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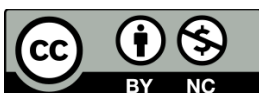
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## **Desa Sekura's Tourism Prospects: Unlocking the Local Assets in Community Development**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Cultural heritage has been recognized as a relevant discourse in the planning of tourism village development within the international context; however, existing literature reveals certain limitations. A critical aspect of addressing this issue pertains to the integration of local assets into community empowerment initiatives. Consequently, this study seeks to investigate the tourism potential of Desa Sekura by employing an ethnography-based model of community empowerment that incorporates local assets. Utilizing an ethnographic methodology, this research examines the ways in which cultural traditions, social capital, and natural resources in Desa Sekura, West Kalimantan, Indonesia, can be leveraged to promote sustainable tourism development. The findings suggest that principles of social inclusion, community participation, and locally-based management can enhance the tourism potential of Desa Sekura while preserving its cultural identity. Furthermore, the evolution of local institutions in the management and utilization of cultural and social assets is effectively illustrated as a means of fostering tourism village potential. This study aims to contribute new perspectives on the development of tourism villages that emphasize local community empowerment and the preservation of cultural heritage as essential components of sustainable economic development.

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Tourism Prospects, Desa Sekura, Local Assets, Community Development, Ethnography.

## **Introduction**

Desa Sekura, located in West Kalimantan, Indonesia, recognized for its rich cultural heritage, faces significant constraints in leveraging local assets for the advancement of rural communities (Cerisola, 2019; Giglitto et al., 2022; Pintossi et al., 2023; Swensen et al., 2013). The village's unique traditions, including *Cap Go Meh*, *Tepung Tawar*, and *Pangkak Gasing*, present opportunities for the development of cultural tourism.

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However, there is a notable absence of consideration for local assets in the integration of cultural preservation within a strategic framework aimed at economic growth (Astuti et al., 2024; Holly et al., 2022; Idris et al., 2016; Xiao et al., 2024). Furthermore, the fragmentation of local institutions and the lack of synergistic collaboration among local organizations hinder cohesive planning efforts necessary for fostering inclusive participation and tourism initiatives (Palmer & Chuamuangphan, 2018; Park et al., 2018). While women and youth in the community actively contribute to socioeconomic activities related to village development (Heryanda et al., 2023; Xu & Wang, 2021), their roles in the community development process remain limited, leading to marginalization and insufficient policy management. Additionally, the village suffers from a lack of visibility in regional tourism markets, attributed to inadequate branding and digital engagement. These challenges highlight the urgent need for a local asset-based development framework that aligns cultural, ecological, and institutional strengths while critically addressing the tensions between cultural authenticity and commercialization.

The prospects of village tourism reveal a notable deficiency in international discussions regarding sustainable tourism, asset-based community development, and the interaction between local knowledge and global market dynamics. Predominantly, the global dialogue on sustainable tourism has concentrated on urban or well-established destinations, resulting in a scarcity of research focused on how rural, culturally rich villages in the Global South can leverage local assets—such as cultural traditions, human capital, and natural resources—within a tourism framework that is both locally driven and cognizant of global trends (e.g., Caffyn, 2022; Eslami et al., 2019; Hesam et al., 2020; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2023; Widawski et al., 2023). This deficiency is particularly evident in the application of asset-based community development (ABCD) within tourism contexts, especially in villages characterized by limited institutional frameworks (see, Castro-Arce & Vanclay, 2020; Duxbury & Jeannotte, 2012; Garcia, 2020; Lasso & Dahles, 2023), where the challenge resides in reconciling cultural sustainability with the economic pressures associated with commercialization. Furthermore, international discussions surrounding gender and youth inclusion in tourism frequently depict these demographics as passive beneficiaries (Gómez, 2019; Izudin, 2021; Jaya et al., 2022). In contrast, the model of gender-inclusive development and youth-driven innovation exemplified by Desa Sekura presents a distinctive opportunity to investigate their proactive roles in tourism development. Lastly, the challenges faced by cultural heritage tourism in maintaining authenticity amid commercialization have yet to be examined in terms of their equilibrium between cultural preservation and market demands (Giblin, 2017; Hollowell & Nicholas, 2009; Holly et al., 2022; Xiao et al., 2024). These identified gaps underscore the necessity for further research into how peripheral rural villages can assert their cultural identities and engage meaningfully in global tourism networks without being eclipsed by urban or coastal destinations.

