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Community perception and participation in mangrove ecotourism development in Lembar area west Lombok regency

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ABSTRACT

In 2015 the area was developed into a mangrove ecotourism area as a form of proper management to ensure the conservation and economic sustainability of local communities. Community perception and participation will determine the success of developing a mangrove ecosystem area for ecotourism activities. Community participation in management is not always high for each coastal region due to differences in community characteristics that can affect the level of community perception and participation. This study aims to determine and describe the community perception and participation in mangrove ecotourism development in the Lembar Village of West Lombok regency. The research method was carried out through a qualitative research approach with the technique of determining informants based on purposive sampling techniques. The results showed that the overall community perception and participation in mangrove ecotourism development in the Lembar area be categorized low was caused by the community characteristics who did not have good knowledge and understanding of the mangrove ecosystem and the benefits of its development. Low community perception has an impact on the low level of community participation.

Key words *: Community, Ecotourism, Perception, Participation*

Introduction

Mangrove ecosystem management for the development of ecotourism is an alternative step to support the sustainability of the ecosystem and the community's economy. Fishery products and products from mangrove forests can be used as supporting commodities and attractions for ecotourism activities (Tuwo, 2011; Burhanuddin, 2011). The development of mangrove ecotourism is something that cannot be separated from community participation because local communities are users of resources directly or indirectly. Community involvement in each stage of program implementation according to Cohen and Uphoff (1977) in Rosyida and Nasdian (2011) is the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stage, and enjoying the results.

The meaning of community participation in the concept of conservation and development is increasingly debated (Scheyvens, 1999; Tosun, 2000; Lash, 2003; Mowforth and Munt, 2003; Kiss, 2004; Eshun, 2011; Yeboah, 2013). In community participation, Cline-Cole (1995) described it like an organized effort to increase community role and control over resources. Kiss (2004) added that local communities have the right and obligation to be involved in the

process of planning and implementing tourism activities in the area because the surrounding communities are communities that coexist with resources and provide social and environmental impacts.

In general, participation can be defined as participation in various activities. Participation is an active process and initiative taken from the community members themselves, guided by their own way of thinking, using means and processes (institutions and mechanisms) through which they can assert control effectively. The starting point for participation is to decide, act, then reflect on the action as a conscious subject. This participation is accompanied by a critical awareness that fosters creative power in itself (Nasdian, 2014). Communities are given the ability to identify needs and problems, as well as the ability to manage their potential independently. Nasdian (2014) also explained that participation in community development must create maximum participation with the aim that all people in the community can be actively involved in community processes and activities. Community participation illustrates how redistribution of power occurs between providers of activities and groups of recipients of activities. Multilevel community participation is in accordance with gradations, degrees of authority, and responsibilities that can be seen in the decision-making process (Rosyida and Nasdian, 2011).

The development of mangrove ecotourism is a way to provide wide access to local communities to get direct or indirect benefits (Amal and Baharuddin, 2016). This is in accordance with government programs in poverty alleviation of coastal communities, where the community as actors and beneficiaries of the development of areas based on potential and community problems. Thus, the purpose of developing the area for mangrove ecotourism can be to preserve ecosystems and improve community welfare (Tuwo, 2011). Open access in the pattern of utilizing the area will increase public awareness and mindset towards the urgency of managing mangrove forests for ecotourism development. Community awareness and mindset are the main basis influencing community perception and participation, community awareness, and mindset are strongly influenced by age, sex, education, length of stay, occupation and basic income and dependents (Wardhani, 2016; Sawairnathan and Halimoon, 2017).

One of the potential natural resources in the West Lombok coastal area is the mangrove ecosystem. The potential area of mangroves in coastal areas and small islands of West Lombok Regency is 501,9 ha. Spatially, the distribution of mangroves in the coastal areas and small islands of West Lombok Regency can be grouped into three regions, namely the Bangko-Bangko and Pelangan areas, the Lembar and Sekotong areas, and the Sepi Bay area. The area of mangrove forests in the Bangko-Bangko and Pelangan areas is 178,4 ha which includes Bangko-Bangko, LabuhanPoh, Pelangan, GiliGede and GiliLayar. The mangrove forest in the Lembar and Sekotong area is 205,5 ha with distribution including Medang, Telaga Lupi, Empol, Buwur bay, and Lembar. The mangrove forest in the SepiBay area is 118,0 ha (DKP Lobar, 2016).

