



Identification of the Potential for Development of the Rainforest Lodges Kedah Ecotourism Area, Gayo Lues District, Aceh Province

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ABSTRACT

Aceh Province's natural resource wealth is diverse, offering natural panoramas, flora and fauna, and rainforest areas with attractive attractions for both domestic and foreign tourists. Forestry-based ecotourism has the potential to become a leading sector in the tourism industry. This research aims to map potential attractions, amenities, and regional accessibility of the Rainforest Lodges Kedah ecotourism area in Gayo Regency Lues Aceh Province. The area has unique natural resources, including beautiful flora and fauna, clear river flow, and tourist activities such as nature viewing, facilities, research/education, and sports. The area can accommodate up to 1,642 people per day. The ecotourism development strategy is in the quadrant one (I) SWOT matrix, allowing for optimal utilization of existing opportunities and support for aggressive growth.

INTRODUCTION

Forestry-based ecotourism has the potential to become one of the leading sectors. Can increase people's income, expansion employment opportunities, government income, increased foreign exchange, national entrepreneurship and benefits for communities around the forest both economically, socially and culturally (Saputra et al., 2019). Developments in the tourism sector today, especially in the ecotourism sector based on Forest Resources (SDH), are increasingly attracting the interest of both domestic and foreign tourists (Hamdan and Low, 2014). It is hoped that this condition will encourage communities around forests to prioritize forest area conservation as an effort to increase and develop conservation of ecological assets through ecotourism development without having to physically extract natural resources in the local area. One of these ecotourism areas is the rainforest area in Gayo Lues Regency which has various promising potential tourist attractions, one of which is the Rainforest Lodges Kedah Ecotourism destination which is administratively located in Penosan Sepakat Village, BlangJerango District, Gayo Lues Regency, Aceh Province. This ecotourism area, which covers an area of 766 hectares, is managed by the local community and is currently collaborating with the Technical Implementation Unit of the Forest Management Unit Service (UPTD KPH) Region V, Aceh Province. This ecotourism object, which is located at an altitude of 1,200-1,500 meters above sea level, is dominated by views of rice fields and natural pine forest mountains. This is the entrance to the climbing route and the last vehicle access before climbing the Gunung Leuser National Park (TNGL). The Rainforest Lodges Kedah Ecotourism Area, Gayo Lues Regency is currently still lagging behind tourism in other areas in the Gunung Leuser area such as Bukit Lawang and Tangkahan. So strategic efforts are needed to achieve the desired results, including through developing potential attractions, amenities and accessibility of ecotourism areas in a more planned, orderly and sustainable manner as well as improving and adding facilities and infrastructure for the comfort of tourists. The results of the inventory need to be followed up with research, starting from reviews to further research.

With the data obtained and recommendations from research results, the steps needed to determine areas designated for certain types of tourism can be prepared. Rainforest Lodges Kedah, if supported by a management strategy and community participation that runs optimally and is able to accommodate all aspects related to tourism development efforts so that the development of Rainforest Lodges ecotourism, will have an impact on improving the economy of the community around the Ecotourism area. Considering the above problems, this research will outline the opportunities and challenges in developing the Rainforest Lodges Kedah ecotourism destination using a SWOT analysis approach, this will try to be directed towards the development and management of the Rainforest Lodges Kedah ecotourism area. Based on this background, researchers are interested in this research entitled Identification of Development Potential for the Rainforest Lodges Kedah Ecotourism Area.

METHODOLOGY

This research will be carried out using a descriptive method using a qualitative type of research, namely research that aims to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by research subjects holistically, and by means of descriptions in the form of words and language, in a special natural context and by utilizing various scientific methods (Adlini et al., 2022). The determination of respondents as research units in collecting primary data was carried out deliberately (purposive sampling). Respondents were adults who lived in the research location, namely residents aged over 17 years who

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Ecotourism development is the main focus of *Rainforest Lodgeh Kedah*. There are three important components that need to be considered in tourism development, namely attractions, amenities and accessibility (Nabila and Widiyastuti, 2018). These three components must be sustainable so that Ecotourism can have high competitiveness.

a. Attractions

According to Irpan *et al .*, (2021), an attraction or tourist attraction is anything that has uniqueness, beauty and value in the form of natural, cultural and man-made wealth which is the target or purpose of tourist visits. The Kedah Rainforest Lodge Ecotourism Area has unique natural resources in the form of beautiful flora and fauna and also a clear river flow. Tourist activities that can be carried out include enjoying the natural beauty, available facilities, research/education and sports activities such as *outbound rides* .

b. *The Rainforest Lodgeh Kedah E*

cotourism Area is an area free from residential areas. There is no industry or other pollutants in this area because entering the *Rainforest Lodgeh Kedah* Ecotourism area is surrounded by local plantations and rice fields.

c. Amenities .

