Revitalizing Ecotourism in Indonesia: A Green Economy Vision Through the Lens of Fiqh Biah

Ahmad Havid Jakiyudin
Universitas Darussalam Gontor
e-mail: ahmadhavidjakiyudin37@student.hes.unida.gontor.ac.id

Vina Fithriana Wibisono
Universitas Darussalam Gontor
e-mail: vina.fithriana.wibisono@gmail.com

Mufliha Ramadia Ma’shuma
Al Azhar al Syarif University, Cairo
e-mail: mufliharamadia@gmail.com

Abstract: The existence of ecotourism in Indonesia needs a massive boost. Thus far, the development of ecotourism has yet to be optimal despite its significant implications in responding to the achievement of a green economy. Ecotourism offers uniqueness by prioritizing environmental conservation as a selling point and requires an appropriate development model. This research aims to address the challenges of ecotourism development based on a green economy using the alternative Fiqh Biah model. A qualitative research method with a qualitative content analysis approach was employed. The content analysis focused on ecotourism in Indonesia, the Green Economy, and Fiqh Biah. The results indicate an interconnection between ecotourism and the Green Economy regarding impacts on the economic, social, and environmental sectors. The suggested construction for ecotourism development includes: 1) Hima: an alternative for forest-based ecotourism development, 2) Harim: a protection and mitigation system for ecotourism, and 3) Ilya al-Mawat: an opportunity to create new ecotourism by utilizing abandoned land.

Keywords: Ecotourism; Fiqh Biah; Green Economy

Introduction

Tourism is an activity in the context of providing services, income and economic impacts for providers, destination communities and the government. The United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) explains that the tourism sector is a leading sector which is one part of the key to national development for equal access to welfare for the community. Tourism is positioned as one of the priority sectors in national development in Indonesia.\(^1\) It cannot be denied that Indonesia is one of the countries with various famous tourist destinations in the world. This is what makes Indonesia busy with tourists, both domestic and international. As of August 2022, there has been significant development in the development of foreign tourist visits, reaching 510.2 million visits, this number has increased compared to the previous year which was only 15.1 visits. Meanwhile, in 2020 and 2021 tourist visits did not experience significant changes and even tended to be the same (Figure 1).\(^2\)

---


The tourism transition scheme in Indonesia has begun to move towards ecological tourism design or what is called "ecotourism". Ecotourism contains perspectives and dimensions that are the face of future tourism that is sustainable and environmentally friendly. This arises because of trends, lifestyle developments, and new public awareness of the responsibility to maintain the valuable relationship between humans and the environment. Ecotourism emphasizes aspects of careful management of the tourism sector in utilizing natural resources. Unconsciously, the existence of ecotourism in Indonesia has helped the implementation of the CHSE (Cleanliness, Healthy, Safety, and Environmental Sustainability) protocol.

However, it is still a problem, come from World Economic Forum stated that Indonesia still occupies the lowest level for the environmental sustainability pillar in the tourism sector (Figure 2). Environmental preservation is still a key risk factor in the sustainable development of the tourism sector. Ecotourism needs to be encouraged more massively, because this sector is able to create jobs, increase people's income, improve people's quality of life, and protect a healthy environment. Ecotourism innovation needs to be encouraged to develop a sustainable tourism system in Indonesia. The development of ecotourism in Indonesia has not been optimal considering the large potential that exists. In fact, Indonesia is known as the second largest mega-biodiversity country in the world, known to have very high natural wealth in the form of flora and fauna. It is rare for this potential to be used as a tourist center such as Bunaken Park, Komodo Park, protected forests, etc. This condition has led to demands to build environmentally friendly conservation natural tourism destinations.

The development of environmentally based tourist areas is indirectly in line with the green economy program. Without realizing it, the direction of development and development of ecotourism in Indonesia is in line with the target of achieving a green economy. Green economy studies are starting to be adopted by the Indonesian government to address three problems at once, namely economic, environmental and social. The United Nations Environment Program defines a green economy as

---


an economy that improves societal well-being and ensures social justice while significantly reducing the risk of environmental degradation and depletion.\(^8\) In simple terms, a green economy is a sustainable development model that emphasizes the basic principles of understanding environmentally oriented economics with a target of social welfare.\(^9\) This principle is in line with the direction of the existence of ecotourism in Indonesia. Green economy-based ecotourism development is needed to achieve the goals of ecotourism.

