

Chapter 1

Introduction: Balancing Sustainability and Development in Tropical Tourist Destinations

Akhmad Saufi

Abstract The issues of conservation, restoration and sustainability in tropical environments are critical for the health of the world. As tourism industry continues to grow, it plays important role in the development of tropical countries, and benefits from the conservation and sustainability of the cultural and environmental resources. The issues of managing the balance between the development of tourism in tropical environments and the sustainability of traditional and sensitive places have inspired the conduct of an international tourism conference on 29–31 July 2015 in Lombok, Indonesia. A number of authors looked at various constituents of tourism sector and analyzed each of those from a sustainability standpoint. The tourism development and its sustainability were addressed in three main parts: (1) ecotourism, local culture, and marketing issues, (2) local community participation and tourist behavior issues; and, (3) sustainability and economic development in tourism.

Keywords Tourism development · Sustainability · Tropical countries · Conservation · Community participation

Tropical environments comprise some of the richest and most complex ecosystems on the planet. The diversity and density of resources that exist in tropical environments means they are increasingly impacted by global economic and social forces, including economic development pressures that are often tourism and recreation related. They are also being impacted by rapid population growth that is driven by economic migrants, major resource extraction in the form of oil and gas drilling and relentless industrial fishing, and global climate change and steadily rising sea levels. These pressures create enormous challenges for tropical communities due to the global scope of the problems, an inadequate understanding of the issues, and a paucity of effective management tools.

A. Saufi (✉)
University of Mataram, Mataram, Indonesia
e-mail: akh.saufi72@gmail.com

Given this context, the issues of conservation, restoration and sustainability in tropical environments are an enormously pressing concern for the health of the world. Tourism has an important role to play in addressing these issues because it is both an agent of development and a cause of change, while at the same time it benefits from the conservation and sustainability of the tropical world's cultural and environmental resources. How can we keep the balance between the development of tourism in tropical environments and the sustainability of those traditional and sensitive places?

This was the broad question that drove the undertaking of an international tourism conference that was held 29–31 July 2015 on the island of Lombok, Indonesia. This is also the question that the authors who have contributed to this book are trying to answer. The book takes tourism sustainability beyond the realms of external factors that matter to a single industry. The authors look at various constituents of the tourism sector and analyze each of those from a sustainability standpoint. The book includes articles and case studies that are global in nature, though with an emphasis on Asia, and that show how sustainable applications can be used and how concerns can be addressed.

The book consists of 36 chapters which are grouped into three parts. The first 12 chapters in part one discuss issues of ecotourism, local culture, and the marketing of natural and cultural products of tourism. There are linkages between ecotourism and biopiracy, and the need to protect indigenous and local communities from the practices of biopiracy (Chap. 2). Related to this, eco-friendly attitude are increasingly influencing tourist preferences to stay in green hotels during their holidays (Chap. 3). The conservation of culture through tourism in the context of Malaysia and several tourist destinations in Indonesia is discussed in Chaps. 4–7. Furthermore, various marketing issues related to *halal* tourism, tourist buying behaviour, and packaging are discussed in Chaps. 8–10. Movie touring and culinary tourism are issues discussed in Chaps. 11–13.

Part two includes 11 chapters that cover various issues on local community participation in tourism development and tourist behavior. Leisure activities and leisure skills of residents are discussed in the context of Hangzhou, China (Chap. 14). Demographic issues (Chaps. 15 and 16), the roles of community social capital in the development of ecotourism (Chap. 17), and the contribution of tourism to local wellbeing (Chaps. 18 and 20) provide insight into tourism and community development. Other chapters discuss the community participation in tourism planning (Chap. 21), dark tourism and its impacts on local economies and a community's memory (Chap. 22), cluster-based development models (Chap. 23), and Islamic tourism (Chap. 24).

Part three comprises 12 chapters that present a number of topics related to the sustainability and economic development in tourism. The chapters focus on issues related to economic impacts, such as tourism products and supply chains in the tourism industry (Chaps. 26 and 27), the competitiveness of tourism destinations (Chaps. 34 and 35), industry contributions to tourism sustainability (Chap. 28), the distribution of tourists in a destination (Chaps. 32 and 33), and marketing issues in tourism (Chaps. 25, 29, 30, 31 and 36).

Although much of evidence presented in this book is from tourism destinations in Asia, particularly China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Sri Lanka, many of lessons learned in these case studies apply to other tourism destinations in the world. The adoption of technology in tourism is overshadowing differences in management style and marketing strategies in developed and developing world tourism destinations. The ever increasing demand for travel across the globe is making the industry more sophisticated and is intensifying competition among the many places seeking tourist expenditures. Therefore, it is more important now than ever to understand the dynamic development of the tourism industry, which can only be accomplished through comprehensive studies by many different researchers in many different countries, as provided in this book.