

Sustainable Tourism Development Combining Health And Culture As A Local Community-Based Wellness Tourism Attraction In Gebong Memarong Tradisional Village, Airabik, Bangka Regency

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Abstract

Gebong Memarong Airabik Traditional Village possesses significant potential for development as a health tourism destination, leveraging its rich natural resources, cultural heritage, and traditional healing practices. This study aims to identify the village's health tourism appeal and examine the roles of key stakeholders, including the Bangka Regency Tourism Office, the Indonesian Tourism Actors Association (ASPI), PT Timah Tbk, local tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis), and indigenous communities. A qualitative approach was used, with data collected through direct observation, interviews, and documentation analysis. Findings indicate that collaboration between stakeholders and the local community has played a critical role in promoting the village and improving local human resource capacity. The development of health tourism is centered on the use of herbal plants for traditional medicine, which aligns with the principles of sustainable tourism. However, regulatory challenges—particularly concerning land use zoning—remain a threat to the preservation of local wisdom and sustainable development. Ongoing efforts are addressing these issues through formal regulation and the promotion of herbal products and wellness services, such as scrubs, herbal drinks, retreats, and spas for both domestic and international markets. This study emphasizes the importance of integrating cultural values and traditional knowledge into tourism planning, while ensuring institutional support and policy alignment for long-term sustainability.

Keywords: Wellness Tourism, Traditional Village, Community-Based Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Tourism development today increasingly emphasizes the principles of sustainability, requiring the tourism sector to balance ecological integrity, cultural preservation, and individual well-being (Sulistyadi, Eddyono, & Hasibuan, 2017). This shift aligns with contemporary lifestyle trends that prioritize physical and mental health, yet still embrace leisure and enjoyment. Among these trends is wellness tourism, a growing sector actively promoted by Indonesia's Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. This is reflected in initiatives such as the 2024 China–ASEAN International Forum on Traditional Medicine, aimed at strengthening health tourism and expanding investment opportunities through traditional healing methods.

Wellness tourism is a form of sustainable tourism that prioritizes holistic well-being. According to the (Global Wellness Institute, 2022), tourists are increasingly drawn to destinations that offer wellness experiences across six dimensions: physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social, and environmental. Wellness tourism typically offers services such as yoga, meditation, retreats, hiking, spa treatments, and other health-oriented activities (Wendri, 2019). As such, it holds significant potential as a high-value and sustainable tourism sector.

Indonesia ranks 22nd globally as a wellness tourism destination, with a market value of USD 49 billion and a moderate growth rate of 5.9% between 2020–2022

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(Global Wellness Institute, 2023). However, to further develop this sector, particularly in rural and culturally rich areas, alternative strategies must be implemented. These include integrating wellness tourism with local cultural elements and traditional knowledge.

One such promising area is the Gebong Memarong (Mapur) Traditional Village in Bangka Belitung Province. Known for preserving the customs of the Lom ethnic group since the 19th century, the village is rich in both natural and cultural resources. Collaborations with stakeholders have resulted in the construction of seven traditional houses and the revitalization of traditional healing practices. Local communities cultivate over 200 types of medicinal and spice plants, used in herbal drinks and body scrubs for healing and fitness (Prayoga et al., 2022; Lestari et al., 2024). In-situ and ex-situ conservation programs have further supported the development of herbal product-based wellness services, including a local herbal café alongside homestay accommodations.

However, the success of a tourism village relies heavily on community engagement and support (Heny & Dewi, 2018). Despite ongoing initiatives, local interest and perceived benefits remain limited, and legal recognition of the village as a formal tourist area is still lacking. Therefore, this study explores the potential of developing wellness tourism through the integration of herbal plants and traditional healing practices in Mapur Traditional Village, and the necessary strategies to ensure its sustainable implementation..

