

THE PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE IN ECOTOURISM VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF KENDAN VILLAGE

Dafyar Eliadi Hardian, Cut Yasinta, Sarah Ayu Agnestia Pelani, Ferdinand Sahat Parulian Tobing

Universitas Islam Syekh Yusuf, Tangerang, Indonesia

Email: dafyar711@unis.ac.id, 2407010077@students.unis.ac.id, 2407010150@students.unis.ac.id, 2407010019@students.unis.ac.id

Abstract. This study analyses the forms and strategies of participatory governance in developing *Kendan* Village as a thematic ecotourism village based on history, culture, and the environment. It employs a descriptive qualitative approach to examine village planning documents and the collaborative practices of local and external actors in supporting community-based tourism development. The results indicate that community participation occurs in various forms, including involvement in village meetings, hospitality training, preservation of local culture, and environmental restoration programs. Strategies for participatory governance are developed through an inter-RW potential zoning approach, enhanced capacity of local human resources, and multi-stakeholder partnerships, which include inter-village collaboration and digital promotion. Despite these promising collaborative initiatives, the management process continues to face challenges such as gaps in community capacity, a lack of established institutions, and limited supporting infrastructure. This study concludes that planned and adaptive participatory governance can be key to successful, sustainable tourism village development. The findings are expected to serve as a conceptual and practical reference for other villages aiming to develop locally-based tourism potential in an inclusive and resilient manner.

Keywords: participatory governance; ecotourism village; village development; community-based tourism; Kendan

INTRODUCTION

Village tourism development is integrated into a sustainable development strategy that prioritises preserving natural resources and local culture while enhancing the well-being of village communities. As tourists increasingly seek authentic and sustainable experiences, Indonesian villages have adopted a community-centred approach to tourism development. This model positions the community as the primary actor, serving not just as a recipient of development but also as the planner, implementer, and manager of tourism initiatives (Hannan & Rahmawati, 2020; Susilawati, 2016; Sutiarmo, 2018). This framework makes participatory governance crucial for fostering collaboration among the community, government, and other stakeholders. In general, participatory governance in tourism village development can enhance community ownership of development programs, strengthen social cohesion, and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of resource management (Utami et al., 2017). Participatory models also promote social innovation, bolster village social capital, and increase the sustainability of development programs. However, participation at the village level still faces several challenges, including a lack of community capacity, weak local institutions, and limited consistent policy support (Andriyani et al., 2020). *Kendan Village* in *Bandung* Regency is an example of a village evolving into a thematic tourism destination by highlighting its historical, cultural, and natural assets as primary attractions. Since it was designated as a pilot tourism village in 2023, the village has developed an Action Plan that includes various programs for community participation. The village's potential, which includes the historic site of the *Kendan Kingdom*, diverse traditional arts, and the natural beauty of the mountains, represents a vital asset for the growth of ecotourism. However, the planning report indicates that community participation remains suboptimal, and tourism management is not yet fully structured or sustainable.

Numerous earlier studies have explored the role of community engagement in developing community-based tourism. For instance, research by Wibowo et al. (2016) revealed that the success of tourism villages heavily depends on the community's active participation in decision-making. Similarly, Hidayat & Mulyadi (2019) emphasised the necessity of local institutional support and capacity-building training to enhance the community's role as a key player in tourism governance. Nevertheless, limited research focuses on the participatory governance process within thematic tourism villages rooted in history and culture, such as *Kendan Village*. Furthermore, while many studies focus on the economic effects of tourism development, few delve into the intricacies of governance dynamics, collaboration among stakeholders, and the socio-cultural challenges accompanying village ecotourism development (Ramadhani & Irawan, 2021). Consequently, a significant gap exists in understanding how the community crafted, executed, and embraced participatory governance in theme-based tourism village development.

