

# Participatory Communication in Community-Based Tourism Development in Bireuen

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## Abstract

*This study examines community participation in tourism development, especially in Community Based Tourism (CBT). By referring to the concept of tourism communication, this study aims to provide an overview of the role of individuals or community groups in encouraging the growth of tourist destinations. This study is expected to identify inhibiting and supporting factors in the implementation of participatory communication, as well as formulate recommendations to strengthen community participation in tourism development. Therefore, the selection of locations and informants, namely nature tourism business actors and the Regency Tourist Bireuen, is considered appropriate because it is in accordance with the characteristics of the research. The use of qualitative methods is expected to answer all questions that will be studied in this study.*

**Keywords:** *Communication, Participatory, Community, Tourism, Development.*

## Introduction

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) has emerged as a popular approach to tourism development worldwide (Bennet, 2017). This approach emphasizes the active participation of local communities in the planning, development, and management of tourism in their areas. Bireuen Regency in Indonesia is one of the areas that is trying to develop CBT.

Participatory communication is a relevant concept in the context of CBT development in Bireuen Regency. Participatory communication aims to achieve reciprocal cooperation at every level of participation (Hardiyanto in Sobra, 2023). This implies that all parties need to participate in the communication process, be open to input and views from other parties, be able to assess objectively, and respect and build mutual trust among communication participants. Participatory communication involves collaboration between various stakeholders, including local communities, local governments, non-governmental organizations, and the tourism sector. By involving all relevant parties, participatory communication enables open and inclusive dialogue, effective information exchange, and sustainable decision-making.

Bireuen Regency has very rich tourism potential, including natural beauty, cultural heritage, and unique customs. The tourism sector in this regency continues to grow as more and more people seek recreational activities. However, the implementation of tourism development often faces challenges, which cause existing programs to not adequately consider the needs, aspirations, and potential of the local community.

In the context of CBT development, participatory communication is key to building shared understanding, strengthening community participation, and creating sustainable tourism programs that are aligned with local needs. Through participatory communication, local communities can share their knowledge and experiences, provide input into planning and decision-making, and feel ownership and responsibility for tourism development in their area. According to Hadiyanto in Sobra (2023), the implementation of participatory communication allows for personal dialogical communication between the community and village development agents, more effective use of traditional media or people's media, as well as the growth of group social activities and the development of community media.

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The impact of tourism refers to changes that occur in the environment, both before and after the implementation of tourism activities. These changes can be direct or indirect and include physical and non-physical impacts (Pitana and Gayatri, 2005). In the context of tourism development, economic impacts can be divided into negative and positive impacts that affect the economic environment of the community as a consequence of the development of the tourism sector (Sukadjo, 1997).

Although participatory communication is important in the development of CBT, its implementation in Bireuen Regency still has limitations. Some of the challenges faced include lack of awareness of the importance of community participation, imbalance of power among stakeholders, and limited adequate communication infrastructure.

Therefore, research on participatory communication in the development of CBT in Bireuen Regency has significant relevance for the development of regional tourism. This research is expected to identify inhibiting factors and constraints in the development of CBT in Bireuen Regency, supporting factors for the implementation of participatory communication, and formulating recommendations to strengthen community participation in tourism development. Thus, this study can contribute to the development of sustainable, inclusive, and community-empowering tourism in Bireuen Regency.

## Method

This research was conducted in Bireuen Regency. This location was chosen because Bireuen has many tourist destinations developed by its people, thus representing the characteristics of the research based on the data we observed. The research period was approximately four months (June to September). The research schedule started from the preparation stage before fieldwork, field research, data collection and analysis, and report preparation.

The research approach used in this study is a qualitative research approach that is not limited to certain categories in data collection, so that researchers can study and find issues in depth related to research problems. Therefore, by using the Community Based Tourism (CBT) model, a picture of community participation in tourism management in an area can be obtained. Referring to Creswell (2010), qualitative research is a type of research that explores and understands the meaning of a number of individuals or groups of people from a social problem. The focus of this study is Participatory Communication in Community-Based Tourism Development in Bireuen. The subjects in this study were the actors consisting of tourism managers and the Youth, Sports and Tourism Office of Bireuen Regency which was conducted through interviews

Qualitative research can generally be used for research on community life, history, behavior, concepts or phenomena, social problems, and others. One of the reasons for using a qualitative approach is the researcher's experience in which this method can find and understand what is hidden behind phenomena that are sometimes difficult to understand.

## Results and Discussion

This study is expected to identify specific factors that inhibit and support participatory communication in the context of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in Bireuen Regency. By understanding these factors, this study will provide recommendations to increase community involvement in tourism development.

Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to the creation of a sustainable and inclusive tourism industry that empowers local communities in Bireuen Regency. The findings of this study will likely highlight the importance of effective communication, collaboration between stakeholders, and addressing power imbalances to achieve successful CBT implementation.

Community-based tourism development in Bireuen Regency has implemented the principles of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) well, as seen by the active involvement of local communities in the planning and management of tourist destinations. The government, through regulations and technical and

financial support, assists communities in managing tourist villages. A transparent communication process between the government and the community builds trust and active participation, while regular monitoring helps identify challenges and areas for improvement. Local leadership also plays an important role in encouraging participation and creating solid collaboration.

However, challenges related to community understanding of the benefits of the tourism village program require improvements in socialization and communication strategies. Regulatory flexibility is key to supporting local initiatives and maintaining tourism sustainability. Weak coordination and delays in delivering information also hamper the development process.

Programs such as the integration of nature school curriculum demonstrate the importance of education in building environmental awareness among the younger generation. With the right approach, community-based tourism development in Bireuen can improve the local economy and community welfare in a sustainable manner.

## Conclusion

This study aims to examine the implementation of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in Bireuen Regency. The results of the study indicate that the potential for CBT in this area is quite large, there are several obstacles that still hinder its realization. These obstacles include the lack of public awareness of the benefits of CBT, the imbalance of authority between stakeholders, and the limitations of supporting infrastructure.

The study also shows the important role of participatory communication in driving the success of *Community-Based Tourism* (CBT) initiatives. By involving local communities in decision-making processes and ensuring that their needs and aspirations are taken into account, CBT can be a powerful tool for sustainable development. Active community participation in the planning and implementation of tourism activities not only increases a sense of ownership but also strengthens the social bonds necessary for the sustainability of the program.

Based on these findings, this study can be a recommendation for developing a capacity building program for local communities, establishing effective communication channels between stakeholders, and creating supportive policies to facilitate the implementation of CBT. These recommendations are important for creating an inclusive and participatory framework, so that all parties involved can contribute optimally to tourism development.

The results of this study are expected to be a reference for decision makers and stakeholders in formulating more effective strategies to optimize the potential of community-based tourism in Bireuen Regency. Thus, strong collaboration between the government, community, and private sector is essential to create an ecosystem that supports the success of PBM.

This study explains that the success of community-based tourism does not only depend on natural and cultural potential, but also on the active participation and commitment of all parties involved. Therefore, an approach that focuses on empowering local communities and promoting sustainable practices is very relevant in the context of sustainable tourism development in Bireuen Regency.

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