Figure 2. Indonesia Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Rank 2015 & 2017

*Source: The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report by World Economic Forum*

However, there is relevance between ecotourism and green economy principles and Islamic principles related to the rules for controlling and conserving nature, namely *Fiqh Biah*. *Fiqh Biah* regulates the rules of good and bad or halal and haram which will be the benchmark for evaluating human actions towards the environment, thereby presenting a religious approach that can be applied in looking at environmental problems.\(^{10}\) The construction of *Fiqh Biah* is needed to develop ecotourism, because there are two values embedded in *Fiqh Biah*, namely ecological behavior and also a form of concern for achieving benefit. So far, the development of ecotourism has only focused on economic and environmental aspects. Social

---


\(^{10}\) Yusuf Al-Qardhawi, *Ri'ayah Al-Bi'ab Fiy Syari'ah Al-Islam* (Kairo: Dar al-Syuruq, 2001). P. 70
aspects (benefits) are often neglected and not paid careful attention. This is the basis for the need for additional *Fiqh Biab* models to develop the existence of ecopreneurship in Indonesia. With this construction, it cannot be denied that ecotourism development can be economically, environmentally and socially oriented. Therefore, this research aims to provide an ecotourism model design with green economy principles using the *Fiqh Biab* construction. So, the direction of the development model includes three main targets, namely economic, social and environmental.

Every industry requires an innovation process to achieve sustainability and growth goals. The tourism industry over the last few decades, has increased throughout the world. The Indonesian tourism industry shows positive growth with the increase in tourists contributing to national economic development. Especially in the ecotourism-based tourism industry model, it continues to experience progressive growth and development. In this context: Eko Yuwono (2021) explains that there are several things that are problems with ecotourism development, including uncontrolled forest degradation, increasing access to tourist locations, and community empowerment. Afrizal Firman, et al (2022) explained that innovation in the green tourism sector plays an important role in developing sustainable tourism development in Indonesia. Apart from that, policy support by the government is needed to strengthen its existence. Atika Nurhayati (2019) explain that the development of marine ecotourism is necessary to be able to play a role in preserving natural resources in a sustainable manner, while the dimensions of appropriate ecological design play a very significant role in its development. Gayoung Choi, dkk (2020) explained that the existence of ecotourism plays an important role in supporting the achievement of targets for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, forest deforestation, and supporting the implementation of REDD+.

Based on several previous studies, literature emphasizes the importance of

---


developing ecotourism appropriately by looking at various factors that have been obstacles.

The method used in this research is qualitative content analysis or referred to as textual analysis. Verschuren and Doorewaard explained that qualitative content analysis is a research method used to extract information relevant to researchers from a large amount of research data content material. This research focuses on extracting information covering three variables, including ecotourism, green and Fiqh Bi’ah. The source of research data comes from credible secondary materials by conducting a comprehensive literature review through journal articles, websites, legislation, reports, and so on. Data analysis is carried out in the following stages: a) analyzing the literature, b) mapping the results of the analysis into discussion indicators, c) presenting data using critical analysis to provide the construction of the intended model, and d) conclusions drawing.

**Results and Discussion**

**Challenges and Opportunities: Ecotourism Certification in Indonesia**

The World Conservation Union (WCU) states that ecotourism is the provision of a tourism sector that provides experience to visitors to be able to enjoy traveling in pristine areas based on natural beauty that is still maintained. Meanwhile, The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defines ecotourism as a tourism provision that simultaneously focuses on environmental conservation efforts and improves the welfare of local communities.