This study formulates the following problems: (1) What forms and practices of participatory governance exist in developing ecotourism in *Kendan Village*? (2) Who are the key actors involved, and what collaboration patterns do they exhibit in establishing thematic tourism villages? (3) What challenges and opportunities arise in implementing participatory

governance within the village? The research aims to describe and analyse participatory governance in the context of tourism village development in *Kendan*. The specific objectives include: (1) identifying how the community participates in the planning and management of tourism villages; (2) mapping the actors and collaborative networks involved in tourism village development; and (3) revealing the factors that support or inhibit the implementation of participatory governance at the local level.

This research aims to provide both conceptual and practical contributions. Conceptually, it enhances the literature on participatory governance in developing tourism villages, especially regarding history and culture-based thematic communities. The findings can guide village authorities, support institutions, and other stakeholders in crafting strategies for community empowerment and sustainable, inclusive tourism management. Moreover, fostering participatory governance in tourism villages aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 11, which advocates for inclusive, safe, and sustainable cities and settlements, and Goal 8, which focuses on decent work and economic growth (Bappenas, 2020). Thus, developing tourism villages extends beyond the tourism sector, embodying a comprehensive and community-oriented development approach. In light of this, further exploration of participatory governance dynamics in *Kendan* Village within the thematic tourism village development context is essential. This research outlines participatory practices and reveals strategic elements that can inform other villages in cultivating their tourism potential sustainably and collaboratively.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach to delve deeply into the participatory governance process in developing tourist villages in *Kendan* Village. The qualitative method was selected because it effectively captured social dynamics, actor interactions, and the meanings constructed by local communities in the context of ecotourism development. Data was collected through a document study and content analysis of the *Kendan* Village Planning Action Report prepared in 2023–2024. This document addressed various aspects of tourism village development, including potential identification, program planning, actor involvement, and evaluation. Document study was deemed an appropriate method in governance research, as it provided a comprehensive picture of the policy direction, participation structure, and strategic decisions made by the community and village government (Bowen, 2009; Handayani et al., 2021).

In addition to document analysis, the researcher triangulated by referring to relevant previous studies and additional information from the village's official social media. This triangulation approach aimed to enhance the validity and credibility of the data by comparing and consolidating information from various sources (Flick, 2018). The analysis focused on identifying patterns of community participation, key actors involved, and collaboration strategies used in developing tourism villages. The data analysis technique used was thematic analysis. Data from documents were analysed systematically by grouping information into central themes, such as the form of community participation, the role of the village

government, the involvement of external stakeholders, and the challenges and opportunities faced. Thematic analysis enabled researchers to understand the interrelationships among social variables in complex contexts such as tourist village development (Nowell et al., 2017).

This research was conducted reflectively and critically while adhering to the principles of research ethics, particularly in interpreting data from the community. Although no direct interviews were conducted, the presence of comprehensive and participatory planning documents provided ample opportunities for researchers to explore local narratives meaningfully.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Potential of Kendan Village as an Ecotourism Village

Kendan Village's geographical and cultural characteristics foster its development as an ecotourism destination. Situated in a hilly region covering 318 hectares, the village boasts a diverse landscape, ranging from forested areas to agricultural lands and historical sites. This diversity of landscapes is a significant asset for nature and environment-based ecotourism, allowing tourists to appreciate the beauty of nature and participate in environmental conservation activities (Wibowo et al., 2018). Natural attractions like Kendan Hill, Mount Cibodas, and Curug Aneum provide key experiences in trekking tourism, ecological education, and biodiversity conservation. In addition to its natural advantages, Kendan Village is rich in cultural heritage that can be integrated into ecotourism. The village is located in an area of significant historical value, namely the Tomb of King Kendan and the relics of the Kendan Kingdom, which extend into the neighbouring village of Citaman. The presence of these cultural sites enables the development of thematic historical tourism that not only conveys historical information but also fosters community pride in local identity (Putri & Mulyana, 2020). Intangible cultural heritage also manifests in traditional arts such as Jaipong Dance, Karinding, and Sisingaan performances, which are regularly showcased at local cultural festivals.

