Resilience and Build Back Strategies for the Coastal Tourism Industry from the COVID-19 Pandemic in Seribu Islands, Indonesia

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Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic provides opportunities for a transformative sustainable pathway that may strengthen our resilience to climate change. We assessed how the tourism industry in Seribu Islands, Indonesia, responds to the pandemic and sea level rise (SLR) as global crises of differing times of emergence. Our community-based study identified that strengthened coastal ecosystem services such as mangroves from private and public funds could be adopted to dampen the impacts of the economic downturn in the short-term while strengthening resilience against climate change in the long-term.

Introduction

- Seribu Islands are one of the new favorite tourist destinations in Indonesia by focusing on the marine and small islands nature.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected the people who rely on tourism sector for their income.
- At the same time, the small islands inhabitants also face climate change risks such as SLR that is causing the islands to sink gradually.
- Based on resilience concepts, the current pandemic can provide opportunities to adapt in a transformative pathway.
- The question is to what extent build back better strategies can be implemented in response to the pandemic while also adapting to the ongoing SLR.

Aim and Objectives

Aims:
- To explore opportunities for community resilience and build back strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic that also cater to the adaptation to SLR.

Objectives:
- To investigate the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic to the tourism industry in the Seribu Islands.
- To gain insights into how the community responds to the prolonged pandemic.
- To figure out the opportunity to respond slow onset of SLR through strategies to respond COVID-19 pandemic.

Results and Discussion

Impact Pandemic to inhabitants
- COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant impact to the inhabitants who relying on tourism sector as main livelihoods. Almost 90 % lose their incomes while others trying to find alternative jobs to survive.
- The government provides social assistance during the large scale restriction policy.

Coping/ Responses to COVID-19 Pandemic
Response to the pandemic among the respondents are diverse from implementing health protocol to mentioning better strategies for building resilience in tourism sector:
- Planting mangrove
- Rehabilitating the degraded-nature
- Planting and maintaining coral reefs
- Protecting the marine ecosystem

“During this pandemic, no visitors on this island, we could work on our nature so we can increase the quality of our nature” (respondent)

An opportunity to building resilience and build back strategies
As small islands inhabitants, respondents are aware of the risk to SLR, and most of them prefer to choose planting mangrove and coral protection as adaptations which in line with preferences to respond pandemic.

Conclusions

Factors that help or disrupt tourism in Seribu Islands are marine ecosystem based. The sustainability of the tourism industry in the Seribu Islands relies on our ability to foresee both incidental and long-term changes and take early action to mitigate losses. The build back strategies during pandemic have been found through the initiative of local people to apply eco-strategies solutions to cope with pandemic and therefore achieve sustainability of their livelihood that rely on marine-based ecotourism.

References


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