The mangrove ecosystem in the Lembar area has a high ecological role and is used as a pilot project area for mangrove conservation and rehabilitation activities in the southern West Lombok Regency. In 2015 the area was developed into a mangrove ecotourism area as a form of appropriate management to ensure the sustainability of conservation and rehabilitation while at the same time encouraging the economy of local communities in a sustainable manner. According to Reimer and Walter (2013); Jalani (2012); Rizky *et al.,* (2016); and Hanafiah *et al.,* (2010) the development of mangrove ecotourism can provide direct economic benefits to local communities in terms of developing alternative livelihoods and business opportunities. According to Tuwo (2011) that the development and utilization of mangrove ecosystems for ecotourism is one alternative development that can help overcomes the problem of utilization that is destructive and threatens the preservation of resources.

Community involvement and participation will determine the success of developing a mangrove ecosystem area for ecotourism activities (Hanafiah *et al.,* 2010). Local community support for tourism activities is needed to guarantee the commercial, socio-cultural, physiological, political and industrial value of economic sustainability. The role of the community in influencing tourism development activities through collaboration with the government is very important (Jamaludin *et al.,* 2009). According to Tanjung *et al.,* (2017) in general, community participation is low because members are less involved in management activities which include aspects of planning, setting boundaries, implementing activities and monitoring evaluation. Thus, the

purpose of this research is to find out and analyze the perceptions and levels of community participation in the development of mangrove ecotourism in the Lembar West Lombok Regency.

Materials and Methods

Site Map of Research

The mangrove ecosystem in the Lembar village is one of the areas in the Lembar Bay region which is administratively located in the Lembarsub-district of the West Lombok regency of West Nusa Tenggara (Fig. 1).

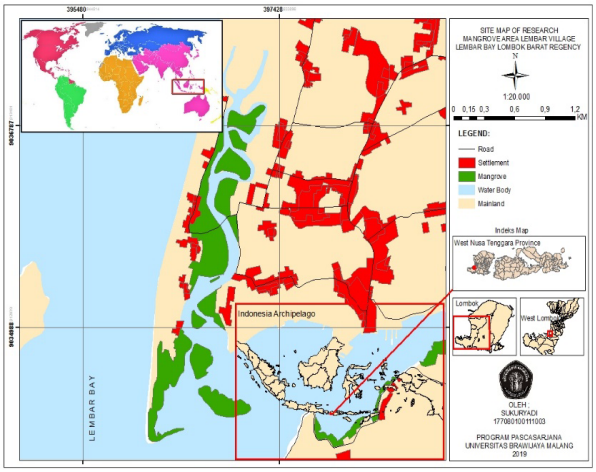

Fig. 1. Site Map of Research

Determination of Respondent Techniques

Respondents are people who are considered to know well about the problem under study and are willing to provide information. In qualitative research, the position of the respondents is very important, this is because the respondent is the foundation of data collection for researchers in revealing research problems (Arikunto, 2014). The technique used in determining respondents is none probably sampling technique, namely purposive sampling where the number of members of the population is deliberately chosen based on the objectives of a study with consideration of having a direct connection and involvement with the research area (Sugiyono, 2014). The number of respondents in this study was 52 respondents consisting of 50 people from community elements who are directly adjacent to the mangrove ecosystem and 2 people from elements of the village government and the head of the resource management group. Community respondents are elements of the productive age group (15-64 years old) with various backgrounds and professions such as traders, fishermen, entrepreneurs, community leaders who are resident and know the condition of mangrove ecosystems in the area and have links to the use of natural resources in the coastal area of Lembarvillage ofLembar sub-district. Thus, researchers can assume that a community group is a group of people who have knowledge, awareness, and ability to interact with the surrounding environment.