This paper aims to investigate the integration of local assets—such as cultural traditions, human capital, and natural resources into community development

frameworks, with a particular emphasis on their contribution to enhancing the tourism potential of Desa Sekura. By analyzing the evolution of local institutions, this research seeks to elucidate how these structures facilitate community engagement, governance, and the management of tourism resources. Furthermore, it will examine the role of these institutions in promoting a balance between cultural preservation and economic development within the tourism sector, especially in rural areas characterized by minimal external intervention. Found that the role of schools in producing job-ready and globally competitive young entrepreneurial graduates has a strategic impact on national and international education policy through entrepreneurship training and collaborative approaches that integrate practical skills, (Ramadhan et al., 2025). The objective is to offer insights into the mobilization of local assets to establish sustainable tourism villages, where community-driven initiatives can advance both cultural heritage and economic progress, while safeguarding local traditions and identities against the pressures of commercialization.

### **Theoretical Review: Human Capital Theory for Integrating Local Assets**

Community development is a complex, multi-faceted process that encompasses not only the physical transformation of a locality but also the empowerment of its inhabitants, institutions, and cultural practices (Benu et al., 2020; Ryberg-Webster, 2019). In the context of Desa Sekura, a village situated in West Kalimantan, Indonesia, the path of development has been significantly influenced by its distinctive physical and non-physical resources, which are essential for promoting sustainable advancement. As well as is part of Sambas Regency, which shares a direct border with Malaysia (Imran et al., 2025). This critical analysis employs various theoretical frameworks to examine how the local assets of Desa Sekura can be leveraged to enhance community development, ultimately leading to increased self-sufficiency and resilience.

The present study employs human capital theory, which pertains to the knowledge, skills, and abilities of individuals that enhance economic productivity and community welfare (Becker, 1962). Therefore, quality education at the frontier will teach students technology utilization skills (Irsyad et.al., 2024). Human capital is conceptualized as a synthesis of local wisdom inherent in traditional practices and the contemporary skills introduced by the younger generation (Edmiston & Nicholls, 2018; Karayianni et al., 2023; Raharjo et al., 2016). Ramaano (2021) posit that a community's economic potential is closely linked to the creative industries that arise from local knowledge and traditions. In the context of Desa Sekura, this entails the utilization of cultural practices such as *Pangkak Gasing* (traditional spinning top games) and *Mengaping* (fertility rituals) not merely as cultural heritage but also as valuable assets within the creative tourism sector. These manifestations of human capital establish both a social and economic foundation, wherein the principles of social responsibility and harmony, cultivated through local educational systems, can be transformed into creative and economic initiatives grounded in local heritage (Izudin et al., 2024; Kunyati & Radianti, 2024; Watt et al., 2000). Additionally,

women are instrumental in the empowerment process within Sekura. As noted by Sharma (2020), women's participation in initiatives highlights their leadership capabilities in promoting the economic, social, and educational well-being of their families and the wider community. The role of women in achieving economic self-sufficiency (Sen, 2004; Supraptiningsih et al., 2023)—particularly through home-based enterprises that utilize local resources such as medicinal plants and culinary expertise—illustrates the integration of human capital into the framework of economic development.

In a broader theoretical framework, human capital theory encompasses the networks, relationships, and trust that are integral to a community, thereby facilitating cooperation and collaboration. Within the context of Sekura, social capital is pivotal in ensuring the village operates cohesively, despite its ethnic and cultural diversity. OECD (1997) asserts that participatory governance and increased budget allocations are fundamental to advancing village development. The culture of *gotong royong*, or communal labor, which is deeply ingrained in Sekura's social structure, exemplifies the role of social capital in both the development and upkeep of the village's infrastructure and public spaces (Al Humaidy et al., 2024; Rianawati, 2019; Sumarto, 2017). Furthermore, community-based institutions such as the *Badan Koordinasi Majelis Taklim* (BKMT) and various religious and cultural organizations enhance Sekura's resilience by promoting cooperation among different ethnic groups. The management of economic spaces in Sekura, including the Sekura Market and ferry port—key economic centers—is facilitated through the collaborative efforts of local residents, village leaders, and law enforcement. The harmonious interactions among diverse groups, including the Malay, Sambas, and Chinese communities, illustrate how the tolerant multiculturalism in Sekura, fostered through ongoing dialogue, contributes to social cohesion and economic collaboration (Cahyono, 2018; Minza et al., 2024; Putro & Zain, 2021).

