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The Development of Food Security Model Based on Subak System in Bali
Wyna Widian, Erna Sari, Wayan Sudarta
8-14
PDF (Bahasa Indonesia) available: 2

Changes of Household Food Consumption in Indonesia: A Focus on Grain Consumption
Sukanto T. Tanoto, Hadi Gunawan, Hadi Hadi
15-20
PDF (Bahasa Indonesia) available: 2

Market Integration and Response of Rice Market Agents in South Sumatera
Taufik Harso, Eko Gunawan Abdi
21-29
PDF (Bahasa Indonesia) available: 2

Policy Option for Agriculture in Facing the Impact of Sea Level Rise in The South Kalimantan Province
Akhmad R. Tani, Yudha Ario
30-35
PDF (Bahasa Indonesia) available: 2

The Contribution of Agricultural Sub-Sector to Indonesian Economy
Iwarwati, Lutfiati Kusumastuti
36-42
PDF (Bahasa Indonesia) available: 2

Profile Perumkaro Bali (Pendekatan dari Sistem Neraca SosialEkonomi)
I Made Sinta, Budi Wintarno
43-52
PDF (Bahasa Indonesia) available: 2

Ratna Asundi, Agus Surya
53-60
PDF (Bahasa Indonesia) available: 2

Profile Agroindustri Beras Kutapang Tabanan
I Ketut Switawin, Muhammad Zulnaim
61-70
PDF (Bahasa Indonesia) available: 2

The Consequences of Growing Oil Palm in Indonesia
I Y. S. Haris, F. P. Putra
71-76
PDF (Bahasa Indonesia) available: 2

Pengawasan Buah-Buahan oleh Supermarket di Kota Depokan
Symba Pating, Nilai Putri Senastri
77-84
PDF (Bahasa Indonesia) available: 2

Branding Strategies for Agribusiness Enterprises
Gatot Ong Sida
85-90
PDF (Bahasa Indonesia) available: 2

Insight on Live Bird Market in Bali: The Suspect Source of Avian Influenza Transmission
Gatut Agung Arya Irianto
91-97
PDF (Bahasa Indonesia) available: 2

Implementation of Local Knowledge: "Si Hiti Kasaon" on Ecotourism-GM Management in Bali
Agung Syamsuddin, Arif Agung Gede Bala
98-100
PDF (Bahasa Indonesia) available: 2
IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL KNOWLEDGE “TRI HITA KARANA” ON ECOTOURISM MANAGEMENT IN BALI

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ABSTRAK


Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menggali potensi penerapan kearifan lokal, Tri Hita Karana, dalam pengembangan dan pengelolaan pariwisata menuju pariwisata Bali yang berkelanjutan. Pembahasan pada artikel ini difokuskan kepada penerapan filosofi Tri Hita Karana dalam pengelolaan ekowisata, khususnya pada beberapa hutan masyarakat di Bali yang dikelola sebagai daya tarik ekowisata.

Kata kunci: kearifan lokal, tri hita karana, ekowisata, Bali

ABSTRACT

Tourism has become a driving force in the economic development of Bali Province. As tourism developed rapidly in the late 1970s, the Bali's economy has risen sharply. The ideal forms of tourism development for Bali have been debated publicly since the last few years. However, as a society known for its distinctive culture, Bali has a local knowledge, called "Tri Hita Karana" which embraces the need of balance in every aspects of Balinese life. Tri Hita Karana becomes the fundamental philosophy that may be implemented into tourism development and management in Bali.

This paper explores the incorporation of the local knowledge of Balinese, Tri Hita Karana, into tourism development and management that may be useful in contributing to the realisation of sustainable tourism in Bali. Focus is given to the implementation of Tri Hita Karana in the management of ecotourism, particularly in the community forests which have been managed as ecotourism attractions in Bali.

