

## Social Innovation of Tourism Village: Asset-based Community Development in East Rombiya Village, Madura, Indonesia

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### Abstract

East Rombiya Village, Sumenep, Madura, is a compelling example of a region actively advancing sustainable village tourism by leveraging its local potential. This study aims to analyze the social innovation initiated by the Village Government through the Village-owned Enterprises (BUMDes) in developing the "Somber Rajeh" tourist destination using an Asset-based Community Development (ABCD) approach, and its impact on community empowerment and the village economy. The research method used is qualitative, with data collection through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving the village government, BUMDes managers, and the local community. The results show that the implemented social innovation successfully transformed natural springs into sustainable tourist attractions, created new jobs, increased the village's local income, and strengthened community participation in tourism management. The analysis reveals that synergy among the village government, BUMDes, and the local community is the critical success factor of inclusive and independent tourism development. This study suggests that local assets can be leveraged to generate effective solutions for sustainable village development, grounded in community empowerment.

Desa Rombiya Timur, Sumenep, Madura, adalah potret nyata sebuah wilayah yang memiliki inisiatif unggul dalam mengembangkan pariwisata desa berkelanjutan berbasis potensi lokal. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis inovasi sosial yang dilakukan oleh Pemerintah Desa melalui Badan Usaha Milik Desa (BUMDes) dalam mengembangkan destinasi wisata "Somber Rajeh" dengan pendekatan Asset-based Community Development (ABCD), serta dampaknya terhadap pemberdayaan masyarakat dan perekonomian desa. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif, dengan pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi yang melibatkan pemerintah desa, pengelola BUMDes, serta masyarakat setempat. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa inovasi sosial yang diterapkan berhasil mengoptimalkan potensi mata air menjadi destinasi wisata berkelanjutan, menciptakan lapangan kerja baru, meningkatkan pendapatan asli desa, dan memperkuat partisipasi masyarakat dalam pengelolaan wisata. Analisis menunjukkan bahwa sinergi antara pemerintah desa, BUMDes, dan masyarakat lokal menjadi kunci utama dalam keberhasilan pembangunan wisata yang inklusif dan mandiri. Penelitian ini berimplikasi bahwa kekuatan lokal dapat dimanfaatkan untuk menghasilkan solusi nyata bagi pembangunan desa yang berkelanjutan dan berbasis pemberdayaan masyarakat.

**Keywords:** asset-based community; BUMDes; community empowerment; social innovation; tourism village

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## Introduction

Social innovation is essential in community development because it focuses on creating new, effective solutions to address various social challenges through collaborative and community-based approaches (Abad and Ezponda 2022; Faludi 2023; Krlev, Mildenerberger, and Anheier 2020). Social innovation not only introduces new products or services, but also alters the way society addresses collective problems by emphasizing participation, inclusion, and sustainability (Rodríguez-Núñez, Cervera-Taulet, and Periañez-Cañadillas 2024). This approach emphasizes sustainable social transformation by leveraging local knowledge and stakeholder collaboration (von Schnurbein, Potluka, and Mayer 2023). Examples of social innovation implementation include community-based renewable energy development, cooperative health services in marginalized areas, and inclusive tourism models that actively involve communities (Domanski, Howaldt, and Kaletka 2020). These cases demonstrate that social innovation has strategic potential in strengthening social resilience and promoting community independence, particularly in rural areas.

A study of social innovation has been carried out widely in various contexts and regions. Abad and Ezponda (2022) highlight the multi-disciplinary dimensions of social innovation and its various conceptual debates. Domanski et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of social innovation ecosystems in creating sustainable systemic change. Gerli, Calderini, and Chiodo (2022) developed an ecosystem model in technology-based social entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, Batista and Helal (2023) underscore the role of social innovation in education systems as a driver of sustainable change. Overall, this literature demonstrates that social innovation is not just a concept, but also a

development practice that relies on local strengths and cross-sector collaboration.

