

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BEDIL ISLAND MARINE TOURISM INSPIRED BY RAJA AMPAT AS A TOURIST ATTRACTION IN BANYUWANGI

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Abstract. Banyuwangi is the largest region in East Java and is home to one of the underdeveloped marine tourism assets—Bedil Island, a small island with tremendous potential due to its beautiful beaches, crystal-clear waters, and pristine marine biodiversity, resembling that of Raja Ampat. Considering the success of Raja Ampat's tourism branding and management, it is important to explore the development of Bedil Island without losing its local uniqueness. This study aims to examine the potential and development strategies for Bedil Island's marine tourism, inspired by the Raja Ampat model, as a new attraction for both domestic and international tourists. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach. Data sources include both primary and secondary data. The data analysis techniques used are data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. To ensure data validity, triangulation of sources and methods was applied. The findings reveal that Bedil Island holds great potential to be developed as a leading tourism destination in Banyuwangi. Its main attractions include a cluster of small islands, clear turquoise-blue seawater, and distinctive natural beauty. Accessibility to the location is relatively feasible: visitors can travel approximately two hours by land from Banyuwangi city center, followed by a boat trip to the Bedil Island cluster. Key attractions and unique features of Bedil Island include: snorkeling and diving, sailing around the island cluster, trekking to Kemuning peak, marine educational tourism, and local seafood culinary experiences such as grilled fish and other seafood dishes.

Keywords: Tourism Development, Marine Tourism, Tourist Attraction

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known as an archipelagic country rich in natural beauty, particularly in its marine tourism potential. One of the world-renowned marine tourism destinations is Raja Ampat in West Papua, famous for its rich underwater biodiversity, stunning island clusters, and pristine natural environment. The success of Raja Ampat as a national marine tourism icon has inspired other regions to develop similar potential, including Banyuwangi, East Java.

Banyuwangi is the largest regency in East Java, endowed with diverse natural wealth ranging from mountains and forests to beaches and unexplored small islands. One of its underdeveloped marine tourism assets is Bedil Island—a small island that holds remarkable potential with its beautiful beaches, crystal-clear seawater, and untouched marine life. However, Bedil Island has yet to emerge as a leading destination capable of attracting a large number of tourists.

Inspired by the successful branding and tourism management of Raja Ampat, it is essential to explore the possibility of developing Bedil Island using a similar approach, while preserving its unique local characteristics. This strategy not only has the potential to increase tourist visits to

Banyuwangi but also to promote local economic growth, marine conservation, and the empowerment of coastal communities.

This study aims to assess the potential and development strategies of Bedil Island's marine tourism, modeled after Raja Ampat, as a new attraction for both domestic and international tourists. Through this approach, it is hoped that Bedil Island can become a flagship destination, strengthening Banyuwangi's position as a gateway for marine tourism in the eastern part of Java.

A. The concept of marine tourism

Marine tourism is a form of tourism based on the potential of marine and coastal resources, both natural and man-made. According to Yoeti (2008), marine tourism includes activities such as diving, snorkeling, fishing, sailing, and enjoying ocean scenery. Small islands like Bedil Island have great potential to be developed as marine tourism destinations because they offer relatively unspoiled natural beauty and low levels of pollution. However, its development must adhere to sustainability principles to avoid damaging the marine ecosystem (Sunaryo, 2013)

B. Tourism Destination Development

Tourism destination development involves a series of efforts to enhance a region's attractiveness, accessibility, amenities, and promotion in order to attract tourists (Cooper et al., 2005). The sustainable destination development model encompasses three main pillars: economic, socio-cultural, and environmental aspects (UNWTO, 2019). In the context of Bedil Island, development must consider environmental conservation, local community involvement, and the improvement of supporting infrastructure.

C. Case Study: Raja Ampat as an Inspiration

Raja Ampat is recognized as one of the world's top marine tourism destinations due to its high marine biodiversity and conservation-based destination management. The success of Raja Ampat is the result of strong collaboration between local government, local communities, NGOs, and the private sector (WWF Indonesia, 2015). The concepts of ecotourism and community-based tourism have been key to the successful management of marine tourism in the region. Applying the "Raja Ampat model" to Bedil Island does not mean replicating it entirely, but rather adapting its proven management and promotional approaches. Environmental education, community capacity building, and conservation-based tourism management are essential elements that can be adopted to support sustainable development on Bedil Island.

D. Tourist Attraction and Tourist Behavior

Tourist attractions are the main elements that determine tourists' motivation to visit a place (Kotler et al., 2010). These attractions can be natural or man-made. Bedil Island possesses strong natural attraction potential but still requires enhancement in terms of amenities and accessibility to improve tourist satisfaction. Current tourist behavior tends to favor authentic, environmentally friendly, and sustainable experiences (Holloway, 2009). This presents an opportunity for Bedil Island to offer a marine tourism concept that is educational and oriented towards the preservation of culture and the environment.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study is a descriptive qualitative research with a case study approach. The research aims to describe and analyze the potential, challenges, and development strategies of Bedil Island as a marine tourism destination modeled after Raja Ampat, as well as how this can attract tourists to Banyuwangi. The research was conducted on Bedil Island, Banyuwangi Regency, East Java. This location was chosen as the main object of study. The study was carried out over approximately three months, from March to June 2025.