The development of Desa Sekura is influenced by a complex interaction of local resources, which encompass cultural capital, gender inclusivity, and effective governance. Cultural practices, including traditional festivals and rituals such as *Cap Go Meh*, *Sya'banan*, and *Tepung Tawar*, extend beyond their symbolic meanings to serve as significant catalysts for creative industries and tourism. These traditions not only honor Sekura's cultural heritage but also enhance economic resilience by drawing visitors and cultivating local pride (Cahyono, 2018; Fanselow, 2014; Mirawati, 2017). Additionally, the empowerment of women and youth is essential for the advancement of Sekura. Women, through organizations such as the Family Welfare Empowerment (*Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga*—PKK), are instrumental in economic and social decision-making processes, while the involvement of youth in innovative activities stimulates entrepreneurship and economic development. Moreover, the village's governance framework, supported by institutions like the Village Consultative Body (*Badan Permusyawaratan Desa*—BPD) and the Village Consultative Council (*Lembaga Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*—LPM), promotes inclusive dialogue and participatory decision-making (Nocca, 2017; Petunia & Selepe, 2020). The practice of *musyawarah* facilitates effective conflict resolution and collaboration, thereby

strengthening social cohesion and enabling Sekura to manage its resources sustainably. Collectively, these elements unlock the full potential of Sekura, promoting long-term development while preserving its cultural identity.

The case of Desa Sekura underscores the significance of leveraging local assets—encompassing both tangible and intangible resources—in the quest for sustainable community development. By utilizing cultural, human, social, and environmental capital, Sekura has illustrated that rural communities can effectively navigate challenges and enhance resilience through collaborative efforts, innovation, and inclusivity. This study aims to investigate the potential for further integration of these assets into the national development framework, with a particular focus on village autonomy and the sustainable management of resources. Policymakers and development practitioners can derive valuable lessons from Sekura's model, which serves as a paradigm for how local knowledge, governance, and community participation can drive inclusive development while safeguarding cultural identity and promoting environmental sustainability. The application of this framework to other multiethnic villages in Indonesia may yield important insights into the cultivation of resilient, self-sufficient rural communities that are both economically dynamic and socially integrated.

## **Research Methodology**

### *Study area descriptions*

Desa Sekura is characterized by its diverse ethnic composition, which includes groups such as the Melayu Sambas, Javanese, Bugis, Chinese, Batak, and Dayak. The predominant languages spoken within the community are Malay, Melayu Sambas, and various Chinese dialects, including Khek, Tiochiu, and Hoklo, with daily communication primarily occurring in Melayu Sambas. The community exhibits a notable degree of tolerance, particularly during significant celebrations such as *Cap Go Meh*, *Sya'banan*, Eid al-Fitr, and Islamic calendar anniversary (1 *Muharram*), where mutual respect is evident among members, despite the fact that the majority of market vendors belong to the Melayu Sambas ethnic group. Importantly, there is no evidence of violence or extortion directed towards merchants by any ethnic group. Collaborative efforts between local authorities and the community are currently in place; however, historical grievances have led to some opposition among community members regarding the settlement of the Madurese ethnic group in Desa Sekura. The educational infrastructure in Desa Sekura includes six kindergartens, eight elementary schools, four junior high schools, three senior high schools, and one college. New residents arriving in search of employment or business opportunities at Sekura Market introduce a variety of cultural influences. Public transportation options in Desa Sekura are limited to buses and boats, while many residents depend on private vehicles, such as motorcycles and cars.

To foster harmonious relationships among community members, merchants, and service providers, the Desa Sekura community actively promotes its cultural heritage and positive traditions. Furthermore, the empowerment of women's roles, supported by the

village government through initiatives like the PKK and various formal social organizations—including the BPD, LPM, farmer groups, and cooperatives—plays a crucial role in realizing the community's socio-cultural potential. Cultural practices such as the art of Pangkak Gasing, the Tepung Tawar ceremony, traditional poetry recitals, dances, and Mengaping have become integral to the community's lifestyle. Additionally, the community's cultural traditions and daily practices significantly influence its interactions with other societies.