Keywords: local knowledge, tri hita karana, ecotourism, Bali

INTRODUCTION

In this paper we examine the recent issues of sustainable tourism development in Bali, and propose a framework for ecotourism development and management that incorporates Balinese traditional knowledge, called Tri Hita Karana. Firstly, the paper outlines the nature of Bali's tourism development and the concepts of sustainable tourism development. And then, this paper outlines a tourism development and management that incorporates concept of Tri Hita Karana. Finally, this paper describes how the local knowledge, Tri Hita Karana, is implemented into ecotourism development and management in Bali. Examples are given to the development and management of three ecotourism objects, namely Hutan Wisata Alam Sangeh, Hutan Wisata Alas Kedaton, and Hutan Wisata Wenara Wana Ubud.

Issues of Tourism Development in Bali

Tourism in Bali has been developed in terms of increasing number of visitors and tourism facilities. The numbers of direct arrivals of foreign visitors in Bali increased from 24,340 in 1970 to 1,412,839 international tourists in 2000 (BPS Bali various issues), and then decreased afterward to reach 993,029 international tourists in 2003 due to the impact of terrorism attacks in Kuta and Legian on 12th October 2002. However, it took only one year to bring back tourists to Bali to reach 1,458,309 international tourists in 2004. Due to other terrorism attacks in Kuta and Jimbaran on 1st October 2005, the number of international tourists to Bali decreased to 1,260,317 tourists, but the number of international tourists increased to reach 1,664,854 tourists in 2007 (DIPARDA Bali, 2008). The number of international tourists visited Bali still increased in year 2008 to reach 1,968,892 tourists, the highest number.
in Bali's tourism history. Most foreign tourists (55.7%) visiting Bali were interested in people and culture, and about 29.4% were interested in natural amenity of Bali (DIPARDA Bali, 1998).

Tourism has become the leading sector in Bali's economy. As Bali's economy has been developed mostly through tourism and other economic sectors related to tourism, therefore tourism competes with agriculture on the use of natural resources, particularly water and land resources (these two resources are considered to be the two most significant development constraints in Bali) (Wiranatha, 2001). Moreover, many believe that the 'booming' in tourism development has raised several concerns, including:

- An increasing impact of development (tourism) on Balinese socio-culture, particularly in terms of changing lifestyles towards more consumerism and individualism (i.e. less time for socio-cultural activities) due to the influence of foreign tourists and/or their involvement in economic activities (tourism);
- Conflict of interests over the use of public spaces (especially beaches) between cultural-religious activities of Balinese society and tourist activities in some areas;
- Limitations of natural resources (particularly land and water) and the competitions over the use of the resources between economic and residential activities.
- Issues of beach erosion, reef destruction, wastewater pollution, and solid waste disposal; and
- Disparity distribution of economic benefits from tourism.

Regarding the above facts, uncontrolled tourism development and other development related to tourism may inhibit tourism itself. It is because uncontrolled development may lead to deterioration of natural amenity and socio-culture cohesiveness. Therefore, concepts of sustainable development should also be applied in tourism development and management in Bali.

Concept of Sustainable Tourism

The concept of sustainable tourism was formulated in order to follow up the concept of sustainable development. The issues of sustainable development have been widely acknowledged since its appearance in 'Our Common Future' (WCED, 1987). Sustainable development has been expressed as an adaptive process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, and the orientation of technological development and institutional changes are made to meet the needs of present and future generations for a better life. Moffat (1993) summarizes components of sustainability as maintaining ecological integrity and diversity, meeting basic human needs, keeping options open for future generations, reducing injustice, and increasing self-determination.

In term of tourism development, the concept of sustainable development so called sustainable tourism could include three main aspects, namely: sustainability, education, and local participation. The aspect of sustainability should cover four areas, namely environmentally friendly, socially responsible, culturally acceptable, and economically viable.

