

The Sustainable Tourism Potential of Tongke-Tongke Mangrove Forest in Sinjai Regency

Abdu Rahman¹

¹Makassar Tourism Polytechnic, Indonesia

Abstract

This research investigates whether or not the Tongke-Tongke mangrove forest in Sinjai Regency has the potential to become an eco-friendly tourism destination. In accordance with the tenets of sustainable tourism, the study looks at the effects that this natural marvel has on many aspects of society and the natural environment. The Tongke-Tongke mangrove region has received a lot of attention from the local government and many stakeholders, which has helped it evolve into a model for collaborative sustainable tourism projects. This research sheds light on the many ways in which the mangrove forest contributes to the local economy, such as the creation of jobs and the maintenance of a wide variety of animal species. In addition to this, it investigates the accessibility, tourist facilities, and public amenities in Sinjai Regency that contribute to positive visitor experiences there. The Tongke-Tongke mangrove forest is a potential contribution to both the economic growth of the local community and the protection of the natural environment, especially as the area works toward more responsible management of tourism.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism, Tongke-Tongke Mangrove Forest, Economic Benefits

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Introduction

Sinjai Regency has a variety of natural and cultural resources as tourist objects and attractions spread across various sub-districts. One alternative for developing a tourist attraction that can be used as a tourist destination in Sinjai district is a natural tourist attraction, namely the Tongke-Tongke mangrove forest (Surya & Manaf, 2021). Based on information from the Sinjai Regency Maritime and Fisheries Service, Tongke-Tongke village has a mangrove forest with an area of approximately 132.5 ha. Mangroves have great potential to be used for ecotourism because their conditions are very interesting and unique and areas that are developed as tourist attractions still pay attention to and preserve the authenticity of the forest and the organisms that live in it.

Initially, the management of mangrove forests in Tongke-Tongke Village was a community-based effort from the Aku Cinta Indonesia Natural Resources Conservation Group (KPSDA ACI) which has succeeded in building mangrove forests with the aim of protecting the coast so that abrasion does not occur and it becomes a village inhabited by the community. Previously, this area was a coastal area which the local community used as a pond and residential area, but in the end, it encouraged the pond farming community to relocate the mangrove forest area to become a habitat for fish or shrimp or to open up new land. However, along with the decline in productivity in the area, the local Sinjai community in the coastal area was then encouraged to rehabilitate the area by reforesting the mangrove forest which has now been used as a tourist area and has become a laboratory for mangrove development by the local government.

Based on this description, it appears that Sinjai district has quite large potential as a tourism

destination and is one of the National Tourism Development Areas (KPPN) which is included in the Makassar - Takabonerate National Tourism Destination Area (DPN), however the management of tourist attractions has not been implemented effectively. Limitations in facilities (accessibility and amenities) are also one of the problems that causes tourists to still not make Sinjai district a tourism destination or main tourist destination compared to other districts in South Sulawesi province, such as; Bantimurung in Maros district, and Bira Beach in Bulukumba district.

Tourism in an area will progress if the area has a destination with the 3A elements, namely attractive tourist attractions, easy and affordable accessibility, and amenities in the form of tourism facilities and infrastructure as well as public facilities and infrastructure (Wibawa et al., 2020; Rahman, 2022). In recent years, the development and management of tourism by the government and the private sector has largely ignored environmental preservation and continuity around the location of the tourist attraction being developed, so that this has the potential to damage the surrounding environment (Wang & Bramwell, 2012; Orbasli, 2002). For this reason, sustainable tourism management is needed to optimize the use of mangroves in Tongke-Tongke village as tourist objects and attractions.

Sustainable tourism according to the World Tourism Organization (WTO) is tourism that takes full account of current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, meeting the needs of visitors, industry, the environment and local communities. It is hoped that this sustainable tourism will be able to improve the welfare of the people in the area around the Tongke-Tongke mangrove forest and increase the original regional income of Sinjai district

Methods

The data used in this research are data according to the source; namely external data and data according to how they were obtained, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained from Tongke-Tongke mangrove debt managers and visitors. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from the Sinjai district Tourism Office and Sinjai district BPS. The primary data and secondary data obtained will be processed and analyzed and conclusions will be drawn into qualitative data.

In this study, the research subjects were managers, relevant government officials, and visitors. Observations were carried out on research objects, namely; Tongke mangrove debt - Tongke as a tourist attraction. Meanwhile, interviews for managers, government officials and visitors to the Tongke – Tongke mangrove debt.

This research uses primary data through observation and interviews. Meanwhile, secondary data uses data collection techniques through document searches related to the number of tourist visits, as well as element 6A, namely; Attractions, Activities, Accessibility, Accommodation, Amenities and Ancillary services in Sinjai district. In this research, the analytical method or technique used is; Data collection is carried out by observation, interviews, literature study or document collection. Next, data reduction and data presentation are carried out. Then draw conclusions and verify.