Data for this research were obtained from two types of sources: Primary Data: In-depth interviews with relevant stakeholders such as the Banyuwangi Tourism Office. Secondary Data: Documentation studies from tourism planning documents, local government reports, scientific journals, and other publications relevant to marine tourism and destination development.

Data were analyzed qualitatively using the interactive model by Miles and Huberman (1994), consisting of three stages:

1. Data Reduction: Sorting, summarizing, and selecting data relevant to the research focus.
2. Data Display: Organizing data into narratives, tables, and figures to facilitate understanding and interpretation
3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Drawing conclusions based on the data collected and testing their validity through repetition.

The data validity techniques used in this study were source and method triangulation. Triangulation was conducted by comparing interview results from various informants and cross-checking with observation and documentation data.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. General Overview of the Research Location

Bedil Island is located in the coastal area of Banyuwangi Regency, East Java, precisely in Dusun Pancer, Sumberagung Village, Pesanggaran District. The island began to gain public attention since mid-2024 due to its natural beauty, which resembles the cluster of islands in Raja Ampat, Papua. The cluster of small islands, clear seawater, and rich coral reefs make this area highly potential as a marine tourism destination.

B. Marine Tourism Potential of Bedil Island

• Natural Beauty of Bedil Island

Bedil Island boasts the advantage of pristine sea panoramas. The cluster of small islands scattered around the main island creates an exotic view with a gradient of turquoise blue seawater similar to Raja Ampat. The presence of snorkeling and diving spots with healthy coral reefs further enhances the marine tourism appeal of this area.

• Accessibility and Infrastructure

Access to Bedil Island is fairly adequate. Tourists can take a 2-hour land trip from downtown Banyuwangi to Mustika Island, then continue with a motorboat ride for approximately 30 minutes. The road infrastructure leading to Mustika Beach is quite good, with most routes paved smoothly. This development is the result of collaboration between the local government and the mining company PT Bumi Sukesindo through their corporate social responsibility (CSR) program.

• Tourism Activities

The main tourism activities offered include snorkeling and diving, sailing around the island clusters, trekking to the peak of Kemuning Hill to enjoy a 360° panoramic view, marine educational tours, and seafood culinary tourism.

C. Interview and Observation Results

Tourists Perspectives

The majority of tourists who visited stated that they were attracted by visual information on social media referring to Bedil Island as the "Raja Ampat of Banyuwangi." They expressed satisfaction with the scenic views and hoped that the government would soon add supporting facilities such as resting areas, public toilets, and walking paths..

Local Community Perspectives

The local residents welcomed the development of Bedil Island as a tourism destination. They hoped that the program would provide economic benefits through job opportunities, homestay businesses, and sales of local products. However, they also expressed concerns about potential environmental damage due to the increasing number of visitors.

Analysis of Bedil Island's Potential as a Tourism Destination

Based on observations, interviews with tourists and local communities, as well as literature review, it is evident that Bedil Island has great potential to be developed as a premier marine tourism destination in Banyuwangi Regency. The main characteristic of Bedil Island is its cluster of small islands and seawater resembling the features of Raja Ampat in Papua. This gives Bedil Island a strong visual and ecotourism appeal. The nickname "Raja Ampat of Banyuwangi" emerged naturally through social media and digital publications, and was later reinforced by the local government as a destination branding strategy. This nickname creates a positive psychological effect that arouses curiosity, raises expectations, and drives tourist interest to visit

Accessibility and Supporting Infrastructure

Accessibility to Bedil Island is fairly adequate, although not yet ideal. Tourists can travel about 2 hours by land from Banyuwangi city center to Dusun Pancer (Mustika Beach), then continue by boat to the Bedil Island cluster. The road infrastructure from Banyuwangi to Mustika Beach has significantly improved since 2020, thanks to the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program of PT Bumi Suksesindo. However, tourism support facilities such as docking piers, public toilets, resting areas, information centers, and trekking paths to viewpoints are still insufficiently available. This is an important note for sustainable marine tourism development to ensure tourists' experiences remain safe, comfortable, and high-quality.

Tourist Attractions and Uniqueness of Bedil Island

Tourism activities available on Bedil Island include:

- Snorkeling and diving at coral reef spots.
- Sailing or island hopping around the small island clusters.
- Trekking to the peak of Kemuning Hill to enjoy a 360° panoramic view of the islands.
- Marine educational tours, such as coral reef observation, ornamental fish, and conservation activities.
- Seafood culinary tourism featuring grilled fish and local seafood dishes.

