



Coastal tourism as an alternative solution to poverty alleviation in remote village communities in soto'ó village, south nias

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ABSTRACT

Soto'o Village has great potential to be developed as a leading coastal tourism destination in South Nias. However, its management remains very limited and seems to be stagnant. As a result, Soto'o Village is less well-known as a tourist destination. This study aims to: (1) describe the importance of coastal tourism as a strategy to improve the local economy through a community-based and sustainable approach. (2) analyze the coastal tourism potential in Soto'o Village, including aspects of natural beauty, culture, and local wisdom; identify supporting and inhibiting factors for coastal tourism development in the village; and formulate a strategy for developing sustainable community-based coastal tourism, taking into account social, economic, and environmental aspects. This study used a qualitative approach with direct observation of tourism potential and existing infrastructure conditions. This was achieved through interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). The results indicate that Soto'o Beach is worthy of being developed as a new coastal tourism destination in South Nias due to its natural and marine beauty. Village residents strongly support their village as a new tourist destination. The Soto'o village government, the Maniamolo sub-district head and his staff, academics, students, and community leaders agreed to encourage the South Nias Regency Government to support this initiative through sustainable infrastructure development in Soto'o village. It is hoped that coastal tourism activities will provide the potential to increase the income of Soto'o villagers.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Economic development is reflected in development that has an impact on the welfare and productivity of society, namely reducing unemployment and poverty. (Harsono et al., 2023) The tourism industry is the fastest growing sector in the world, due to the high demand for people who want to travel, because tourists need a satisfying travel experience for them. (Hadi et al., 2025) Many countries have embraced tourism as a

strategy for economic development. (Smith et al., 2023) The increasing frequency of tourists has an impact on increasing the level of welfare of people in areas with open and developing tourism potential. The coastal tourism industry is the right prospect and solution to improve the local economy. (Johnson & Schroeder, 2012) Tourism development and attraction includes activities to build and manage tourist objects and attractions as well as neck facilities and infrastructure for coastal tourism. Coastal tourism contributes to the potential income of local residents in terms of job creation and poverty alleviation. (Bhuiyan & Darda, 2024) In most developing countries, government policies across various sectors are heavily influenced by policies on development and poverty alleviation, regarding the role they should play, and sometimes the direction they should take. (World Tourism Organization, 2013)

Soto'o Village offers stunning coastal beauty with promising potential for coastal and marine recreation. If properly managed, the community will benefit from these beautiful natural resources. Regional development is realized by utilizing the area's diverse potential. This is supported by the statement that coastal tourism is a significant source of income. (T. Ghosh, 2011) However, Soto'o Village faces several obstacles to its economic and social progress, such as low incomes for its residents, despite its stunning natural beauty and abundant coastal resources. The community has not yet stopped exploiting these resources for coastal tourism activities.

With proper resource utilization, coastal tourism plays a role in supporting sustainable development in the area. According to the World Bank (2017), the concept of blue economy is "the sustainable use of marine resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and employment while maintaining the health of marine ecosystems." (Sotiriadis & Shen, 2020) The lack of tourism awareness among the people in Soto'o village should not be a barrier. ISE, the community needs to be empowered to become a tourism-conscious community. This will ensure that the blue economy is feasible to be implemented in Soto'o village in the future. They need to be involved so that they have full control over their local values (Putra et al., 2019) and they also benefit from the impact of the development of Soto'o Beach

On the other hand, lack of promotion, access to diskic transportation, limited supporting infrastructure, and community skills in managing the tourism sector are obstacles in optimizing this potential. These various obstacles must be resolved comprehensively to improve the community's economy sustainably, one of which is building tourism with local values. (Shaayesteh et al., 2025) In the future, the development of coastal tourism that is confirmed by development along the coast in the future does not damage the green zone (does not damage the environment) (Zhong et al., 2024) and does not damage the unique local culture, as well as the traditions of community life. In fact, this will be an attraction for domestic and international tourists. The responsibility of different parties (local) is very important in overcoming the challenges faced by the village of Soto'o.

It would be a shame if the coastal tourism potential in Soto'o village was left untouched. Activities such as snorkeling, sailing, fishing, swimming, and surfing are ideal there. In addition, tourists can take part in beach activities, such as admiring the sunrise and sunset, sunbathing, building sandcastles, and engaging in soccer and beach volleyball. This natural potential should benefit the residents of Soto'o village. This remote location should be developed and become a gateway to poverty alleviation through community involvement in tourism, providing them with alternative sources of income besides agriculture. (Purnomo & Istiqomah, 2019) Therefore, efforts should be made to strengthen the image of Sotonet village as a potential tourist destination. This study aims to analyze the coastal tourism potential in Soto'o village and design strategies that can be implemented to improve the local economy. With the right approach, Soto'o Beach should be developed towards coastal tourism.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1 Type of Research

This research is a qualitative, descriptive study (Syahrizal & Jailani, 2023) to obtain a comprehensive overview of the potential and challenges in developing coastal tourism in Soto'o Village.

