

# Community Empowerment Strategy in Tourism Village Development in Bandung Regency

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## Abstract

This study aims to analyze the condition of community empowerment, the inhibiting factors, and the empowerment strategies in the development of Alamendah Tourism Village in Bandung Regency. The study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design through in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis. The results indicate that community empowerment is still in a transitional stage. Although several positive dynamics have emerged, such as the initial establishment of relationships between managers and the community, community involvement in several activities, and efforts in documentation and promotion, the empowerment process has not yet been fully participatory and remains limited to a core group. The study also identifies several inhibiting factors, including weak social networks among local actors, non-participatory and unsustainable mapping of local potential, the absence of an inclusive shared vision, elite-dominated decision-making processes, limitations in collectively designing and implementing activities, and inadequate documentation and evaluation practices. The strategic analysis shows that community empowerment in tourism village development is positioned in Quadrant I (Strength–Opportunities), which requires the implementation of an aggressive–progressive strategy by optimizing the internal strengths of the community to capitalize on external opportunities in a sustainable manner. This strategy includes strengthening collective capacity, expanding collaborative networks, utilizing policy and technological support, and reinforcing local institutions to promote sustainable empowerment and enhance the competitiveness of the tourism village.

*Keywords:* Strategy, Empowerment, Community, Tourism Village.

## A. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has developed into one of the strategic sectors in promoting sustainable development in many countries. In addition to contributing to economic growth through job creation and increased community income, the tourism sector also plays an important role in strengthening cultural identity, expanding social networks, and supporting environmental conservation. In the context of regional development, tourism is able to encourage economic diversification and create new economic opportunities, particularly in rural areas that possess unique natural and cultural resources (Achmad, Nurwati & Sidiq, 2023; Achmad, 2023).

In Indonesia, tourism development is directed toward supporting sustainable community welfare. Law Number 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism emphasizes that tourism development must be carried out systematically, integratively, sustainably, and responsibly in order to provide the greatest possible benefits for public welfare while maintaining environmental, cultural, and natural sustainability. In this

framework, community-based tourism has become a relevant approach because it positions local communities as the main actors in the development process.

Over the past few decades, the global tourism development paradigm has shifted from *mass tourism* toward *alternative tourism*. The mass tourism model, which mainly emphasizes the quantity of tourist visits and economic profit, has been widely criticized because it often places pressure on the environment, local culture, and social structures of host communities. In response to these challenges, various forms of alternative tourism have emerged, emphasizing sustainability, social justice, and the active involvement of local communities in tourism planning and management (Safari, Afriza & Riyanti, 2023). Aryani et al. (2019) explain that current tourism trends have shifted from mass tourism toward alternative tourism that prioritizes nature-based and cultural experiences, providing tourists with opportunities for adventure, learning, and exploration through activities such as trekking, adventure tourism, and rural tourism.

One form of alternative tourism that has developed significantly is the tourism village. The tourism village concept represents an implementation of community-based tourism, which positions local residents as the main actors in managing and developing tourism destinations (Saepudin, Budiono & Halimah, 2018). In this approach, tourism development is not solely oriented toward economic gains but also toward strengthening community control over local resources, preserving cultural identity, and maintaining environmental sustainability. Therefore, tourism villages are considered an effective strategy for integrating economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects within sustainable development (Risdawati & Hermansah, 2022; Wijayanto, Kolopaking & Mardiana, 2025).

Bandung Regency, located in West Java Province, is one of the regions that possesses significant potential for community-based tourism development. The geographical characteristics of the area, which include mountainous landscapes, forests, plantations, and rice fields, as well as rich cultural resources such as traditional arts, customary practices, and Sundanese culinary traditions, provide strong attractions for tourism activities. These potentials encourage the local government to place tourism as one of the priority sectors in regional development. This commitment is reflected in the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) of Bandung Regency for 2021–2026 and the Regional Tourism Development Master Plan for 2018–2025, which identify tourism villages as a key focus for tourism destination development.

To strengthen tourism village development, the Government of Bandung Regency issued Regional Regulation Number 7 of 2020 concerning the Management and Development of Tourism Villages. This regulation serves as a policy framework to promote community-based tourism by encouraging the active involvement of local communities in the management and development of tourism destinations. The

development of tourism villages in Bandung Regency actually began in 2011 when the local government designated ten tourism villages through a Regent Decree. However, in practice, the development of these tourism villages has faced several challenges, including limited institutional capacity, low levels of community participation, limited accessibility, inadequate tourism facilities, and weak destination marketing.