LITERATURE REVIEW

Health and Wellness Tourism

Health tourism is a broad concept that includes various types of travel motivated by the pursuit of physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It comprises several sub-categories such as disease prevention tourism, medical tourism, spa and healing tourism, and wellness tourism (Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001). Among these, wellness tourism has emerged as a particularly dynamic and sustainable segment in recent years. The (Global Wellness Institute, 2022) defines wellness as a proactive lifestyle aimed at achieving holistic well-being, encompassing physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social, and environmental dimensions. Wellness tourism, therefore, refers to travel experiences designed to maintain or improve personal well-being, and is recognized as a legitimate business model within the wider health tourism industry (Baratova et al., 2021).

According to (Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001), wellness tourism is adaptable to the specific social and environmental contexts of a destination. It integrates tourism services with concepts of rest, healing, and personal transformation. (Fitriani et al., 2024) note that wellness tourism provides travelers with health-promoting experiences, such as yoga, meditation, retreats, and spa treatments, often set in natural or culturally rich environments. In Indonesia, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (2021) has identified wellness tourism as a key development priority, aligned with Regulation No. 12 of 2020 on the Strategic Plan for 2020–2024. This regulatory framework emphasizes the creation of high-quality tourism experiences that leverage local cultural wisdom and natural resources. Research by Aulia Nisak (2022) further underscores the attractiveness of wellness services—including traditional medicine practices—to both domestic and international tourists.

The integration of wellness tourism with local cultural assets not only strengthens identity and heritage but also offers economic opportunities. As (Kurniawan, 2018) highlights, this approach increases local income and supports the continuity of traditional practices such as jamu (Indonesian herbal medicine) and herbal therapies. Moreover, it contributes to environmental sustainability by promoting nature-based wellness experiences. (Sharma et al., 2024) argue that activities like yoga, meditation, and spa services are directly connected to natural sustainability, providing a holistic experience that unites physical, mental, and ecological well-being. This supports the findings of Baloch et al. (2023), who emphasize that incorporating sustainable practices into tourism—particularly those based on wellness and health—can mitigate negative environmental impacts while enhancing destination value and aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Community-Based Tourism (CBT)

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is a model that emphasizes the active involvement, ownership, and management of tourism activities by local communities. CBT aligns closely with the principles of sustainable tourism, focusing on empowerment and inclusive development. Chiu and Ling (2017) describe CBT as including initiatives like charitable contributions from tourists and other forms of direct engagement with residents. According to Telfer and Sharpley (as cited in Permatasari, 2022), public participation is a core element in CBT, enabling communities to benefit directly from tourism activities while preserving their cultural and natural assets. CBT is thus a critical component of sustainable tourism development, ensuring that tourism growth contributes to the well-being of local populations.

METHODS

This research employs a descriptive qualitative method to explore wellness tourism development in the Mapur Traditional Village. The qualitative approach was chosen due to its capacity to obtain in-depth and contextualized data related to the case being studied, particularly the socio-cultural dynamics, stakeholder involvement, and implementation of eco-wellness initiatives. Data collection techniques in this study involved both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through direct observation, focus group discussions (FGDs), and in-depth interviews, while secondary data were collected from previous indexed and scholarly research, serving as a comparative framework and theoretical foundation to support the findings.

The research engaged a total of 10 informants, including representatives from the Bangka Regency Tourism and Culture Office, the Indonesian Tourism Actors Association (ASPPI), PT Timah Tbk, local leaders of the Mapur Traditional Community, the Head of the Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Group), researchers and academics, as well as herbal plant practitioners. These stakeholders were selected due to their direct involvement and knowledge regarding the village's tourism potential and wellness-based practices.

This study features several distinct characteristics. First, it aims to introduce and analyze the application of wellness tourism dimensions within the context of a traditional village. Second, it proposes the integration of herbal plant areas as part of an eco-wellness tourism concept, including the addition of Latin botanical names and QR/barcodes for educational and eco-tourism purposes. Third, it addresses an existing research gap, as no prior study has specifically focused on the development of eco-wellness tourism in Airabik Tourist Village, particularly regarding community-based tourism, wellness tourism policy comprehension, cultural activities, and the processing of traditional herbal remedies.