Desa Sekura has achieved first place in the Village Self-Reliance Index (IDM) at the provincial level in West Kalimantan and ranks seventeenth among 74,900 villages across Indonesia, indicating its significant economic potential. Attaining the status of a self-sufficient village necessitates the presence of adequate human and natural resources. The extensive plantation and agricultural lands in Desa Sekura are pivotal in determining household income, with agriculture contributing through cultivation, animal husbandry, and agricultural labor. Additionally, professional and non-agricultural employment, particularly in trade, plays a substantial role in the village's economic landscape. The community's commercial activities are centered around Sekura Market, the sole marketplace within the village. The average monthly income for residents of Desa Sekura ranges from Rp2,000,000 to Rp5,000,000. Women actively participate in both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. Furthermore, parents encourage their adolescent children to assist with work during school breaks and after school hours, while still fulfilling their educational responsibilities.

In terms of infrastructure and access to services, Desa Sekura has made notable advancements. The public facilities in Desa Sekura are well-developed, enhancing community life. These facilities include markets, integrated health posts (*Pos Layanan Terpadu* –Posyandu), police stations, schools, and village administration offices. The availability of such services is a significant factor in attracting new residents to Desa Sekura.

#### *Data Collection and Analysis*

This research employed an ethnographic approach to investigate how local assets and socio-cultural dynamics shape the prospects of community-based tourism in desa Sekura, Kalimantan Barat, Indonesia. Ethnography was selected for its capacity to generate in-depth, contextualised insights into the lived experiences, value systems, and daily practices of local communities through direct and sustained engagement in the field. Data collection was conducted using a combination of participant observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and field documentation of socio-cultural activities related to tourism development. These methods facilitated an understanding of how local actors perceive, construct, and mobilise cultural and natural resources—including traditional ceremonies, heritage festivals, artisanal crafts, and eco-tourism sites as part of sustainable village development. The fieldwork was conducted over a two-month period, from early



July to late August 2023. This duration enabled the researcher to reach data saturation, wherein no new significant information emerged from additional field data. Moreover, data triangulation was applied by cross-verifying information from multiple sources and methods to enhance the trustworthiness and validity of the findings. A total of ten key informants were recruited using purposive sampling, based on their active roles and representational significance in community tourism initiatives. The sample comprised: two village officials (including the village head), two cultural leaders and educators, two artists and members of local creative collectives, and two micro-entrepreneurs or MSME representatives. This diverse configuration of informants enabled a nuanced analysis of cultural practices, tourism-related interpretations, and the community's readiness to participate in and benefit from grassroots-based tourism development.

Field observations were primarily focused on significant economic hubs, including the Sekura Market and the Port of Sekura, both of which are essential infrastructures for local livelihoods. The observational data were supplemented by interviews that explored community dynamics, local practices, and perceptions of economic opportunities. Additionally, the research utilized documentary sources, such as village records and existing literature, to contextualize empirical findings and trace the historical development of the area. A notable finding of the study is the community's robust social cohesion, which transcends ethnic, occupational, and migratory backgrounds. This solidarity is particularly pronounced during communal events such as weddings, agricultural harvests, and traditional ceremonies. These findings highlight the social capital inherent within the community, which serves as a vital resource for fostering both economic resilience and social integration. Regarding economic assets, the Sekura Market functions as a regional trade hub, while the Port of Sekura serves as a critical transportation node, both of which significantly contribute to local livelihoods. These venues not only stimulate commerce but also create employment opportunities, particularly for youth who have not pursued formal education. The variety of goods and services available, ranging from handcrafted items to local food products, reflects the entrepreneurial potential present within the community.

In summary, the multi-method data collection strategy employed in this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the development potential of Desa Sekura. By integrating social and economic observations with community narratives and documentary analysis, the research offers a grounded account of local dynamics and identifies key assets that could inform future rural development or tourism initiatives.

## **Findings and Discussion**

This paper presents two key contributions. Firstly, the authors delineate the Sakura community development process, which is structured around an integration model encompassing social, cultural, and economic capital. Secondly, the paper discusses the transformation of the village into a viable tourism prospect.