In an effort to accelerate tourism village development, the Bandung Regency Government, through the Department of Culture and Tourism, launched a program to develop 100 tourism villages. This initiative was implemented through the designation of 50 tourism villages in 2022 and an additional 50 villages in 2023. As a result, the number of tourism villages in Bandung Regency increased significantly from only ten villages between 2011 and 2021 to one hundred villages by 2023. However, this quantitative growth has not been fully accompanied by improvements in management quality and institutional capacity.

Data from the Department of Culture and Tourism of Bandung Regency show that most tourism villages are still in the early development stage. Of the total 100 tourism villages, 87 villages are categorized as pioneering (*rintisan*), 11 villages are in the developing stage (*berkembang*), 2 villages have reached the advanced stage (*maju*), and none have yet achieved the independent stage (*mandiri*). This condition indicates that most tourism villages still require significant support in terms of institutional strengthening, community participation, and sustainable development strategies.

Community empowerment is one of the key factors determining the success of tourism village development. From the perspective of public administration, sustainable development requires the active involvement of citizens as subjects of development rather than merely beneficiaries. Denhardt & Denhardt (2003), through the concept of *New Public Service*, emphasize that the role of government is not only to manage public services but also to empower citizens through participation and collective capacity building. In the context of community-based tourism, Scheyvens (1999) argues that the success of tourism development largely depends on the extent to which local communities have control over decision-making processes and benefit distribution.

However, the practice of community empowerment in tourism village development still faces several challenges. Studies conducted by the Department of Culture and Tourism of Bandung Regency indicate that community involvement in tourism planning and management remains limited, partnerships with external stakeholders are not yet well established, and the identification and utilization of local resources have not been carried out systematically. In addition, decision-making processes in tourism village management tend to be insufficiently inclusive and participatory.

To address these challenges, a comprehensive and systematic community empowerment strategy is needed. One approach that can be applied is the Seven D

(7D) approach developed by Dhamotharan (2009). This approach emphasizes the importance of community capacity development through interconnected stages, ranging from identifying community potential and participatory planning to program implementation, evaluation, and collective learning. The approach aims to facilitate productive, sustainable, and equitable community development by enhancing the participation of community members and external stakeholders throughout different phases of the development process.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze community empowerment strategies in tourism village development in Bandung Regency using the Seven D (7D) approach. The study focuses on Alamendah Tourism Village as a case study, considering its significant tourism potential and ongoing community-based initiatives, while still facing challenges related to community empowerment, institutional capacity, and sustainable governance. This research is expected to contribute to the academic literature on community-based tourism while also providing strategic recommendations for developing more participatory and sustainable tourism villages.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Community-Based Tourism**

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) has emerged as an alternative tourism development approach that places local communities at the center of tourism planning, management, and benefit distribution. This concept developed as a response to the negative impacts of mass tourism, which often prioritizes economic growth while neglecting environmental sustainability, local culture, and community welfare. In CBT, local communities are expected to have control over tourism resources and actively participate in the decision-making process related to tourism development (Murphy, 1985).

Murphy (1985) argued that tourism development should be integrated with community development because local communities are directly affected by tourism activities. Therefore, involving communities in tourism planning and management is essential to ensure that tourism development aligns with local values and social conditions. The community approach also helps create tourism systems that are more responsive to local needs and sustainable in the long term.

Furthermore, CBT is often associated with rural tourism development because rural areas typically possess unique cultural and natural resources that can attract visitors seeking authentic experiences. According to Suansri (2003), community-based tourism is tourism that is owned and managed by communities and developed for the benefit of the community, with a strong emphasis on participation, sustainability, and equitable benefit distribution. Through this approach, tourism development is expected to contribute not only to economic growth but also to cultural preservation and environmental conservation.

## **2. Community Empowerment in Tourism Development**

Community empowerment is a key element in community-based tourism development. Empowerment refers to the process through which individuals and communities gain the ability to control decisions and resources that affect their lives. In the context of tourism development, empowerment is closely related to the capacity of local communities to participate in tourism planning, control tourism resources, and benefit from tourism activities.