Data collection technique

Community social data consisting of perceptions and participation levels were collected directly at the study site through structured interviews with respondents (guidelines with a questionnaire). In this study, a questionnaire was made to obtain data on social aspects of the community which included perceptions and community participation levels in the management of mangrove ecosystems for ecotourism development. So, the type of questionnaire used in this study is a closed questionnaire type, which contains questions that are accompanied by a number of alternative answers. Respondents in answering are bound to the answers provided (Margono, 2010). This questionnaire uses a type of Likert Scale (summated rating scale) used to measure the attitudes and perceptions of a person or group of people about social phenomena (Sugiyono, 2014). Another opinion also states that a Likert scale is a number of positive and negative questions about an attitude. The choice of answer items is always, sometimes and not (Margono, 2010).

Data analysis technique

The social analysis conducted in this study uses descriptive qualitative analysis methods. The data used as the basis for the analysis were obtained by conducting direct interviews with the community using a questionnaire. The information that will be explored is how the social conditions of the community, in this case, is the perception and level of community participation in supporting the management of mangrove ecosystems for ecotourism development as in Table 1. Analysis of perceptions and levels of participation in this study includes participation in the planning, implementation, evaluation and monitoring stages and enjoy results in the low, medium and high categories using a Likert scale

Table 1. Indicators of community perception and participation level for mangrove ecotourism development

No	Indicators	Parameters
1	The level of community perception	1. Ability to identify the potentials of mangrove ecosystems, 2. Ability to explain the understanding of concepts and principles of ecotourism, 3. Ability to understand and apply the concept of ecotourism-based management of mangrove ecosystems, 4. Ability to understand the urgency of developing ecotourism as an alternative that can maintain sustainability nature and economy of society.
2	The level of community participation	1. Involvement in various forms of activities or programs to develop mangrove ecotourism, 2. Involvement in integrating local natural and cultural potentials, 3. Involvement in managing one of the tourist attractions and souvenirs in the mangrove ecosystem, 4. Committed together with other communities in managing mangrove ecosystems in planning, implementing, evaluating and monitoring.

approach (Margono, 2010; Sugiyono, 2014).

Results

According to the Central Statistics Agency of West Lombok Regency (2016), the population of West Lombok Regency in 2015 was 654.892 people, consisting of 320.102 male and 334.790 female,with an area of 1.053,92 km^2, the average of population density was 621 people/km^2. Distribution of population according to sub-districts ranges from 37.176 - 85.929 people, most in Gunung Sari District and the smallest in Kuripan District. While the population density according to the sub-district ranges from 116 - 2734 people/km^2, the highest is in Kediri District and the lowest is in Sekotong District. Judging from its density, the population distribution in West Lombok Regency is very uneven, ranging from very low to high density. Districts with relatively high population density be sides Kediri are Gerung, Labuapi, Batulayar, and Kuripan.

The population in the coastal areas including the Sekotong, Labuapi, Gerung, Lembar and Batulayar Districts was 307.210 people or 46,91% of the total population. This shows that almost half of the population of West Lombok Regency lives in coastal areas and small islands. The population density in the coastal area was 428,59 people/km^2, the highest density is in Labuapi District and the lowest is in Sekotong District. The composition of the population according to sex or sex ratio in West Lombok Regency in 2013 was 96, meaning that there were 96 male residents for every 100 female residents. This shows that the male population is less than the female population. The sex ratio of the population by the district is 90 to 100, almost all districts have a sex ratio below 100, which means that the male population is less than the female population, only in Batulayar sub-district are balanced between male and female residents.

Population composition by age group in West Lombok Regency in 2016 peaked in the 0-14 year age group and there was a tendency for the composition to decrease with increasing groups. The composition of the population according to this age group shows that the composition of the age population of children is relatively high. This shows that the majority of the population is in non-productive age, the non-productive population is the population who are generally in dependents consisting of groups of children (0-14 years old) and the elderly group (>65 years old). The composition of the productive age population (15-64 years old) in West Lombok Regency in 2016 was 64.91% while the elderly population (> 65 years old) amounted to 5.11% and the population of children 0-14 years amounted to 29.98%. The distribution of the composition of the population of productive age by district ranges from 57, 09% to 65.72%. The percentage of dependents on the district-scale can be seen in the dependency ratio. Dependency ratio is a ratio that illustrates a large number of non-productive population borne by 100 productive age population, so it is necessary to pay attention to the composition of the population by productive age as shown in Table 2.

