

DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM AND RELIGIOUS VILLAGES IN SUMBERRANTAS VILLAGE, BATU CITY

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Received :01 December 2025

Published :31 January 2026

Revised :10 December 2025

DOI :<https://doi.org/10.54443/ijset.v5i1.1625>

Accepted :29 December 2025

Publish Link :<https://www.ijset.org/index.php/ijset/index>

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the development and expansion of tourism and religious villages in Sumberbrantas Village, Batu City, and their impact on the local community. Sumberbrantas Village boasts pristine mountainous natural beauty, a harmonious social life, and strong religious values, offering the potential for development as a community-based tourism and religious village. This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive approach. Data collection techniques included observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, involving village officials, religious leaders, tourism managers, and the local community. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results indicate that the development of tourism and religious villages in Sumberbrantas Village has had a positive impact on improving the community's economy, preserving socio-cultural and religious values, and increasing public awareness of environmental sustainability. Active community participation and support from the village and regional governments are key contributing factors to the success of tourism and religious village development. However, constraints remain, including limited human resources and suboptimal tourism promotion. Therefore, a well-planned development strategy, community capacity building, and strengthening cooperation between stakeholders are needed to realize a sustainable tourism and religious village.

Keywords: *Tourism Village, Religious Tourism, Village Development, Community Participation.*

INTRODUCTION

Village tourism is a development strategy focused on empowering local communities and sustainably utilizing regional potential. Previous research has shown that developing village tourism can improve community welfare through job creation, increased income, and strengthening local identity. (Ultimate, 2025). Tourism villages not only function as recreational destinations, but also as a medium for preserving the culture, social values, and local wisdom of the local community. Research by(Damanik & Weber, 2016)emphasized that participatory tourism villages tend to be more sustainable because they involve the community as the primary actors. In the context of regional development, tourism villages are also seen as an effective instrument for equitable development, particularly in rural areas. Batu City, as a tourist destination, has significant potential for developing tourism villages based on nature, culture, and religion. Therefore, the development of tourism villages is relevant to be studied in depth, particularly in Sumberbrantas Village, which has unique characteristics.

In addition to tourist villages, religious tourism is also developing as a form of tourism with strong spiritual appeal and social values. Previous research conducted by(Fatimah & Sugianto, 2024)Studies show that religious tourism not only encourages tourist visits but also strengthens religious values and social cohesion within local communities. Religious tourism is often associated with religious sites, traditions, and spiritual activities passed down through generations. Developing religious tourism integrated with tourist villages can create a holistic tourism experience, encompassing recreational, educational, and spiritual aspects. A study by(Mujtahid et al., 2023)revealed that integrating religious tourism into tourist villages can increase tourists' length of stay and expand economic benefits for the community. Thus, developing tourism and religious villages is a complementary approach. This presents a strategic opportunity for villages with strong religious and cultural potential, such as Sumberbrantas Village.

Sumberbrantas Village is one of the villages in Batu City that boasts mountainous natural resources, agrarian culture, and well-preserved religious values. Based on previous research by(Hastuti et al., 2023), villages located in mountainous areas have great potential to be developed as ecotourism and religious tourism villages due to their pristine environment. Sumberbrantas Village is also known for its active religious traditions, such as community religious activities and the presence of places of worship that serve as centers of social activity. This potential, if managed properly, could become a unique and sustainable religious tourism attraction. Other research by(Darmawan & Rosmilawati, 2020)emphasized that the success of tourism village development is largely determined by the village's ability to manage local potential in an integrated manner. However, without thorough planning and development, this potential risks not developing optimally. Therefore, Sumberbrantas Village requires a targeted development strategy for tourism and religious development.

The development of tourism and religious villages cannot be separated from the role of various stakeholders, such as local governments, village communities, and the private sector. Research by(Amalyah, 2016)shows that synergy between stakeholders is a key factor in the success of community-based tourism development. Local governments play a role in providing regulations, infrastructure, and mentoring, while communities act as managers and key actors in tourism. On the other hand, the private sector can contribute through investment and tourism promotion. In the context of Sumberbrantas Village, this collaboration is crucial to ensure that the development of tourism and religious villages is not solely oriented towards economic gain. Previous research also confirms that tourism development that ignores social and spiritual aspects can lead to conflict and the degradation of local values, making an inclusive and sustainable development approach a primary need.