Scheyvens (1999) proposed a widely used framework for understanding community empowerment in tourism, which consists of four dimensions: economic, psychological, social, and political empowerment. Economic empowerment occurs when tourism generates tangible financial benefits for local communities, such as employment opportunities and increased income. Psychological empowerment refers to the enhancement of community pride and confidence in their cultural heritage. Social empowerment relates to stronger social cohesion and collaboration within the community, while political empowerment involves the ability of communities to participate in decision-making processes related to tourism development (Scheyvens, 1999).

These dimensions indicate that successful tourism development should not only focus on economic outcomes but also on strengthening community capacity and participation. Empowerment enables communities to become active actors in development rather than passive recipients of tourism benefits. However, implementing community empowerment in tourism development often faces several challenges. Blackstock (2005) argued that many community-based tourism initiatives fail to fully empower communities because participation is often limited to symbolic involvement without real decision-making power. In some cases, tourism development is still dominated by external actors such as government agencies or private investors, which can reduce community control over local tourism resources.

## **3. Community Participation in Tourism Development**

Community participation is a fundamental principle in sustainable tourism development. Participation refers to the involvement of local communities in various stages of tourism development, including planning, implementation, management, and evaluation. Effective participation ensures that tourism development reflects the needs and aspirations of local communities.

Tosun (2000) identified several limitations in community participation in tourism development, particularly in developing countries. These limitations include structural barriers such as centralized decision-making systems, lack of access to information, limited financial resources, and low levels of community capacity. As a result, local communities often have limited influence over tourism development decisions, even though they are directly affected by tourism activities.

Despite these challenges, research has shown that meaningful community participation can significantly contribute to the sustainability of tourism development. When communities are actively involved in tourism management, they are more

likely to support tourism initiatives and contribute to the protection of local environmental and cultural resources (Tosun, 2000).

#### **4. Community Empowerment Strategy in Tourism Village Development**

Developing effective strategies for community empowerment is essential to ensure the sustainability of tourism village development. Tourism villages that successfully implement community-based tourism typically have strong local institutions, active community participation, and collaborative networks involving government, private sectors, and civil society organizations.

One approach that can support community empowerment in tourism development is the Seven D (7D) approach introduced by Dhamotharan (2009). This approach emphasizes community development through several interconnected stages designed to strengthen community participation and capacity. The stages include identifying community potential, building shared visions, planning community programs, implementing activities, and documenting lessons learned for continuous improvement (Dhamotharan, 2009).

The Seven D approach aims to facilitate productive, sustainable, and equitable community development by creating opportunities for collaboration among community members and external stakeholders. Through this approach, communities are encouraged to actively participate in the entire development process, thereby strengthening local ownership and ensuring the sustainability of development initiatives.

In the context of tourism village development, this approach is particularly relevant because it integrates participatory planning, capacity building, and community learning processes. By applying systematic empowerment strategies, tourism villages can develop stronger governance structures, improve community participation, and enhance the sustainability of tourism development.

### **C. METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to examine community empowerment strategies in tourism village development in Bandung Regency. A qualitative approach is appropriate for understanding social processes, community participation, and the dynamics of empowerment within a specific context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The case study design was used to explore the phenomenon in depth within its real-life setting, particularly in tourism villages that actively implement community-based tourism initiatives (Yin, 2018).

The research was conducted in selected tourism villages in Bandung Regency using purposive sampling to identify locations where community involvement in tourism development is evident. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted with key informants, including village officials, tourism village managers, community members involved in tourism activities, and representatives from the local tourism

office. This approach allows researchers to obtain rich and detailed information regarding empowerment processes and stakeholder roles (Patton, 2015).

Data analysis followed an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The collected data were transcribed, coded, and categorized to identify patterns and themes related to community empowerment strategies in tourism development (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). To ensure the credibility of the findings, data triangulation was applied by comparing information obtained from different sources and methods.

## **D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Community Empowerment Conditions in Tourism Village Development**

The findings of this study indicate that community empowerment in the development of tourism villages in Bandung Regency, particularly in the case of Alamendah Tourism Village, demonstrates a complex and transitional dynamic. Although empowerment has not yet been fully institutionalized as a collective and sustainable practice, early signs of socio-economic transformation have begun to emerge within the community.

From the perspective of social relations and partnership networks, the community still faces limitations in building trust, solidarity, and external collaboration. Social capital, which is an essential component of community-based tourism development, has not yet been fully consolidated. However, the presence of key local actors such as village leaders, tourism village managers, and partnerships with external institutions has gradually opened opportunities for strengthening social networks and collective action. This condition reflects the argument that social capital and local leadership are crucial elements in enabling community participation and empowerment within tourism development processes (Scheyvens, 1999; Goodwin & Santilli, 2009).