The education level of the population in an area

Table 2. Population Composition by Productive Age Group in West Lombok Regency in 2015

No.	District	Population Composition (people)			Dependency ratio
		0-14 yrs	15-64 yrs	>64 yrs	
1.	Sekotong	17.450	33.201	7.503	75.16
2.	Lembar	13.792	30.226	1.980	52.18
3.	Gerung	23.054	50.633	3.320	52.09
4.	Labuapi	18.861	41.348	2.709	52.17
5.	Batulayar	14.098	30.856	2.020	52.24
6.	Kediri	16.810	36.845	2.415	52.18
7.	Kuripan	10.561	23.138	1.516	52.20
8.	Narmada	27.290	59.830	3.921	52.17
9.	Lingsar	19.691	43.158	2.828	52.18
10.	Gunungsari	24.407	53.450	3.501	52.21
Amount	186.014	402.685	31.713	54.07	
Percentage	29.98	64.91	5.11	54.06	

Source: The Central Statistics Agency of West Lombok (2016)

describes the level of quality of human resources in the region. The highest level of education completed by residents over the age of 10 years in West Lombok Regency in 2015 was still relatively low and did not complete elementary school reaching 39.18%. The population that has an elementary school level of education is still high at 25.72% and those who finish secondary school is 16.83%. The percentage of the population having a senior high school education level or equivalent was 16.33%, meanwhile, the population with the first and second diploma level was 0.35%, the third Diploma was 0.53%, fourth diploma or bachelor was 3.16% and undergraduate and postgraduate education was 0.17%. The education level of the male population is generally higher than the female population, the percentage of the male and female population completing junior high school is 19.89% and 13.98% respectively. The percentage of male and female residents who completed senior high school or equivalent was 16.37% and 11.89% respectively, while the percentage of the education level of the male and female population at the elementary school level is almost balanced at 31-34%.

Based on the description of population data, it can be concluded that in general almost half of the population of West Lombok Regency are in coastal areas and small islands with low education and income levels, uneven population density, male population is smaller than female population, high dependency ratio, dominated by non-productive age population groups. Thus, the characteristics of coastal communities in the Lembar area West Lombok are categorized as having low-quality human resources. This can be seen from the level of education which is largely dominated by the category of not schooling and completing elementary school at the age of 10 years and over, having a low-income level with a relatively large dependency ratio of 52,18%. These community characteristics will have a significant influence on the perception and level of community participation in the management of mangrove ecosystems for ecotourism development. According to Wardhani(2016), the perception and level of community participation are strongly influenced by the characteristics of the local community.

Based on observations conducted through interviews both openly and closely show that most of the community's perception of the management of mangrove ecosystems for ecotourism development in the Lembar area West Lombok has not shown a good level of understanding. This can be seen from the lack of understanding of most people about the functions and benefits of mangrove ecosystems. About 70% of the total respondents have a low level of understanding of the role and function of mangrove ecosystems as an ecotourism development area, 27% of respondents are categorized well-understood, and only 3% of respondents have a high level of understanding of the existence of mangrove ecosystems. This shows that most local people have a low level of understanding of the existence and management of mangroves for ecotourism development. The level of understanding of the community around the Lembar area of the existence of mangrove ecosystems can be seen in Figure 2.

