

## PACKAGING OF NATURE AND CULTURAL CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES THROUGH ECOTOURISM TITLED FESTIVAL

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**Abstract.** The problem of protecting the environment is often not considered properly. Including the maintenance and management of the Sekanak Lambidaro River in Palembang, which was once a garbage dump and surrounded by slums. So it certainly makes damage to the place of an ecosystem of flora and fauna that exist in the environment. Not to mention that the endless cultural conflicts between the Sekanak River area have become a problem in the city of Palembang. So, a Sekanak Lambidaro Palembang River Festival was held in order to make the community affected by the bad environment more livable. Through activities that are oriented towards a green environment based on the concept of sustainable development. This concept is used so as not to make people continue to be influenced by the great world of globalization at the moment. By using a descriptive qualitative research method with the aim of being able to find out how useful this festival is in increasing the awareness of the people of Palembang City in nature and cultural conservation by applying the principles of ecotourism and sustainable tourism.

**Keywords:** conservation; natural; culture; festival; globalization.

### I. INTRODUCTION

By looking at the problems that continue to occur in the Sekanak Lambidaro River area in terms of the lack of maintenance of river cleanliness and the destruction of the belida fish ecosystem, which at that time was increasingly experiencing a reduction in their habitat. In addition, the problem of population density has become a long-standing problem in increasing the level of poverty in the environment. The fact is that many jobs are not in favor of the local population. The reason is because the problem with the education benches that they receive is not in accordance with the qualifications needed, so that if the surrounding community manages it, it will only add to the loss. This certainly can increase the crime rate, especially in the case in the city of Palembang. In addition, the impact of this population density causes the arrival of dirty air pollution and cloudy water that is not suitable for human use. This is because there is a lack of knowledge in the care and maintenance of clean rivers without illegal dumping of garbage. Then not to mention the cultural conflict between the Chinese, Malay and Arab races in the city of Palembang which is less integrated with others, thus creating a lack of concern for solidarity. Of course, this will have a negative impact on the preservation of the culture of the city of Palembang as a whole.

Whereas basically if viewed from the background of the city of Palembang as the oldest city in Indonesia which is famous for its various ethnic cultures and the abundance of natural resources from its rivers which have the potential to be used for a long time. Of course, it will be able to help people who lack food sources and the economy of the population is low. However, this is just a contest. However, if

the community takes part in nature conservation activities, such as planting crops, reforestation, maintenance of belida fish habitat and proper preservation of natural space. Of course it will make a very positive contribution to the answer to this problem.

Various kinds of cultural characteristics that were born in the city of Palembang, of course, can also be used by the community to attract real economic resources. Through the introduction of cultural habits to tourists who come to the area, it becomes an interest and activity for tourists to learn and deepen a culture in Indonesia. It is also in line with the pillars of sustainable development or sustainable development which is always glorified by stakeholders in Indonesia, which contains nature and culture conservation, economic impact and community empowerment (Enok Maryani [1]). In terms of community empowerment, it is necessary to pay close attention to the community, because before carrying out these activities it is necessary to look at the level of awareness or concern for the community itself in maintaining the consistency of the surrounding environment. Then the meaning in terms of preserving nature and culture that is used can have a significant economic impact on an area, so that if the three pillars are applied in accordance with the current conditions of Indonesia, of course large state revenues can be achieved optimally. When the three pillars have been implemented evenly, indirectly the goal of Indonesia's participation in achieving the 2030 SDGs (sustainable development goals) which focuses on social development, economic development and environmental development can be well realized.

In the current era of society 5.0, the realistic challenge of the spread of technology which is increasingly displaying

its sophistication is as if it affects Indonesian culture, especially in the city of Palembang in socializing with others, so it is feared that it will override the good habits that have been instilled by previous Palembang ancestors to their descendants. As a result, people follow their times, which are influenced by renewable trends that tend to be westernized. In addition, the impact of technological developments that extends to various sectors including the tourism sector in the city of Palembang. The use of technology is rapidly changing the division's downsizing policy as well as the number of employees working in the hospitality industry. So that it has an impact on the unilateral termination of employment which is issued directly by the policy maker.