Results and Discussion

The Existence of the Tongke-Tongke Mangrove Forest as a Sustainable Tourist Attraction

Understanding sustainable tourism is tourism that takes into account current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, and can meet the needs of visitors, industry, the environment and local communities. Then, referring to Minister of Tourism and Creative

Economy Regulation Number 9 of 2021 concerning Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism Destinations, it is explained that sustainable tourism is tourism that takes into account current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, meets the needs of visitors, industry, the environment and local communities and can be applied to all forms of tourism activities in all types of tourist destinations, including mass tourism and various other types of tourism activities.

The Tongke - Tongke Mangrove area as a natural tourist attraction in Sinjai district has received great attention from the government and tourism stakeholders. This is based on Sinjai Regency Regional Regulation No. 19 of 2019 concerning the Tourism Development Master Plan for 2018 – 2033, as well as those related to the management of Tourism Areas in Sinjai district, one of which is the Tongke – Tongke Mangrove debt area, as stated in the Decree of the Regent of Sinjai No. 276 of 2023 concerning the Determination of the 2023 Sinjai Regency Tourism Strategy Area Management Team.

Likewise with the involvement of Pentahelix or Tourism Stakeholders, with the involvement of Academics and students from various Universities including; UNHAS, UNM, UMI, UNISMU, etc., Tourism Awareness groups (Pokdarwis), environmental and literacy communities, central and regional governments and the media (Kusumojanto et al., 2021). Meanwhile, it is related to area management in relation to visitors and visitor activities in standard debt areas, with the availability of facilities and infrastructure for roads/wooden bridges, gazebos, culinary places, watchtowers, information boards/talking boards, as well as directions and gathering points in the event of a disaster emergency response.

The existence of the Tongke - Tongke mangrove area provides economic benefits to the local community, by providing facilities or facilities for culinary establishments and restaurants, Klonton sales shops, floating villas, fishing boats, parking lots. All of these activities and facilities provide livelihoods (employment and business opportunities) to earn income or income from interactions and transactions with visitors.

Likewise, with ticket service points/posts for visitors, a fee is charged to enter the mangrove area, namely IDR 10,000 for adults and IDR 5,000 for children. So that the welfare and social impact of society can be felt and enjoyed by the people who live around the Tongke - Tongke mangrove area, with community involvement in various economic and social activities in the community, such as; as food and drink sellers, basic food sellers for visitors' needs, parking attendants, security officers, cleaning guards, motorcycle taxi drivers, fishermen, tour guides, etc.

As a pioneer, pioneer and fighter for mangrove debt, H. M. Taiyeb started pioneering in 1985, related to campaigns on environmental issues, especially coastal erosion, including the Tongke-Tongke beach which is now the Tongke-Tongke mangrove debt area. At first there were no mangrove trees, let alone mangrove trees, there was only the sea without barriers, people's houses were always damaged due to abrasion and floods every time there was high tide.

With these situations and conditions, Haji Taiyeb and 17 residents participated in the activity of planting mangrove trees. Planting mangroves with community self-help has finally borne fruit. After 4 years (1989), it had produced 78 Ha of mangroves with a planting distance of 50 cm Then, after the mangrove grows and becomes large after entering the age of 5 years, from the moment it is planted, this condition can be said to be safe and it will bear fruit.

The Tongke - Tongke mangrove area, which now covers an area of 173.5 Ha (2023), is located in Tongke - Tongke village, East Sinjai sub-district, Sinjai district, is one of the tourist attractions that attracts a lot of attention and is popular with many visitors. The Ministry of

Tourism and Creative Economy has designated it as a tourist village. With an area of 173.5 Ha and a planting distance of 50 cm 50 cm and no mangrove trees died, because the explanation is that every time one dies, it is immediately replaced during the maintenance and planting period.

Regarding resource management, based on the results of investigating Tongke mangrove debt, Tongke is a combination of natural and rehabilitated mangroves. Rehabilitation of mangrove debt was carried out in 1986 by village communities independently by the Natural Resources Lovers Group - Aku Cinta Indonesia (KPSDA - ACI).

Mangrove trees, which number in the millions and form forests and become areas of mangrove forests, enable the life and development of various fauna habitats associated with the mangrove environment, such as; Insects, tree snakes, bats, herons, sea lilies, and marine fauna such as; oysters, various types of fish, mud crabs and shrimp. It is estimated that there are 27 species of fish and 4 species of shrimp and at least 8 species of gastropods that live permanently in mangrove areas.

Then, in relation to waste and emissions management, area managers always remind and campaign for visitors and MSME managers in the Tongke - Tongke mangrove area to always pay attention to waste problems, dispose of waste in the places provided, and always keep public spaces clean. clean, this is conveyed via information boards or talk boards, verbal appeals from officers.

Tourism Facilities and Public Facilities

Tourist attractions in Sinjai district are dominated by cultural and historical tourism, namely 57.14% of the total tourist attractions in Sinjai district, totaling 119 tourist attractions. Famous historical tourist attractions include the Balangnipa Fort which is managed by the Sinjai Regency Culture and Tourism Office, the Batu Pake Gojeng Archaeological Park which is managed by the Sinjai Regency Disbudpar and BPCB South Sulawesi Province and the Larea Rea Traditional House which is managed by the family.