*Sekura Community Development Model: Integrating Social, Cultural, and Economic Capital*

The community development framework in Desa Sekura is fundamentally anchored in a robust culture of inclusive solidarity that transcends ethnic, religious, and cultural distinctions. This solidarity is not merely a theoretical construct; rather, it is a tangible aspect of daily life, evident in social interactions and collaborative efforts, particularly in communal spaces such as the Sekura Market. The village is characterized by a heterogeneous population that includes ethnic Malay Sambas, Chinese (Tionghoa), Javanese, Bugis, Dayak, and Batak communities, each possessing unique cultural and religious identities (Buchari, 2014). Nevertheless, the social cohesion of Sekura is maintained through mechanisms that foster interethnic harmony and mitigate divisiveness. A prominent mechanism is the prevalent practice of consensus-based deliberation (*musyawarah*) for addressing community issues, which enhances trust and encourages communal engagement. Community members frequently participate in mutual support during religious celebrations such as *Cap Go Meh*, Eid al-Fitr, and *Sya'banan*, illustrating how pluralism serves as a source of strength rather than a point of contention. As an ethnographic observation, this collective ethos of “living together in difference” represents a significant site of cultural production, where solidarity is perpetually negotiated through cooperation, respect, and everyday acts of tolerance. This perspective challenges prevailing narratives that depict diversity as a catalyst for conflict, positioning Sekura as a paradigm of grassroots multicultural resilience. The community's inclination towards deliberation rather than confrontation reflects not only indigenous values but also a shared commitment to maintaining peaceful coexistence. This model carries substantial implications for international discussions on inclusive community development, particularly in multicultural societies that are susceptible to fragmentation.

“Informant YO (42) reported that during significant holidays, including *Cap Go Meh*, Eid al-Fitr, *Sya'banan*, and 1 *Muharram*, there is a notable absence of disruption or disorder, even with the high volume of Malay Sambas traders present in the market. It is clear that these traders have not encountered incidents of violence or extortion. Furthermore, the maintenance of order is supported by both community cooperation and ongoing collaboration between law enforcement and the community.”

Desa Sekura serves as a compelling illustration of participatory governance characterized by grassroots involvement and the dynamic operation of civil society. Ethnographic research indicates that village institutions—including the Village Consultative Body (BPD), Community Empowerment Institution (LPM), Family Welfare Movement (PKK), agricultural cooperatives, and the Contact Body of *Majelis Taklim* (*Badan Koordinasi Majelis Taklim*—BKMT)—function not merely as bureaucratic entities but as vital organizations that promote community engagement and agency (I. Ramadhan et al., 2015). These institutions provide platforms for collective decision-making and inclusive dialogue, allowing a diverse array of community members to participate in local

governance processes. The practice of *gotong royong*, or communal labor, is deeply ingrained in the local culture, where activities such as cleaning public areas, repairing infrastructure, and organizing religious events are viewed not as obligations but as shared responsibilities (Saidang & Suparman, 2019). This cultural ethos fosters civic solidarity while simultaneously addressing essential infrastructural needs. Furthermore, the collaboration between community members and local law enforcement in managing shared economic spaces, such as Sekura Market and the ferry port, exemplifies a model of co-produced order, wherein security is upheld through trust and cooperative negotiation rather than coercion. Such partnerships highlight the interplay between formal authority and informal social capital in promoting accountability and social cohesion. These ethnographic findings position Sekura as a significant case study for examining the effective localization of participatory governance, particularly within pluralistic societies. The efficacy of its governance model is attributed to the synergy between institutional engagement and cultural norms of mutual responsibility, providing valuable insights for scholars and policymakers focused on fostering sustainable community empowerment within decentralized governance frameworks.

The developmental trajectory of Desa Sekura is fundamentally rooted in its extensive cultural capital and indigenous knowledge, which together constitute the intangible infrastructure that underpins community resilience and identity. Ethnographic fieldwork indicates that cultural traditions, including *Pangkak Gasing* (traditional spinning top games), *Mengapung* (fertility rituals), *Tepung Tawar* (blessing ceremonies), and poetic recitations, function not only as expressions of culture but also as essential mechanisms for the intergenerational transmission of knowledge, moral education, and collective memory. These practices encapsulate values such as harmony, humility, and social responsibility, which are ingrained from an early age through active participation in communal activities. In Sekura, cultural assimilation and acculturation occur not through the negation of differences but through dialogic processes of respectful adaptation, fostering a pluralistic yet unified society. Significantly, these traditions act as symbolic resources that bolster both internal cohesion and external attractiveness, particularly in the context of cultural tourism. Rituals and performances are frequently highlighted during local festivals, attracting visitors while simultaneously reinforcing local pride. Consequently, the cultural practices of Sekura can be interpreted as a form of “social infrastructure”, promoting a sense of belonging, continuity, and economic opportunity. This evidence highlights the role of local wisdom as a dynamic catalyst for community-led development, wherein heritage is not commodified but rather mobilized to support sustainability and autonomy in an increasingly dynamic global landscape.