2.2 Research Location and Time

Location: The research was conducted in Soto'o Village, South Nias. The location was selected based on the coastal tourism potential of Soto'o Village and the challenges faced in its development. Time: One year, with 2025 as the first year (initial study phase).

2.3 Data Collection Methods

a. Primary Data:

Primary data can be obtained through: Field observations (identifying potential natural and cultural tourism, as well as available infrastructure); In-depth interviews with local communities, village governments, and tourism operators; Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) involving stakeholders to explore issues and aspirations; and questionnaires and community surveys to determine their perceptions and readiness for tourism management.

b. Secondary Data:

Literature study on the concepts of community-based tourism and sustainable tourism. Government documents, village reports, and tourism statistics from surrounding areas. Documentation study to analyze government policies related to tourism development. (Ardiansyah et al., 2023)

2.4 Data Analysis Methods

a. Qualitative Analysis:

Interview and observation data were analyzed to understand the potential, challenges, and strategies for coastal tourism development. The researcher only described the complexity of the research problem in general. The purpose of qualitative data analysis techniques was to find the general meaning or overview of the research problem (Sofwatillah et al., 2024). (a) Thematic analysis techniques to understand patterns and perspectives from interviews and FGDs. (b) SWOT analysis to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of coastal tourism in Soto'o Village.

b. Quantitative analysis:

Descriptive analysis of questionnaire results to measure community readiness and initial economic impact.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

a. General Conditions of the Research Site

Indonesia is a maritime nation with one of the longest coastlines in the world. The Nias Islands, located off the west coast of Sumatra and directly bordering the Indian Ocean, boast numerous renowned beaches, including world-class surfing spots. However, in South Nias, there are still many potential beaches for tourism, particularly coastal tourism. One such beach is Soto'o Village, Maniamolo District, South Nias Regency.

Soto'o Village offers natural beauty in the form of white sand, clear seawater, relatively calm waves, and captivating sunsets. This potential aligns well with tourists' expectations of destinations found along the world's tropical and subtropical coastlines, many of which are influenced by sun, sea, and sand.(Anirban, 2020) Furthermore, Soto'o Beach is a nesting ground for sea turtles. This area lacks management or tourism facilities, meaning it remains pristine and holds great potential for development as a place to learn about nature, culture, and the environment. However, promotion and supporting infrastructure are still very minimal.

b. Interview Results with Soto'o Village Residents

The following are some questions posed to 90 Soto'o villagers regarding coastal tourism. The results are as follows: (a) 100% of respondents agree that Soto'o Village has good natural potential for tourism. (b) 100% of respondents agree that Soto'o Village is a new tourist destination in South NIAS. (c) 90% of respondents expressed their willingness to participate in tourism development activities, while 10% were hesitant for various reasons. (d) 100% Respondents agreed that community members should be provided with basic tourism awareness training before engaging in tourism activities.

Based on interviews with the community of Soto'o Village, four main themes were identified that reflect the current conditions and expectations for coastal tourism development. These are summarized in the following thematic analysis: Theme 1: Infrastructure and Facility Barriers, (Threats)

The interviews revealed that, first, Soto'o Beach is highly suitable to be developed as a new tourist destination, as it boasts beautiful beaches and stunning natural scenery. However, access to Soto'o Beach remains the primary challenge. Some informants mentioned that the road to the beach requires crossing a river, especially during the rainy season when conditions become even more difficult. One resident stated: "The road to the beach is still difficult; you have to cross the river. During the rainy season, it becomes even more difficult." Additionally, the lack of basic facilities also hinders tourist comfort. Another resident shared: "We actually want to support tourism, but there are no facilities like toilets, huts, or resting areas."

This quote reinforces the finding that limitations in infrastructure and supporting facilities are fundamental issues in developing Soto'o Beach as a tourist destination. Based on interviews with residents of Soto'o Village, four main themes were identified that reflect the current conditions and expectations for coastal tourism development. These are summarized in the following thematic analysis: Theme 2: Community Participation and Readiness, (Strengths)

Second, despite infrastructure constraints, the community has shown enthusiasm for supporting tourism development. The community has demonstrated participation and readiness to engage in tourism development. The younger generation is enthusiastic about promoting the beach through social media.