According to Camilleri *et al .*, (2018), amenities are a series of facilities provided by a tourist destination that are used to meet the needs of visitors or tourists who come.

d. Accommodation

Kedah Ecotourism Objects can be reached from Blangkejeren by taking regular public transport on the Kutapanjang/Blangjerango route which is around 9 km, then by motorbike rickshaw to Penosan Sepakat Village 5 km, or by chartering public transport from Blangkejeren to Penosan Sepakat Village.

e. Supporting Facilities and Infrastructure

Supporting facilities that can be found at *Rainforest Lodgeh Kedah* are the availability of information, signage, tourist counters, availability of clean water, market eating and drinking facilities, prayer rooms, bathrooms, huts, *camping ground* , *outbound rides* , photo spots, and parking. Meanwhile, other supporting infrastructure is the electricity network.




f. Accessibility

According to Meneguette (2016), accessibility is a tool that can provide convenience for someone who is going to travel. To make this journey you need a means of transportation. Based on field observations, the condition of the road from the capital city of Gayo Lues, namely Blangkejeren to Penosan Sepakat Village, is quite good. The road is made of asphalt with a width of >3 meters, while from Penosan Sepakat Village to the Kedah Ecotourism Object the road is rocky. The distance traveled from Blangkejeren City to Penosan Sepakat Village is around 15 km with a travel time of around 0.5 hours. Along the way to Penosan Sepakat Village from Blangkejeren City you will pass through villages and rice fields.




Table 1. Coordinate Points for Ecotourism Object Areas

No	Information	X	Y	Picture
1	Entrance	97° 15' 26.021" E	3° 59' 23,950" N	
2	Jungle Door Big Tree Entrance	97° 15' 18.297" E	3° 59' 26.087" N	

No	Information	X	Y	Picture
3	Black Gibbon	97° 15' 5.903" E	3° 59' 36.885" N	
4	Orangutan	97° 15' 12.161" E	3° 58' 48.915" N	
5	Kedah Rain Forest location	97° 15' 15,000" E	3° 58' 48.708" N	
6	Tapa Rock	97° 15' 14.006" E	3° 58' 48.708" N	

No	Information	X	Y	Picture
			° 58' 48.181" N	
7	Camping Camp Location	97° 15' 2.366" E	3° 58' 38.759" N	
8	Orchid	97° 15' 4.685" E	° 58' 37.317"	
9	Orangutan	97° 15' 6.539" E	3° 58' 36.597" N	

No	Information	X	Y	Picture
10	Dam	97° 15' 9.133" E	3° 58' 38.851"	
11	Camp Water Campsite	97° 14' 58.079" E	3° 58' 30.871" N	
12	Watch Post	97° 14' 19.239" E	3° 58' 34.096"	

No	Information	X	Y	Picture
13	Orangutan Animal Area	97° 15' 15.199" E	3° 57' 8.634" N	
14	Waterfall	97° 15' 24.345" E	3° 56' 41.953" N	
15	Camp Telege	97° 15' 24.186" E	3° 56' 2.795" N	

Latitude is also called latitude. Latitude is a vertical line that measures the angle between a point and the equator. The point north of the equator is called north latitude, while the point south of the equator is called south latitude. Longitude is also called longitude. *Tracking* Coordinate Points The Rainforest Lodges Kedah Ecotourism area can be seen in Table 2 below. Community Participation in Ecotourism Development Tourism is a sector in Indonesia that is currently experiencing increase, especially in terms of the number of tourists coming so increase the country's foreign exchange. This increase makes the government area in Indonesia are competing to improve the

tourism sector area both in terms of quality and quantity. The main reason for development tourism on a tourist destination, whether locally, regionally or spatially The national scope of a country is very closely related to development the economy of the region or country. In other words, development tourism in a tourist destination will always be taken into account advantages and benefits for the people (Nabila and Widiyastuti, 2018). Based on interviews with the community as sources, then Community participation in Penosan Sepakat Village can be differentiated as follows:

- a. Community participation in the Rainforest Lodgeh Kedah Ecotourism area is possible seen from the community's understanding of regional development Ecotourism Rainforest Lodgeh Kedah which states that with Kedah Ecotourism Objects are able to create jobs like this There are 20 tour guides/guides for tourists who will visit people and increase income for the community such as facilities a place to eat and drink for tourists while enjoying the beauty nature Rainforest Lodges Kedah.
- b. Forms of community participation in the Rainforest Lodgeh Ecotourism area Kedah can be concluded as the willingness of the resource persons who as a whole took part or participated in the implementation.
- c. Development of the Rainforest Lodgeh Kedah Ecotourism area proven by his daily activities as an entrance guard, officer parking, Rainforest Lodgeh Kedah Ecotourism security officer, Guide/tour guide as well as construction of supporting facilities in Kedah Ecotourism Area, Blangjerango District. Judging from the shape participation carried out by the local community which is given in the form of energy, then it can be concluded that the participation provided is the level of incentive participation.
- d. Forms of participation, skills and proficiency, are aimed at existing the resource person's willingness to run a small restaurant/canteen and kiosk business which sells food and soft drinks. If seen from the participation given by society in the form of skills and abilities, then This participation can be said to be at the level of initiative participation.

Calculation results of the external environmental factor score values in the

Rainforest Lodges Kedah ecotourism area development strategy. The results of calculating internal factors (*Internal Strategic Factor Analysis Summary*) and external factors (*External Strategic Factor Analysis Summary*) which produce the X axis value are the result of subtracting the strength factors (121.2) and weakness factors (14.7) from the internal environment, which is equal to 155.4 and the Y axis value which is the result of subtracting opportunity factors (51.7) and threat factors (26.9) from the external environment is 24.8. As for the SWOT diagram Which formed on picture 1.

Figure 1. SWOT diagram

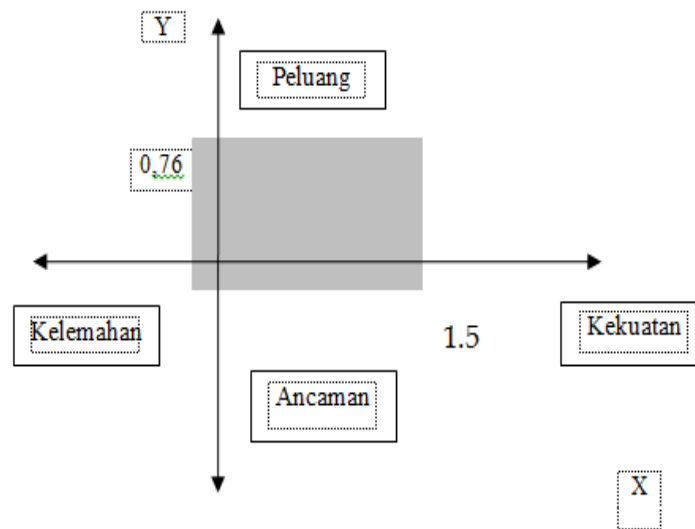


Figure 1. shows that the position of the Rainforest Lodges Kedah Ecotourism area is in quadrant 1. This indicates that the Rainforest Lodges Kedah Ecotourism is in a very favorable position where the strengths of the Rainforest Lodges Kedah Ecotourism such as World Heritage have interesting flora and fauna and beautiful natural panoramas. beautiful and still cool and clean air can cover weaknesses and threats such as lack of facilities and infrastructure, unprofessional management and so on. This position also allows Rainforest Lodges Kedah Ecotourism to take all available opportunities, such as making Rainforest Lodges Kedah Ecotourism a flora and fauna research location for students and students as well as the potential for providing souvenirs, and so on.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of data analysis as described previously, results This research can be concluded as follows:

1. Potential Attractions, Amenities and Accessibility of Rainforest Lodges Kedah The area has unique natural resources in the form of flora and fauna beautiful and also has a clear river flow. Available tourist activities include enjoying the beauty of nature, the available facilities, research/education and sports activities such as outbound rides. Apart from that, in one day this area can accommodate as many as 1,642 people/day
2. SWOT identification shows that the strategic position in quadrant one (I) is a very profitable position where Rainforest Ecotourism Lodges Kedah has opportunities and strengths. So the opportunities are there can be utilized optimally. This position also allows for implementation of strategies that support aggressive growth policies.

3. Optimizing the sub-variables of attractions, amenities, accessibility from tourism planning (development) to be more effective in the success of Rainforest Lodges Kedah Ecotourism tourism development, including all event themes and activities carried out.
4. To optimize Rainforest Lodges Kedah Ecotourism, the Regional Government needs to allocate sufficient funds for tourism development, which is the region's leading tourism sector, by coordinating with all private parties. Community-based business management of tourist objects and attractions (tourist attractions) in each village, providing tourist facilities such as homestays, cottages, restaurants, sales and improving infrastructure such as roads.

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