Another potential lies in residents' economic activities focusing on processing local resources. Kendan Village has SMEs involved in traditional food production, bamboo craftsmanship, and traditional red brick workshops, all of which can be developed as part of community-based tourism attractions. This concept aligns with the principles of ecotourism, which emphasise local economic empowerment by providing products and services based on village potential (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2015). Additionally, the Kendan Mandiri Women Farmers Group (KWT) and the Pamucatan souvenir centre reflect the village's readiness to welcome tourists while supporting the local economic value chain. The uniqueness of Kendan Village also lies in integrating natural potential, culture, and community activities that support one another. This approach is known as the eco-cultural tourism model, where tourism development only focuses on exploiting natural or cultural attractions but also encourages harmony between humans and their environment (Agustina & Heryanto, 2021). Through this model, tourist villages serve as spaces for tourist consumption and as venues for education and preservation for village communities and visitors.

However, the potential of Kendan Village still needs to be strengthened in terms of planning, promotion, and supporting infrastructure. For example, accessibility to tourist sites is still limited; some locations can only be reached by walking on steep terrain. Additionally, facilities such as public toilets, signboards, and security measures still need to be developed to meet the standards of tourist comfort and safety (Susanti et al., 2019). Nevertheless, the potential of Kendan Village indicates that it is strategically positioned for development as a leading ecotourism village with a participatory and sustainable approach.

Table 1. Mapping the Potential of Kendan Village as an Ecotourism Village

Potential Category	Description	Location	Development Potential
Nature	Kendan Hill, Cibodas Mountain, Curug Aneum, Kendan Terrace Cliff, Batu Tapak	RW 10 and RW 11	Trekking, hiking, panoramic tours, nature, and water conservation tours
Culture and Heritage	Kendan King Tomb, Kendan Royal Site, collaboration with Batu Korsi Site (Citaman Village) Jaipong Dance, Karinding, Sisingaan, Kaulinan Barudak	RW 6, RW 10 and Citaman Village	Thematic historical tours, historical education packages, and local culture tours Cultural performances, traditional art workshops
Local Economy/SMEs	Women Farmers Group (KWT), Pamucatan Souvenir Centre, traditional red brick craftsmen, community homestays	RW 3, RW 9, RW 10	Culinary ecotourism, homestay package development, and typical village products
Agriculture and Environment	Agricultural land, greening area, reservoir program, TPPAS green belt	RW 6, RW 11	Agricultural eco-tourism, fruit orchards, and eco-tourism destinations
Social and Community	Community participation, hospitality training, and use of village social media for promotion	all RW	Human resource capacity building, digital promotion, and village branding strengthening

Form of Community Participation

Community participation in tourism village development is key to ensuring inclusive and sustainable development. In Kendan Village, community participation is evident through various initiatives that directly involve residents in the planning and implementing of tourism activities. One tangible form of participation occurs through residents' involvement in the village development planning meeting (musrenbang), a strategic forum for the community to express ideas and aspirations related to thematic tourism development (Handayani et al.,

2021). This mechanism encourages the creation of tourism programs that are relevant to local needs and characteristics. Participation is also reflected in the involvement of residents in training programs organised by the village government, such as hospitality training and etiquette for welcoming tourists. This program enhances local human resources' capacity and builds residents' confidence to participate actively in the village tourism ecosystem (Purnamasari & Yuliarmi, 2020). Residents are trained to recognise the importance of friendly service, homestay management, and ethics in marketing local products to tourists. Thus, participation is not merely ceremonial but evolves into competency-based involvement.

Moreover, the community's involvement in Kendan Village encompasses environmental restoration efforts to enhance the ecological capacity for nature tourism. Initiatives like tree planting by students and local groups to mitigate landslides and drought illustrate that the community acts not only as onlookers but also as stewards of their village's environmental sustainability. This engagement aligns with ecotourism principles, which foster conservation alongside the empowerment of local populations (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018). Additionally, these activities instil ecological values in younger generations while strengthening social bonds among residents through collaborative efforts.