Based on observations about the level of commu-

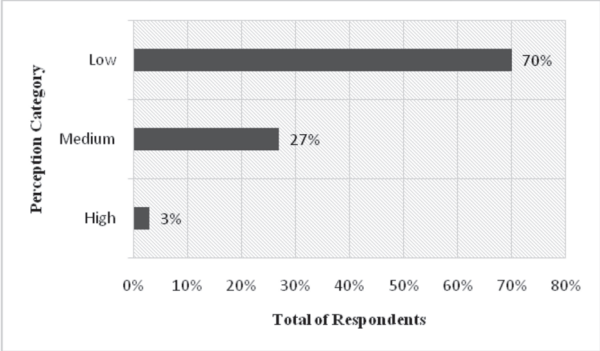

Fig. 2. Percentage of Community Understanding Level

nity participation in the management of mangrove ecosystems for ecotourism development shows that most people have a low level of participation both at the planning, implementation, evaluation and monitoring stages and enjoy the results of mangrove ecosystem management activities and their development which includes socialization and extension activities, nurseries, planting, maintenance, and supervision as well as utilization of the results. The variables that have a dominant influence on the level of participation in the management of mangrove ecosystems are one of the variables of knowledge and community perception (Faizal *et al.*, 2017: Sawairnathan and Halimoon, 2017; Hakim and Darusman, 2015). Community perception in this study is categorized as low so that it brings an impact on the low level of participation as well. According to community attitudes and perceptions, the results of observations in the community, around 70% -79% of local people have a low level of participation in the management of mangrove ecosystems and their development (Fig. 3). Based on Figure 3 shows that the majority of local communities have a low level of participation both at the planning, implementation, evaluation and monitoring stages of mangrove management in the Lembar of West Lombok.

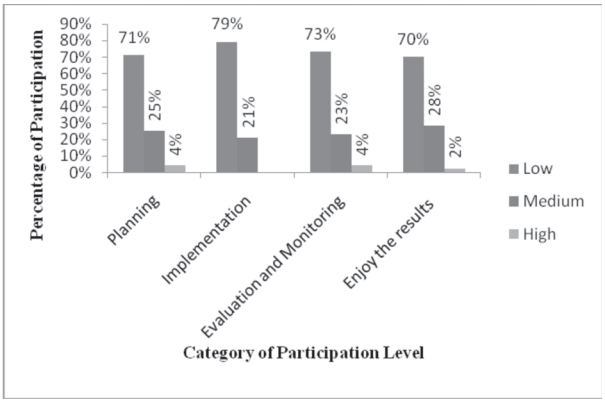

Fig. 3. Percentage of Community Participation Level

Discussion

The development of mangrove ecotourism is inseparable from the role of the central and regional governments and community. The government and the community are responsible for four main things namely; planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating and enjoying the results (Fauzi, 2005). The implementation of the development must be followed by the participation of many parties, the government not only provides financial support, but guidance and assistance must still be done. The role of the government can be seen from the assistance of coastal areas based on the potential, problems, and needs of coastal villages. The development of mangrove ecotourism in the Lembar area West Lombok regency is one form of regional potential based management program. Thus, the program carried out by the local government through the Marine and Fisheries Department of West Lombok Regency in collaboration with the Coastal Community Development Project – International Fund for Agricultural Development (CCDP-IFAD) is based on the potential, issues, and needs of the local coastal community through resource inventory activities in each village. This activity is a first step in the development of the mangrove eco-tourism of Lembar because this can contribute to the conservation of the area by (a) generating income that can be used to manage the area in a sustainable manner, (b) providing local employment, and (c) instilling a sense of ownership community (Jalani, 2012). Village-based information gathering is a form of mangrove ecosystem management that prioritizes community involvement. The program's socialization activities become a major step in shaping community perceptions and mindsets, this is done to shape the mentality of the community that is aware of participating in and estimating the sustainability of the ecosystem as a place for sustaining their livelihoods (Jalani, 2012).

One of the patterns of utilization of mangrove ecosystems that pay attention to conservation is mangrove ecotourism. Mangrove ecosystem management for the development of ecotourism is a step in the integration of conservation and economic

concepts that must be supported by various parties both the government and the community (Fauzi, 2004). Based on this it shows that the socialization activities of the local government made the community begin to realize the importance of protecting mangrove ecosystems that can increase economic value by making the forest an ecotourism area. According to Tuwo (2011) and Burhanuddin (2011) ecotourism as an effort to maintain ecosystem sustainability and utilize ecosystem services that can improve the economy of the community.

