

## **Water Hyacinth Creative Tourism**

How to Make a Sustainable Tourism Through Creative Tourism



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**STUDY OF TOURISM DESTINATION**

**BANDUNG INSTITUTE OF TOURISM**

**2017**

1. In running a tourism business or managing a tourism destination, we don't need to exploit tourism resources. Whether it is the natural or socio-cultural resources. But without exploiting tourism resources, it still can be a source of people's economy by developing sustainable tourism. One of the destination that have a great potential but there are environmental problems that can not be resolved yet is Rawa Pening. Rawa Pening is a lake located between four sub-districts named Ambarawa, Bawen, Tuntang, and Banyubiru, Semarang Regency, Central Java, Indonesia with a total area 2020 hectares , situated at an altitude of 463 meters above sea level.<sup>1</sup>

Pic 1.1  
Rawa Pening's View



Source : wisatanesia.co, 2015

Pic 1.2  
Rawa Pening's Map



Source : wisatanesia.co, 2015

Beside the beautiful view, this lake has a diverse lake biota, this lake also has an important role for local communities as power plants, for irrigation of rice fields as well as the lands of fishing for local communities, which is mostly fishermen and farmers. One of the dominant environmental issues that can be a tourist attraction in Rawa Pening is the Water Hyacinth. Water Hyacinth is a natural plant in Rawa Pening that become a pest that causes most of Rawa Pening's surface covered and sedimented because of its uncontrolled growth. But actually the Water Hyacinth can handicrafted with an aesthetic value and high selling price. Nowadays, Water Hyacinth even also known as an alternative fuel and fertilizer.

Pic 1.3  
Water Hyacinth in Rawa Pening



Source: jateng.tribunnews.com, 2016

Pic 1.4  
Water Hyacinth Handycraft



Source: www.pahlawanekonomi.com, 2016

<sup>1</sup> Nugroho, et al, 2012

Seeing this potential, Rawa Pening Region can be developed as a Water Hyacinth Creative Tourism. Potential activities that can be done are enjoying the Rawa Pening view, fishing, and making your own craft of Water Hyacinth, tourists can also buy typical souvenirs such as bags, furniture, and others that made from Water Hyacinth. With the increase of Water Hyacinth handicrafts production, beside improve the environment it can also improve people's economy.

2. Rawa Pening has a lot of tourism resources, but it has an environmental problem that can not be resolved yet. Environmental problems in Rawa Pening is the decrease of lake capacity because of the rivers that flow into Rawa Pening carry a wide variety of waste, and the community around the river makes the Water Hyacinth can grow rapidly by throwing organic waste on the lake. And according to Soeprbowati, a researcher at Diponegoro University, Rawa Pening could become dry by 2021 due to increasing sedimentation.<sup>2</sup>

Pic 2.1

Rapid Growth of the Water Hyacinth



Source: print.kompas.com, 2016

The growth of Water Hyacinth pests which not controlled covered 80 percent of the lake's surface. So the challenge of this project is to develop a sustainable tourism through creative tourism by using Water Hyacinth as an attraction. Some local people just harvest it and sell it to the craftsmen with cheap price. So, people haven't feel the economics impact of Water Hyacinth crafts yet. Another challenge is how to make local people understand the concept of sustainable tourism and creative tourism where people have to interact with tourists. The next challenge is how to attract investors for the project considering the Creative Tourism is a new thing in Indonesia.

3. Judging from sustainable tourism function whose principles are environmental, economic, and socio-cultural, and to ensure long-term sustainability must maintain a balance between these three aspects, Water Hyacinth as Creative Tourism in Rawa Pening may be the answer.<sup>3</sup> Water Hyacinth has long been a major problem in Rawa Pening, which very difficult to

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<sup>2</sup> Sulistiyo, 2003

<sup>3</sup> UNEP and UNWTO, 2005

eradicate because of its rapid growth. through Creative Tourism, Water Hyacinth that was a pests can be handcrafted with high value. Creative Tourism is tourism which offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences, which are characteristic of the holiday destination where they are taken.<sup>4</sup>