The stages of this research followed a systematic process starting from problem identification, literature review, data collection, thematic analysis, and finally concluding. These steps were structured to ensure comprehensive analysis and validation of the eco-wellness tourism development framework in the context of community empowerment and sustainable tourism.



Figure 1. Research Stages Source: research data, 2025

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Development of tourism potential in Mapur Traditional Tourism Village

The Mapur Airabik Traditional Tourism Village was established in 2019 through self-help and functions as a Mapur Cultural Museum. The oldest tribal settlement in the Bangka Belitung Islands, which was just inaugurated on September 4, 2023, has been registered in the tourism village network managed by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. Some of the facilities are a parking area, meeting hall, prayer room, toilet, homestay, jungle tracking, souvenir kiosks, traditional culinary, and photo spots. This village has various tourism potentials, both natural, cultural, and artificial, and local wisdom. Besides that, it also has the potential for developing wellness tourism because it has a stretch of forest with a quiet, calm, and still traditional atmosphere that supports fitness, and is surrounded by people who still use herbal plants as medicine. The location is quite accessible, just 1 hour from the center of Pangkalpinang, with highway access, making the Mapur Traditional Tourism Village highly potential for development.



Figure 2. Observation Activities on the Traditional Village of Mapur

Source: Research data, 2025

This village has the characteristics of a traditional village with natural potential and the original ethnic culture of the Bangka tribe which can be packaged into tourism products, the calm and traditional conditions of the village support the development of wellness tourism, in addition it is also supported by the wisdom of the community using herbal ingredients that are around the village with traditional processing.

Cultural and Man-Made Tourism Potential (Local Wisdom)

The Mapur Traditional Tourism Village, also known as Gebong Memarong, holds significant cultural and man-made tourism potential, rooted in the traditions, heritage, and local wisdom of the Lom ethnic group. This includes a wide range of cultural expressions, traditional architecture, culinary heritage, and community-based medicinal knowledge. Among the key cultural assets are traditional dances such as Campak Dance, Bubung Dance, and local Pencak Silat martial arts, which are performed during ceremonial events and cultural festivals. These traditions have been promoted by local cultural institutions such as the Babel Cultural Dance Studio, increasing visibility and preserving heritage for future generations. The village is also home to the iconic Gebong Memarong traditional houses—seven wooden houses (built without nails) that represent the ancestral homes of the Lom people. Each house covers approximately 5x5 meters and is elevated on 1.5-meter stilts. These structures now function as a cultural museum and homestays, rented out at IDR 250,000 per night. This initiative provides direct economic benefits to residents while offering tourists immersive experiences in traditional living environments.

Cultural tourism in Mapur is further enriched by traditional culinary offerings, available through food packages starting at IDR 40,000 per person. Visitors can enjoy local dishes and stay overnight in homestays for a complete cultural experience. In addition to its cultural richness, the village boasts a Medicinal Plant Conservation Park, which showcases the long-standing tradition of using herbal medicine based on the local wisdom of the Lom ethnic group. More than 200 species of medicinal plants are cultivated and processed into herbal drinks, scrubs, and spices. These practices were further supported through community service programs (Pengabdian Masyarakat) that created educational installations and plant identification signage (Parmin & Rusilowati, 2022). These locally known herbal remedies are widely trusted for their effectiveness and remain an important component of cultural identity and eco-wellness tourism. The following table outlines the key cultural attractions and elements of local wisdom in Gebong Memarong Village:

Table 1. Cultural Potential and Local Wisdom of Gebong Memarong Village

Tourist Attractions	Description
Campak Dance	A traditional dance performed during important events such as guest receptions and customary celebrations.
Mapur Traditional House	Traditional wooden houses representing the Lom ethnic group; currently used as homestays and cultural museums.
Pencak Silat	A unique martial art practiced by the community, reflecting the identity and historical heritage of the village.
Afternoon Meal Package	A traditional culinary package is offered to tourists, priced at IDR 40,000 per person.
Nuju Jerami Ceremony	The largest traditional ritual of the Mapur community is one that expresses gratitude for agricultural harvests.
Mapur Souvenirs	Locally made handicrafts and souvenirs are available from IDR 10,000 to several hundred thousand.
Herbal Medicine (Jamu)	Tourists can sample traditional herbal drinks derived from local medicinal plants.