“One of the participants in the study, identified as YO (42), is a satay vendor from Solo City who has been engaged in his business for two decades in Sekura Village. In the context of market competition, the cultural diversity present within the village serves as a valuable resource that fortifies community ties. The arrival of migrants, each bringing their unique cultural backgrounds, enhances the social and cultural dynamics of Sekura

Village. As the sole market in the vicinity, the Sekura market draws a significant number of migrants seeking employment opportunities.”

In Sekura, gender-inclusive development is not merely an ancillary issue but a fundamental principle that is intricately woven into the daily fabric of the community. We indicate that women, particularly through their involvement in the Family Welfare Empowerment organization (*Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga*–PKK), play a crucial role in influencing economic, social, and educational pathways. Rather than being relegated to domestic spheres, women actively utilize local resources—such as medicinal plants and culinary practices—to establish home-based enterprises that not only enhance household income but also safeguard local knowledge systems. These initiatives are bolstered by a strong village infrastructure that emphasizes early childhood education and literacy, thereby facilitating the intergenerational transmission of values and skills. The PKK functions as a platform for women’s leadership, providing training, peer support, and access to institutional networks. This framework of intergenerational empowerment cultivates a cyclical dynamic in which women foster both economic resilience and educational aspirations within their families and the wider community. The ethnographic perspective reveals that in Sekura, empowerment transcends being a mere policy objective; it is a tangible and negotiated reality, deeply rooted in local institutions and social norms that honor both tradition and innovation. This model challenges the dichotomies of formal/informal and public/private, demonstrating how gendered agency can thrive within culturally relevant contexts of governance and development.

The developmental trajectory of Sekura exemplifies a community that is progressively attuned to the ecological ramifications of growth. Our analysis indicates that environmental awareness is not an ancillary aspect of development; rather, it is intrinsically woven into the fabric of the community, influenced by both lived experiences and local leadership. As commercial activities escalate—especially in proximity to waterways and essential infrastructure—residents have united to confront emerging challenges such as obstructed drainage and flooding. These mitigation initiatives are not isolated occurrences; they are systematically organized through community forums, youth organizations, and informal neighborhood coalitions, reflecting a collective commitment to environmental stewardship. The incorporation of ecological considerations into village-level planning meetings—often facilitated by village leaders, religious figures, and local experts—highlights the participatory nature of Sekura’s sustainability strategy. Notably, environmental issues are framed not solely as technical challenges but as social and moral imperatives, thereby linking the care for the environment with responsibilities toward future generations. This perspective is manifested in practices such as community clean-up events, tree planting initiatives, and the safeguarding of water sources, all conducted with a sense of shared accountability (Rohmad et al., 2016; Schilling et al., 2020). Viewed through this lens, Sekura presents a model of rural development that harmonizes infrastructure expansion with environmental resilience—an approach that is increasingly

pertinent to global discussions on sustainable development, particularly within diverse, resource-dependent communities.

The Sekura Community Development Model exemplifies an effective approach to integrating social cohesion, economic resilience, and cultural preservation in the pursuit of inclusive and sustainable rural development. This model is founded on local knowledge and bolstered by strong community engagement, leveraging the abundant social and cultural capital of its inhabitants while promoting active collaboration among various sectors and ethnic groups (Cridland et al., 1995; Strzelecka et al., 2023). By emphasizing shared prosperity and participatory governance, Sekura adeptly reconciles the interests of both indigenous and migrant populations. This locally grounded yet flexible framework provides significant insights for other multiethnic rural regions aiming to attain development that is equitable, culturally sensitive, and environmentally sustainable.

#### *Desa Sekura: From Agrarian Livelihood to Tourism Village Prospect*

Desa Sekura serves as a prime example of a complex rural economy where agricultural practices, gender-inclusive entrepreneurship, and youth-driven innovation intersect to establish a solid foundation for sustainable development. The economic activities of the community are predominantly centered around agriculture, with 2,819 individuals involved in the cultivation of rice, oil palm, salak, citrus, and rubber. This agricultural framework is supported by substantial land resources, encompassing a total of 2,914.67 hectares, of which 2,038.97 hectares are allocated to plantations and 117.2 hectares to agricultural activities (Aulia & Rahmini, 2020). These production systems play a crucial role not only in ensuring local food security but also in facilitating regional and cross-border trade, particularly with Malaysia and other adjacent markets.