- Environmentally friendly means to avoid or minimize the environmental impact of tourist activities. Calculation of physical carrying capacity is important to assess environmental impacts and its sustainability.
- Socially responsible refers to the ability of a community to absorb inputs, such as extra people, for short or long periods of time, and to continue functioning either without the creation of social disharmony as a result of these inputs or by adapting its functions and relationships, so that the disharmony created can be alleviated or mitigated. There is a suggestion to calculate social carrying capacity, although it seems to be harder than calculating physical carrying capacity.
- Culturally acceptable refers to the ability of people or a people to retain or adapt elements of their culture which distinguish them from other people. Cultural impacts are more easily seen over the long term and are therefore more difficult to measure, although the cultural subversion of many local communities has been well documented.
- Economically viable refers to a level of economic gain from the activity sufficient either to cover the cost any special measures taken to cater for the tourist and to mitigate the effects of tourist's presence or to offer an income appropriate to the inconvenience caused to the local community visited - without violating any of the other conditions - or both.

Moreover, sustainable tourism includes education for both tourists and hosts. Education for tourists means to provide enlightenment to the tourists in the cultural ways and norms of those they are visiting. On the other hand, education for hosts means to give training to the 'hosts' so they are better able to cater for the whims of the tourists who visit them. Finally, sustainable tourism could be more comprehensive with local participation. Therefore the hosts can obtain direct benefits from tourists who visit their area.

The general concept of sustainability may be used as a guide to Bali's tourism development. However, more attention should be given to natural resources, traditional resource uses and conservation practices, and the socio-culture aspect. In this respect, the Bali Sustainable Development Project (BSDP) has come to the conclusion that sustainable development for Bali should reflect the balancing of economy, environment and culture, and development as a process that enhances the quality of life (Martopo and Mitchell, 1995).
INCORPORATING TRI HITA KARANA INTO TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Balinese people expect that development could lead to an increasing both standard of living (economic wellbeing) and quality of life (combination of environmental and socio-cultural well-being). It is hoped that Balinese people could maintain and develop their socio-cultural traditions with economic development without harming the environment. It is also suggested that the Balinese people do have a concept of how Bali should be developed, including what should and what should not be developed around the island. One of traditional values system amongst many local knowledge that have been considered as an ideal concept for sustainable development in Bali is known as *Tri Hita Karana* (Three sources for a harmony in life) (see Martopo and Mitchell, 1995). This value system emphasises the harmonious relationship between human and God (*parhyangan*), between people and society (*pawongan*), and between human and environment (*palemahan*). The above formulation of *Tri Hita Karana* announced by I Gusti Ketut Kaler during a seminar on customary village at the Faculty of Law and Social Studies Udayana University in 1969. The fundamental concept of *Tri Hita Karana* actually has been found in Bhagavad-Gita (III.10) saying that “ajnina (holy sacrifice) is the basis of relation among the Almighty God (Praja Pati), human (praja) and nature (kamadhuk)” (see THK Awards, 2005).

The implementation of *Tri Hita Karana* (THK) for tourism in Bali is suggested to be given more attentions on *pawongan* aspect since community plays a central role in Bali tourism as most tourists visiting Bali are interested in people and culture. The main issues on *pawongan* aspect are the empowerment of local community particularly through their involvement on planning, development and operation of tourist objects and facilities. For example, the local community should be given priority in managing tourist objects and taking up the employment opportunities in the tourist objects or facilities (such as hotels and restaurants). Moreover, the management is encouraged to facilitate a harmonious relationship between and within employees and management through the establishment of internal employee associations with various activities in which they can communicate openly and regularly.

*Parhyangan* aspect can be outlined in some principals, including: the appropriate location, placement and the activities at the holy/sacred place (particularly Balinese temple known as *pura*) within the tourist object or facilities; the appropriate use and placement of statues and symbols of Balinese Hindu; and the contribution of the management for religious activities and Balinese culture within the tourist object or facilities and the surrounding area.

