

# Tunggu Tubang women empowerment effects in the development of ecotourism in Fajar Bulan Village, Semende Sub-district, Muara Enim district, South Sumatera-Indonesia

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**Submission date:** 16-Jun-2023 09:27PM (UTC+0700)

**Submission ID:** 2117324899

**File name:** 7\_EEC-15\_Eni\_Murdiati,\_Sriati,\_dkk.pdf (84.39K)

**Word count:** 4118

**Character count:** 21632

# Tunggu Tubang women empowerment effects in the development of ecotourism in Fajar Bulan Village, Semende Sub-district, Muara Enim district, South Sumatera-Indonesia

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(Received 9 March, 2018; accepted 20 April, 2018)

## ABSTRACT

The tradition of Tunggu Tubang is an ecotourism potential in Fajar Bulan Village. The study aims to analyze the social and cultural factors in Semende sub-district and the potential of the village as a tourist destination. The study uses the qualitative method with the form of ethnography study. The data are collected using in-depth interview technique, documentation, and observation. The results show that the supporting factors of local tradition and natural resources from agriculture, farming, and plantation support the Fajar Bulan Village as the object of ecotourism. The tradition of Tunggu Tubang as a local wisdom could contribute to the welfare of the community. The management is necessary to increase the potential of the village as a tourist destination.

*Key words* : Empowerment, Tunggu Tubang, Development, Ecotourism

## Introduction

The cultural diversity and the natural beauty of Indonesia with the unique traditions and the livelihoods of rural people become an attraction for tourism and eco-tourism destination. Ecotourism is commonly in demand by the tourist who has high intellectual and understanding and sensitivity of ethics, morality, and values and make the ecotourism a new experience (Hall dan Weiler,

1992; Steven, 2010). The ecotourism development has a correlation and influenced by the tradition of the local community (Drake, 1991; Scheyvens, 2000; Drumm and Moore, 2002; Fennell, 2003; Dunn, 2007). The potential tourism could be developed without undermining the local socio-ecology (Das and Chatterjee, 2015a; 2015b). In order to maintain the balance of the environment, the norm, the values, and the rules are implemented for the generations. The local wisdom is applied to the community

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of Semende Darat Ulu, Muara Enim, especially in the Environmental aspect.

The local wisdom that has become the tradition in Semende is known as *Tunggu tubang*. *Tunggu tubang* is the oldest daughter who is the successor or someone who was responsible for the parents, the properties of families such as field, house, ponds, gardens, etc. The woman of *Tunggu tubang* plays a role to take care of her brother and sister to adulthood and have their own family. In this tradition, if there is no the eldest daughter, then the wife of the eldest son becomes heir (*Tunggu tubang ngangkit*). Although all the property fell to the *Tunggu tubang*, it does not mean that those properties are allowed to be traded (Iskandar, 2003; Muhammad, 2006).

In this decades, there are changes in the internal and external of Semende women who have no longer to follow their customary law. However, the changes of function and role affect the management and environmental sustainability. For example, the Ulayat land ownership for agriculture allows only one or two hectares which were managed by the woman of *Tunggu tubang* and their families are now allowed to fulfill their life needs. The study aims to empower the women of *Tunggu tubang* and find the correlation to the development of ecotourism in Fajar Bulan village.

#### Research methodology

The study used the qualitative methods to find the hypotheses with the limited samples and explored the research topics by observing the participants at the study sites (Creswell, 2007). The data source was chosen purposively. The subject number was determined when the redundancy was achieved (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975; Creswell, 2007). The main subjects and informants were the elders and community of *Tunggu tubang*. In addition, the people who really know the internal and external condition of Fajar Bulan Village was used as the additional informants. All the informants should have the extensive knowledge about the social life of Fajar Bulan village community and have the strong influence of the community. The informants were expected to provide the appropriate input on the women of *Tunggu tubang* both the environmental management process and *Tunggu tubang* role related to the development of Fajar Bulan as the ecotourism destination.