On the other hand, on the positive side, the soaring sophistication of a technology can streamline performance in an industry. Thus, the goal of industry in contributing to the development of the national economy can occur in a sustainable manner. In this millennium era, a micro and macro industry must certainly innovate. This will increase the access of small-scale industries and enterprises, especially in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit that is integrated into value chains and markets. Likewise, when the need for goods and services increases, of course people demand renewal of new inventions. So, innovation is what makes the industry progress and develop tremendously.

In terms of industrial movement to innovate, it must go hand in hand with very rapid technological advances. It can be seen that people fulfill their needs for clothing, food and housing only through smartphone screens. The fact is that food is no longer used as the primary need of society in this millennial era, but people prefer to fulfill their psychological needs first. The proof is that many people prefer to buy internet quota packages rather than nutritious food. This is certainly a transformation from a good habit to a bad one. However, for the community it is a normal thing, people think that the world is in the grip of a smartphone. This is what indicates that it is as if the world has been made easier with digital [2].

Even with the conditions that are all digital from the influence of today's globalization. At first remote access was difficult to reach, now it can be closer. Of course, this should not reduce the thinking power and behavior of the people of Palembang City in their responsibility to maintain the social environment, natural environment and culture that characterizes Indonesia with courtesy and hospitality to others. Due to a life full of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity that is spread in the city of Pempek, it can still maintain the identity of the Palembang people as a whole. In maintaining its cultural and natural wealth, as well as having great potential in changing the habits of the people around the city of Palembang, especially in the Sekanak Lambidaro River area. The local government synergizes with academics, tourism activists and involves the local lurah to make the Sekanak Lambidaro River Festival in 2022 to unite the mindset of the community to maintain the cleanliness of the river, as well as maintain existing cultural differences.

In previous studies related to ecotourism research based on river and cultural conservation in the city of Palembang, it only examined its natural potential, cultural conflicts, and mangrove maintenance. However, previous researchers did not think of studying in terms of procuring a festival event entitled ecotourism which can be used as an activity in which a lot of nature and culture conservation is carried out as well as the economic additions that occur and do not escape the activities of empowering the surrounding community in maintaining river conditions to keep the river clean and clean. prolonged. Therefore, what is interesting and the difference in this study compared to previous research lies in the aim of the researcher in studying and knowing how useful this festival event is in increasing the awareness of the people of Palembang City in conserving nature and culture in continuity with the principles of ecotourism and sustainable tourism in the midst of world progress. globalization.

In the current development of ecotourism, especially in the city of Palembang, which puts forward the concept of sustainable development by using the concept of a green environment on an ongoing basis. This is implemented because there are many problems that occur related to the weak support capacity of the community in the preservation or conservation of nature and culture around the Sekanak Lambidaro River area of Palembang. Not to mention a lot of damage to the ecosystem of flora and fauna that exist in the environment, so there is a need for empowerment through an activity that reawakens people's love for nature and culture conservation. This activity can be carried out by forming a festival event entitled ecotourism with an orientation to sustainable development.

Based on Getz's statement [3] which says that the procurement of a memorial aimed at respecting and preserving positive habits that have ever existed, both his love for culture and nature, needs to be held a special event in the form of a festival. Previously, Adha [4] explained that festival events such as the Krakatau festival were held to remind residents around Mount Krakatau to be able to protect the forest by cleaning up existing garbage due to the many climbers who did climbing activities to conquer Mount Krakatau. In Zulfajri research [5], he also provided a study related to the development of the festival as a tourist attraction, the activity aims to preserve Acehese culture and has implications for the economic growth of the community and to improve Aceh's tourism industry.

Many festival events, including the Reyogponorogo festival, are held with the aim of introducing musical performances, languages, styles, and attractions combined with the presentation of the reyog, but this festival is only focused on performances on that day [6]. The holding of the festival can also be interpreted as a commemoration of Nyepi which is usually held by Hindu communities, especially in the province of Bali, which brings many tourists in it, due to the ogeh-ogoh attractions shown during the event. Of course, the festival has a significant economic impact that is felt directly by the people who hold the festival event [7].

The previous research mentioned above mostly focused on festival events as a trigger in increasing the

economy in the area. However, it is very different from the research studied this time, because by looking at the many activities for nature and cultural conservation which are directly built an ecotourism destination, of course a lot of funds are poured for the development of ecotourism areas. However, this can certainly be replaced with a festival activity. Many festivals that have been held by event managers do not use the principles of sustainable tourism.

