

Livelihood Transformation on Komodo Island, Indonesia

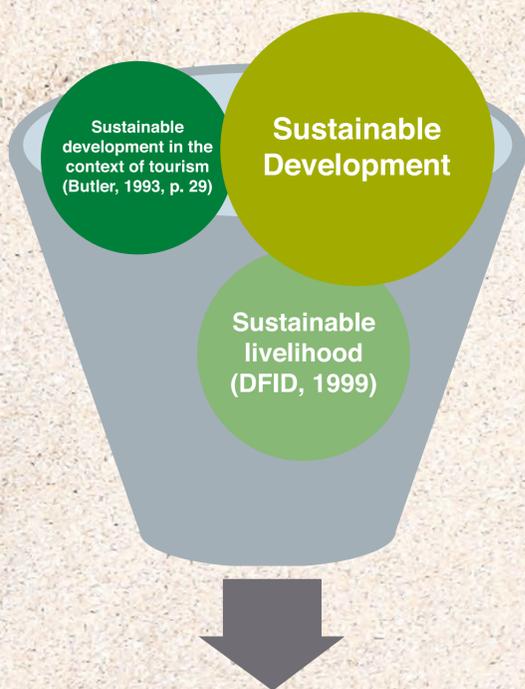
Background

Komodo village is located inside the conservation area of Komodo National Park (KNP), East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. Being influenced by both KNP regulations and early inhabitants, the locals used to depend primarily on fishing for their livelihood. However, the proximity of Loh Liang, the park's main visitor centre, to the village has triggered impacts to the village. As the closest community to the main tourism park, local livelihoods in Komodo village are among those that are inevitably affected by tourism development. As a result, livelihood transformation has taken place in this community: the fishing was overtaken by the souvenir business. However, the locals need to face a number of new challenges in order to secure the sustainability of their livelihood.

Research questions:

1. How has the process of livelihood transformation taken place at Komodo village?
2. What are the opportunities and challenges that have emerged since the livelihood transformation took place?
3. What strategies do the local businessmen apply in their effort to secure the sustainability of livelihood?

Theoretical framework



Tourism as an optional livelihood diversification (Shen, Hughey & Simmons, 2008; Tao & Wall, 2009)

Methodology



To understand people's actions and accounts in real everyday and put a researcher in the field (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007)
Aiming at Social Constructions based on local perspectives (emic) (Glesne, 1999, Shwartz and Jacobs, 1979)

Data Collection



This research COMPARES & CONTRASTS people's BEHAVIOUR and PERSPECTIVES through a fieldwork.

Preliminary findings

- The significant livelihood transformation period began in the mid-2000s when fishing business faced severe challenges and at the same time the number of tourist visit began to escalate.
- Each cruise visit to Loh Liang has enabled the local souvenir sellers to generate high seasonal income as the trading is mostly conducted in foreign currency.
- The limited selling place, high dependency on the number of cruise visits, low tourist season and poor financial management are the challenges faced by these players.
- Livelihood diversification, building larger networks and sufficient financial management are the significant strategies applied to secure the livelihood of Komodo people.



Contributions:

- Provide ethnography of tourism development in local community that serves as a basic consideration for stakeholders in planning the local development that is sustainable and enhances local livelihoods.
- Offer a contribution to sustainable development debates specifically in the context of tourism in relation to sustainable livelihood.

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