In the context of rural development, tourism villages are an innovative model that integrates economic growth with cultural preservation and environmental sustainability. This model positions communities as the primary actors in managing local potential, including nature, traditions, and local wisdom. Pickel-Chevalier, Bendesa, and Putra (2021) examine the concept of integrated tourism villages in Indonesia and emphasize the importance of community participation in tourism development. Djuwendah et al. (2023) researched the sustainability of community-based agro-ecotourism in West Java, while Rosalina et al. (2023) highlight the role of local governance in two case studies of tourist villages in Bali. The findings indicate that the success of tourist villages is heavily influenced by active community involvement, institutional support, and approaches tailored to the local context.

One approach that strengthens the development of tourism villages is Asset-based Community Development (ABCD). This approach emphasizes mapping and utilizing existing community assets—whether natural resources, social capital, local knowledge, or village institutions—to encourage sustainable development (Lloyd 2021; Nel 2025; Titisari et al. 2024; Yanan, Ismail, and Aminuddin 2024). Past studies have shown the advantages of this approach. Appau, Asibey, and Grant (2024) demonstrate how the ABCD approach can strengthen the climate resilience of poor communities in urban Ghana. Chui et al. (2023) show that implementing ABCD has proven successful in developing dementia-friendly communities in Hong Kong. Wu and Pearce (2014) have also demonstrated the successful implementation of ABCD in developing community tourism in Tibet.

Meanwhile, Calderón-Larrañaga et al. (2021) show that the flexibility of ABCD is beneficial in education and disaster management. All these studies prove that ABCD is an effective participatory approach in promoting development based on local strengths.

However, there is still minimal research integrating social innovation, tourism villages, and the ABCD approach in managing natural springs as a tourist attraction at the village level, such as in East Rombiya Village in Sumenep Regency, Madura. Most existing literature emphasizes tourism management's economic or technical aspects and has not explored the dynamics of local asset-based empowerment in depth. Furthermore, previous studies were generally conducted in socially and culturally distinct areas from Madura, thus failing to provide a contextual overview of ABCD implementation in the region. This study addresses this gap by examining how social innovation and the ABCD approach were applied to transform the Somber Rajeh spring in East Rombiya Village into a community-based tourism destination.

This research also contributes novelty to the study of village development in Indonesia, presenting a unique case from Madura that has not received much academic study (Amalia and Sunartiningih 2023; Firdaus et al. 2023; Hafiyyan et al. 2024; Qiyami and Hermansah 2021; A. Rahmawati et al. 2024; Sulisno 2021; Wibowo 2022; Zakariya and Soim 2023). While various aspects of tourism development have been discussed, none have explicitly analyzed how the ABCD approach can be employed to empower communities by developing locally resource-based tourism villages, particularly within Madura's cultural and social context. Therefore, this study offers an inclusive, collaborative, and sustainable village development model.

The Somber Rajeh tourist attraction in East Rombiya Village, Sumenep Regency, Madura Province, is an interesting example of transforming local natural resources into a sustainable community-based tourism destination. Somber Rajeh, once merely a spring water source for daily needs, has been transformed into a tourist destination emphasizing local values and environmental sustainability. This process utilizes natural potential and demonstrates how the village community, in collaboration with the government and BUMDes, successfully works together to optimize local potential within a more inclusive and asset-based development framework. The success of Rombiya Village in managing natural springs as a tourist attraction highlights the importance of community empowerment and an asset-based approach in building economic independence at the village level. This research opens up opportunities to understand the dynamics of community empowerment directly involved in the management and development tourist destinations based on local wisdom, which has not been widely studied in the Madura region. This research is valuable as it offers new insights into implementing the ABCD approach in the development of natural resource-based tourism.

This study aims to answer three main questions: 1) How is the ABCD approach applied in developing local potential-based tourism in East Rombiya Village? 2) How do local institutions respond to the use of the ABCD model for tourism management? 3) To what extent do the ABCD approach and social innovation impact community empowerment and village economic sustainability?

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to understand the process of transforming a natural spring into a community tourism attraction in East Rombiya

Village. The field study was conducted on-site using semi-structured interviews, with informants selected through purposive sampling (see Table 1). The field study also collected data from observation of social practices and tourism activities, and documentation of village archives, tourism program reports, and meeting minutes. Source and method triangulation techniques were employed to enhance data validity.

Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Member checking was also conducted with key informants to ensure the validity of the findings. The researchers' direct presence in the field enabled contextual, in-depth, and reflective interpretation of the data regarding the social dynamics in the tourism village development process.

### **The Application of the ABCD Approach in Developing Local Potential-based Tourism in East Rombiya Village**

The breakthrough initiated by the Village Government of East Rombiya through the Village-owned Enterprise (BUMDes) has brought significant change, especially in developing tourism based on local potential. One of the most striking innovations is the

transformation of the Somber Rajeh spring—a pristine natural water source that had long been used as a communal bathing site. For years, its ecological and aesthetic values remained overlooked. It was not until 2021 that awareness began to grow, sparked by a series of discussions between the village government and BUMDes. They recognized the spring's potential as a village asset that could be developed into a tourist attraction.

This realization is captured in an interview with the village head (Nurhayati):

“The initial idea for the development emerged from the urgency to optimize untapped local potential. Together with BUMDes, the village government began designing a development concept for Somber Rajeh not as a typical tourist site, but as a model of community-based tourism that could comprehensively empower the local population.”

The statement aligns with the local youth leader:

“The success of this project really boiled down to how involved the people were. It wasn't just about planning—people actually came to help clean the area, build the facilities, and set up the management together. From the start, we all felt like this place belonged to us. Somber Rajeh wasn't

Table 1  
Research Informants

No	Informant	Position/Title
1	Nurhayati	Head of East Rombiya Village
2	Hosni	Director of Somber Rajeh Tourism
3	Sahrih	Youth Leader of Somber Rajeh
4	Pendi	Employee of Somber Rajeh Tourism
5	Aziza	Local Community member
6	Noval	Local community leader
7	Nayyah	MSME (UMKM) owners

Source: Personal Document, 2025

just the village government's or BUMDes' (asset) anymore—it became something we all own and take care of together" (Sahrir).

The explanations provided by the village head and the local community leader of East Rombiya support the findings of Syarifah and Rochani (2022) and Ekamukti and Lemy (2023), which highlight that active community participation and strong institutional collaboration are critical success factors of community-based tourism development. In the case of Somber Rajeh, the direct involvement of residents in planning and management processes, along with close cooperation between the village government and BUMDes, fostered a shared sense of ownership and promoted sustainability in the development of the tourism attraction.

They chose to implement the ABCD approach, an empowerment model that focuses on the potential and assets within the community, rather than focusing on its problems or deficiencies. This approach emphasizes that people must be active agents in development, not just passive beneficiaries.

The ABCD approach in East Rombiya began with participatory asset mapping. Local leaders, youth, women, and micro-entrepreneurs were involved in identifying both tangible and intangible village assets. Tangible assets included the Somber Rajeh spring itself, the surrounding ecosystem, and area accessibility. Intangible assets comprised cultural heritage, local belief systems, and social practices such as cooperation (gotong royong) and consensus-based decision-making (*musyawarah*). Village deliberations were then held to formulate a development strategy aligned with local values and community aspirations.

This process illustrates the core mechanism of the ABCD approach, which, according to Mathie and Cunningham (2003), begins with

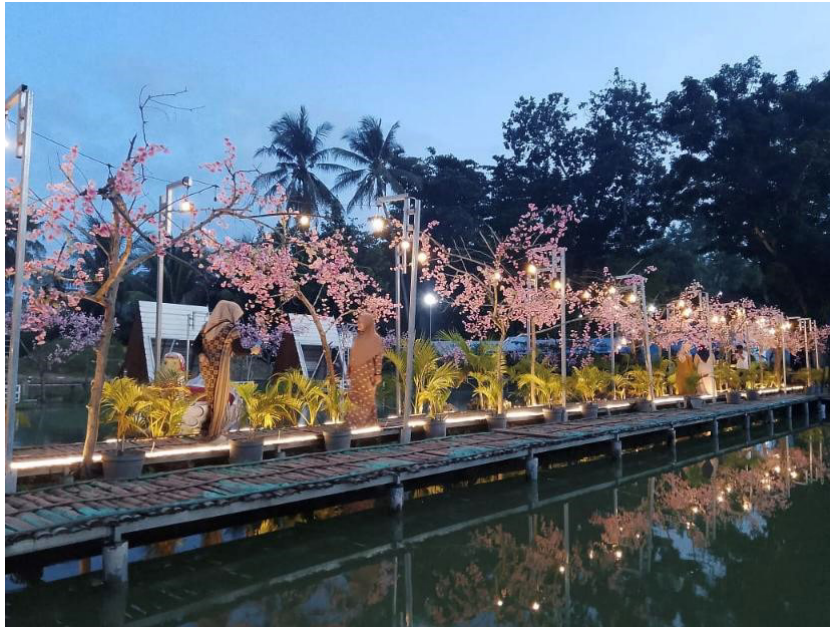
identifying existing assets through participatory methods, then mobilizing these assets in ways that generate community-driven initiatives. The participatory asset mapping in East Rombiya followed this logic: first, community members collectively inventoried their natural and social assets; then, through deliberative forums (*musyawarah*), they linked these assets to a shared vision—transforming Somber Rajeh into a tourism-based development hub. This pattern aligns with the ABCD cycle model: discovery → dream → design → delivery.