Aspect of *palemahan* focuses on protection of environmental quality, conservation of biodiversity, and management of sewage and waste. *Palemahan* aspect is also related to the attractiveness of Bali tourism destination as many tourists are interested in natural amenity of Bali. Moreover, the future trend of tourism will be ‘back to nature’ tourist activities, and more tourists concern with environment (environmentally friendly tourists). Implementation of *palemahan* aspect could also hand-in-hand with international criteria and standard on Environmental Management System, and International Certification on Tourism Industry (such as Green Globe).

In Bali, it has been attempted to promote the implementation of *Tri Hita Karana* (THK) concept into tourism industry, particularly for tourist accommodations and tourist objects, since year 2000 through a tourism accreditation system called "*Tri Hita Karana Tourism Awards & Accreditation*" (see THK Awards, 2005).

**Tri Hita Karana and Ecotourism Management**

Ecotourism and nature tourism are recognised as being particularly conducive to enriching and enhancing the standing of tourism, provided they respect the natural heritage and local populations and are in keeping with the carrying capacity of the sites (Global Code of Ethics for Tourism; www.world-tourism.org). The Ecotourism Society defined ecotourism as “a responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people” (Western, 1993). Ecotourism covers ecological, economical aspects and issue of ‘evaluating community opinion’. Ecological aspect deals with issue that ecotourism contributes positively on conservation of nature. Economical aspect relates to issue that ecotourism as a tool for a sustainable source of economy. Evaluating community opinion means ecotourism empowering the community, economically by giving more ‘roles’ to them in ecotourism activities, and improve their participation in conservation (Sudarto, 1999).

In general, there are eight principles of ecotourism, namely: (i) natural area focus; (ii) ecotourism interpretation and education; (iii) ecological sustainability practices; (iv) contributing to conservation; (v) benefiting local communities; (vi) respect and be sensitive to the culture; (vii) consumer satisfaction; and (viii) responsible marketing (Ecotourism Association of Australia, 2002). Furthermore, Ecotourism in Indonesia outlines five principles, namely: (i) supports nature conservation programs, (ii) involves local communities, (iii) provides economic benefit to the community most immediately affected by tourism activity, (iv) preserve the socio-cultural and religious values of the local community, and (v) comply with regulations related to tourism and environmental conservation (Anonymous, undated; Anonymous, 1997; Dalem, 2002).

Tourism stakeholders in Bali were also formulating the principles of ecotourism for Bali during a workshop on ecotourism in Sanur, Bali (Indonesia) on 3rd - 5th September, 2002 (Dalem, 2004). *Tri Hita Karana* (THK) concept is closely related to the principles of...
ecotourism. The principles of ecotourism were enlightening the three aspects of THK as follows:

(a) **Pawongan** (harmonious relationship between human and social environment):

(i) development of ecotourism based on community consultation and approval;
(ii) to involve and empower the local community, such as recruit them as employees;
(iii) benefiting local community by providing continuous economic contribution to the local community;
(iv) to provide appropriate and accurate interpretation by the local guides;
(v) to preserve the socio-culture of the local community;
(vi) contributing to preservation of socio-culture of the local community;
(vii) to meet consumer expectations / consumer satisfaction; and
(viii) honest and accurate marketing and promotion (responsible marketing).

(b) **Palemahan** (harmonious relationship between human and the natural environment):

(i) natural area focus: concern, commit, and responsible to environmental conservation;
(ii) ecological sustainability practices;
(iii) contribute to conservation of natural environment;
(iv) to provide an interpretation which make visitors possible to enjoy nature and foster their interest on environmental conservation; and
(v) comply to the law or regulations related to environment, land zoning, etc.

(c) **Parhyangan** (harmonious relationship between human and culture-spiritual environment):

(i) sensitive and respect to the local culture, tradition and religion (culture-spiritual); and
(ii) concern, commit, and responsible to preservation of the local religious values (culture-spiritual).