For example, the younger generation has taken the initiative to utilize social media for promotion. This is reflected in the statement: "The young people in this village are enthusiastic; they can help with promotion through social media." Additionally, the community is aware of the economic opportunities that can be gained from increased tourist visits. One resident stated: "If tourism develops, we can sell our farm produce or fish to visitors."

This finding indicates the potential for active community participation and readiness to utilize local economic opportunities through farm produce and fish catches

for visitors. This demonstrates the presence of social capital that can serve as a strength for community-based tourism development.

Theme 3: Expectations for Government Support, (Weaknesses), The residents of Soto'o Village have high expectations for the government's role in supporting tourism infrastructure development. One resident said: "We hope that the government will provide support to build bridges and repair roads." This statement illustrates that government intervention is urgently needed to realize tourism development in Soto'o Village.

Theme 4: Community Empowerment, (Opportunities), Fourth, the community hopes to be provided with guidance before tourism activities are developed in their village. One resident stated: "I hope the community will be actively involved in tourism business activities. Therefore, training or guidance is also needed, provided by the relevant agency or experts in the field of tourism, to prepare the community to better accommodate tourists."

This statement implies that the community's involvement and role as hosts and coastal tourism operators in their village is highly anticipated. From the above results, it is clear that the residents of Soto'o village strongly hope that coastal tourism will be truly realized. The strong enthusiasm and positive response from villagers, reinforces the need for coastal tourism activities in Soto'o village to increase the potential for increasing village income through the aforementioned tourism activities.

c. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Results

Based on the results of the discussion held at the Maniamolo Sub-district Office, attended by the Sub-district Head, Sub-district Office Employees, the Village Head and Soto'o Village Officials, academics, researchers/writers, and students, several recommendations were made for the sustainability of coastal tourism in Soto'o Village, namely: (a) FGD participants agreed to support the development of coastal tourism in Soto'o Village. (b) Coastal tourism development in Soto'o Village begins with efforts to build and repair damaged or unpaved roads along 4.5 kilometers from the Provincial Road Intersection. (b) Individual promotion by each villager through social media accounts (Facebook).

d. Strategy for developing community-based coastal tourism as an effort to improve the local economy

1. Mapping and Identification of Local Tourism Potential

During initial observations and interviews with the village community, several potential tourism attractions were identified in Soto'o village, namely:

- a) Beach, Soto'o Beach is very beautiful, located directly behind Soto'o village. To reach it, visitors must cross the Eho River in a small canoe owned by residents moored on the riverbank. Once across the river, walk approximately 150 meters to reach the beach. The coastal plain is like an "island" between the river and the sea. This beach's unique feature is its white sand, 50-60 meters wide, and 5 km long stretch. It's perfect for sunbathing, beach volleyball, and outdoor activities. Sea turtles migrate to the beach two or three times a year to lay their eggs. Occasionally (sometimes two to three times a month), international tourists vacationing at Sorake Beach come to surf at Soto'o Beach.
- b) The Sombagi Mboho Stone Site, a legend from folklore, claims that the large rock was once a ship from a foreign country seeking to control the Soto'o area.

- c) Maniamolo District is the largest rice granary in South Nias. On Nias Island, one of the largest rice paddies is located in Soto'o Village, making it ideal for ecotourism.
- d) For culinary purposes, Soto'o Village, a coastal area rich in marine fish. Residents often cultivate smoked fish, which, if developed, could become a leading local commodity for export. International tourists. Furthermore, the coast is lined with coconut trees, making young coconuts a perfect food for visitors and tourists. Furthermore, coconuts can be used to develop various products that can supplement local income.
- e)

2. Empowerment and Training of the Local Community

Diversity education is essential. Prospective tourists come from diverse backgrounds, cultures, traditions, customs, lifestyles, and backgrounds. This is essential to prevent conflict. Differences in culture and values often lead to identity conflicts, characterized by feelings of alienation, negative stereotypes, or differing goals between individuals. (Fitri, 2025) Several efforts and methods are being implemented to provide basic tourism skills and abilities to the Soto'o village community, such as: (a) Training for local tour guides, b) Homestay management training, where residents' homes are converted into lodgings, c) Training in the management of local culinary specialties such as smoked fish, d) Training for village residents on ecotourism entrepreneurship, e)

Establishment of tourism awareness groups, in coordination with the village government.