Pic 3.1

Water Hyacinth Handycraft



Source :  
Agriculturelifestyle.com, 2015

Pic 3.2

Water Hyacinth Handycraft



Source :  
www.kerajinanambarawa.com,  
2015

Pic 3.3

Water Hyacinth Handycraft



Source : citizen6.liputan6.com,  
2013

So, tourist can participate to make handicrafts such as bags, wallets, furniture, and others using the Water Hyacinth. Besides the Water Hyacinth is also known to be an alternative fuel and fertilizer. By doing so, Rawa Pening which now 80 percent of its surface covered in Water Hyacinth and suffered silting due to the increasing of the mud can be as clear as before. Activities such as fishing and enjoying the outdoors can be done too in Rawa Pening because the place is still natural and still less pollution. In managing the Creative Tourism, the local people must interact with tourists. Therefore we should socialize people on how to manage the Creative Tourism Destination. Water Hyacinth had been used by the local community as crafts, but has not been used as the major attraction in Rawa Pening. With its uniqueness it's not impossible for Water Hyacinth to become a major attraction in Rawa Pening and makes Creative Tourism as the main source of the people's economy considering there's just a few of competitors in Creative Tourism.

4. In developing this project, there are five aspects that need to be considered. They are market and marketing aspect, technical and technology aspect, human resources aspect, legal and legality aspect, and economic and financial aspect. In the market and marketing aspects, the market that we are targeting are all ages both foreign and domestic tourist. This is because the activities in Water Hyacinth Creative Tourism can be done all ages. For marketing aspect, we used online media, and print media such as website, youtube, social media, and

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<sup>4</sup> Raymond & Richards, 2000

magazines. Water Hyacinth Creative Tourism will create their own website for ticket reservations too. We will also cooperate with several travel agents to arrange some tour package. For technical and technological aspects, the project will have an area of 1500m<sup>2</sup> which is a resident's area so we don't have to built any building. This is an area of home industry, traditional restaurant. And we have to provide every home an equipment for making crafts and fertilizer. In the aspect of Human Resources, the project is "by people and for people" project. Thus, there will be a training for people on how to manage creative tourism as well as training on the manufacture of handicrafts and fertilizer because not all local people can make it. In the aspect of law and legality, this project requires a permit from some institution and government to make sure this project is legal and ready to operate. In the economic and financial aspects, the project requires a capital of 15 Billion Rupiah. To collect it, we make a cooperation with another company such as travel company, media enterprise and others. By doing so the project is expected to be completed during one year from from the initial planning, construction, until they are ready to operate.

5. Water Hyacinth which are a pest in Rawa Pening is not only can be made as a beautiful craft. Water Hyacinth is also can be made as an alternative fuels and a fertilizers. In a process of making Water Hyacinth handicraft, the part of Water Hyacinth taken is just the stalk and the leaves, so that the roots which still have buds dumped into the lake. Indeed, the process of Water Hyacinth's stalks, leaves and roots cutting is done on the boat over the lake, and not on the land. The roots that still have its buds will lead to faster growth of the Water Hyacinth and the decomposing Water Hyacinth can make Rawa Pening silt.<sup>5</sup> Actually, the roots and and the buds of Water Hyacinth can be used as a compost fertilizer instead of throwing it into the lake. Currently there are some people who become collectors of Rawa Pening compost, they dredge the rotten Water Hyacinth to dry it on the land. This method is considered less efficient. Water Hyacinth's that take the stalks and the leaves for handicraft should not throw back the roots and buds on the lake, but brought it ashore for composing process. The local community should also be taught how to process the compost. This is done to make Water Hyacinth as the identity of Rawa Pening's people where Water Hyacinth utilized in a various ways. With making composing process and the rural shade, this would be an alternative attraction instead of crafts. Tourist can also try the composting process.

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<sup>5</sup> Iqmal Tahir, 2009

Pic 5.1

Process of making fertilizer



Source: Muhamad Sugiharto, 2016

However, the reasons to make handicraft as a main attraction are the uniqueness of the crafts, the price is more valueable than the compost fertilizer and the market prediction will be more interested in making crafts than compost fertilizer.

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