**A Case Study: Implementation of THK at Ecotourism Attractions in Bali**

In order the learn about the implementation of THK in ecotourism management in Bali, this paper outlines a case study on three community forests which have been managed by the local community organisation called Desa Adat (customary village) based upon the THK concept. The three ecotourism attractions are namely Hutan Wisata Alam Sangeh, Hutan Wisata Alas Kedaton, and Hutan Wisata Wenara Wana Ubud. These three community forests have been well-known as ecotourism attractions, in which the attractions relied upon the forests and the animals occupying the forests.

1. **Hutan Wisata Alam Sangeh**

_Hutan Wisata Alam Sangeh_ is a 10.8 hectare of Dyptera-carpus forest, which is going to be expanded with an additional 3.169 ha of mixed forest. The government classifies this forest formally as “Taman Wisata Alam” or Nature Tourism Park. Sangeh forest is located about 20 km to the north of capital city of Denpasar, which can be reached in 30 minutes by public transport.

Fauna which have been identified in Sangeh consist of 22 species of birds, 5 species of mammals, 3 species of reptiles, 2 species of amphibians and 5 species of arthropods (BKSDA, Ministry of Forestry). Monkeys are the major attractions in this forest. Species of monkey found in this forest is the macaque (Macaca fascicularis). The population of the macaque is about 190 individuals (based on the direct count, Nov 16, 2003). Based on information from BKSDA, plants occupy the forest were classified into 28 species of trees and 22 species of shrubs. Meanwhile in the new additional forest was planted by Manilkara sp., Psidium sp., mahagoni, etc. which are expected to provide food for the monkeys.

Sangeh forest is managed by a local management which is formed by the Customary Village of Sangeh (Desa Adat Sangeh). There are 21 persons of staffs who were recruited from 6 Banjar Adats (Neighborhood Communities) existed within Desa Adat Sangeh. The Sangeh Nature Tourism Forest is a popular tourists attraction in Bali, which has been visited by 150,000 - 200,000 visitors annually. For example: in year 2001, it was visited by 64,343 domestic tourists and 161,256 foreign tourists, and then the number was slightly decreasing in year 2002, i.e. 48,353 domestic tourists and 98,125 foreign tourists (DIPARDA Bali, 2003). The number of foreign tourists visiting Sangeh had been in a decreasing trend until year 2005, i.e. 67,340 foreign tourists (2003), 45,724 foreign tourists (2004), and 47,318 foreign tourists (2005). However, the number of foreign tourists visiting Sangeh then jumped up to the highest number ever, that was 166,478 foreign tourists in year 2006 (DIPARDA Bali, 2008).

THK concept has been implemented in tourism development and management at Sangeh forest. It can be seen that Sangeh Nature Tourism Forest is managed by local traditional authority (Desa Adat) of Sangeh, and the staffs have been totally recruited from local people. Moreover, visitor satisfaction has been maintained. It can be seen from the number of tourists visiting this forest annually. The economic benefits of these tourism activities surely are taken by Desa Adat Sangeh and the local people. It means that the *Pawongan* aspect of THK has been implemented.

In term of *Palemahan* aspect, the successful of the Desa Adat Sangeh in managing the forest can be seen from the way of the staffs to handle the monkeys and look after the forest. Some years ago, there was a problem with the offensive behaviour of the monkeys in the Sangeh forest. This might happened because the monkeys have been often given incentives (food) to allow tourists taken photos with them. However, when few visitors coming and monkeys got less food, they became aggressive. They stole visitor's belonging, and
would only be returned when food is provided. This problem has been able to overcome by the management, by providing appropriate food and planting some trees that can provide food for the monkeys. Now the Sangeh Nature Tourism Forest is fighting back to get its better image, so it is expected that more tourists to visit Sangeh forest. The Sangeh tourist object has also been facilitated with parking area, clean toilets, souvenir shops, and food stalls.