Based on this description, a study on the development of tourism and religious villages in Sumberbrantas Village, Batu City, is important to conduct. Previous research by(Ramdani, 2025)stated that studies on religious-based tourism villages are still relatively limited, particularly in the mountainous regions of East Java. However, the combination of natural, cultural, and religious tourism has great potential to increase the competitiveness of village tourism destinations. This research is expected to provide an overview of the potential, challenges, and strategies for developing religious and tourism villages in Sumberbrantas Village. Furthermore, this study can also serve as a reference for the local government and community in formulating village tourism development policies. Thus, the development of religious and tourism villages not only contributes to economic growth but also preserves the religious and social values of the community. Therefore, this research has strong academic and practical relevance in the context of sustainable tourism development.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive approach, aiming to provide an in-depth description of the development and advancement of a tourism and religious village in Sumberbrantas Village, Batu City. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research focuses on understanding the meaning, processes, and social dynamics that occur within the village community.(Lexy J Moleong, 2019)Qualitative research aims to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects holistically through descriptions in the form of words and language. This research places the researcher as the main instrument who interacts directly with research subjects in the field. The research location was determined purposively because Sumberbrantas Village has natural and religious tourism potential that is relevant to the research focus. Research subjects include village officials, religious leaders, tourism village managers, and local communities directly involved in tourism activities. The informant determination technique was carried out using purposive sampling by considering the informant's involvement and knowledge of the development of tourism and religious villages. With this approach, it is hoped that researchers will be able to obtain in-depth and contextual data in accordance with the research objectives.

Data collection techniques in this study included observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to directly observe village conditions, tourist activities, and religious practices that are part of religious tourism. In-depth interviews were conducted semi-structured with key informants to obtain information related to the planning, implementation, and impact of tourism and religious village development. Documentation was used to supplement the data in the form of village archives, activity photos, program reports, and other supporting data. According to(Sugiyono, 2019)The use of various data collection techniques aims to obtain more valid data through triangulation. Data analysis is carried out interactively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This analysis process is carried out continuously from data collection until the research is completed. Data validity is tested through source and method triangulation techniques to ensure the credibility of the research results. Thus, this research method is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the development of tourism and religious villages in Sumberbrantas Village, Batu City.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The development of Sumberbrantas Village as a tourism and religious village demonstrates the optimal utilization of local potential. The village boasts natural resources in the form of mountainous areas, agricultural land, and cool air, all of which attract tourists. These natural conditions support the creation of sustainable nature-based tourism. Furthermore, the community's religious values are still maintained and serve as the village's identity. This strengthens the village's character as a tourist destination that is not only recreational but also spiritual. Research(Ultimate, 2025)stated that villages with strong natural and cultural potential have significant potential for development as tourist villages. This finding is relevant to the condition of Sumberbrantas Village, which still maintains its natural environment. The development of tourist villages in this area also aligns with the concept of community-based tourism. Therefore, the development of Sumberbrantas Village has a strong conceptual and empirical basis.

Community participation is a crucial element in the development of tourism and religious villages in Sumberbrantas Village. The community is involved in various activities, from environmental management and tourism service provision to religious activities. This involvement reflects a sense of ownership in the tourism village development program. Community participation also promotes sustainable tourism management. The community is not only the object but also the subject of tourism development. Research(Hasan et al., 2023)emphasized that active community participation is a key factor in the success of tourism villages. This is evident in Sumberbrantas Village. The community plays a role in maintaining social and religious values amidst tourism development. Thus, community participation is a key force in the development of tourism and religious villages. Religious tourism in Sumberbrantas Village has flourished alongside the community's ongoing religious activities. Religious activities are not only a spiritual obligation but also a tourist attraction.



Figure 1. Main Places of Religious Activities

Religious tourism offers a different experience than conventional tourism. The presence of tourists also encourages communities to continue preserving religious traditions. Religious activities are carried out without diminishing their sacred value. Research(Siswanto et al., 2024)He explained that religious tourism can increase spiritual awareness while strengthening local cultural identity. This aligns with the situation in Sumberbrantas Village. Religious tourism in this village grew naturally from the community's life. Therefore, religious tourism has great potential for sustainable development. From an economic perspective, the development of tourism and religious villages has had a positive impact on the people of Sumberbrantas Village. They earn additional income through the tourism sector. Activities such as selling agricultural products, local culinary delights, and tourism services provide new sources of income. Tourism also creates employment opportunities for the village community, reducing dependence on the agricultural sector alone. Research(Khamimah, 2021)This study shows that tourist villages can improve the economic well-being of local communities. This finding aligns with the situation in Sumberbrantas Village. The community directly experiences economic benefits. Thus, tourist and religious villages contribute significantly to improving the village economy. The development of tourism and religious villages also impacts the socio-cultural aspects of the community. Interactions between local communities and tourists create new social dynamics. Communities are encouraged to be open while still adhering to established norms. Cultural and religious values are maintained in daily life. Tourism, in fact, serves as a means to introduce local culture. Research (Rizqi & Mujiwati, 2023)states that cultural interaction can strengthen community identity if managed properly. This is evident in Sumberbrantas Village. The community is able to maintain traditions amidst the influx of tourists, ensuring that the development of the tourism village does not diminish local cultural identity.

Environmental aspects are a key focus in the development of tourism and religious villages in Sumberbrantas Village. The natural environment is a primary asset that must be maintained sustainably. The community is beginning to recognize the importance of cleanliness and environmental sustainability. Tourism activities are conducted while maintaining the balance of nature. Environmental management is carried out in a simple yet sustainable manner.