Source: https://jadesta.kemenparekraf.go.id/atraksi/142840

Medicinal Plant Conservation Park

In addition to its natural and cultural attractions, Mapur Traditional Village also possesses significant manmade tourism potential in the form of a Medicinal Plant Conservation Park. This area has long been known for using herbal plants as traditional medicine, reflecting the local wisdom of the Lom ethnic group. These herbal plants serve as raw materials for producing herbal drinks, spices, traditional scrubs, and other wellness products. Past initiatives, such as the Community Service (Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat / PengMas) program, have supported this effort by establishing educational areas with labeled signage for each plant (Parmin & Rusilowati, 2022). The plants native to Mapur are widely recognized and believed to effectively treat a variety of health conditions, maintaining their relevance and usage within the local community to this day.

The conservation park aligns with the broader goals of cultural and wellness tourism, where traditional knowledge systems are integrated into modern health practices. The Lom tribe's traditional herbal medicine book identifies at least 50 species, of which 46 types are still found and used in the village. These include plants such as barley, sago rarot, remambong, viburnum, brucea, and many others. The utilization of spice-producing

plants such as cloves, pepper, cinnamon, and nutmeg also contributes to the production of mangir body scrubs, massage oils, and SPA treatments, which are central offerings in the wellness tourism experience.

Furthermore, several modern applications—such as temulawak latte, coco pandan latte, and red ginger lemongrass drinks—showcase innovation in traditional herbal usage. These not only support nutritional health and immune function but also appeal to wellness-focused tourists seeking natural remedies. The Bangka Regency Tourism Office and the Indonesian Tourism Actors Association (ASPPI) have expressed ongoing support for developing Mapur's wellness tourism potential through infrastructure improvements, homestay service standardization, and the promotion of SPA and fitness-based tourism activities. The use of QR-coded botanical signage (Figure 2) has also been introduced as a method to digitally identify and educate visitors about each plant species, further enhancing the eco-educational value of the site.



Figure 2. Barcode Sign As An Identifier

Source: Research data, 2025

Table 2. Medicinal Plants and Their Functions in Mapur Traditional Village

Local/Scientific Name	Use and Benefits
Adinandra sarosanthera	Leaves used to treat stomach ailments.
Tristania sumatrana	Bark used to cure smallpox.
Stephania japonica	Leaves and roots are used for postpartum recovery.
Glochidion celastrioides	Latex and bark are used for canker sores and local diseases, "sango."
Coix lacryma-jobi	Roots used for stomach disorders.
Arthrophyllum diversifolium	Roots are used to reduce fever.
Viburnum sambucifolium	Roots used to treat malaria.
Melastoma malabathricum	Leaves used for wound healing.
Brucea javanica	Fruit used for malaria treatment.
Zingiber purpureum	Leaves used to treat allergies.
Bambusa vulgaris var. striata	Roots used for jaundice treatment.
(No Latin Name) Fever Plant	Young leaves are used to stimulate breast milk production.
(No Latin Name) Ketelot	Shoots used to treat ulcers.
Nephelium sp.	Leaves aid in treating eye disorders.
Orthosiphon aristatus	Leaves treat kidney stones and urinary issues.
Coelogyne sp.	Leaves used in postpartum recovery.
Vinca rosea	Leaves, flowers, and roots are used for diabetes, asthma, bronchitis, and anemia.
Derris elliptica	Roots are used for various skin disorders.
Hedyotis rigida	Leaves and fruit are used to treat warts.
Ilex cymosa	Roots are used to treat a hernia.
Phycotria sp.	Leaves and fruit are used for skin conditions.
Schima wallichii	Young leaves are used as a natural blush for beauty care.
Piper betle	Leaves used for nosebleeds and toothaches.
Syzygium lineatum	Sap is used to neutralize poison.
Hibiscus rosa-sinensis	Roots, leaves, and flowers are used to treat fever and boils.
Tinospora cordifolia	Roots and stem bark are used for malaria and blood sugar regulation.
Maranta arundinacea	Tubers are used for skin irritation and indigestion.
Syzygium muelleri	Bark is used to treat skin allergies and itching.
(No Latin Name) Sememer	Leaves used to treat external wounds.
	Course Descorab data 2027