Beyond physical infrastructure, the village government recognized the importance of building human capital. In 2023, a range of training programs was conducted, funded by a Village Fund (ADD) allocation of IDR 450 million. These programs covered tourism services, sanitation, financial management, and small business development related to tourism. The goal was clear: to ensure the community could manage Somber Rajeh professionally and sustainably, without relying on external aid. The area was developed using a Japanese-style visual theme, blended with authentic local elements to enhance its aesthetic appeal and attract a wider audience. See Figure 1.

Similar findings were noted in a study by Dewi, Susila, and Wirya (2022), emphasizing that capacity building must precede infrastructure investment in rural tourism development to ensure sustainability. The case of East Rombiya reinforces this, showing how early investment in training (tourism services, sanitation, finance) created a foundation for effective community-based management. This layered strategy is often absent in top-down tourism projects, where physical development outpaces local readiness.

One of the residents, Nayyah, a local micro-entrepreneur, explained the transformation brought about by the program in the interview:

Figure 1  
Nighttime of Somber Rajeh with Decorative Sakura Trees and  
Lighting by the Pond



Source: Personal Documentation

"I used to sell from home, and few people came. After Somber Rajeh was developed, I started selling snacks there on weekends. Now, I can make around Rp. 300,000 to Rp. 500,000 each weekend. It really changed our lives."

The results have been impressive. Within months of its official launch, visitor numbers soared to over 500 per day on weekends. The economic impact was immediately felt—locals began earning income from food stalls, gazebo rentals, tour guiding services, and local transport. According to a village elder interviewed during the fieldwork, this success was deeply rooted in the inclusive, participatory, and empowering development strategy.

This outcome validates Boemiya et al. (2024), who found that inclusive economic

participation—especially of women and micro-entrepreneurs—is a key success factor in asset-based tourism. Here, the income-generating opportunities (food stalls, transport, guide services) reflect the redistribution of benefits across social strata, not just to elite actors or external investors.

The development of Somber Rajeh offers a compelling case study of how the ABCD approach can be applied contextually and effectively in rural development. It maximized local assets and reshaped how the community perceives development. People no longer wait for help from outside—they now lead development themselves, grounded in their capacities. Social capital—trust, solidarity and cooperation—has become the driving force behind this transformation.

The adopted ecotourism concept aligns well with principles of sustainable development. The area is managed without disrupting the ecological function of the spring, and environmental protection efforts have even been strengthened. Regular community activities continuously reinforce local values like openness, deliberation, and social responsibility. It demonstrates that development does not always have to come from external actors—it can emerge organically from within, as long as there is the right facilitation and learning process.

More broadly, the success of Somber Rajeh proves that rural communities can become hubs of social innovation and local progress. Today, East Rombiya is increasingly recognized as a model for community-based tourism. Its best practices have attracted the attention of other villages seeking to develop independent and sustainable tourism. It aligns with numerous studies showing that the success of rural development often depends on the community's ability to identify, manage, and preserve its resources (Boemiya et al. 2024; Dewi et al. 2022; Ekamukti and Lemy 2023; Rochman et al. 2023; Syarifah and Rochani 2022).

