

## Analysis of Swamp Buffalo Tourism Potential to Improve Community Welfare in Paharangan Village, South Kalimantan

<sup>1</sup> Isra Ul Huda, <sup>2</sup> Anthonius Junianto Karsudjono, <sup>3</sup> Sugiarto

<sup>1,2</sup> Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Pancasetia Banjarmasin

<sup>3</sup> Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Cendikia Karya Utama

Email: israulhuda83@gmail.com, tonimbbm@yahoo.com, sugiep3m@gmail.com

Article Info	ABSTRACT
<b>Keywords:</b> Swamp Buffalo Tourism, Community Welfare, Community-Based Tourism Model.	This study explores the potential of swamp buffalo tourism in Paharangan Village, South Kalimantan, as a means to improve community welfare. By examining the cultural and economic value of swamp buffalo, the study highlights how community-based tourism could enhance local livelihoods and support sustainable development. Using interviews, observations, and SWOT analysis, findings reveal that swamp buffalo tourism has strong potential due to the cultural uniqueness of the buffalo and the village's natural setting, despite challenges such as limited infrastructure and marketing support. Opportunities lie in the growing interest in eco-tourism and cultural experiences, which could position Paharangan as a distinctive destination. The study recommends a community-based model for tourism development, involving locals directly in planning, training, and promotional activities, thus enabling economic benefits and preserving cultural heritage. This research underscores the role of community-driven tourism in enhancing rural welfare and sustaining traditional practices in alignment with environmental conservation goals.
This is an open access article under the <a href="#">CC BY</a> license	<b>Corresponding Author:</b> Isra Ul Huda E-mail: israulhuda83@gmail.com



## INTRODUCTION

The concept of tourism potential and its approaches can be found in various literature that discusses tourism development and the general science of tourism. Experts such as Peter Murphy, Stephen Page, Jafar Jafari, and Geoffrey Wall, among others, have contributed to understanding tourism potential and strategies for its development. They emphasize the importance of identifying resources and utilizing them sustainably to support the growth of the tourism industry. This concept also appears in the works of many other scholars engaged in tourism studies.

According to these experts, tourism potential is a combination of natural, cultural, and human resources that hold appeal and potential for development into attractive tourism products or destinations. Tourism potential can include natural beauty, cultural heritage, historical attractions, recreational activities, cultural events, and supporting infrastructure such as accommodation, transportation, and other tourist facilities. Evaluating tourism potential often involves analyzing various factors such as accessibility, sustainability, economic potential, and social and environmental impacts. By effectively identifying and managing tourism potential, a destination can enhance its appeal to tourists and promote local economic growth.

Swamp buffaloes, also known as mud buffaloes, are commonly found in areas with swampy and wetland habitats. These animals possess unique characteristics that make them well-suited to their environment. Swamp buffaloes typically inhabit areas with swamps, rivers, and wetlands, adapting well to watery and muddy conditions. Physically, they are large, robust animals with thick skin that is generally dark in color, often gray or black. They spend a lot of time in water or mud to regulate their body temperature and avoid insect bites. Their diet consists of grass, aquatic plants, and other marsh vegetation, and they can also utilize agricultural by-products.

Swamp buffaloes offer several benefits, especially in rural agricultural communities. They are often used for plowing rice fields and other farmland, particularly in areas that are inaccessible to modern machinery. Their meat is known to be leaner than beef, and buffalo milk contains higher levels of fat and protein. Additionally, buffalo hides are used to produce leather goods, while their horns can be crafted into various handicrafts. In terms of ecosystem support, swamp buffaloes help maintain wetland ecosystems by consuming invasive plants and creating small ponds that serve as habitats for various species of flora and fauna.

However, there are also challenges and conservation concerns associated with swamp buffaloes. Climate change and environmental alterations, such as converting wetlands to farmland or settlements, pose threats to their natural habitat. Swamp buffaloes are also susceptible to various diseases commonly found in wet environments, such as leptospirosis and liver flukes. Conservation and breeding efforts are essential to maintain the population of swamp buffaloes, including genetic and health improvements.

In light of these factors, several research questions arise regarding the tourism potential of swamp buffaloes. First, what is the current condition and tourism potential of swamp buffaloes in Negara Subdistrict? This includes identifying the current state of the swamp ecosystem and swamp buffalo population, as well as assessing the attractions and activities that could be developed for tourism. Second, what factors influence the development of swamp buffalo tourism in Negara Subdistrict? This involves analyzing internal factors such as infrastructure availability, human

resources, and community readiness, as well as external factors like government support, accessibility, and tourist interest.

Another key question examines the economic impact of developing swamp buffalo tourism on the welfare of the local community. This includes evaluating the economic effects, such as job creation, income increases, and new business opportunities, as well as identifying additional revenue sources from tourism, like local product sales and service offerings. Additionally, how can the development of swamp buffalo tourism contribute to cultural and environmental preservation in Negara Subdistrict? This question explores the role of swamp buffalo tourism in preserving local traditions and culture and assesses its positive and negative impacts on the environment, including necessary conservation steps.