This shows that Bedil Island offers a diversified range of tourist attractions, not limited to visual recreation but also including adventure, education, and culinary experiences. The availability of integrated tourism packages will greatly support local economic development.

Social, Economic, and Environmental Impacts

The increase in tourist visits has positively impacted the income of the local community, especially boat operators, food vendors, tour guides, and homestay owners. Tourism activities have become an alternative source of income for traditional fishermen and MSME actors. However, it should be noted that uneven management could lead to social jealousy among

residents. Therefore, a community-based tourism management system through the establishment of transparent and inclusive tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis) is necessary.

On the other hand, increased tourism activity poses risks to the sustainability of the marine ecosystem, particularly coral reefs and marine life. The absence of regulations on maximum visitor capacity (carrying capacity), poor waste management, and lack of tourist education may accelerate environmental degradation. Hence, conservation-based preservation policies need to be formulated, such as snorkeling zoning, prohibitions on littering in the sea, and strict supervision by field officers.

Marine Tourism Development Strategies for Bedil Island

To make Bedil Island a competitive flagship tourism destination, the following strategies are recommended:

Aspect	Strategy
Branding and Promotion	Strengthening the image of "The Raja Ampat of Banyuwangi" through social media, brochures, vlog, and partnerships with travel agencies.
Tourist Infrastructure	Development of a dock, sanitation facilities, tourism signage, shelters, and an information center in the main area
Community based Management	Involving local residents through tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis), tour guide training, and educating tourists about ecotourism.
Environmental Conservation	Establishing visitor limits in marine conservation zones and providing ecotourism education to tourists.
Diversification Tourism Product	Development of local cultural tourism, coastal art performances, marine festivals, and educational tours for schools

Research Implications

This study demonstrates that the development of marine tourism on Bedil Island can serve as a model for sustainable tourism development that balances three key aspects: economic, social, and environmental. If the proposed strategies are implemented consistently and involve all relevant stakeholders, Bedil Island has the potential to become a national marine tourism icon and a driving force for economic growth in the southern region of Banyuwangi.

III. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of field observations, interviews with stakeholders, and analysis of secondary data from local government sources and online media, the following conclusions can be drawn: **Bedil Island has significant marine tourism potential**, characterized by clusters of small islands, clear seawater, pristine coral reefs, and ocean panoramas resembling those of Raja Ampat. These unique features make Bedil Island a promising destination capable of attracting both domestic and international tourists. **The branding of "The Raja Ampat of Banyuwangi" has proven**

effective in building destination image and enhancing the appeal of Bedil Island. This branding has successfully attracted tourist attention through social media and news coverage, accelerating the island's popularity as a leading marine tourism alternative in East Java. **Accessibility to Bedil Island is relatively easy**, supported by adequate road infrastructure thanks to local government initiatives and corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs from local companies. However, on-site tourism support facilities—such as docking piers, toilets, signage, information centers, and waste management—remain suboptimal. **Tourism development on Bedil Island has had a positive economic impact on the local community**, especially through business opportunities related to boat tours, food stalls, homestays, and guiding services. Nevertheless, the growing tourism activity also poses environmental challenges, such as potential damage to marine ecosystems due to waste, overcrowding, and the lack of visit regulation. **The absence of an integrated and sustainable management system has hindered the optimal development of Bedil Island's tourism potential.** A community-based approach and collaborative tourism governance are needed to ensure a balance between economic benefits and environmental conservation. Based on the conclusions above, the author offers several strategic recommendations that can serve as a foundation for the future development of marine tourism on Bedil Island: **Strengthening Community Based Management** The local government should promote the establishment and empowerment of tourism awareness groups (*Pokdarwis*) that actively involve local communities. Regular training on tourism management, visitor services, environmental conservation, and financial management should be provided to enhance the capacity of residents as key tourism actors. **Development of Tourism Infrastructure and Facilities** Basic infrastructure development in the Bedil Island area must be prioritized including: a) A safe docking pier for boats b) Trekking paths to Kemuning Peak c) Public toilets and resting areas d) Waste collection and processing facilities In addition, signage, tourism brochures, and a tourist information center should be made available to improve visitor comfort and experience. **Implementation of Sustainable Ecotourism Principle** It is essential to set a daily visitor quota (carrying capacity) to preserve the environment. The government should also establish conservation zones, prohibit the use of harmful equipment that endangers marine life, and educate tourists on the importance of protecting marine ecosystems. **Strengthening Branding and Digital Promotion.** The “Mini Raja Ampat” promotional strategy needs to be enhanced through digital approaches, including the management of official social media accounts, partnerships with travel bloggers/influencers, and integration into online travel platforms. Promotional efforts should continue to highlight local cultural values to maintain the unique identity of Banyuwangi. **Stakeholder Synergy** The development of Bedil Island must involve cross-sector collaboration, including local government, tourism industry players, local communities, academia, and investors. Such synergy is vital to establishing inclusive and effective tourism governance, enabling Bedil

Island to emerge as a nationally competitive and sustainable tourism destination

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