Table 2. Matrix of Participation Forms of Kendan Village Residents in Ecotourism Development per RW

RW	Types of Activities	Forms of Participation	Local Actors Involved	Relevance to Ecotourism
RW 3	Traditional red brick production	Local culture-based economic activities	Local craftsmen, workshop owners	Traditional industry, educational tourism, and local souvenirs
RW 6	Jaipong dance, Kaulinan Barudak, Karinding, Green Belt TPPAS reforestation program	Cultural preservation, youth & student involvement	Art community, students, and cultural leaders	Cultural tourism, environmental education, and village performances
RW 9	Women Farmers Group (KWT), Pamucatan souvenir centre	Village culinary production, creative economy	Homemakers, SMEs	Local culinary tourism, tourism-based local economy
RW 10	Tebing Teras Kendan, Kendan Kingdom Site, red brick workshop, cultural field	Preservation of historical sites and performance spaces	Traditional leaders, site managers, and youth art groups	Historical tourism and open-air art performances
RW 11	Forest development, embung, orchard, and eco-tourism area	Community-based reforestation and conservation	Farmers, students, and youth organisations	Nature tourism, environmental conservation, and agro-tourism
All RW	Development planning deliberation (musrenbang),	Collective decision-making, capacity building	All elements of society, village officials, and	Participatory governance, village readiness to receive

RW	Types of Activities	Forms of Participation	Local Actors Involved	Relevance to Ecotourism
	hospitality training		development cadres	tourists

On the cultural side, Kendan villagers actively maintain and perform traditional arts during village activities and annual festivals. Activities such as Jaipong Dance, Sisingaan, and Kaulinan Barudak performances are entertaining and serve as a space for expression and cultural identity that distinguishes Kendan Village from other destinations. Residents' participation in these arts creates a reciprocal relationship between cultural preservation and tourism development, where local culture is not overly commodified but nurtured by the performers themselves (Suwena & Putra, 2016). However, despite the emergence of various forms of participation, community engagement still faces structural challenges. Some residents do not fully understand the long-term benefits of tourism village development, and there are still inequalities in information and role distribution between RW areas. This suggests that community participation cannot be separated from the village government's and supporting partners' systematic facilitation efforts. As Arnstein (1969) suggested in his ladder of participation theory, which is still relevant today, actual participation must move from mere consultation to joint decision-making (Agustina & Heryanto, 2021). Therefore, strengthening institutional capacity and fostering more inclusive communication are important prerequisites for improving the quality of citizen participation in the future.

Participative Governance Strategy

The participatory governance strategy in the development of Kendan Village prioritises collaboration among actors, including community members and external stakeholders. This approach aligns with the principles of good governance, which position the community not only as beneficiaries of development but also as decision-makers in the process (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Andriyani et al., 2020). In Kendan Village, strategy formulation occurs through village deliberation forums (musdes) and village development planning meetings (musrenbang), which act as deliberative spaces for residents, village officials, and representatives of community groups to agree on the direction of tourism village development collectively. One primary strategy involves integrating the tourism sector with environmental and social issues. This is reflected in the essential land restoration and reservoir construction programs, which are executed in a participatory manner by engaging students, farmers, and youth groups. These activities not only aim to reduce the risk of disasters such as landslides and droughts, but also seek to establish education and conservation-based tourism areas. This strategy aligns with the ecotourism approach, emphasising the significance of environmental conservation and local community empowerment as the main pillars of tourist destination development (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018).

Furthermore, Kendan Village employs a cluster-based development strategy at the RW level to ensure an equitable distribution of development benefits. Each RW is developed according to its unique potential, such as RW 6 for arts and green spaces, RW 10 for historical

tourism and cultural sites, and RW 11 for agricultural areas and educational forests. This model enhances each area's local character and fosters inter-RW connectivity through integrated tourist routes. This strategy reflects the application of the destination zoning concept on a local scale, which has proven effective in managing tourist attractions systematically and sustainably (Setiawan & Hartanto, 2021).