The study also aims to identify the primary challenges in developing swamp buffalo tourism in Negara Subdistrict and proposes strategies to overcome them. This involves recognizing obstacles in tourism development, such as infrastructure, marketing, and community involvement, and providing strategic recommendations to address these issues, such as infrastructure improvements, human resource capacity building, and effective tourism promotion.

The objectives of this research include mapping the tourism potential of swamp buffaloes in Negara Subdistrict, analyzing the economic, social, and environmental impacts of developing swamp buffalo tourism, and identifying challenges while formulating effective development strategies to improve the welfare of the local community.

This research is expected to provide several benefits. It aims to offer recommendations for local government and other stakeholders in planning and developing swamp buffalo tourism. It also seeks to raise community awareness and participation in sustainable tourism development and support cultural and environmental conservation efforts through responsible tourism.

## METHOD

This research is a case study aimed at analyzing the potential of swamp buffalo tourism to improve community welfare in Negara Subdistrict, Hulu Sungai Selatan Regency, South Kalimantan Province. As a case study, it focuses on the unique context of this location and examines how developing swamp buffalo tourism could bring positive benefits to the well-being of the local community.

The research uses several methods to gather comprehensive data. Field research plays a crucial role, involving direct data collection on-site through observations of the swamp buffalo, interactions with the local community, and assessments of existing tourism infrastructure or areas needing development. Additionally, a thorough literature review supports this study, compiling and analyzing relevant resources on swamp buffalo tourism potential, the economic, social, and

environmental impacts of tourism on local communities, and successful tourism development case studies in similar locations. Interviews are also conducted with key stakeholders, including local tourism operators, community members, local government representatives, and experts in related fields, to gather diverse perspectives on the project.

This study adopts a qualitative approach, emphasizing an in-depth understanding of the local context, community perceptions, and the socio-cultural implications of swamp buffalo tourism. An interdisciplinary approach is also used, drawing insights from economics, anthropology, ecology, and resource management to build a holistic understanding of the impacts of developing swamp buffalo tourism. Furthermore, a participatory approach is integrated into the research, actively involving the local community in decision-making processes and tourism management. This engagement ensures that the community feels a sense of ownership and directly benefits from the tourism development

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The concept of swamp ecosystem-based tourism development has been explored in various studies, each offering insights into how tourism can positively impact local economies and contribute to environmental conservation. For instance, a study by Sari and Gunawan (2017) on ecotourism in Gunung Leuser National Park revealed that ecotourism not only brings significant economic benefits to the local community but also supports environmental conservation through active local involvement in tourism management. This relevance aligns well with the potential for swamp buffalo tourism in Hulu Sungai Selatan, demonstrating how a well-managed wetland ecosystem can bolster both local economy and environmental preservation.

In the field of cultural tourism, Putra and Purnomo (2018) examined cultural tourism in Yogyakarta and found that cultural tourism enhances local income and helps preserve cultural heritage. This study underscores the importance of active community participation in the development and promotion of tourism, which is applicable to swamp buffalo tourism, where preserving local culture and community involvement are crucial to success.

Suryawan (2018) investigated the impact of tourism on community welfare in Bali, highlighting that tourism boosts economic welfare through job creation and increased income. However, this study also pointed out challenges such as social change and environmental pressure. This dual perspective provides valuable insights for planning sustainable strategies for

swamp buffalo tourism, balancing the positive economic impact with careful environmental management.

Community-based tourism development, as seen in Honey's (2008) study on ecotourism in Kerala, India, shows how community involvement, training, education, and effective promotion contribute to successful tourism initiatives. This model not only benefits the economy but also aids in environmental conservation, providing a sustainable approach that could be adopted for swamp buffalo tourism.

A specific case related to swamp buffalo tourism was studied by Garcia (2014) on Carabao Island in the Philippines. This research demonstrates that buffalo tourism can attract visitors and increase local income through educational tours, farming demonstrations, and buffalo festivals. This example serves as a practical model for developing swamp buffalo tourism in Negara Subdistrict, with direct economic benefits for the local community.

The framework for analyzing the potential of swamp buffalo tourism to enhance community welfare in Negara Subdistrict, Hulu Sungai Selatan Regency, South Kalimantan Province, involves several stages. First is the identification of tourism potential, including the unique characteristics of swamp buffalo, such as their habitat in wetlands, distinctive behaviors, and role within the ecosystem. Potential tourist attractions, including educational tourism, ecotourism, and cultural experiences, are assessed. Additionally, understanding the unique cultural elements related to swamp buffalo, such as local traditions, festivals, and daily activities, adds value to the tourism appeal.

The second stage involves analyzing the impacts of tourism development. Economic impacts include increased income for the community, job creation in the tourism and supporting sectors, and the growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) related to tourism. Social impacts encompass improved social welfare through enhanced access to education and health services, and cultural preservation through tourism activities that highlight local culture. Environmental impacts focus on wetland ecosystem preservation through responsible ecotourism programs and raising awareness among tourists and locals about environmental conservation.