Basically, Ecotourism has become a national issue, which started with workshops and seminars held by Pact-Indonesia and WALHI in April 1995 in Bogor. This activity resulted in the formulation of ecotourism activities involving the local community. The development of ecotourism was started by the NGO (Non-Government Organization) Wisnu Foundation by providing ecotourism assistance in Bali covering four villages (Desan Ceningan, Tenganan, and Sibetan in Karangasem, Banjar Kiadan, pelage in Badung, and Ceningan Village in Klungkung). The Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK) claims that ecotourism in Indonesia continues to experience rapid development. The forms of ecotourism in Indonesia generally take the form of tourist villages, national parks, protected forests, island exploration and so on.

The legality of ecotourism has also been supported by the foundation of Law No. 10 of 19 concerning Tourism. Article 1 paragraph 5 states that ecotourism is one of the tourist attractions including interest and cultural tourism. Furthermore, it is also confirmed in article 14 paragraph 1 which explains that ecotourism emphasizes

---

15 P. Verschuren and H. Doorwaard, *Designing a Research Project* (Uthrect: LEMMA, 2005), P.38.
the management of the environment and natural resources in tourist areas. In the Decree of the Director General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation (PHKA) No.129/Kpt/DJ/1996, it is explained that ecotourism is built on a voluntary basis to make the area beautiful and conserved. Even to establish an ecotourism permit, there are permits that must be fulfilled, such as the Nature Tourism Business Permit (IPPA) as confirmed in PP No.36/2010 and Minister of Forestry Regulation No.48/Menhut-II/2010 concerning Nature Tourism Businesses in Wildlife Reserves, Parks National, Grand Forest Parks and Nature Tourism Parks, as well as Minister of Forestry Regulation No. 4/Menhut-II/2012 concerning Amendments to Minister of Forestry Regulation Number 48/Menhut-II/2010 concerning Natural Tourism Businesses in Wildlife Reserves, National Parks, Forest Parks Raya and Nature Tourism Park. This shows the strong existence of ecotourism through regulatory channels in Indonesia.\footnote{17}

Strengthening these regulations has in fact become a driving force for ecotourism in Indonesia. The growth of ecotourism is through regulatory channels which become preventive laws for the tourism sector. So far, the four main forms of ecotourism areas refer to existing regulations, including: Wildlife Reserves, National Parks, Grand Forest Parks and Nature Tourism Parks. Then other places are Tenganan Village (Karangasem), Kiadan Banjar, Pelaga (Badung), Ceningan Village (Klungkung), and Sibetan Village (Karangasem). This destination is what attracts many tourists who are starting to target traveling with the aim of natural tourist destinations. Of course, it is not only limited to this sector, in other sectors the growth of ecotourism is growing quite rapidly, but its existence is not very well known. As stated in Article 14 paragraph 1, the category of tourism that prioritizes the environment can be categorized as ecotourism.

However, the current issue for the ecotourism sector in Indonesia that needs attention is certification. Sustainable Tourism Certification (STC) is issued by the Indonesia Sustainable Tourism Council (ISTC). Standards of sustainable tourism operational practices can be measured by the accreditation provided by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. Its legality is regulated in the Decree of the Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia, Number Km. 143/Kd.00/Menpar/2019, Concerning the Indonesia Sustainable Tourism Council. Companies can obtain certification in the areas of destination, accommodation, and tour and travel. This certification is useful for increasing tourist confidence, improving company quality standards, providing support to the green tourism sector, and increasing promotion and marketing of green tourism-based companies. Certification standards through STC are a priority that must be considered by ecotourism actors in Indonesia.

Ecotourism and Green Economy: A Symbiotic Relationship

The ecotourism paradigm emerged as an alternative form in the tourism sector that used to focus only on profit, exploit resources and tend to be counterproductive to the environment. This condition has given rise to a new idea in the form of tourism by prioritizing green (environmental) values as its key business. Ecotourism contains the concept of sustainable tourism which aims to support environmental conservation efforts in the form of nature and culture and increase community participation in management. This situation can provide economic benefits for the community and local government.