The Parhyangan aspect of the Sangeh forest also carefully looks after by the local management. Even though Sangeh forest has been publicly opened as a tourist object, it is still considered to be holy or sacred by the local community, so it is conserved. Some temples were also located in this forest. One of them is Pura Bukit Sari which was built in the 17th Century by the Mengwi Kingdom ruled by I Gusti Agung Ketut Karangasem. The management takes responsibility for maintenance of the temples, and also to provide offerings required for the temples both daily and during the temples’ ceremonies.

2. Hutan Wisata Alas Kedaton

Hutan Wisata Alas Kedaton is located in Tabanan regency, south western of Bali. It can be reached by one hour drive from the capital city of Denpasar. The site is approximately 12 hectares, and the forest is about half of the area (Ado, 2000). The major ecotourism attraction in this place are hundreds of monkeys live in a forest ecosystem, and temples (pura) as well as a colony of bats as supporting attractions (Dalem and Astarini, 2000; Dalem, 2002).

Hutan Wisata Alas Kedaton becomes more popular as a tourist attraction in Bali than Sangeh forest. Visitations of tourists to Alas Kedaton forest were about 275,000 annually. For example, in year 2001 it was visited by 127,584 domestic tourists and 150,133 foreign tourists (DIPARDA Bali, 2003). The number of foreign tourists visiting Alas Kedaton increased in year 2004 to reach 228,253 foreign tourists. However, this figure then decreased gradually in the next two years, i.e. 169,486 foreign tourists in year 2005, and 120,335 foreign tourists in year 2006 (DIPARDA Bali, 2008).

The implementation of THK concept in ecotourism object of Alas Kedaton can be seen in three aspects of THK. Parhyangan aspect is showed in the way of managing Alas Kedaton Forest by the customary village (Desa Adat) of Kukuh. Desa Adat Kukuh established a committee to manage the Alas Kedaton Tourism Forest, including the management of forest area, personnel, income, and tax. Staffs are appointed from 12 Banjar Adats (Neighborhood Communities) existed within Desa Adat (Customary Village) of Kukuh. They are in charge for cleaning of the area, looking after parking, and collecting entrance fees (Ado, 2000). Many souvenir shops’ keepers (almost all of them are women) also act as local tourist guides who has been determined by the committee previously. There are about 200 local tourist guides, and a half number of them have been given a guiding training in 2004 which was organized by the Bali Government Tourism Office, so they have a special license as a local guide for tourists only in Alas Kedaton. As the shop keeper actively participates as a tourist guide, therefore there is a chance to persuade visitors to see handicrafts and souvenirs in her shop before leaving the site. If visitors buy something, then this will bring income for the local community.

In term of Palenahan aspect, the management committee and staffs, and the shop’s owners together have responsibilities to look after the forest, keep the area clean, and develop public facilities, as well as to provide food for monkeys. As economic benefits of ecotourism activities in Alas Kedaton brings a better income for the local community and Desa Adat, therefore the community’s sense of belonging to the forest is getting better. It leads to a better awareness and commitment to forest conservation.

Incomes generated from Alas Kedaton also become funding sources for temple rehabilitation, and temple festivals in the Desa Adat Kukuh. Recently, more than one billion rupiah of its revenue was allocated to rehabilitation of Pura Kahyangan Tiga (village temples) at Desa Adat Kukuh (Dalem and Astarini, 2000). This is an example of the implementation of Parhyangan aspect in the THK concept.

The successful management of Alas Kedaton Forest by Desa Adat has made this tourist object as a model for tourism training. For example, in 1998 it was chosen as a field study of ecotourism management during a national training of Indonesian Association of Ecotourism (Masyarakat Ekowisata Indonesia), and during a Bali regional training on ecotourism in 2002.