The previous thing is the reason for the interest in this study compared to previous studies, because the festival that has been held namely the Sekanak Lambidaro Palembang River festival was studied with a focus on packaging natural and cultural conservation activities juxtaposed with the principles of ecotourism and sustainable tourism. This is because the development of activities in conserving nature with the principle of ecotourism is always centered on the development of ecotourism potential found in rivers, mangroves, forests, lakes and beaches. However, many researchers do not think about the festival research entitled ecotourism which is seen from the perspective of using the concept of sustainable tourism after the festival is held.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

The research uses qualitative research by using three methods, first with an in-depth interview study approach [8] to five sources including Lurah 23 Ilir, the community around the Sekanak River, festival event managers, Palembang City Tourism Office staff, and visitors at the Lambidaro Sekanak River Festival. This interview activity was carried out for one day with a duration of one hour per resource person who took place directly during the festival event. The questions asked were: 1) Can the Sekanak Lambidaro River Festival be held to provide an element of ecotourism?, 2) Are nature and cultural conservation activities effective in the form of the Sekanak Lambidaro River Festival?, 3) Does the Sekanak Lambidaro River Festival produce the concept of sustainable tourism? for the local community?

Second, this research also uses a literature study approach. As explained by [9] that literature study is research that uses library sources to obtain additional research data, so that in this study the reference literature becomes the second additional source of researchers in researching this topic. The literature study in question is looking for and studying various existing literatures such as books, scientific journals, ecotourism articles, popular articles on festival events and articles on nature and cultural conservation activities.

Third, by using field notes that are also an additional source of data in this study, because if you only rely on interviews and literature studies, your studies will be lacking. Then it is added by using the researcher's field notes so that the interpretation listed can be in accordance with existing developments. Coupled with the experience of previous researchers related to the topic, it can add insight into the research. Data analysis in this study was carried out by descriptive method. This is intended as an effort to collect and compile data which is then described in written form, not including numbers [9].

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Can the Sekanak Lambidaro River Festival be held to provide an element of ecotourism?*

Prior to the holding of this festival, the Palembang City Government in synergy with the Tourism Office, Public Works and Public Housing Office as well as the event organizer together changed the image of the Sekanak River which was once famous for its smelly, dirty river and used as a garbage disposal site starting from the impact of trade. In the past, until 2022, it will become a clean river and clean water that can be used by many people, especially the people who live around the river. The local government also considered the slum settlements surrounding the Sekanak River area. The most appropriate way is to dismantle the old slum building into livable housing. However, the most important thing is that before demolition is carried out, it is necessary to pay attention to the level of public awareness to change people's habits in disposing of waste in its place while at the same time keeping Palembang culture sustainable. In maintaining a good natural scope, including nature conservation in rivers, it is very good when the Sekanak Lambidaro River Festival is held. In fact, with many activities in it such as river cleaning activities together, seed distribution of belida fish, musical and cultural performances typical of the city of Palembang and other competitions, it is very effective and gradually empowers the community to make this festival a success.

Based on the data obtained [10], related to the procurement of natural and cultural conservation activities, it really gives an element of ecotourism in it. Due to the various activities witnessed by the community and visitors who come to highly uphold ecotourism values such as river cleaning, conservation of flora and fauna, providing a significant economic impact, as well as community empowerment carried out by the local government in collaboration with tourism academics in order to maintain environment, both natural and cultural in a sustainable manner.

Through the activities conceptualized by the event manager, it refers to the principle of ecotourism. Because one of them is evidenced by the existence of tree planting activities around the river, so that these activities are oriented to reforestation. Not only that, local game activities are also shown in this festival. The goal is to remind the children of Palembang City to continue to maintain their cultural wealth at the festival. Then the typical clothing competition activities and native dances of the Palembang people are also presented in this event, so if it is said whether there is an ecotourism element?, then the answer is that it has a true ecotourism element.

*Are natural and cultural conservation activities effective in the form of the Lambidaro Sekanak River Festival?*

When the researcher collected data through in-depth interviews with several related sources, it resulted in the results that the activities exhibited by the event manager and the local government's creative ideas to create events that

could be combined into one event. Much of the literature found by researchers, the majority of other researchers examine the natural potential of rivers, mangroves, mountains, lakes and their culture. Then there is also research that discusses related to events in the form of holiday commemoration festivals, cultural festivals, regional festivals. However, there has been no research that discusses the relationship between the packaging of conservation activities related to festival events.