Ecotourism is a type of sustainable tourism. Ecotourism is growing very rapidly, including increasing flows of accommodation capacity, local population and the environment, where tourism developments and new investments in the tourism sector are pro-active in supporting environmental sustainability. The Indonesian government has taken several initiative steps, one of which is strengthening the ecotourism sector in Indonesia to better manage tourism growth and place sustainable tourism as a development priority. This is because this business can protect tourism resources or assets not only for now but for the future. Ecotourism is part of SDGs, and SDGs in Indonesia was more important accelerating by government.18

Ecotourism is an activity in the tourism sector with natural resource management and nature exploration activities that provide economic and social benefits to local communities.19 Ecotourism emphasizes environmental conservation, improves community welfare and involves an educational component.20 Ecotourism gives tourists more experience because it consists of many types of entertainment. Tourist attractions contained in ecotourism, such as observing rare flora and fauna, exploring nature or climbing mountains, as well as river tours. Then cultural tourism from the local community is obtained from tourist visits such as handicrafts, traditional dances, and performing arts. Supriata at least mentions five basic factors so that it can be said to be ecotourism:

---

1. Environment, form the tourism area that is used as ecotourism is a place that is still natural and unpolluted, so that to develop it does not damage the biota that has existed since the beginning. This is the main principle that ecotourism is more pro-active in conserving nature.

2. Community, it cannot be denied that the community plays a role in the formation of ecotourism areas. The local community plays an important role in preserving nature which is used as a tourism object, because they know the area better.

3. Education and Experience, the main target of ecotourism is not only to provide an impression of experience for visitors, but as a means of education to raise awareness of the importance of protecting nature.

4. Sustainability, this factor needs to be carefully calculated to maintain the sustainability of the ecotourism area. Strategy and planning through good management can maintain sustainability for ecotourism areas.

5. Management, the existence of ecotourism is very dependent on good management factors both in terms of human and natural resources.

Through sustainable tourism, all resources can be managed to meet needs and maintain cultural integrity, biodiversity, ecological dimensions, and system life. Thus, sustainable tourism considers current and future impacts (economic, social, and environmental), and meets the various needs of tourists, industry, and local communities. The acceleration of achieving sustainable tourism is, in fact, realized through ecotourism.

It should be noted that the widely used but loosely and much debated term ecotourism, is rarely defined and can be used to refer to any tourism activity carried out in natural areas, where the main focus is natural resources, or tourism that is considered environmentally responsible in natural. This means that an important function of green tourism is to ensure the conservation of areas, large and small, and their associated wildlife for future generations.

Ecotourism emphasizes aspects of environmental conservation, which is aimed at tourists with a great sense of concern and responsibility for the environment of the place they visit. Ecotourism is a form of ecotourism development concept used in sustainable tourism practices that guarantee future needs for adequate environmental, economic, social and cultural resources. In practice, many


movements have brought about changes, especially in local communities, in addition to nature conservation efforts.

Referring to the 2011 Green Economy Report contained in the Flagship Report section, UNEP defines the green economy as "one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. It is low carbon, resource efficient, and socially inclusive." 23 Based on this definition, it can be understood that the green economy is an effort to realize social welfare and equality significantly through an economic role that is oriented to reduce environmental risks and ecological scarcities. The targets of the green economy include reducing carbon gas emissions, efficient resources and social inclusion.

Investigating more deeply, it is clear that there is coherence between ecotourism and green economy. It can be said that ecotourism is one part of the green economy. In essence, green economy targets achieving three aspects of sustainable development through three indicators, namely social and environmental economics. So far, the existing tourism concept only focuses on social and economic aspects, and tends to ignore the environmental side. This is different from ecotourism which operates as a tourism sector movement that seeks to turn environmental conservation into a tourism opportunity. This is the reason why ecotourism is in line with the direction of green economy development. The form of implication given is in the form of increasing economic and social values that are in line with environmental development.