Table 3. Participatory Governance Strategy in the Development of Kendan Village Ecotourism Village

Strategy	Implementing	Actors Strategic	Objectives Indicators of Success
Participatory Musrenbang and Musdes	Village government, RW/RT representatives, community leaders, and local communities	Develop a tourism development plan based on the needs and potential of the community.	Development of RPJMDes and Tourism Action Plan documents with cross-community participation
Training and Capacity Building for Tourism Human Resources	Tourism Office, NGOs, academics, and the village government	Improve community competence in tourism services, hospitality, and ecotourism.	Regular training organised; increasing number of residents involved in tourism activities.
Potential Zoning per RW (Cluster-based development)	Village government, local leaders, and RW communities	Optimising the role of RW according to local potential for equitable distribution of tourism benefits	Integrated tourism route developed; economic activities based on RW potential increased.
Community-based Reforestation and Environmental Conservation	Farmer groups, students, RW, Environment Office	Address critical land, strengthen environmental carrying capacity for sustainable tourism.	The percentage of green land increased; landslide-prone areas decreased; realisation of eco-tourism in fruit orchards.
Strengthening MSMEs and Village Creative Economy Products	Local UMKM, KWT, Disperindag, BUMDes	Increase residents' income through local speciality tourism products.	Increased village superior products; increased local souvenir transactions
Inter-Village	Village government,	Increase residents'	Establishment of cross-

Strategy	Implementing	Actors Strategic	Objectives Indicators of Success
Collaboration (Kendan Citaman) for Historical Tourism	cultural - conservationists, and traditional leaders	income through local speciality tourism products.	village historical tour packages; increased visits to historical sites
Digital and Social Media Promotion of Tourism Villages	Village media team, youth, Communication and Information Office	Building an integrated historical narrative to strengthen thematic tourism	Increase in village account followers; increase in digital-based tourism visits
Establishment of Tourism Village Management Board (independent tourism community)	Village government, community representatives, and youth leaders	Increase the visibility and attractiveness of tourism villages in the digital space.	Formation of formal institutions; SOP for management and distribution of tourism business results
Multi-stakeholder partnerships (government, private sector, academics, NGOs)	Kemenparekraf, corporate CSR, universities, environmental NGOs	Ensure transparent, participatory, and sustainable tourism governance	Increased number of supporting partners; implementation of cross-sector programs that support tourism development

Moreover, the collaborative strategy is reinforced by engaging various stakeholders such as government agencies (Tourism, Agriculture, Environment), academics, local communities, media, and the private sector through corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. This partnership provides technical assistance and funding and bolsters village networks for promotion, program innovation, and building local institutional capacities. Such cross-sector collaborations are essential for fostering adaptive and responsive tourism governance, as highlighted in the collaborative governance literature (Emerson et al., 2012). Despite implementing numerous strategies, challenges remain, including disparities in residents' capacities, gaps in information, and insufficient documentation of good practices for replication. Consequently, a more structured strategy is essential to enhance the institutions of tourism villages in the future, including establishing a community-based tourism management organisation. This organisation is anticipated to oversee assets, ensure fair benefit distribution, and uphold the sustainability of the tourism village program. This method

has been effective in various other tourism villages in Indonesia and is endorsed by the Ministry of Tourism in the management guidelines for tourism villages (Kemenparekraf, 2020).

CONCLUSIONS

The development of *Kendan Village* as an ecotourism destination highlights the vital role of participatory governance in fostering sustainable, inclusive, and community-driven village progress. Community involvement is reflected not only in tangible activities like environmental restoration, cultural preservation, and tourism management, but also in planning and decision-making through village forums. Collaborative strategies—such as capacity-building, neighbourhood (RW)-based zoning, and institutional strengthening—demonstrate effective synergy among local actors, government, academics, and external partners. Despite these efforts, challenges remain, including disparities in resident capacity, limited infrastructure, and the need for more robust institutional frameworks. Addressing these issues requires reinforcing community-based tourism institutions, enhancing digital literacy for promotion, and broadening cross-sector partnerships. Future research should explore the long-term impacts of participatory governance on social cohesion and economic resilience, as well as innovative models for institutional development in thematic ecotourism villages.

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