The overall development trajectory of Somber Rajeh mirrors what Rochman et al. (2023) define as “bottom-up innovation,” where the revalorization of local heritage and community memory fosters new forms of economic activity and identity. Rather than being passive subjects of development, villagers in East Rombiya became co-creators and custodians of their transformation.

Implementing the ABCD approach in East Rombiya Village has created a new paradigm in rural tourism development rooted in local strengths. It has delivered significant economic

benefits, strengthened the village's social fabric, expanded community capacity, and fostered a shared awareness of the importance of preserving village heritage. This success story proves that a village can become self-sustained and be an inspiring development model for others with the right strategy. Somber Rajeh, once an ordinary spring, has now become a symbol of community strength and grassroots-driven development.

### **The Response of Local Institutions to the Use of the ABCD Model for Tourism Management**

The social innovation that developed in East Rombiya Village emerged as a result of the strong and sustainable collaboration between the village government, BUMDes, and the local community. This innovation not only transformed the village's physical infrastructure but also reshaped the social processes by positioning the community as the main actors in every stage of development (participatory development). The village government and BUMDes played the role of facilitators, supporting all tourism development processes in a participatory manner, rather than making unilateral decisions. In this case, the village government encouraged inclusive dialogue, involving all elements of society in tourism planning and management. This approach significantly shifts from the traditional hierarchical governance model to a more open, democratic system based on community participation.

One concrete example of this social innovation can be seen in the development of Somber Rajeh Tourism. Previously, local residents only used this site as a communal bathing site. In the interview, the Head of East Rombiya Village stated:

"The initial idea of developing this tourism village was based on the urgency to improve the community's economy. We met with village officials and community leaders, then collected data about our potential. From that, we agreed that tourism was the most realistic way to develop" (Nurhayati).

Sahrih, a local youth leader, emphasized the significant role of youth involvement in Somber Rajeh's tourism development, as shown in the following excerpt:

"From the beginning, we as village youth really felt we had a big role. We weren't just asked to help build the gazebos or walking paths — we managed the tickets, organized the events, and even handled the social media promotion. We created Instagram posts and short videos, and sometimes we even went live to show how beautiful our village is. Success isn't just about the buildings or the number of tourists; it is how we, especially the young people, started to believe in our potential."

Aziza, a female resident actively involved in local crafts, also shared her perspective:

"I used to sell snacks from home, but now I have a stall at the tourism site. I joined the training organized by the village, which changed my confidence. We now earn more and feel proud that people come to visit what we built together."

Similarly, Noval, one of the respected local leaders, noted:

"What's special here is the spirit of working together. Even though we don't have much funding, the community contributes time, energy, and ideas. That's the strength of Somber Rajeh."

Based on interviews with various stakeholders—village leaders, youth, and women entrepreneurs—it is evident that social innovation occurred not only in terms of physical development but also in social processes. The Somber Rajeh site, once an

underutilized natural resource, became the center of village transformation. As stated by the Village Head Nurhayati, the initial planning was rooted in local needs and aspirations, while Sahrih, a youth leader, highlighted how community involvement was present in every step, from infrastructure building to digital promotion and tourist engagement. Similarly, a woman entrepreneur, Aziza explained how tourism development increased her family income and boosted her self-confidence.

These narratives underscore a key finding: community participation enabled a stronger sense of ownership and accountability, fostering sustainability. It aligns with Mathie and Cunningham (2003), who argued that social innovation through the ABCD model begins with recognizing community strengths, rather than deficits, and proceeds through inclusive, participatory planning.

The social innovation in East Rombiya Village has fostered a strong sense of shared ownership among the residents. Through dialogue forums, village deliberations, and working groups, the community feels responsible for the success and sustainability of this tourism project. The involvement of residents in decision-making and tourism management has reduced dependence on external parties and strengthened the existing social structure. The spirit of cooperation and mutual support has grown stronger, strengthening social cohesion among residents and enhancing solidarity within the community. It is an example of how social innovation can bring about more profound changes in the social fabric of a village.