**Fiqh Bi’ah: Unveiling Sharia Principles for Nature Conservation in Tourism**

Fiqh is practical Sharia laws taken from tafshili postulates. In fiqh it is not all about prohibitions but also rules, recommendations, commands and good and bad considerations. In this case, Fiqh Biah does not view tourism as an object that must be protected so that it remains natural without taking advantage of the tourism benefits, but Islam views tourist attractions as a source of life that must be managed for the benefit of humanity. In an effort to understand this reality, Islamic principles actually contain demands for humans to always pay attention to the concept of protecting nature. Studies on this matter are currently appearing in various forums, including those conducted by Harvard University's Center for World Religion on "religion and ecology" showing that Islam does not regulate the divine relationship between humans and their gods, but also regulates the relationship between humans and nature. 24 This actually shows that in Islam, Allah SWT also orders humans to

---

23 Mealy and Teytelboym, “Economic Complexity and the Green Economy.”
always protect nature. It can be understood that Islam also provides guidelines in sharia law related to the concept of economic protection (mumalah) and nature conservation.

The ontological-theological basis of Fiqh Bi’ah is then developed into epistemological-methodological fiqh biah, namely maslahah, the relationship that arises from maslahah with sharia including: First. Shari’a is built on the basis of benefit and rejects the existence of damage in the world and the hereafter. Second: Shari’a is always related to benefit, so that the Prophet SAW encourages his people to do good and avoid damage. Third: there is no possibility of conflict between shari’ah and benefit; and Fourth: Shari’a always points to the benefit even though it is not known where the benefit is, and Allah gives certainty that all the benefits that exist in Shari'a will not cause damage.  

The discourse on the fiqh biah paradigm, then axiologically it contains norms that regulate and control the maintenance of this universe through two concepts or instruments; namely halal and haram. An action or action is considered halal, if it contains elements of goodness, is beneficial, reassuring, or has good consequences for a person, society and the environment. Conversely, an action or action is considered haram, if it contains elements of evil, harms or damages a person, society and the environment.

It is interesting to describe the construction of ecotourism based on Fiqh Biah values as an alternative form of ecotourism development model in Indonesia. The following is an alternative model for ecotourism construction based on Fiqh Biah with green economy values:

1. Development of Ecotourism by Hima’Model

Most forms of ecotourism are protected forests. Ecologically, a forest is an ecosystem, which consists of abiotic components such as air, water and soil, and biotic components consisting of plants, animals, fungi and microorganisms. Forest ecology includes all studies of forest ecosystems as a whole and those that only study some aspects of forest ecosystems. So the scope of forest ecology is very broad. In this research, the author only covers part of forest ecology, such as forests as protecting water sources, protecting flora and fauna, and

---


reforestation. Because in the regulations of Law Number 5 of 1967 concerning Basic Forestry Provisions. The government determines Forest Areas of sufficient area with appropriate distribution and location, so that they can evenly meet the needs of the Indonesian people for forest products and other benefits.

In line with the above policy, Bi'ah Fiqh theory strengthens forest protection with Hima’, namely reserving areas to protect valleys, grasslands and the plants in them. The Hima’ area has been run by Khulafaurrosyidin to protect it according to its objectives. Hima can protect species and carry out natural ecological processes of forests, restore damaged ecosystems, and benefit from increasing the genetic potential of species (economic value and ecosystem services). So that the sustainability of forest-based ecotourism can be maintained through the Hima’ model.

The Hima model construction is able to make the development of protected forest-based ecotourism sustainable. The Hima’ model is able to guarantee the sustainability aspect of ecotourism, because the safeguard model that is directed refers to area control and protection. So that future projections can provide benefits to the forest itself in terms of forest area conservation, benefits to the community, longer term benefits and, more importantly, being able to protect the flora and fauna in it.

---

2. Development of Ecotourism by *Harîm* Model

Islam establishes various inviolable zones where development is prohibited or restricted to prevent the decline of utilities and natural resources. These zones are called Harîm. Water sources such as seas and lakes, rivers, springs, wells, streams, must have an inviolable zone resembling a place to prevent their damage, to facilitate their use and maintenance, and to avoid disturbances and dangers. Briefly, Harîm's standard measurements in terms of freeing the area from buildings and human intervention are as follows: a) Springs, radius 150-200 meters, b) Wells, radius 12 meters, c) Water channels (rivers, streams), half the width river body, river to edge, d) The prohibited area (harîm) for a tree covers a distance of two and a half to three meters around the tree. The use of ecotourism to achieve ecological value, especially protecting springs, can be done by implementing harîm, namely protecting natural zones from damage.

