic and will resume in December 2023. Cibeusi Tourism Village is now recognized and visited by tourists, including international travelers, and is categorized as a developing tourism village, with the community beginning to recognize its tourism potential and capable of managing tourism businesses through relevant institutions.

Attractions

Tourist attractions in Cibeusi Village are dominated by ecotourism, where all tourist attractions offer camping activities considering that Cibeusi Village is located in the hills with forests and rice fields.

Table 2. Desa Wisata Cibeusi Attractions

Attraction	Description	Picture
Curug Ciangin	Curug Ciangin is located in Neglasari Village, Cibeusi Village, Ciater District, Subang Regency, West Java. Curug is another name for a waterfall, Curug Ciangin is one of the recommended natural tourist attractions in the Subang area. The name Curug Ciangin comes from the water that falls from the top of the cliff carrying a fairly strong gust of wind, so that the surrounding air becomes cool. The area of Curug Ciangin is about two hectares with a height of nine meters. The tourist spot was opened to the public on December 23, 2015. At the bottom of the waterfall, visitors can see the expanse of rice fields and a clear river flow.	

Curug Cibareubeuy.	Curug Cibareubeuy is administratively part of Cibeusi Village, Ciater District, Subang Regency, West Java Province. As the name suggests, waterfall, which in Sundanese means waterfall, the main attraction at the Cibareubeuy waterfall tourist location is a waterfall with a height of 40 m. Tourists can play in the water and soak in a small pool that holds the waterfall's water. Other attractions around Curug Cibareubeuy include 4 Ancient Sites, the Bumi Pengembangan area and pine forests. In addition to the attractions mentioned above, around the tourist location there are many palm sugar craftsmen who can be enjoyed directly on the spot.	
Muara Jambu	Muara Jambu Tourism Object is a well-known ecotourism destination in Subang Regency. Situated in the Cibeusi tourist village, specifically in Kampung Neglasari, Cibeusi Village, Ciater District, Subang, West Java, the Muara Jambu Camping Ground offers a family-friendly camping experience. It is frequently utilized as a hiking location, a training venue, or as a site for camps organized by communities, company employees, and school students.	
Kampung Senyum	Kampung Senyum is a homestay tourism destination situated in the Ciater District of Subang Regency, forming part of the Cibeusi Tourism Village. Emphasizing the local wisdom and the pristine natural environment of the surrounding forest, Kampung Senyum offers a serene retreat for tourists after a long journey to nearby attractions, such as the waterfall known as Curug Cibareubeuy, which is located just behind the homestay. In addition to Curug Cibareubeuy, visitors can also explore another waterfall in the Cibeusi Village area, Curug Pandawa 5. Kampung	

	Senyum reflects the principles of sustainable tourism by integrating community-based hospitality, environmental preservation, and cultural authenticity. The homestay is operated by local residents, which directly supports inclusive economic development and strengthens community ownership in tourism. The surrounding forests and waterfalls are managed with respect for ecological balance, promoting nature conservation while offering low-impact, immersive experiences for visitors.	
River Tubing Nusa Pelangi	River Tubing at Nusa Pelangi, located in Cibereum Village within the Ciater District of Subang, is a natural tourist destination that promises an exhilarating adventure through tubing activities on a flowing river using inflatable tires. Participants are provided with essential safety equipment, including life jackets, helmets, and foot protectors. Surrounded by scenic views of rice fields, bamboo forests, and the beauty of rural nature, this site is ideal for relaxation, nature photography, and creative digital content for the younger generation. In addition to river tubing, visitors have the opportunity to engage in light trekking, environmental education, and meaningful interactions with the local community. This makes Nusa Pelangi a potential hub for community-based edu-tourism and ecotourism. The involvement of local guides enhances community empowerment, positioning Nusa Pelangi as a model for safe, environmentally friendly tourism rooted in local culture.	