Source: Research data, 2025

Based on the table above, it is evident that the diversity and continued preservation of traditional medicinal plants in the Gebong Memarong Tourism Village offer great promise for wellness tourism development. These

plants are not only integral to the village's cultural identity and health traditions but also serve as attractive elements for eco-tourists seeking authentic, holistic wellness experiences.

Local Wisdom in Mapur Traditional Village

Mapur Traditional Village is rich in local wisdom that remains preserved and actively practiced by the community. Among the most notable traditions are the crafts of mengkuang mat weaving, sarong weaving, and batik making—activities that are not only economically valuable but also serve as forms of mindfulness, requiring calmness, precision, and focus to produce beautiful and meaningful works. These traditional practices are deeply rooted in the cultural identity of the Lom ethnic group and continue to be passed down across generations.

Support from various institutions has played a key role in maintaining and developing these traditions. The Head of the Village Movement noted that the Bangka Regency Tourism Office, in collaboration with PT Timah Tbk and Babel University, has provided training programs for the local community. One such initiative is the Ecoprint training program, which teaches residents to utilize plants with natural pigments to dye fabrics, mats, and crafts. This environmentally friendly technique not only enhances local products but also aligns with the principles of eco-wellness tourism.

According to (Prayoga et al., 2022), local wisdom encompasses worldviews and traditional life strategies practiced by communities to address their needs and challenges. In this context, the preserved cultural practices of Mapur Village directly support the development of wellness tourism, as they promote sustainability, creativity, and cultural continuity. These crafts and traditional knowledge systems are not only sources of economic empowerment but also form part of a holistic wellness experience for visiting tourists.



Figure 3. Mengkuang Craft (Mat weaving) Source: Research data, 2025

Development of Health and Culture as a Wellness Tourism Attraction Based on Local Community Participation

A central component of wellness tourism development is the integration of local potential and cultural authenticity that provides meaningful experiences for visitors while directly supporting the community's economic well-being. In the case of Mapur Traditional Village (Gebong Memarong), efforts to advance this vision are grounded in the traditional health practices and cultural heritage of the Lom ethnic group. One significant initiative in this direction is the establishment of a herbal café designed to become a tourism icon of the village. As stated by a traditional leader of Mapur village during an interview:

"There has been previous dedication related to the establishment of a herbal café as an icon of Mapur tourist village, so that the medicinal plants produced can be placed in one place." (SF, 2022)

The presence of endemic medicinal plants is being highlighted through signage with Latin names and QR codes, helping to enrich tourist knowledge and ecological awareness. Infrastructure-wise, Mapur is gradually meeting the basic criteria for health tourism development, including accessibility, attractions, cultural authenticity, and plant-based health services. According to a discussion with the Association of Indonesian Tourism Actors (ASPPI) and the Head of the Mapur Customary Institution, several key developments have already taken place:

"There has been an arrangement of 7 replicas of traditional houses, which also function as homestays supported by PT Timah Tbk. There has also been the formation of community groups for the conservation of medicinal plants since 2023. In addition, a special book was made for medicinal plants of the Lom tribe."

The medicinal plant conservation site continues to be maintained and developed through academic collaboration and community involvement. This includes the transfer of endemic plants to a new designated area aimed at creating a space for eco-wellness education and experiential tourism. However, challenges

remain in fully processing medicinal plants into marketable wellness products, such as herbal drinks, scrubs, or health supplements.