## Results and Discussion

Fajar Bulan village has a large administration area compared to the other village in the sub-district of Semende Darat Ulu. Geographically, Fajar Bulan Village has an area of 4.600 Ha consisting of 3000 Ha as lands and 1.600 Ha of Paddy field. Fajar Bulan Village approximately located at 1.205 above sea level with the rainfall level of 500 mm with the average temperature of 18-30°C. The wavy region of Fajar Bulan reached around 85%. The natural resource of Fajar Bulan consists of agricultural, livestock, plantation, and lands.

The distances of Fajar Bulan to the Provincial capital, The District Capital of Muara Enim, and Sub-district of Semende Darat Ulu were 382 km, 190 km, and 1.5 km, respectively. Fajar Bulan is directly adjacent to the villages of Arentamai, Tanjung Raya, Tenam Bungkok, and Tanjung Agung in the north, south, west, and east, respectively.

#### The life in Fajar Bulan village

The community in Fajar Bulan village used the Malay language as the native language of Semende in the daily communication. In the use of language, there was a classification of communication to the position of the local community. For example, in order to call the mother-in-law which was not the same as the mother (placing the position of the role because of the status factor in the society).

The most people of Fajar Bulan had the livelihoods of the rice and coffee farmers. They only plant one type of rice that called as *Padi panjang* (Long rice). They harvested rice was not for sale, but stored in *Tengkian* (rice barn) for food reserves for one year. While the harvested coffee was sold to Lampung, Palembang, and Jakarta.

The socio-cultural life of Fajar Bulan people was the family relationship which had the high solidarity among the community. Furthermore, the cultural preservation and development were well maintained in which showed by the existence of traditional arts groups such as traditional dance groups, martial arts, and *rebana* (music). In term of the cultural system, Fajar Bulan village community consisting of Semende people used the major system. The major system was the inheritance system in which the estate was owned by the oldest heirs managed and utilized for the benefit of young heirs whether female or male until they were adults and could support and take care of themselves. The

major systems would be strengthened by the existence of Lembaga Adat headed by a chairman of Pemangku adat.

### The social culture of Tunggu Tubang

“Tunggu Tubang” is a social culture of Semende. The culture which gives the responsibility to the eldest daughter of a family to take care of inheritance in the form of houses and farmland (note: all the properties is forbidden to be traded). In addition, the eldest daughter should guarantee the lives of parents, and the lives of her brothers and sisters until they are adults and having families (Iskandar, 2003; Saputra and Wirawan, 2010). The properties should be maintained and managed well to support the lives of the family until the next generation of Tunggu tubang. The properties are forbidden to be traded because it is feared to cause the family members seeking their life out of the home and out of Tunggu tubang properties (farmland, field, etc). This term is known as the “Semende Raje-raje”.

Furthermore, the male heirs have the responsibility to oversee the overall treasure of Tunggu Tubang in order to guarantee the properties would not be damaged, reduced, and lost. He has no power to wait and keep the properties. He is in charge and called as the little of Meraje. While anak belai is a descendant daughter (Kelawai Meraje). The power of Meraje is only in the house of his tribe of the mother. The Meraje does not have the power at the house of his wife. The levels of the Meraje area:

- Muanai Tunggu Tubang called Lautan (the candidate of Meraje). He has no power to govern the family but he can be a guardian for his kelawai (his sister).
- Muanai Ibu Tunggu Tubang called Meraje.
- Muanai Nenek Tunggu Tubang called Jenang.
- Muanai Puyang Tunggu Tubang called Payung.
- Muanai Buyut Tunggu Tubang called Lebu Meraje or Queen.
- Muanai Lebu Tunggu Tubang called Entah-entah.

The power level of Meraje is still used and accepted today by the people of Fajar Bulan through the tradition of Tunggu Tubang.

Tunggu Tubang is a local cultural wisdom that describes the harmonious inter-relationship between the man and the nature manifested in the ethos of ecocentrism. The ethic sees the human in-

terest, not as the ultimate and consciously involves the nature as a whole thus creating a balanced ecosystem. Keraf (2002) mentioned that the notion of local wisdom is all forms of knowledge, belief, understanding or insight and customs, and ethnicities that guide people to behave in the life of the ecological community.

In the Fajar Bulan, most of the people work as the farmers and gardening coffee. Most farmers and gardeners cultivate the limited farmland and are supported by their own family labor as an independent economic entity (Ellis, 1993).