Then natural tourist attractions account for 29.41%. Natural tourist attractions that are in great demand by visitors and are favorites for tourists are the Tongke – Tongke Mangrove Forest Area, Lembang Saukang Waterfall, and Larea Rea Island marine tourism which is managed by the Sinjai district Tourism and Culture Office. Next are the natural tourist attractions of Karampuang Beach, Barania Waterfall and Lamatti Waterfall which are managed by the local Village Government. Apart from tourist attractions, in Sinjai district there are several tourist villages including The Tongke - Tongke tourist village is a place or village where the Tongke - Tongke Mangrove area is located, the Harapan Island tourist village and the Unity Island Village are located on Island IX.

The existing tourist attraction with various attractions on offer includes various activities that visitors can do, for example taking photos with family, fishing, exploring roads in the mangrove area, enjoying the culinary offerings offered to visitors, bathing in the sea, diving., etc. Generally, tourist attractions in Sinjai district are managed by the village government (21 DTW) and the Sinjai Regency Government (10 DTW).

Sinjai Regency, as one of the tourist destinations which has many tourist attractions, can be easily accessed by visitors, both local tourists, domestic tourists and foreign tourists. Foreign and domestic tourists who want to visit Sinjai district to see the tourist attractions spread across Sinjai district can easily access it by road from Makassar - via Camba Maros with a distance of +/- 5 hours drive with a distance of around 191 km. There is also an alternative from

Makassar - via Malino Gowa with a distance of \pm 4 hours and you can enjoy the panorama and beauty of nature and the gardens in Malino to Sinjai. Another alternative road from Makassar – via Bantaeng – Bulukumba with a distance of 222 km.

The vehicles or modes of transportation used can be 2-wheeled, 4-wheeled and 6-wheeled. Needs during the trip can easily be met, because along the trip there are fuel filling stations, shops selling 9 basic necessities, stalls or restaurants, hospitals and health centers, services telecommunication, mosques and toilets as public facilities. Available along the road to tourist attractions in Sinjai district including visiting the Tongke - Tongke Mangrove tourist attraction.

Related to existing tourism facilities that can be used and utilized, namely accommodation facilities (hotels), eating and drinking facilities (restaurants and restaurants), entertainment facilities, fitness and beauty facilities (Spas) (Nelwamondo, 2010).

Lodging facilities in the form of hotels and guesthouses, there are 18 hotel/guesthouse units, with a total of 267 rooms and 269 beds. This shows that generally each room has 1 large bed (king size). These hotel facilities are spread across the city of Sinjai with room prices that consumers can afford, namely under IDR 500,000,- room/night or a range between IDR 200,000 to 385,000,- per room/night. The largest hotel in Sinjai district is the Rafina hotel located on Jalan Jenderal Sudirman with 40 rooms and the Sandika hotel located on Jalan K.H. Agussalim with a total of 30 rooms.

Meanwhile, entertainment and fitness facilities or salons and spas can be found in the city of Sinjai which can serve visitors and customers at any time. The number of entertainment facilities, especially karaoke, operating in the city of Sinjai is 4 units and employs 15 employees. Likewise with spas and salons, there is 1 spa service business in Sinjai city, namely the Andiez Spa and Muslimah Salon, as well as 15 salon businesses spread across Sinjai district.

Then, to support excellent and maximum service to visitors at tourist attractions spread across the Sinjai district, it is supported by human resources who have been trained and educated, totaling 40 tour guides. Other important things related to public facilities and services are the availability of clean water facilities (PDAM), telecommunications (Telkom WiFi) and other telecommunications networks, banking services (ATM), souvenirs, prayer facilities, especially prayer rooms and mosques, public toilets, security (security units) and others are available sufficiently to support the activities and sustainability of tourism businesses which have an impact on business expansion and employment opportunities, as well as increasing community income and increasing regional retribution originating from the tourism sector

Conclusion

Sinjai Regency's Tongke-Tongke mangrove forest has great promise as a long-term tourism destination. There are a few main takeaways from this research. To begin, the forest complies with the tenets of sustainable tourism, which include accounting for and mitigating negative consequences on the local community, the environment, and the economy. Second, the local government and other stakeholders including schools and environmental groups have worked together to make this mangrove ecosystem more appealing to visitors. This group effort highlights its value as an example of responsible tourist growth.

The mangrove forest also has substantial monetary advantages. Jobs and revenue for locals may be found in the many restaurants, fishing spots, and other service providers that cater to tourists. The rich flora and marine life that has flourished because to the mangrove ecosystem's meticulous management and preservation is another major draw for tourists. Effective trash

management programs and accessibility through well-connected highways make Sinjai Regency readily accessible to both local and international visitors, enabling their excursions to the Tongke-Tongke mangrove forest and other attractions in the area.

Sinjai Regency is a popular tourist destination due to its natural beauty and the variety of accommodations, restaurants, attractions, and spas it provides. Clean water, telephones, financial services, gift shops, prayer rooms, and security services are just some of the public amenities that are easily accessible to guests. Constant work to improve and update tourist infrastructure is required if its full potential is to be realized. Tongke-Tongke mangrove forest is an important part of Sinjai Regency's economy and ecosystem, and it may continue to flourish with continued dedication to sustainability and responsible tourist management.

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