The social innovation implemented in East Rombiya Village has also significantly impacted changing social relationships, particularly in empowering women and youth. Previously, the



role of women in the village was limited to the domestic sphere. However, in the development of Sember Rajeh tourism, women are now actively involved in managing food stalls, producing souvenirs, and providing homestay services. It has increased household income and allowed women to develop their leadership capacities. Similarly, the youth, who previously preferred to migrate to the city, now see business opportunities in the village, particularly in the tourism and ecotourism sectors.

The success of Sember Rajeh tourism development demonstrates that social innovation is not limited to physical or economic development but also involves broader social change. Community empowerment and democratization of decision-making are crucial in ensuring sustainability. Village deliberations serve as a forum to discuss various policies concerning all elements of society, from youth and women to community leaders. It creates policies that are more inclusive and responsive to the needs of the residents, while also enhancing trust between the community and the village government.

One important aspect of this social innovation is strengthening the institutional capacity of the village through BUMDes. The village government ensures that BUMDes is a formal business entity and a pillar for driving the village economy, managed professionally and sustainably. In this regard, training in tourism management, financial management, and digital promotion has become essential. As was done in 2024, where BUMDes collaborated with the community service (KKN-T) team from Universitas Trunojoyo Madura, the Capacity Development and Decentralization Center (P3KD), and the Directorate General of Financial Balance (DJPK) from the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of

Indonesia (Kemenkeu RI) to enhance the capacity of tourism managers and expand market access (Redaksi Harian Radar 2024). This institutional strengthening ensures the sustainability of the tourism project and increases the potential for replication on a larger scale.

Social innovation in East Rombiya Village has also brought positive changes to the social dynamics at the village level. The collaboration between the village government, BUMDes, and the local community has significantly altered how the residents view development. The community is now more confident in actively participating in their village's development. They no longer wait for external assistance but instead take the initiative to manage and maintain their village's potential independently. This process also creates a closer, mutually supportive social relationship, which benefits the short term and ensures the long-term sustainability of the tourism project.

Furthermore, the development of Sember Rajeh tourism in East Rombiya Village serves as a successful example of community-based social innovation that can transform a village's mindset and social structure. This innovation demonstrates that by giving communities the space to engage in every stage of development, villages can create progress that is not just physical but also social and economic. This model shows villages can be fertile ground for sustainable social transformation if managed with the right approach and participatory involvement. This study's findings further affirm that participatory models like this make development policies more responsive to community needs and help build trust between residents and the village government (Mulyan and Martoni 2024; Rachmawati and Fitriyani 2024; Sari, Huda, and Wulandari 2022; Soedarwo et al. 2022).

The success of Somber Rajeh tourism in improving the community's welfare and strengthening the village's social structure proves that local potential-based development, with community participation, can create significant change. Observations by the author in Somber Rajeh show that entrepreneurs earn substantial income, especially on weekends and holidays. They also have a strong sense of responsibility to ensure the sustainability of this tourism initiative. This high sense of ownership positively impacts social innovation, actively involving the community in developing local economies. East Rombiya Village now stands as a concrete example of how social innovation can create long-term impacts that benefit current and future generations. This social innovation proves that significant change can begin from a small community that believes in its collective strength.

### **The Impact of the ABCD Approach on Social Innovation and Community Empowerment**

The ABCD approach and social innovation applied in the development of Somber Rajeh Tourism in East Rombiya Village have become a significant turning point in empowering rural communities. Instead of waiting for external assistance, the local community has harnessed its strengths—natural beauty, cultural heritage, and social solidarity—to build tourism based on local potential. Somber Rajeh is a successful example of bottom-up development that generates tangible benefits for the local population. Based on the fieldwork observation, this transformation has had not only economic impacts but also social, institutional, and even cognitive effects on the collective mindset of the village.

Somber Rajeh has become a new tourist destination with a simple yet authentic charm

rooted in nature. The facilities provided—such as swimming pools for children and adults, pedal boats, fishing ponds, rice field exploration zones, camping grounds, and homestays—blend harmoniously with the calming expanse of green rice fields. See Figure 2.

According to Hosni, Somber Rajeh Tourism Management:

"The success of this site, in my opinion, comes from the inclusive concept we've applied since the beginning. For instance, the entrance fee is kept at just IDR 10,000—and that already includes a bottle of mineral water. From what I've observed, this simple approach has made a big difference. Visitor numbers have grown steadily since we opened, and it's really helped drive the local economy forward" (Hosni).

