

Socialization on Ecotourism Development of Kahayan River, Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia

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Abstract

Kahayan River has a size of 450 m long and 100 m wide. The characteristic of the locality shows the uniqueness along the bank of Kahayan River, in which daily people activities physically influence the settlement model. The settlement along the river bank is initial settlement following the river configuration. The houses face the river as part of the settlement environment and interesting place to live. The settlement model at the river bank has two types, raft houses and (2) pillar houses. Pollution occurs because of lack of awareness of the environmental impact that causes the water condition to be in an abnormal limit. When the water condition is out of the normal one, the water can be categorized as polluted, and it could then impact to the environment and human. The community service was done in Pahandut Seberang near Kahayan River through socialization that the local communities could manage the environment along Kahayan River well. People participation is highly needed to maintain the sustainability and the cleanliness along the bank of Kahayan River, and the comprehension on the importance of public awareness so as not to litter for Kahayan River development as ecotourism object to increase people income along the river bank.

Key Words: Palangka Raya, water pollution, Pahandut, settlement

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I. INTERODUCTION

Change in tourism practices has recently created a new tourism concept called as ecotourism, a sustainable and environmental friendly natural resource utilization through tourism (Bachri, 2004). This concept, according to Gurung (2010), is one of sustainable development system mechanisms that are capable of balancing the natural resources functions and human and development activities through biodiversity as tourism object and attractiveness, that is back to nature. Ecotourism is a form of responsible tourism to the nature conservation, that yields economic benefit and maintain the cultural unity for local communities. Therefore, ecotourism is basically a conservation actions conducted by the communities (Fandeli & Mukhlison, 2000).

Ecotourism emphasizes on three major aspects as follows: nature sustainability or ecology, providing economic benefit, and psychologically acceptable to the community's social life. Thus, ecotourism activities directly give access to all people to see, know, and enjoy the nature experience, the intellectuality, and the local community's cultures (Satria, 2009). One of the ecotourism potentials in Palangka Raya is Kahayan River, the largest river in Central Kalimantan. This river has important role for people in Palangka Raya area, particularly Pahandut district. The river itself seems to be not able to be separated from the public culture of Palangka Raya in general.

River itself has numerous benefits for surrounding communities to fulfil their living needs, and there are many potentials that we can benefit from Kahayan River, one of which is fish cultivation. Aquaculture is an effort to maintain and breed fish and other aquatic organisms, such as clams, shrimps, and aquatic plants. Fish culture production always rises because of its high demand as consumption fish for protein and affordable price. The fish culture activities run by the communities near Kahayan River has revealed that aquaculture has good business prospect. Among 5 districts of Palangka Raya, Pahandut is one with the highest fish culture production from floating fish cages that are distributed in 6 villages, Pahandut, Panarung, Langkai, Tumbang Rungan, Tanjung Pinang, and Pahandut Seberang.

Based on the profile of Pahandut Seberang in 2018, Pahandut Seberang possessed the highest number of fish farmers and floating fish cages, 179 people and 250 units of fish cages, respectively, and these numbers are developing every year. Fish culture activities are done not only by the fish farmers, but also through profit sharing between the fish farmers and investors. Profit sharing is an alternative taken to run all the floating cage fish culture due to insufficient capital. Freshwater fish culture is highly needed to balance and help the decreasing fish production from fishing. Modernization and population growth have led to increased need for

animal protein with year, so that fish production needs to be raised as food and protein source. Fish culture activities along the bank of Kahayan River can become one of the tourism objects. Other unique object is houses along the river called lanting. This type of house is made of wood to be floating, with float base of 3 wooden beams. The house is usually tied to the wooden poles stuck in the riverbed to protect it from carried away by water currents. Therefore, clear information is needed on how the people living along Kahayan River actually participate in tourism potential development to realize the ecotourism. This information could then be benefitted as basic guide to ecotourism development implementation in Kahayan River.

II. MATERIALS AND METHOD

The community service was carried out in Kahayan River region that passes the city of Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan Province, from June to October 2021.



Figure 1. Kahayan River passing the city of Palangka Raya with residential area along the river bank of Pahandut Seberang

Equipment and materials used in this community service were a digital camera, marker, writing pad, tape, scissor/cutter, and site guide for field observations. Approach technique to the community in Pahandut Seberang near Kahayan River was done through socialization to encourage people to well-manage the environment along the river.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Central Kalimantan possesses 11 large rivers flowing to Java Sea, one of which is Kahayan River that passes the city of Palangka Raya, but the river has, in fact, been degraded from pollution. Human, private companies, and government institution activities have directly and indirectly caused remarkable change in water quality since 1980s. Plantation and mining companies that put huge investments and public gold mining in Kahayan watershed increase the disposals and wastes into the river, particularly total suspended solids from erosion causing the river water be turbid along the year in Kahayan River and Rungan watershed.