e. Community-Based Sustainable Tourism Management

Community-based sustainable tourism management is a tourism development approach that positions local communities as both the primary actors and beneficiaries of tourism activities. The goal is to ensure that tourism activities are not only economically profitable but also maintain environmental sustainability, maintain socio-cultural values, and provide long-term positive impacts for future generations. The goals are: (a) Full community participation, involving the Soto'o village community, starting from the beginning. Planning, preparation, implementation/management, and evaluation of tourism activities in Soto'o village. (b) Tourism by providing "home stays" for visitors. For example, in West Bengal, India, fishing communities are allowed to participate in tourism activities by providing "homestays" for visitors. (P. Ghosh & Chakravarty, 2023). (c) Environmental Sustainability, prioritizing tourism activities that do not damage nature and maintain the balance of the marine ecosystem and the surrounding natural environment. Because the tourism industry can damage natural resources and negatively impact the quality of life, (Senthilkumar R, 2022) This is in line with the opinion that "Community-Based Tourism has proven to be able to manage and strengthen local communities, socio-cultural aspects, and sustainable environmental conservation." (R. Rachmat A. Sriwijaya et al., 2024) (d) Prioritizing activities and attractions that focus on local wisdom. (e) Developing local tourism products with the potential for future development to improve the standard of living and the economy of the village community. (f) Zoning and Tourism Management Regulations to limit areas that can be visited by tourists to protect sensitive areas and ensure the comfort and safety of tourists.

f. Efforts to Initiate and Develop Coastal Tourism Potential at Soto'o Beach

Initiating tourism activities in a region or area is essentially aimed at fostering development and progress. Many countries, such as the Maldives, Singapore, and others, utilize the tourism sector as a primary source of revenue. Increased tourism activity will generate economic growth in a country or region. The impact is far-reaching, including the creation of jobs for the community, which can increase income and welfare. (Yusuf et al., 2024) Tourism development should be carried out in a planned and structured manner, Coastal development requires the involvement of all stakeholders (Eshun et al., 2019) as the driving force behind this is government support in allocating budgets to initiate infrastructure development to enhance existing tourist areas and develop new tourist areas that are marketable to potential tourists. This should be done continuously and sustainably.

Tourism potential can develop with the availability of key capital, primarily the richness and uniqueness of natural resources, both physically and visually stunning. Secondly, creative businesses that attract large crowds, such as culinary delights, and large events (music concerts, art performances, sporting events, art, culture, and automotive exhibitions, etc.), can also contribute to tourism development. Therefore, tourism potential can be considered a source of growth for tourist attractions that will continue to thrive if properly managed and developed. Developing this potential can also boost the economy of Soto'o villagers in the future.

Soto'o Beach is not widely known, either in South Nias or outside Nias Island. Not as well-known as beaches like Sorake, Lagundri, and Baloho, Soto'o Beach is marginalized due to its remoteness and inaccessibility. Furthermore, poor access discourages potential tourists from visiting and dampens their curiosity about its beauty. However, local residents are beginning to recognize Soto'o Beach's potential as a tourist attraction with its charm and unique characteristics. Therefore, external support to assist local residents in developing Soto'o Beach is essential for its development as a new tourist attraction in South Nias Regency.

Developing coastal tourism requires competitive, inclusive, and sustainable development. (World Tourism Organization, 2018) To ensure its sustainability, promotional activities need to be carried out extensively and affordably through social media accounts such as Facebook namely promoting the beauty of Soto'o Beach by avoiding the use of non-environmentally friendly attributes or consumables, and by ensuring a commitment to not harm the environment. Environmentalists will strongly support this effort (Afriyeni et al., 2020) Furthermore, development and management begin with local government support, allocating initial funds for the construction of a road to Soto'o Village. The next stage is to build a bridge from Soto'o village to Soto'o Beach. The third stage aims to build rest huts along the beach, as well as providing road markings and directions to and from Soto'o Beach. Development at Soto'o Beach is carried out by utilizing existing potential as a tourist attraction. Future development of Soto'o Beach's potential Don't just focus on increasing tourist numbers (Sharpley, 2022), but prepare yourself from the start with a strong foundation from within can be done by introducing Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Group) from local residents. By adding attractions in the form of holding certain events such as Beach Volleyball, Beach Ball, Surfing competitions can be an added value to attract tourists. The management is also collaborating with the local community to provide accommodation using residents' homes

(in the initial stage), food stalls, souvenir and snack centers, and several facilities such as bathrooms and toilets.

4. CONCLUSION

Improved infrastructure and accessibility are essential for successful tourism development in remote areas. However, development must be sustainable, inclusive, and environmentally friendly to maximize benefits and avoid creating new problems. Soto'o Beach possesses the potential of a white sandy beach, ideal for sunbathing and surfing. This is a key reason for tourists to visit Soto'o Beach. However, access from the village to the beach remains problematic, as it is limited by a river. This makes Soto'o Beach difficult to monitor, threatening the comfort and safety of visitors. Soto'o Beach lacks adequate facilities and infrastructure to become a tourist destination. Therefore, in addition to seeking support from the local government, the Soto'o Village Government needs to consider allocating village funds for tourism development in Soto'o Village.

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