A direct outcome of this tourism boom has been the creating of employment opportunities for the village population, especially for young people. From the author's interviews with a local worker:

"Before I worked here, I had nothing steady going on. I mostly stayed at home, unsure of what to do next. But now, being part of this place has really changed things for me. I have a stable income, and more than that, I have grown in confidence. I used to avoid talking to people—especially visitors—but now, I actually enjoy explaining things to tourists and helping them out. Working here taught me how to communicate, how to handle complaints, and how to manage time. It's not just a job; it's given me a sense of purpose and pride. I never thought I would be part of something that helps the village grow and also helps me grow as a person" (Pendi).

This pattern of empowerment aligns with the principles of ABCD as proposed by Mathie and Cunningham (2003), which emphasize mobilizing endogenous assets to drive change rather than relying on deficiencies or external aid. The transformation observed in Somber

Rajeh reflects how such an approach can create a ripple effect—generating employment and enhancing social capital and individual capacities, particularly among marginalized youth.

Based on the author's field observation, the participation of local youth in the tourism ecosystem has transformed the village's landscape, literally and figuratively. Many who previously lacked productive activities can now manage their small businesses—such as food stalls, parking services, or tent rentals for tourists. In addition to reducing unemployment, their involvement in tourism operations fosters entrepreneurial spirit. It helps build a generation of young people who are more responsive and adaptive to rural-based economic opportunities. It aligns well with the ABCD principle that emphasizes capacity-

building by leveraging existing community assets.

Another visible impact is the increase in Village Self-generated Revenue (PAD). Through interviews with Hosni and the village head, it was confirmed that Sember Rajeh contributes financially to the village through various streams, including entrance fees, rental of facilities (pedal boats, fishing ponds, camping grounds), and contributions from local SMEs and parking services. Hosni noted that on average, the village generates a significant weekly income, which is reinvested to improve infrastructure, expand tourism facilities, and fund community welfare programs. This model clearly illustrates how community-based tourism can serve as a sustainable and alternative revenue source for rural development.

Figure 2  
Daytime of Sember Rajeh Showing Visitors' Activities and Decorative Sakura Trees that Highlight Community Participation in Tourism



Source: Personal Documentation

The institutional strength of BUMDes, the official body managing the tourism initiative, has also seen remarkable improvement. Based on the field observation, the village government actively provides training and mentoring, and the community is also involved in the evaluation and strategic planning processes. BUMDes acts as a catalyst in this context, bridging local potential with market demands. From the ABCD perspective, this success illustrates the village's ability to build inclusive, adaptive, and community-rooted institutions.

One notable aspect of this transformation is the revitalization of traditional social values that had previously begun to fade. Community deliberations, cooperation (*gotong royong*), and shared ownership of the tourism site have been rekindled. Village discussion forums have become essential spaces for expressing aspirations, solving problems, and planning future development collaboratively. This strong social capital forms a solid foundation for the continuity of community-based development programs—an observation that supports findings in several previous studies (Arizkha et al. 2023; Auliah et al. 2025; Khaerunisa, Prayitno, and Wijayanti 2023; R. Rahmawati et al. 2024; Suryandhani, Prayitno, and Surjono 2023).

Beyond economic and social dimensions, another crucial transformation is the increased participation of women in tourism-related activities. From the direct observation, women in the village are now more empowered and confident in taking on public roles. They manage food stalls, prepare traditional cuisine, and handle lodging services for visitors. In indirect interviews, Hosni highlighted that women's involvement is vital in maintaining service quality and the warmth of social interactions between residents and tourists. It indicates that

tourism development promotes gender equality and expands the scope of women's contributions to village development.

From an environmental standpoint, Somber Rajeh demonstrates a clear commitment to sustainability. The rice fields are preserved as the main visual and ecological asset, rather than being converted into permanent structures. The rice field exploration area is even designed as an educational attraction that introduces visitors to local agricultural traditions. This strengthens Somber Rajeh's identity as a community-based ecotourism destination, where development runs parallel to environmental and cultural preservation. This strategy could be worth replicating in other rural areas with similar social and natural potential.