In this case, the implementation of the festival elaborated by researchers mostly does not examine the packaging of activities in the form of ecotourism, so that conservation activities only end at the festival event [11]. However, interestingly, this festival combines several activities that bring together all tribes and races in the city of Palembang. With it, it shows all forms of artistic and cultural attractions which are visualized through art music performances, traditional clothes, and special foods that are always served in the Sekanak Lambidaro River area. Data obtained from the Palembang City Tourism Office related to culinary tourism has greatly improved. That's why the local government introduced the typical food and drink of the people of Palembang City.

Of course, the activities that have been designed by the event manager in synergy with several agencies have yielded maximum results. The proof is a lot of visitors who come to enjoy this festival. Instead of filling in the blanks on Saturdays and Sundays and some while exercising, they stop by to watch shows from this festival. Of course, it is very effective if ecotourism activities like this are packaged in the form of an ecotourism festival. However, back to community empowerment before carrying out festival activities like this. This festival is also believed by local political stakeholders to be able to attract the attention of tourism activists in the surrounding environment together to restore the impact of the economic downturn since the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

*Does the Lambidaro Sekanak River Festival produce the concept of sustainable tourism for the surrounding community?*

Based on the findings obtained by the researcher, during the outreach of approximately one month, many made positive contributions after the Sekanak Lambidaro River Festival. This is because, in fact, the local community together are now concerned about their environment for cleanliness and intermingling with the various ethnic groups that are there. What's more, there has been less cultural conflict that used to happen every week. Now it has become a river coastal area that can be enjoyed by many people, both the habitat of belida fish, toman fish, catfish and other fauna are maintained. In addition, small children who live around the river are currently seen always together preserving traditional games like small children. The youths there also take part in providing creative programs that can revive their economy because of the population density.

The existence of this festival raises the spirit of the community to continue to care about maintaining clean water which they can use to meet their daily needs [12]. In the past,

there was a lot of garbage scattered in the river, so that many residents were affected by various kinds of diseases such as dengue fever and typhus often encountered the surrounding community. But now this bad condition has been eliminated, because the community has realized that they are destroying their environment and the ecosystem in the river. The impact will hit them back. Not only that, through the holding of this festival, the surrounding community has learned how important it is to receive a good education. The community also hopes that the festival entitled ecotourism will continue to be developed in various other places whose potential needs to be developed in maintaining natural spaces, especially in the Palembang City area.

The big challenges previously felt by the local government, academics or community empowerment, as well as festival event organizers have had a good impact on the community around the Sekanak Lambidaro River. Due to the concept of ecotourism that was upheld previously, it has been carried out for a long time until now. There is also great hope from the community that the Palembang City Government always cares for its people in maintaining natural wealth through the Musi River which has many types of ecosystems in it, so that the community's needs for clothing and food are fulfilled to the maximum.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Various kinds of phenomena in the conservation of nature and culture previously continued to occur in the city of Palembang, especially around the Sekanak Lambidaro River. In fact, if the community is aware that they will take good care of their nature and culture, it can become a selling point for their area in providing a significant economic impact. Before going far for profit, it is better to carry out community empowerment activities provided by academics who are experienced in teaching the concept of ecotourism and sustainable tourism. Of course, this has been conceptualized in a structured manner for fighters to increase tourism in the city of Palembang through the procurement of the Sekanak Lambidaro Palembang River Festival in 2022. Programs of ecotourism activities like this are very effective when packaged in the form of festival events. This is because according to the findings studied by the researchers, it has an impact on sustainable development in the Sekanak River area, which was previously a dirty environment that was ignored by the community. However, who would have thought that now it has turned into a tourist destination with a clean and well-maintained river. The impact of this festival is evidenced by the construction of the Lambidaro Sekanak Park by the Palembang City Government so that the people of Palembang City can see examples of changing a slum river into a habitable one that can be utilized by future generations. According to the data found by previous researchers, many conservation activities were not packaged in festival events, so the impact caused was not principled on prolonged tourism. People's behavior seems to be only fixated on the activities at that time. However, if it is packaged in festival activities, of course it will indirectly change the habits of the people who

used to be bad to be more aware and care about the environment.

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