An ethnographic study conducted in Desa Sekura provides valuable insights into the evolving rural livelihood strategies, particularly within the non-agricultural sector. This transformation is primarily driven by the proliferation of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which encompass household-scale industries such as tofu and tempeh production, processed snake fruit, furniture manufacturing, tailoring, and culinary ventures. These enterprises have emerged as crucial components of community employment and resilience. They function not only as economic initiatives but also as social environments where traditional gender roles are redefined and intergenerational knowledge is exchanged. The active involvement of women in various roles—such as midwives, domestic service providers, culinary experts, fashion designers, and entrepreneurs—illustrates a significant reconfiguration of gendered labor dynamics. These roles transcend mere economic contributions, encompassing aspects of social leadership and the transmission of skills within the community.

Furthermore, the fieldwork data indicate a burgeoning group of youth who are actively reshaping the economic landscape of Sekura. Following their secondary education, many young individuals engage in entrepreneurial endeavors that reflect both

innovation and cultural relevance. These initiatives are bolstered by village policies that create secure, tax-exempt environments conducive to economic experimentation. The rise of youth-led MSMEs exemplifies a deliberate intergenerational strategy that integrates traditional economic practices with contemporary adaptations (Kunyati & Radianti, 2024; Sriyani, 2021). Consequently, Sekura serves as a model of rural transformation characterized by inclusive and participatory economic diversification, deeply rooted in local knowledge systems. This dynamic interaction between gender and generational shifts provides essential insights for re-evaluating rural development strategies in Southeast Asia and beyond. Field observations and community engagement in Desa Sekura reveal how spatial configuration and institutional design coalesce to foster a robust local economy. The village's strategic positioning—anchored by a ferry port and the bustling Sekura Market—has transformed it into a regional commercial hub, attracting traders and consumers from neighboring sub-districts such as Tangerang, Paloh, and Galing. This cross-regional interaction is facilitated by well-integrated infrastructure, including paved roads, accessible sea routes, and the availability of public amenities like ATMs, banking facilities, and places of worship. These institutional supports are not incidental; rather, they reflect intentional governance strategies aimed at stabilizing and incentivizing economic participation. Notably, the provision of tax-free trade zones for micro and small enterprises signals an inclusive approach to economic development, particularly benefiting emerging entrepreneurs and low-income traders. Sekura's fiscal budget—Rp 1.48 billion as of 2017—has been strategically allocated to strengthen public services and entrepreneurial ecosystems. Ethnographic findings suggest that this financial governance cultivates a sense of collective ownership over development outcomes. Local authorities, in tandem with community stakeholders, have created an environment where commerce, faith, and social interaction converge. The marketplace thus becomes more than a transactional site—it is a social institution reinforcing trust, mutual support, and economic resilience. This synergy between spatial accessibility and institutional capacity positions Sekura as a viable model for integrated rural development in Indonesia and other multi-ethnic, peri-urban settings.

With a solid foundation in place, Sekura is strategically positioned to evolve into a model of sustainable village tourism. The community's cultural capital, which is reflected in its traditional rituals (such as *Tepung Tawar* and *Mengapung*), oral traditions, culinary practices, and interethnic harmony, creates a rich framework for cultural tourism. Additionally, the presence of thriving micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) alongside a robust agricultural sector presents significant opportunities for agro-tourism and experiential economic tourism. This could include activities such as farm visits, food processing workshops, and craft-based learning experiences. The community's diverse ethnic composition, which includes Malay Sambas, Javanese, Chinese, Dayak, Bugis, and Batak groups, coupled with a culture of everyday tolerance, further enhances its appeal to tourists seeking immersive cultural experiences (Alyta & Karyana, 2021; D. Ramadhan, 2019; Wahab, 2017).

This potential is consistent with overarching development narratives that promote tourism models that are community-based, inclusive, and grounded in local contexts. The Sekura case illustrates that traditional agrarian communities, when empowered through initiatives focused on gender equity, youth engagement, and institutional backing, can utilize their inherent resources to progress towards a more sustainable and diversified rural economy. Consequently, Sekura serves as a noteworthy model for emulation in other multiethnic rural environments seeking to achieve equitable and culturally sensitive tourism development.