Identifying challenges in tourism development is the third stage. Challenges include infrastructure limitations, such as road access, transportation, and accommodation facilities; lack of skills and knowledge among the local community in managing and developing tourism; financial constraints for tourism investment; inadequate promotion and marketing strategies;

and the challenge of balancing tourism development with environmental preservation.

The final stage involves formulating tourism development strategies. Enhancing infrastructure involves improving essential facilities, such as road access, sanitation, and accommodation. Strengthening community capacity through training and education equips locals with tourism management skills. Securing financial resources involves identifying potential funding sources from government, private sector, and donor organizations, along with implementing sustainable financing models. Effective promotion and marketing strategies utilize social media and digital platforms to increase visibility, as well as partnerships with travel agencies and tour operators. Additionally, environmental and cultural preservation practices are incorporated through sustainable ecotourism principles and programs that support the conservation of local culture and heritage.

This framework provides a comprehensive approach to assessing and developing swamp buffalo tourism, aiming to improve community welfare while ensuring sustainable tourism practices and environmental conservation.

This study will be conducted in Negara Subdistrict, Hulu Sungai Selatan Regency, South Kalimantan Province, Indonesia. Negara Subdistrict was chosen for its significant potential in swamp buffalo tourism and its location within the expansive wetland ecosystem of South Kalimantan. The research is planned over a specific period, moving through several essential phases.

The initial phase involves pre-research preparation, including the development of the research proposal, obtaining necessary permissions, collecting literature related to swamp buffalo tourism potential, and establishing initial contact with local stakeholders to determine appropriate research methods. Field research will follow, involving site visits to Negara Subdistrict for data collection. This phase will include direct observation of swamp buffalo and the assessment of existing tourism infrastructure, along with engagement with the local community. Interviews will be conducted with key stakeholders such as local tourism managers, community leaders, and government officials to gain a comprehensive understanding of the area's potential and needs.

Data analysis will involve processing both quantitative and qualitative data collected from field research and literature studies. This analysis will focus on evaluating the potential economic, social, and environmental impacts of swamp buffalo tourism development on local community welfare. The final phase of the study will be the preparation of a research report,

detailing findings, analysis, and recommendations for developing swamp buffalo tourism in Negara Subdistrict.

The study's subjects include several key groups. The local community of Negara Subdistrict, particularly swamp buffalo owners, farmers, and residents who may participate in managing and promoting tourism, are central to the research. The local government, including district and subdistrict authorities responsible for tourism development and infrastructure, plays a vital role in supporting or facilitating these efforts. Tourism managers, such as individuals or groups involved in managing the swamp buffalo tourism site or operating local tours, are essential stakeholders in realizing tourism initiatives. Other stakeholders include academics and researchers, NGOs focused on environmental conservation, and potential investors interested in supporting or benefiting from the development of swamp buffalo tourism.

The research population includes groups directly involved or impacted by swamp buffalo tourism development. This includes the local residents of Negara Subdistrict who maintain swamp buffalo, farm, or fish within the wetland ecosystem and may have direct involvement in tourism-related activities. The government institutions at the district and subdistrict levels are also part of this population, as they shape policies related to tourism, infrastructure, and environmental management. Additionally, tourism managers and local operators who either manage or plan to manage swamp buffalo tourism sites, as well as other stakeholders such as NGOs and potential investors, are included in the study's population, given their roles in supporting sustainable tourism development and community welfare in the area.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study focuses on the potential of swamp buffalo tourism in Negara Subdistrict, Hulu Sungai Selatan Regency, South Kalimantan Province, Indonesia, as a means to enhance community welfare. Negara Subdistrict, part of an extensive wetland ecosystem, presents unique opportunities for ecotourism centered around swamp buffalo, which holds both ecological and cultural significance for the local community. By examining the conditions, needs, and challenges associated with developing swamp buffalo tourism, this study aims to identify effective strategies that can sustainably integrate local economic benefits with environmental conservation.

The research employs a phased approach, including preparation, field data collection, analysis, and report writing. The preparation phase involved gathering literature, obtaining permissions, and

engaging stakeholders. Field research focused on direct observations of swamp buffalo and tourism infrastructure, coupled with interviews with local residents, tourism operators, community leaders, and government officials to gain a comprehensive view of the potential for tourism development.

Key subjects of this study include the local community, government authorities, tourism managers, and other stakeholders like NGOs and investors. Each of these groups plays a pivotal role in the development process, whether through direct participation, policy support, tourism management, or environmental conservation efforts. By involving these stakeholders, the study addresses the complex social, economic, and environmental factors that influence sustainable tourism development.

The study ultimately aims to present findings and recommendations for developing a viable and sustainable swamp buffalo tourism model that promotes community welfare. This model is intended to balance the economic benefits of tourism with environmental preservation and cultural heritage, providing a foundation for ongoing community engagement and long-term prosperity in Negara Subdistrict. The conclusions drawn from this research will serve as valuable insights for local government, potential investors, and other stakeholders interested in fostering a sustainable and community-driven tourism initiative.

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