Imocraft	Imocraft is a gallery and showroom that showcases wooden artwork crafted by local artisans from the Cibeusi Tourism Village in the Ciater District of Subang. Within this gallery, visitors can explore a diverse range of handcrafted products, including wood carvings, masks, small statues, relief paintings, and both functional and decorative items. What sets these artworks apart is their unique local character, the use of natural materials, and the traditional manual craftsmanship techniques that have been handed down through generations by the community of the village. Imocraft is more than just a marketplace for crafts; it serves as a platform for local empowerment and the preservation of cultural heritage, promoting the growth of sustainable tourism in villages. This initiative offers tourists authentic experiences while delivering direct benefits to the community, exemplifying a model of effective community-based sustainable tourism.	
Saung Budidaya Lebah Madu	Saung Budidaya Lebah Madu is a notable tourist attraction located in Cibeusi Tourism Village, within the Ciater District of Subang Regency, West Java. It is the sole honey bee cultivation center in Cibeusi and serves as an educational hub for visitors. At Saung Budidaya Lebah Madu, tourists have the opportunity to observe and even engage hands-on in the practices of beekeeping and honey extraction from the hives.This attraction exemplifies the principles of sustainable tourism by promoting environmental conservation, community empowerment, and cultural education. The beekeeping process encourages ecological awareness by showcasing the crucial role of bees in biodiversity and local ecosystems. Meanwhile, local residents are directly involved as guides, educators, and producers, creating economic benefits for	

	the community while preserving local knowledge and traditions. By offering authentic, low-impact experiences that support local livelihoods and environmental stewardship, Saung Budidaya Lebah Madu contributes meaningfully to the development of responsible, community-based tourism in Cibeusi.	
MSMEs Gallery	The UMKM Gallery in Cibeusi Tourism Village, Subang, offers a variety of traditional foods, including cassava chips, pineapple dodol, and forest honey, along with handicrafts crafted from wood, bamboo, and natural fibers by local artisans. This gallery is a vital contributor to sustainable tourism, addressing three key aspects: economy, culture, and environment. Economically, it empowers local small business owners by providing market access and generating new income opportunities. Culturally, the products on display celebrate local wisdom and inherited traditions, thereby strengthening Subang's cultural identity. From an environmental standpoint, many items are made from natural materials and produced through eco-friendly processes. The UMKM Gallery serves not merely as a shopping destination for souvenirs but as an essential component of the sustainable tourism ecosystem that focuses on benefiting the community and ensuring the sustainability of local resources.	

Source: Data Collection, 2024

Accesibility Aspect

Reaching Cibeusi Village poses a challenge due to the lack of public transportation options. Tourists must rely on private vehicles to access the village effectively.

Amenities

The tourist site has complete facilities, ranging from restaurants, toilets, prayer rooms, homestays, to a large parking area.

Human Resources and Community Aspect

All tourist attractions in Cibeusi Village are managed and utilized by the local community, and the workers at the tourist attractions are also local residents.

Management and Institutions

Tourism management in Cibeusi Village is supervised by the village head as the person in charge of Village Tourism activities, and is commanded by BUMDes as the executor of Village Tourism activities in Cibeusi Village.

Investment

A common investment activity in Cibeusi Village is the creation of new tourist attractions, where residents who own land and wish to turn it into a tourist destination.

Promotion and Marketing

Cibeusi Village utilizes social media as a promotional medium for its destinations. Various media are used, ranging from websites, Instagram, Facebook, to YouTube. On Instagram alone, there are several accounts, namely @desawisatacibeusi, @bumdes_cibeusi, and tourist attraction accounts such as @wisatamuarajambu, @wisatacurugciangin_, and so on.

The sustainable tourism village of Cibeusi has developed at least some aspects of sustainable tourism, such as:

Social Aspects

Cibeusi Village preserves its culture and customs. Traditions such as ruatan (ngaruat) and ngabungbang, bathing in the river on the 14th day of Mulud, are still preserved. Traditional sisingaan art is also preserved by involving children in its preservation. Sisingaan is often performed as entertainment and a welcome ceremony for tourists. The tradition of plowing rice fields with buffaloes or cows is still practiced and used as a tourist attraction, where tourists can participate in planting rice with the locals without disrupting the daily activities of the residents.

Economy Aspects

Cibeusi Village has many tourist attractions that involve community participation. Although the majority of the population are farmers, only a small percentage work in the tourism sector. The Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes) collects 10-20% of the income from each tourist destination to help the community and build village infrastructure. Many residents work at tourist attractions, such as Muara Jambu, which employs 20-25 local residents, helping to reduce unemployment. Residents also sell goods in tourist areas, supported by regulations prohibiting tourists from bringing heavy food items. Cibeusi Village develops local SMEs through cooking and marketing training, with their products promoted at tourist sites and the Cibeusi Village Tourism Gallery.