Figure 2. Village Environment and Nature as Tourism

Study(Gautama, B et al., 2020)stated that the success of a tourism village is largely determined by good environmental management. This is reflected in Sumberbrantas Village. A well-maintained environment enhances tourist comfort. Thus, environmental aspects are a crucial foundation for the development of tourism and religious villages. The role of village and regional governments is highly influential in the development of tourism and religious villages. The government provides support through policies, mentoring, and infrastructure development. Village planning is also geared toward supporting the tourism sector. Village governments act as facilitators for the community. Support from the Batu City regional government also strengthens the promotion of village tourism. Research(Muhaimin et al., 2023)emphasized that appropriate policies can drive the success of development programs. This is relevant to the situation in Sumberbrantas Village. Government support accelerates the development of tourism villages, thus, synergy between the government and the community is a determining factor in success. Despite its enormous potential, the development of tourism and religious villages in Sumberbrantas Village faces various challenges. One of the main challenges is limited human resources. Tourism management still requires capacity building. Tourism promotion has also not been optimal. Furthermore, the community still requires ongoing support. Research(Cantika & Kurniawan, 2022)stated that limited managerial capacity is a major obstacle for tourism villages. This situation also occurs in Sumberbrantas Village. These challenges need to be addressed through training and mentoring. With proper management, challenges can be transformed into opportunities.

The strategy for developing tourism and religious villages needs to be implemented in a planned and integrated manner. Thorough planning helps villages determine the direction of tourism development. Natural and religious potential must be packaged attractively. Tourism activities must remain aligned with local values. Strengthening community capacity is a top priority. Research(Mu`tafi, 2020)stated that a targeted development strategy is key to the success of a tourism village. This is relevant to the needs of Sumberbrantas Village. The right strategy will increase the village's competitiveness. Therefore, strategic planning is an urgent need. The development of tourist and religious villages in Sumberbrantas Village also contributes to the development of tourism in Batu City. Tourist villages serve as alternative destinations to the main tourist areas. This helps distribute tourist visits equitably. Sumberbrantas Village also enriches the diversity of regional tourist destinations. Research(Mujtahid et al., 2025)stated that the development of tourist villages can support regional tourism development. This finding aligns with conditions in Batu City. Tourist villages help reduce pressure on key destinations. Thus, Sumberbrantas Village plays a strategic role in regional development. This contribution strengthens the village's position within the regional tourism system.

Table 1. Summary of Aspects of Tourism and Religious Village Development in Sumberbrantas Village

No	Development Aspects	Conditions in Sumberbrantas Village
1	Natural Potential	Mountains, agriculture and cool environment
2	Religious Tourism	Routine religious activities of the community
3	Community Participation	Involved in tourism management and activities
4	Economic Impact	Increased income and employment
5	Challenge	Human resources and tourism promotion

Overall, the development of tourism and religious villages in Sumberbrantas Village shows very promising potential. Natural, social, and religious potential are the main capital for village development. Community participation and government support strengthen the program's sustainability. The economic and social impacts are beginning to be felt by the community. Existing challenges can still be overcome with the right strategies. Research(Sana, 2025)emphasized that the sustainability of a tourism village is determined by the collaboration of all parties. This is relevant to the situation in Sumberbrantas Village. The development of tourism and religious villages contributes to the well-being of the community. Therefore, Sumberbrantas Village deserves to be developed as a leading tourism and religious village.

CLOSING

The conclusion of this study indicates that the development of a tourism and religious village in Sumberbrantas Village, Batu City, has enormous potential to support sustainable community-based tourism development. Sumberbrantas Village's primary assets include pristine mountainous natural resources, a harmonious social life, and strong and well-maintained religious values. The development of a tourism and religious village can have a positive impact on improving the community's economy by opening up new business and employment opportunities. Active community participation is a key factor in the success of village development, as the community plays a key role as both the primary actor and the guardian of cultural and religious values. Furthermore, religious tourism develops naturally from community religious activities without diminishing its sacred value. Support from the village and regional governments also strengthens the direction and sustainability of tourism village development. However, this study identified challenges in the form of limited human resources and suboptimal tourism promotion. These challenges require efforts to increase community capacity through ongoing training and mentoring. Good environmental management is also a crucial factor in maintaining natural potential as a tourism asset. With careful planning and collaboration from all parties, Sumberbrantas Village has the potential to develop as a leading tourism and religious village in Batu City.

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that further research examine the development of religious tourism villages in Sumberbrantas Village, Batu City, using a quantitative or mixed-methods approach to more objectively measure the economic, social, and environmental impacts. Further research could also focus on analyzing tourist satisfaction levels and community perceptions of the sustainability of religious tourism and tourism villages. Furthermore, an in-depth study of digital promotion strategies and the use of social media to enhance the attractiveness of religious tourism villages is necessary. Further research is also recommended to examine the capacity building of human resources for tourism managers through ongoing training and mentoring programs. The institutional and governance aspects of tourism villages are also important to examine to strengthen professional management systems. Comparative research with other religious tourism villages in Batu City or East Java can provide a broader perspective. Furthermore, studies on environmental carrying capacity and ecotourism sustainability are also needed. Thus, further research is expected to provide a more comprehensive contribution to the development of sustainable religious tourism villages.

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