Harîm model construction places greater emphasis on aspects of maintaining ecotourism sustainability. Because many cases are related to managers' failure to maintain and care for their ecotourism sites. This condition requires an alternative implementation of the harîm scheme. Harîm model construction is able to become a safe tourism protection system and is able to guarantee the sustainability of the tourist attraction. Of course, the conditions set must be fulfilled in accordance with the criteria set by the Harîm model. Future implications if the tourism sector is able to implement this model will be able to have a long-term impact on: a) the availability of sustainable natural resources, b) the availability of springs, and c) biological benefits for ecotourism sites that have an impact on the community.

3. Development of Ecotourism by *Ihya Al Mawat* Model

Land ownership status is a socio-economic factor that is worth paying attention to because it has an impact on the development of ecotourism and can cause more deforestation in nature reserves and disrupt the role of forests as stores of environmental services. According to Abdurrahman Al-Maliki, there are several ways to strengthen land ownership status in Islamic law, namely through buying and selling, inheritance, grants, ihya al-mawat, tahjir, and iqtha'.

---

Of the following methods, Ihya al-mawat is the easiest method to do. However, the implementation of ihya al-mawat for land ownership is very rare because almost all land without a master has become state property. Ihya al-mawat can now be applied in the context of managing and revitalizing unmanaged land. As in the meaning of ihyā’ al-mawāt, it means managing land that has not been worked on before and making it suitable for use, such as use for house land, farming and the like.

In the case of ecotourism, the use of Ihya al-mawat can be used as an opportunity for the community to turn it into ecotourism. Of course, this will have an impact on increasing the number of tourist spots that can be mobilized. The application of the ihya al-mawat model will make it very easy for investors and even the government to provide funding to build an ecotourism-based tourism sector on abandoned land. The productivity of unused land will be affected if the ihya al-mawat model is adopted. However, what needs to be paid attention to is that the criteria for Ihya al-Mawat land must be selective and its sustainability can be guaranteed. The criteria that must be seen are in terms of location, aspects of soil fertility, land conditions, surrounding environment, existing communities, and so on.

Conclusion

The imperative for an accelerated development of ecotourism in Indonesia is underscored by its burgeoning popularity among both domestic and international tourists. A more profound exploration reveals that the trajectory of ecotourism aligns seamlessly with the trajectory of the green economy. Beyond its immediate economic and social contributions, ecotourism emerges as a pivotal force in environmental conservation. Integrating Fiqh Biah principles proves instrumental in steering this development toward a green economy paradigm. Leveraging the Hima, Harim, and Ihya al-Mawat models within the framework of Fiqh Biah, we can establish a robust foundation for the sustainable evolution of green economy-based ecotourism. The Hima’ model’s emphasis on protected forest areas ensures the longevity and vitality of ecotourism development. Simultaneously, the Harim model prioritizes preserving ecotourism sustainability, providing a strategic approach to ecosystem protection. Furthermore, applying Ihya al-Mawat presents a unique opportunity for communities to transform unused land into thriving ecotourism destinations, further enhancing

---

31 Abdurrahman Al-Maliki, Al-Siyasah Al-Iqtištadiyyah Al-Mustla (Mesor: Mustafa al-Bab al-Halabi, n.d.).
the holistic integration of *Fiqh Biab* in ecotourism development. In essence, the confluence of ecotourism, *Fiqh Biab*, and the green economy manifests as a compelling paradigm that holds the promise of fostering sustainable practices and maximizing the positive impact of tourism on society, economy, and the environment in Indonesia.

### References


Ian, Carl. “Political Challenges in Community Based Ecotourism Political Challenges in Community-Based Ecotourism.” *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 0, no. 0 (2016):


Nisak, Khoirun. “CASH WAQF LINKED BLUE SUKUK: AN ANALYSIS OF FIQH AL-BIAH” 5 (2023)


Science, Environmental. “Carrying Capacity Model Applied to Coastal Ecotourism