In summary, Somber Rajeh's experience exemplifies how combining the ABCD approach and social innovation can lead to meaningful and tangible transformation at the local level. Based on interviews with Hosni and Pendi, supported by direct observation, it is evident that the changes go beyond physical infrastructure or economic gains—they build confidence, reinforce community cohesion, and reshape the direction of village development toward self-reliance. In this context, tourism is a leisure activity and a strategic tool to strengthen rural resilience, managed and shared by the community.

These successful practices promote a positive image for East Rombiya Village at the regional and national levels. This village has inspired many other villages to harness local potential through the ABCD approach and community-centered social innovation. Their success is not solely based on the physical results of developing tourist destinations, but also on how the development process is implemented in a participatory, inclusive, and

sustainable manner. This success led to Sember Rajeh Tourism won 2nd place at the 2024 Sumenep Village Tourism Festival (Official Madura Today 2024). The award was presented as a token of appreciation for outstanding achievements in designing and implementing innovations in the village tourism sector, particularly through the development of Sember Rajeh Tourism, which leverages local potential and wisdom.

This achievement demonstrates that a rigorously implemented ABCD approach can have a tangible impact on community empowerment and village economic sustainability. Through synergy between the village government, BUMDes, and the community members, East Rombiya Village demonstrates that local strengths can provide a strong foundation for equitable and independent village development. The success of managing community-based tourism also strengthens local identity, encourages participation across social groups, and creates space for sustainable innovation. East Rombiya Village is a leading tourist destination, symbol of a development paradigm shift rooted in community-driven strengths. This approach aligns with the principles of sustainable development, which view humans, nature, and culture as mutually reinforcing entities.

Beyond mere economic and infrastructure gains, community-based tourism development in East Rombiya has successfully established a new development culture rooted in participation, independence, and sustainability. It marks a significant shift in the rural development paradigm—from dependence on external assistance to strengthening internal capacity. This success is crucial evidence that villages in Indonesia can design their future, provided they are given the space, trust, and

support to explore and manage their long-held strengths.

The successful management of Sember Rajeh in East Rombiya Village is evidence that village development does not always have to rely on large external resources; it can grow from collaboration, innovation, and an appreciation for local potential. In this context, East Rombiya has provided a valuable learning model for many other villages in Indonesia: with a collective vision, inclusive leadership, and community-based development strategies, villages can create sustainable change that has a broad impact on community well-being. This village has not only succeeded in improving the economy and image of its region, but also strengthened the belief that progress can grow from the grassroots, from the village, for Indonesia. This approach and achievements in East Rombiya can be emulated by other villages, considering that many villages in Indonesia have strategic local potential but have not been optimally managed.

## Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the ABCD approach and social innovation can drive significant transformation in village economic development, leveraging local potential. One of the main findings that stands out is how natural springs previously considered ordinary by residents can be transformed into community-based tourism destinations that increase the local income, create employment opportunities, strengthen social cohesion, and improve women's bargaining position in village development. The implementation of the ABCD approach in East Rombiya Village is clear evidence that sustainable development does not have to depend on external resources but can come from within—namely, the social, cultural,

and natural assets and community capacity owned by the village.

This finding confirms that social innovation, carried out collaboratively among the village government, BUMDes, and the community, can create an inclusive, participatory, and adaptive tourism management model tailored to the local context. This approach impacts the economic aspect and builds a new social structure that is more resilient, democratic, and independent. The success of East Rombiya Village is empirical evidence that the ABCD approach, if implemented systematically and based on local values, can be a strong and replicable village development strategy. Therefore, this study makes a significant contribution to the practice and theory of community empowerment and the development of sustainable and community-based tourism villages.

Nonetheless, this study has limitations, particularly regarding data coverage and the short observation duration since the launch of tourism in 2023. Consequently, the focus on socio-economic aspects has resulted in a lack of exploration of technical aspects of management and long-term impacts on village ecosystems. Additionally, since this study was conducted in only one village, the results should be interpreted cautiously when applied to other villages with different characteristics. Therefore, further research is recommended to utilize several villages with similar tourism potential to understand the success factors and challenges comprehensively.[]

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