In terms of local potential and capacity mapping, the process has not yet been conducted in a participatory and systematic manner. Many community members still perceive their daily economic and cultural activities as ordinary practices rather than as potential tourism assets. As a result, local resources such as agricultural activities, traditional culture, and natural landscapes are only partially utilized in tourism initiatives. This finding confirms previous studies suggesting that community-based tourism often faces challenges in recognizing and mobilizing local assets due to limited awareness and participatory planning mechanisms (Tosun, 2006).

Another important finding relates to the absence of a strong collective vision within the community regarding tourism village development. Community involvement tends to be reactive rather than proactive, with many residents participating only after witnessing tangible economic benefits. The existing vision for tourism development is largely driven by key individuals, such as village leaders or external facilitators, rather than emerging organically from the community as a whole. This situation reflects the common challenge in participatory development where

collective vision-building requires sustained facilitation and inclusive dialogue (Aref, 2011).

Decision-making processes concerning tourism development also remain relatively elitist. Strategic directions are predominantly determined by core managers and village officials, while broader community participation in determining priorities remains limited. As a consequence, the direction of tourism activities sometimes reflects sectoral interests rather than a comprehensive representation of community aspirations. According to community empowerment theory, participatory governance mechanisms are necessary to ensure that local development initiatives genuinely reflect the needs and aspirations of community members (Pretty, 1995).

The study further reveals that activity planning mechanisms are still sporadic and largely based on limited experiences. Community aspirations have not been systematically incorporated into program design, resulting in tourism activities that tend to prioritize short-term visitor interests rather than long-term community development goals. Similarly, the implementation of tourism-related programs demonstrates fluctuating levels of participation. Limited financial incentives, insufficient human resources, and dependence on certain local figures contribute to the inconsistent involvement of community members.

Another critical issue identified in this study concerns documentation and evaluation practices. Documentation activities are mostly conducted as administrative formalities rather than as instruments for collective learning and strategic reflection. As a result, valuable experiential knowledge from previous activities is rarely utilized to improve future planning or to strengthen institutional learning processes. This finding suggests that institutional capacity in managing knowledge and organizational learning remains relatively weak within the tourism village management system.

Overall, the empirical condition of community empowerment in Alamendah Tourism Village can be characterized by a transitional phase marked by dependence on key actors, limited participatory capacity, and weak institutional mechanisms. Nevertheless, significant opportunities exist, including government support, partnerships with external organizations, and the willingness of certain community members to engage in tourism activities. These elements constitute important foundations for strengthening community-based tourism development in the future.

## **2. Factors Hindering Community Empowerment**

The study also identifies several structural and social factors that hinder the empowerment of local communities in tourism village development. These obstacles originate not only from internal community limitations but also from institutional and external dynamics that influence the sustainability of tourism initiatives.

One of the primary barriers is the relatively weak level of social trust and community cohesion. Differences in perceptions regarding the benefits and impacts of tourism development have contributed to skepticism among some community members. In addition, disharmony among local institutions sometimes creates

fragmented coordination, making it difficult to build collective solidarity. Weak social cohesion can significantly undermine participatory development processes because community empowerment relies heavily on trust-based collaboration and shared commitment (Putnam, 2000).

Another significant challenge lies in the limited participatory processes in identifying and mapping local resources. The identification of tourism potential is often determined by external stakeholders rather than by the community itself. Consequently, the development of tourism products tends to overlook many local assets that could potentially enhance the uniqueness and authenticity of the tourism experience. Without a participatory asset-mapping process, tourism development risks becoming externally driven rather than community-centered.

The absence of a shared collective vision further complicates the empowerment process. Many residents remain hesitant to fully engage in tourism activities because they are uncertain about long-term benefits and potential social changes associated with tourism development. Limited experience in participatory planning and insufficient facilitation of community dialogue contribute to this situation.

In addition, decision-making structures remain relatively centralized within a small group of actors. Although formal village deliberation forums exist, they have not yet functioned optimally as inclusive platforms for community participation. As a result, important social groups such as youth, women, and cultural practitioners are sometimes underrepresented in strategic discussions concerning tourism development.