Environmental Agency data of Central Kalimantan Province of 2015 show that Kahayan River has been polluted with lightly polluted status based on pollutant index calculation, especially for turbidity, TSS, BOD, and COD (Environmental Agency of Central Kalimantan, 2015). It is supported with the environmental study of Pulang Pisau Regency in 2014 with more or less similar finding, in which TSS, BOD, COD, Pb, Cl, and phenol reached the standard quality of the environment regulation numbered 82/2001 (Government of Pulang Pisau Regency, 2014).

Ironically, there are many wastes along the bank of Kahayan River that highly disturb the environmental aesthetic and health. The socialization was done to the community along the river that they no longer dispose wastes carelessly that the river environmental conservation could be done and Kahayan River could become new prima donna as a reliable ecotourism area with easy access, since it is located inside the city of Palangka Raya. There are so many plastic disposals and wood from human activities along the bank of Kahayan River.

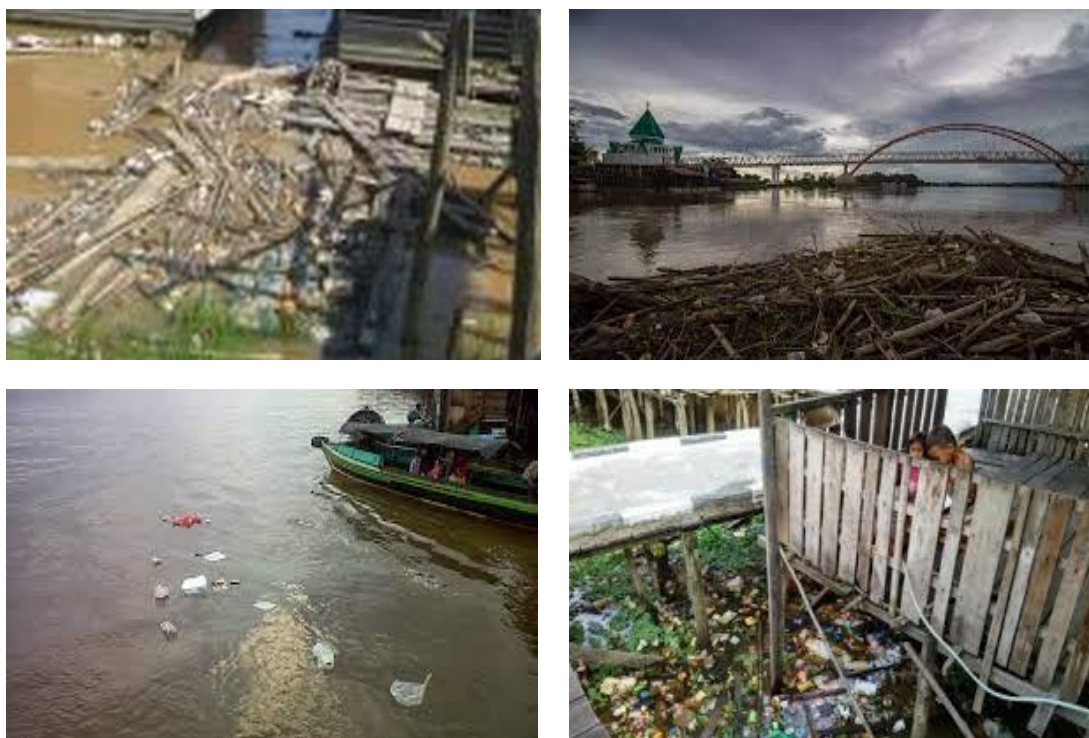


Figure 2. Disposals found in Kahayan River, the city of Palangka Raya



Figure 3. Drainageto Kahayan Riverin Palangka Raya

People's perception on the ecotourism development along Kahayan River bank is closely related to public assessment concerning the comprehension on the meaning, purposes, and goal of environmental and ecotourism management and people's comprehension on the benefit of ecotourism development, particularly in relation with added value that can be gained by the ecotourism to the public income. Interviews with those living along the river of Kahayan showed that nearly all of them were agree and happy with the ecotourism development plan in the area, but they do not know how and what is it?.Local people basically support the ecotourism development, but they still training from related institution to be better understood concerning the ecotourism concept.

The ignorance on the meaning, purposes, and goal of the ecotourism and its development makes the community consider the ecotourism to be the same as mass tourism and not as special interest tourismwith the purpose to enrich exotic knowledge and experience to the tourists.With this poor understanding, the public mind

set and the expectation on tourism development in Palangka Rayawill not be consistent with ecotourism principles.

The community service conducted for socialization on the potential of Kahayan River as.Kahayan River potential as tourism object will be directly able to increase more income to the surrounding communities. Their participation around the river is highly needed to maintain the sustaoinability and the cleanliness of Kahayan River.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

People of Palangka Raya, especially those who live along the bank of Kahayan River, do not really participate in ecotourism development, since there is low awareness and responsibility of the local communitiesto develop their nature potentials and culture.People along Kahayan River have not also been involved in the ecotourism development process from planning, management, and monitoring/evaluation stages.The community service activity through this socialization has highly helped the communities in understanding the benefit of maintaining the sustainability and the cleanliness of Kahayan River that contains ecotourism potentials.

Recommendation

The community service needs to be periodically done to increase the community's participation in conservation and environmental neatness.

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