The Fajar Bulan with its unique tradition is often visited by the visitor and tourist from outside the region. Some student of the university also conducted the field research practice on how the society of Fajar Bulan managed the agricultural land and coffee gardening. Those activities are being a part of ecotourism in which being a part of the mechanism of sustainable development.

Ecotourism is an effort to preserve the areas that need to be protected by providing the economic opportunities to the local communities. The concept is usually called as “back to nature” which is the conservation effort of biodiversity by creating close cooperation between the local people with the tourism industry. Ecotourism is a combination of conservation and tourism in which the incomes gained from the tourism are used to protect and manage the biodiversity. In addition, the ecotourism generates the beneficial to improve the socio-economic sector of the community.

The discourse of women empowerment (Bookman and Morgan, 1998; Cave and Kilic, 2010; Boley et al., 2016) obtained through the participation of women in the achieving of development goals. The women resources of Tunggu tubang should be developed by combining the potential of natural resources or environment and local wisdom which become the life philosophy of the people of Semende.

The ecotourism concept is a nature tourism trip that has a vision and mission in the form of conservation. The financial benefits derived from travel expenses are used to support the needs of nature conservation as well as the welfare of the local community (Scheyvens, 2000; Cave and Kilic, 2010; Kunjuraman and Hussin, 2016). Most of the people change the trip to ecotourism due to the saturation of tourist visiting the artificial tourist attraction. Therefore, the increase of tourists to visit nature-

based tourism through the beautiful landscape and the culture of local wisdom become the potential for the development of ecotourism especially on the empowerment woman of Tunggu tubang.

The concept of ecotourism based on women empowerment is one of the rural development efforts in the tourism sector. Allcock *et al.*, 1993; Wood, 2002; Fennell, 2003; Khanal and Babar, 2007; Walter, 2011; Irandu and Shah, 2014 reported that ecotourism should contain some components such as contributing to the conservation of biodiversity, improve the welfare of local communities, having the interpretation, learning and experience, landscapes, and simple lifestyle, and the responsible perpetrators of tourists and the tourism industry. There are three kinds of criteria that should be included in the ecotourism (Gale and Hill, 2009) which is : (1) attraction which is nature-based attraction, (2) learning and education attraction through visitor interaction and (3) experience and product management that follow the principles and practices related to the ecological, socio-cultural, and economic sustainability.

The results showed that the Fajar Bulan village has the high potential to serve and develop as the ecotourism destination. Although there were some important aspects that should be considered especially on the management of ecotourism destination. The management should be the involvement of all sectors who had the interest and having the capabilities to manage well and maximally in achieving the goals (Drumm and Moore, 2002; Thien, 2009). According to the basic concept of development, the village development was expected to contain some principle that was not contrary to the customs of the culture of the community. For example, the developments could be done by improving the quality of the village environment, the physical development, taking into account the local elements, empowering the village tourist community, paying attention to the carrying capacity and the environment.

One of informant said "we really appreciate and support to develop our village. We still have the custom house of Tunggu tubang which made of wood and was formerly taken from the forest. The house was made of wood with the intention of earthquake resistant and resistant to cold weather. There were rooms that are interpreted as a gathering place for families. In the house of Tunggu tubang, the living room commonly had the terrace or not parallel to the front room. The higher terrace

was commonly used for the Meraje-meraje of Tunggu tubang when there was an event at the house of Tunggu tubang. The home decoration had the orchid leaf plants, and some endemic animals such as elephant, buffalo, tiger, and semah fish. Nowadays, some homes had been modified with concrete because most of the wood supporting the house had weathered. Some space under the houses of the stage had been modified into a place to sell (business) to support the living. In the other house, we made for early childhood education school which was managed and taught by my wife".

The informant also said that they were usually supported by many supporters such as the students who did the field practices and research about the agriculture. They took for data and usually participate in the cultivation and management of rice, and coffee. The house of Tunggu tubang was quite big which could accommodate 20 people. most of the visitor enjoyed staying in the house of Tunggu tubang because it had the clean room and fresh air. The informant said that they usually suggested the visitor bring the blankets. Most of the visitor especially the students stayed for 2 months. The society was happy to receive them due to sharing experiences while and adding the brotherhood".