Planning and program implementation also face several constraints. Planning processes are often sporadic and lack systematic data support. The absence of a comprehensive community database and participatory planning mechanisms limits the ability of tourism initiatives to respond effectively to local needs and aspirations. Moreover, the implementation of activities is frequently affected by fluctuating participation levels, limited financial incentives, and dependency on a few active individuals. Political dynamics and coordination challenges with external partners further complicate program execution.

Finally, the study highlights the limited role of documentation and evaluation mechanisms. Documentation practices remain largely administrative and rarely function as tools for reflection and strategic learning. The lack of technical capacity and supporting infrastructure further reduces the effectiveness of documentation systems in supporting adaptive management and continuous improvement.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that community empowerment in tourism village development is influenced by a combination of social, institutional, and structural factors. Addressing these barriers requires comprehensive strategies that strengthen social capital, participatory governance, and institutional learning within local communities.

### **3. Community Empowerment Strategy for Tourism Village Development**

Based on the results of the Internal Factor Analysis Summary (IFAS) and External Factor Analysis Summary (EFAS), the empowerment of local communities in tourism village development is positioned within Quadrant I (Strength–Opportunities). This strategic position indicates that internal community strengths are relatively strong and supported by significant external opportunities. Consequently, the most appropriate strategic orientation is an aggressive–progressive strategy (SO strategy), which emphasizes the optimal utilization of internal strengths to capture and expand external opportunities.

This strategy positions the community not merely as beneficiaries of development programs but as the primary actors who initiate, coordinate, and control the direction of tourism village development. In this context, community empowerment involves strengthening local leadership, mobilizing social capital, and developing collective capacities for planning, management, and innovation.

The aggressive–progressive strategy focuses on mobilizing internal community strengths such as local leadership, emerging social networks, cultural resources, and growing community awareness regarding tourism potential. These strengths can be leveraged to capitalize on external opportunities, including supportive government policies, multi-stakeholder partnerships, technological advancements, and the increasing recognition of tourism villages as drivers of rural economic development.

Furthermore, this strategy requires a shift from reactive and project-based empowerment approaches toward proactive and institutionalized community development practices. Strengthening collective leadership structures, integrating tourism development planning into village governance systems, and establishing systematic documentation and learning mechanisms are essential components of this transformation.

In addition, the institutionalization of collaborative partnerships with external stakeholders including government agencies, academic institutions, and private sector actors can enhance the sustainability of tourism development initiatives. These partnerships should be structured in ways that reinforce local autonomy while simultaneously expanding access to resources, knowledge, and market networks.

Ultimately, the strategic challenge for community empowerment in tourism village development lies not in the absence of opportunities or capacities, but in the ability to maintain strategic consistency, expand the scale of social and economic benefits, and manage ongoing changes in a sustainable manner. By adopting an aggressive–progressive strategy grounded in community participation and institutional strengthening, tourism village development can evolve into a more resilient and inclusive model of rural development.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that community empowerment in the development of tourism villages in Bandung Regency, particularly in the case of Alamendah Tourism Village, reflects a dynamic yet still transitional condition. Although community

empowerment has not been fully institutionalized, there are emerging socio-economic transformation potentials supported by local leadership, government support, and external partnerships. However, the empowerment process remains constrained by several structural and social challenges, including weak social trust and community networks, limited participatory mapping of local resources, the absence of a deeply rooted collective vision, elite-dominated decision-making processes, sporadic planning mechanisms, fluctuating community participation, and inadequate documentation and evaluation practices. These conditions indicate that community empowerment has not yet developed into a fully sustainable and collective practice.

Despite these challenges, the results of the IFAS-EFAS analysis place the empowerment process within the Strength-Opportunities (SO) quadrant, indicating that the community possesses relatively strong internal capacities and is supported by significant external opportunities. This strategic position suggests that the development of the tourism village should adopt an aggressive, progressive strategy that optimally mobilizes internal strengths to capture and institutionalize external opportunities. Such a strategy emphasizes strengthening social capital, collective leadership, participatory planning capacity, and community-based learning systems while integrating tourism development into village governance and development planning.

Ultimately, the effectiveness and sustainability of community empowerment in tourism village development depend on the ability of local actors to shift from reactive, project-based participation toward proactive, institutionalized, and adaptive governance practices. Strengthening collective leadership, expanding inclusive participation, and developing systematic documentation and learning mechanisms are essential to transform existing potentials into long-term social, economic, and institutional sustainability for community-based tourism development.

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