## Conclusion and Practical Implications

The investigation of Desa Sekura demonstrates the potential of rural communities to achieve sustainable and inclusive development through the implementation of a strategic spatial economy, strong cultural traditions, and proactive local governance. The amalgamation of traditional livelihoods with non-agricultural microenterprises, alongside the socioeconomic contributions of women and youth, exemplifies a dynamic and participatory development model (Fabinyi et al., 2022; Otsuki, 2024; Thwala et al., 2023). The advantageous geographical position of Sekura, marked by a ferry port and a central market, functions not only as a transit hub but also as a socio-cultural center that promotes the integration of diverse ethnic groups, including the Melayu Sambas and Chinese communities, within a framework of mutual respect and shared cultural practices such as *Saprahan* and *Cap Go Meh* (Rianawati, 2019). The village's ability to harmonize traditional values with economic innovation—supported by public infrastructure and institutional inclusivity—has facilitated its transformation into a resilient rural economy. These findings highlight the potential of community-based models for rural regeneration, wherein local knowledge, gender inclusivity, and interethnic tolerance are harnessed as essential developmental assets (Ibrahima, 2017; Loke & Sherraden, 2019; Setyorini & Violinda, 2021).

Furthermore, the socio-cultural richness and spatial connectivity of Desa Sekura position it as a viable candidate for the establishment of a culturally-based tourism village (*Desa Wisata*) (Izudin et al., 2022; Jaya & Izudin, 2023). The presence of vibrant festivals, culinary traditions, artisan crafts, and heritage practices—when complemented by ethical tourism infrastructure and community empowerment—has the potential to attract visitors seeking authentic rural experiences. The incorporation of tourism into the local economy not only diversifies income sources but also enhances the preservation of cultural identity and environmental stewardship (Ramadhan et al., 2023; Yonefendi et al., 2018). Consequently, Sekura's developmental trajectory provides valuable insights for the formulation of sustainable tourism strategies grounded in local wisdom, participatory governance, and inclusive growth.

This research contributes to the extensive discourse surrounding rural development, cultural pluralism, and spatial economy by presenting a context-specific case study from

West Kalimantan, Indonesia. It enhances the ethnographic literature by elucidating how the convergence of strategic geography (land-sea routes), institutional frameworks (fiscal policies, tax-exempt markets), and cultural diversity (indigenous and migrant traditions) can facilitate inclusive development (Fei, 2017; Hollowell & Nicholas, 2009; You, 2020). Specifically, the study broadens the theoretical understanding of how economic infrastructure—such as ports and markets—serves as cultural spaces that bolster social cohesion and participatory governance. Furthermore, it offers a practical reference for policymakers and development practitioners aiming to replicate community-driven economic models in other rural and multiethnic settings.

While the study offers valuable insights, it is subject to several limitations. Firstly, the ethnographic fieldwork was conducted over a relatively short duration, which may not adequately capture seasonal fluctuations in economic activities or cultural practices. Secondly, although qualitative interviews and observations were employed, the incorporation of more robust quantitative measures regarding household income, educational attainment, and gender-based labor division could enhance the validation of the findings. Thirdly, the study predominantly reflects the internal dynamics of the village and may overlook external political and economic factors, such as market volatility or regional migration policies, which also play a significant role in influencing village development.

To further advance the findings of this research, future studies could: First, undertake longitudinal investigations to assess how Sekura's development model evolves over time, particularly in response to external pressures such as climate change or shifts in regional policy. Second, implement comparative analyses by examining similar villages throughout the Indonesian archipelago or Southeast Asia to evaluate the applicability of the Sekura model. Third, employ mixed-method approaches that combine ethnographic insights with quantitative data on income distribution, women's labor participation, and youth entrepreneurship. Lastly, investigate the impact of digital platforms on expanding the reach of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and promoting cultural initiatives, especially among the younger generation of entrepreneurs in Sekura. Overall, this study significantly contributes to the understanding and reformation of rural development within the framework of pentagon assets and community development practices, drawing lessons from Desa Sekura.

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**Author's declaration**

The authors made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study. The authors took responsibility for data analysis, interpretation and discussion of results. The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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