The local people happily welcomed to know that their village would be used as the ecotourism destination especially Tunggu tubang because she realized that it could increase their knowledge, experience, and the income of family (Tengku, tetua adat, 64 years old)

The other informant, Iyah, said that she and her husband were the farmers which had to go to Paddy field (sawah) in the morning as the daily activities. Commonly, they spend most of their activities in the dangau (small hut in the middle of paddy field). The cultivated paddy was the high rice (padi panjang). The paddy field had the beautiful landscape and sometimes become the place for photograph activity. People used the place for taking some pictures due to the green paddy field. The dangau was commonly used as the place to take the lunch. They usually ate the vegetable which was cultivated in their own garden. However, nowadays, there were a lot of people selling the lunch and vegetable. They bought the vegetables, the cake for breakfast, and the weekly need in the market on Saturday. In addition, The society supplied the fish by themselves through fishing in the pond. The characteristic of fish was sweet because they did not

use pellet or pur for fed but moss. Mujair and Mas fish is typically fish that kept in the pond”.

The other informant also said that he usually heard some comments from the students that their village was very beautiful and planned to be developed. The coffee of sumende was also tasty, so it was supported by the fact that most of the people drank coffee couple times a day. They kept the fish in the pond and used the fish for food. Sometimes, they bought fish in the market once a week. They preferred to keep the fish because the fish in the market was usually more expensive. The other tradition of people in Fajar Bulan village was storing the crops and grain in the rice barn. The obligation of Tunggu tubang should have a stock of rice. Any events or community activities used rice as the commodity to support the events, so the rice usually existed in any events. Rice was usually used to support the neighbor or family if they had the events such as wedding party and repay when the other neighbor or family did the same party. The tradition was a very long tradition. Sometimes they felt grateful not to buy more rice when they had the events (Asma, Tunggu Tubang, 39 years old).

The cultivation of coffee was the second income of Tunggu tubang after rice cultivation. The coffee gardens mostly grew on the hills, in the forest belonging to the ancestors of Semende. The forest of Semende was only slightly overgrown with trees. The coffee garden could support their income. The land in the forest was compatible with the coffee plant. In the harvest time, The Tunggu tubang and her family would work together to harvest the coffee. The communities consumed the coffee as a drink in their daily activities.

One of informant told that people usually drank coffee five times a day. The coffee was the energy drink for people to clean and cultivate the paddy field and garden. Robusta coffee was a mainstay of farmers as a distraction and seasonal plants. Some farmers have successfully cultivated the strawberries and trained by the trainers from Bandung-West Java. The strawberries could grow well in Semende because the soil structure was similar to the soil structure in Bandung. Visitors could harvest the strawberries by picking straight from the garden. The potential of Semende especially strawberries plantation began to ogled by the investor. (Arif, the husband of Tunggu Tubang, 60 years old).

Furthermore, we could also see the culture through the marriage tradition. The social status of

a human being in the society would change from a teenager to adult in the marriage tradition. Furthermore, marriage would gain recognition of a higher status within his community (Koentjaraningrat, 1994; Iskandar, 2003). This high confession affected Tunggu tubang to have an attachment to a marriage. Several studies had shown that tourism expanded the opportunities to the woman to play the important role in the economic, social, and political sector (Allcock *et al.*, 1993; Bookman, and Morgan, 1998; Scheyvens, 2000; Wood, 2002; Boley *et al.*, 2016). Women played a larger role in the economic change in tourism and having more benefit compared to the men (Walter, 2011; Lenao and Basupi, 2016). Thus the improvement of living standard that was managed and empowered by the role of Tunggu tubang women could become the solution to solve the conflict or the problem of the family in the era of modernization without eliminating the local cultural wisdom of Tunggu tubang.

## Conclusion

The ethnic tradition of Semende with Tunggu Tubang tradition played the important role for the realization of ecotourism village. The potentials of the agricultural sector, tengkian/rice barn, tebat/fish pond, coffee plantation, and the traditional house around the hill lines become the source of livelihood for the community of Fajar Bulan Village. Tunggu tubang had a very strategic role for the economic and socio-cultural development of the rural community. The ecotourism development of Fajar Bulan was parts of the implementation of tourism that was directly related to the services that required the cooperation and support from all sectors such as the government, stakeholder, and societies.

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