3. Hutan Wisata Wenara Wana Ubud

Hutan Wisata Wenara Wana (Monkey Forest) is located at Padangtegal Village, Ubud. It is about 2.5 km from Denpasar and it can be reached in one hour drive from Denpasar. The forest area of Wenara Wana is about 8.7 hectares (Harmini, 2005) occupied by more than 2000 monkeys (macaques). There are three temples in this forest area, namely Pura Dalem Agung, Pura Beji and Pura Prajapati, which were built at the 14th century. Local community believes that the monkeys belong to the God in Pura Dalem Agung, so they are protected. As the site is considered to be sacred by local community, every visitor visiting the temples should respect the local custom. The visitors should wear selendang when entering the temple. The above descriptions can be the examples of the implementation of Parhyangan aspect of THK at Wenara Wana.

As Hutan Wisata Wenara Wana is located within a developed tourist resort of Ubud therefore this forest area has become popular as an ecotourism attraction. The Monkey Forest is a locally managed by Desa Adat Padangtegal. They have 18 staffs who were recruited from the local community. Their responsibilities are
mostly to look after this ecotourism object, and some staffs as forest rangers (pecalang). Visitation of tourism (domestic and foreign tourists) to Monkey Forest during year 2001 was 143,081 visitors (DIPARDA Bali, 2003), and in year 2004 increased to become 279,035 visitors (Harmini, 2005). Income generated from the Wenara Wana collected by the Desa Adat Padangtegal, and allocated 20% for operation costs, 70% deposited at Village Banking Institution (Lembaga Perkreditan Desa) of Desa Adat Padangtegal, and 10% given to the government of Gianyar Regency. Operation costs include the cost for daily monkeys’ food, staffs’ salaries, visitors’ insurance, etc (Harmini, 2005). The above explanations are examples of the implementation of Pawongan aspect of THK at Wenara Wana.

Wenara Wana is not only considered as a sacred place by local community, and as an ecotourism object, but the forest was also involved in research and conservation programmes. In 1990 and 1991, a monkey behaviour research project was carried out at this monkey forest by the University of Alabama, USA and Udayana University, Bali. In 1998, a five year project was begun between Central Washington University USA and Udayana University. These research projects were looking into the daily life and ecology of the monkeys, the interactions between human and monkeys, as well as the conservation and management of this sacred place. Another research project from Udayana University (Department of Biology) was also carried out in 2003 on population structure of macaques and interaction between tourists and the macaques (Suputra, et al, 2003). The aspect of Palemahan of THK has been also implemented as outlined above.

Problem encountered in the management of Wenara Wana was the population size of macaques in Wenara Wana increased significantly. It was about 125 macaques in 1998, and it was estimated 160 macaques in 2000, and 204 macaques in 2002 (Suputra, et al, 2003). As a result, the population size increased about 35-40 individuals within 2 years, or about 15-20 individuals (or about 5-10%) annually. The increasing number of population of macaques in Wenara Wana might because of the adequate food available either naturally within the macaques habitat or supplied by the forest management. To accommodate the higher number of population, it requires a bigger habitat. However, it will be very difficult to provide a bigger habitat in Ubud, as the price of land in Ubud is very expensive.

CONCLUSION

To achieve sustainable tourism, a balance between economy, natural resources, social, and culture is important. Considering the small size of the Bali island with its’ limited natural resources available, and the uniqueness of its culture and tradition, it is suggested that any development should limit socio-culture degradation and resources depletion, but should increase the economic benefits to the communities.

The paper has considered that there has been a growing awareness among the Balinese and Bali government to adopt Balinese Hindu philosophy - such as Tri Hita Karana - as a basic consideration for sustainable tourism, including in managing ecotourism objects in Bali. Bali has several examples of local traditional management of community forests occupied by monkeys which have been managed as ecotourism attractions, such as in Sangeh, Alas Kedaton, and Wenara Wana Ubud. These ecotourism attractions have been managed by Desa Adats (Customary Villages) based upon Tri Hita Karana concept in which hand-in-hand with ecotourism management. To manage forest as ecotourism attractions, it needs carefully consider socio-economy, environmental, and culture-spiritual aspect of the area.

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99