Environmental Aspect

Tourism in Cibeusi Village prioritizes natural beauty, with the original land consisting of forests, gardens, and rice fields that have been transformed into a tourist area by the landowners with the support of the village. Natural resources such as rivers are utilized for tourist attractions like river tubing. Conservation efforts include river cleaning and tree planting once a year, particularly in the upstream areas to maintain water supply. Cibeusi Village also manages the area by regulating which zones can be managed and which must remain natural. Environmental management in the tourist area is taken seriously, including daily cleaning by officers. The swimming pool in the tourist area does not use chemicals to maintain river cleanliness. Waste in tourist areas is burned at night to maintain environmental cleanliness.

D. CONCLUSION

Tourism activities in Cibeusi Village began to develop around 2010, when the village's rich natural assets—such as plantations, rice fields, and forests that were previously utilized primarily for agricultural purposes—were transformed into attractions for visitors. This shift marked the beginning of the village's journey toward positioning itself as a rural tourism destination. Tourism management in Cibeusi is distinctive because it is carried out by the community through the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes), ensuring that the benefits of tourism are directed toward local development rather than external stakeholders. The village's tourism offerings are primarily nature-based, appealing to visitors through activities such as camping, swimming, and river tubing, which highlight the beauty of Cibeusi's natural landscapes while promoting eco-friendly recreation.

A key feature of Cibeusi's tourism development lies in the active involvement of the local community across all stages, from planning and implementation to evaluation of tourism programs. Many residents seize opportunities created by tourism by participating in small-scale economic activities, such as selling food, beverages, and local products in the tourist area, particularly on weekends when visitor numbers peak. This not only diversifies household income but also strengthens community participation in the tourism economy. In addition, tourism has created more formal employment opportunities, with villagers working as tourism managers, guides, and service providers, thereby reducing dependence on agricultural income alone.

Beyond its natural attractions, Cibeusi Village has succeeded in preserving and showcasing its cultural heritage as part of its tourism identity. Traditions such as the *ruatan* ritual, the dynamic *sisingaan* art performance, and the agricultural practice of plowing rice fields with buffaloes or cows have been maintained not only as cultural symbols but also as experiential attractions for visitors. These practices serve an educational purpose, offering tourists a chance to learn about local traditions while reinforcing community pride in cultural continuity. By integrating cultural preservation with tourism development, Cibeusi ensures that modernization does not erode local identity but instead revitalizes and promotes it as a core strength of the village. As such, Cibeusi's tourism model exemplifies how nature-based and cultural tourism can coexist in a way that fosters economic resilience, community empowerment, and cultural sustainability.

Tourism management in Cibeusi Village is carried out with a strong emphasis on environmental preservation, reflecting the community's awareness that nature is the village's primary tourism asset. To prevent degradation of natural resources, the village has carefully arranged and regulated its tourist zones, ensuring that recreational activities do not disrupt the ecological balance of plantations, rivers, and forests. Cleanliness is also treated as a fundamental principle in tourism operations, with systematic efforts to maintain hygiene in public spaces, waste management, and tourist areas. These practices indicate that Cibeusi has adopted an ecotourism-based development approach, where tourism is not only designed to generate economic benefits but also to safeguard environmental sustainability and cultural authenticity.

The success of this approach depends on the collaboration of multiple stakeholders. The village government plays a role in providing policy direction and regulatory frameworks, the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes) manages tourism operations and revenue distribution, and the Tourism Awareness Group (*Pokdarwis*) mobilizes community participation and promotes tourism activities. The broader community is also actively involved in protecting the environment, from ensuring the cleanliness of tourist sites to preserving forests and agricultural landscapes. Such multi-stakeholder collaboration is crucial in creating a shared sense of responsibility and ensuring that tourism development aligns with long-term sustainability goals.

However, to sustain and expand its tourism potential, Cibeusi Village must also focus on enhancing the capacity of its human resources. Training and skill development in areas such as hospitality, tour

guiding, waste management, and digital marketing are essential to improve the quality of tourism services offered. By strengthening local competencies, the village can not only increase visitor satisfaction but also ensure that the economic benefits of tourism remain within the community. Ultimately, the combination of environmental stewardship, cultural preservation, and human resource development positions Cibeusi Village as a model of sustainable rural tourism that balances ecological care with community empowerment.

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