These plants—mainly consisting of roots and leaves—have long served as the primary base for Lom traditional medicine (Budi & Wicaksono, 2013). Their use reflects a tangible opportunity to position the village as a national wellness destination, especially considering that traditional herbal medicine is a major contributor to the global wellness economy, and storytelling in Indonesian healing culture can significantly enhance the appeal. An ASPPI representative echoed this:

"We are also developing this traditional village, even though there is no legal management in this area; we are only doing what we can, namely managing and organizing the natural and cultural potential of the Mapur traditional village through training and several governance development programs in October."

The local wisdom embedded in traditional wellness practices—ranging from herbal treatments to physical and beauty therapies—offers deep philosophical value that resonates with tourists seeking authentic and natural wellness experiences. These activities are now being offered in the form of customized tour packages based on the dimensions of wellness tourism. In an interview conducted on July 19, 2024, Mr. A, Head of the Creative Economy and Marketing Division of the Bangka Tourism Office, stated:

"To support villages that have natural and cultural potential, especially developing villages towards independent villages by referring to sustainable principles, one of which is the Gebong Marong traditional village, which has a locality that still maintains its authenticity, and also we continue promoting this tourist village through the Mapur Festival every year."

These perspectives are in line with (Widari and Ayu, 2022), who argued that the incorporation of local cultural elements is a practical form of sustainable development. Likewise, (Savitri and Arida, 2019) emphasized the importance of human resource development in ensuring excellent visitor experiences. Regulatory initiatives are also supporting the integration of wellness tourism with local community participation. Mapur Village has submitted proposals for zoning regulations, seeking formal recognition of its medicinal plant conservation area and establishing clear designations for core and tourism zones. The ASPPI is planning further mentoring and training programs to strengthen both natural and human resources and to introduce the wellness potential of the village to broader markets. The Mapur Traditional Institute (LAM) has also actively participated in these efforts:

"We also participate in the socialization carried out by academics regarding new views and insights to the community regarding the tourism potential in our village. The target is based on the community as the foundation of the tourist village."

Thus, community empowerment becomes the cornerstone of wellness tourism development in Mapur. Intensive support is essential for transforming local potential—natural, cultural, and human—into sustainable, high-quality tourism products and services. Through a Community-Based Tourism (CBT) framework, Mapur has the opportunity to become a flagship model for locally-driven, sustainable wellness tourism that is competitive at both the national and international levels.



Figure 4. Discussion with ASPPI, Traditional Leaders Source: Research data, 2025

CONCLUSION

Wellness tourism is an emerging form of tourism that is currently being promoted and developed by the Indonesian government. During the 2020–2024 period, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy has taken strategic steps to cultivate wellness tourism, particularly within rural and traditional tourist villages. One such example is the Gebong Memarong (Mapur) Traditional Village, which holds significant potential for wellness tourism development rooted in local wisdom, ethnic culture, and traditional medicinal knowledge.

The abundance of herbal plants, many of which are believed to be effective in treating various illnesses, serves as a unique cultural and health asset.

Despite this strong foundation, the management and development of wellness tourism in Mapur is not yet fully optimized. Wellness-based products have not been consistently developed, and there remains a lack of supporting infrastructure and facilities needed to elevate the tourist experience. However, multiple stakeholders have contributed to the initial stages of development. The Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis), indigenous leaders, the Bangka Regency Tourism Office, investors, and ASPPI Bangka have each played important roles. For instance, tourism authorities have promoted the village through events, ASPPI has provided homestay standardization training, and investors have contributed by improving facilities and infrastructure.

To ensure sustainable development, this multi-stakeholder collaboration must continue and intensify. Future initiatives should include regular training for local human resources, as well as the establishment of workshops on herbal product creation for creating wellness products such as herbal scrubs, traditional drinks, and quality spa and retreat services. These initiatives will not only support community-based tourism but also help position Gebong Memarong Traditional Village as a competitive wellness destination for domestic and international markets, aligned with current global trends in wellness tourism.

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