Community development and assistance through empowerment programs are needed as a medium to raise the spirit of awareness and mindset of the surrounding environment, the community is a driving force and key to the success of an ecotourism development program (Puspitasari *et al.,* 2015). Community involvement plays a significant role important both in planning, implementing, evaluating,monitoring and enjoy the results. According to Amin and Ibrahim (2015) that community participation influences sustainable area development. At present, the development of ecotourism is an alternative in promoting unique and natural ecosystem services that are still maintained their authenticity. According to Tuwo (2011) that the development and utilization of mangrove ecosystems for ecotourism is one alternative development that can help overcome the problem of utilization that is destructive and threatens the preservation of resources.

The development of the mangrove ecotourism Lembar area was initiated at the end of 2014 with the government and the community through the Marine and Fisheries department West Lombok Regency in the Coastal Community Development Project –International Fund for Agricultural Development (CCDP-IFAD) program. There are several facilities that were built as a means to develop mangrove ecotourism of Lembarsuch as bridge track, gazebo, and floating houses. Community involvement in the stages of planning and implementing the development of mangrove ecotourism is categorized high, this can be seen from the forms of participation at the time of socialization activities and community-based resource inventory and program implementation stages, but at the evaluation and monitoring stage and enjoy the results categorized as low this can be seen from not running the sustainable development of ecotourism areas. This is because the ability of the local community has not been independent in the management of mangrove ecosystems for the development of ecotourism. Independence in management is strongly influenced by the characteristics of the local community. The characteristics of coastal communities in each region are different in responding to a government program. According to Wardhani *et al.,* (2016) that characteristics of coastal communities which include age, sex, education, length of stay, employment and basic income and the number of dependents can influence the perception and level of community participation in management activities.

The characteristics of coastal communities according to the Central Statistics Agency of West Lombok Regency (2016), at the district and sub-district level the number of male population is less than the female population, the composition of the population of children is relatively high, the distribution of the composition of the population of productive age ranges from 57.09% to 65.72%, while the non-productive age population (old age and children) is 35.09%, the highest level of education of the population aged over 10 years is relatively low, with the percentage of the population not completing elementary school reaching 39.18%, and most livelihoods as fishermen with low education and income levels. According to Sawairnathan and Halimoon (2017), people's knowledge and perception of the ecosystem is influenced by social demographic factors such as age, level of education, employment, length of stay and distance of residence from the mangrove ecosystem.

Based on the Central Statistics Agency data of West Lombok Regency (2016) shows that the level of community education at the age of 10 years is mostly dominated at the level of not schooling and only completing elementary school. This shows that public education is categorized as low. According to Sawairnathan and Halimoon (2017) that education plays a role in increasing public awareness and appreciation. Thus, coastal communities do not yet have socio-economic carrying capacity in developing mangrove ecotourism so they have not been able to have a significant impact on the level of community awareness and participation community.

Community involvement in the development of mangrove ecotourism in the Lembar area of West Lombok as a whole has not shown a high category when seen from programs that have been implemented. This can be seen from the government and private programs are still temporal and do not pro-

vide added value to the concern and public awareness of the environment. One of the government programs through the collaboration of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries with the Community Development Project-International Fund for Agricultural Development (CDP-IFAD) in 2013-2016 and private programs through Indonesia Marine and Climate Support-United States Agency for International Development (IMACS-USAID) in 2013 have not shown significant changes in public perception and awareness in supporting the sustainability of activities. The assistance and coaching activities through the empowerment program have not demonstrated the independence of coastal communities in continuing the management program that has been initiated with the government and the private sector, each activity is only able to run at the beginning of the program at the planning and implementation stages, while the evaluation, monitoring and sustainability stages of the program cannot be managed independently by the community. Thus, seeing the objective conditions, pure community involvement cannot fully support the development of ecotourism in the Lembararea.

Community aspirations and initiatives are urgently needed in the development of ecotourism. Communities are required to have managerial skills and maturity evenly in the management process which is left to community institutions. This managerial ability is the ability of local people to organize themselves and their communities. This ability is not owned by the local community so that the management process does not run independently, in other words, it requires the involvement of the government and other stakeholders in maintaining the sustainability of management.

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