

Empowerment of Salted Fish Processors to Support Marine Tourism at Sikabau Beach, Nagari Ranah Koto Tinggi, Koto Balingka Subdistrict, Pasaman Barat Regency

Pemberdayaan Pengolah Ikan Asin untuk Mendukung Wisata Bahari Pantai Sikabau Nagari Ranah Koto Tinggi Kecamatan Koto Balingka Kabupaten Pasaman Barat

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Abstract

Received
18 Desember 2024

Accepted
11 January 2025

The potential for developing marine tourism in Sikabau Beach focuses on integration with the local salted fish processing industry and the importance of synergy between the two sectors, considering that Jorong Sikabau has stunning natural beauty and maritime traditions, including salted fish processing that has been passed down from generation to generation. However, the salted fish processing industry still faces challenges, such as limited market access, lack of technical knowledge, and inadequate infrastructure. This study aims to describe the tourism picture and characteristics of salted fish processors and analyze the empowerment of salted fish processors. The method used in this study is a case study method using a qualitative approach. The selection of informants in this study was purposive. The data analysis used was qualitative, starting from data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. The study results showed that the characteristics of Sikabau Beach marine tourism are mangrove forest tourism, Batu Kajang, and the estuary of Sikabau Beach. The attributes of salted fish processing businesses are that they still carry out the processing process traditionally. The empowerment carried out for salted fish processors is training in processing fish-based products and their marketing, fish packaging, and how to reproduce good processed food. The programs that have not been implemented are business strengthening and strengthening the added value of products. Therefore, there needs to be support from the government that focuses more on skills training for salted fish processors and the development of adequate infrastructure for salted fish processors.

Keywords: Empowerment, Salted Fish Processing, Marine Tourism

Abstrak

Potensi pengembangan wisata bahari di Pantai Sikabau, yang berfokus pada integrasi dengan industri pengolahan ikan asin lokal, pentingnya sinergi antara kedua sektor tersebut, mengingat Jorong Sikabau memiliki keindahan alam yang memukau dan tradisi maritim, termasuk pengolahan ikan asin yang diwariskan secara turun-temurun. Namun industri pengolahan ikan asin masih menghadapi berbagai tantangan, seperti keterbatasan akses pasar, kurangnya pengetahuan teknis, serta infrastruktur yang belum memadai. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah mendeskripsikan gambaran wisata dan karakteristik dari pengolah ikan asin serta menganalisis pemberdayaan pengolah ikan asin. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode studi kasus dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Pemilihan informan pada penelitian ini yaitu secara *purposive*. Analisis

data yang digunakan yaitu analisis data kualitatif dimulai dari reduksi data, display data dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa karakteristik dari wisata bahari Pantai Sikabau yaitu wisata hutan mangrove, batu kajang, dan muara Pantai Sikabau, karakteristik dari usaha pengolahan ikan asin masih melakukan proses pengolahan dengan cara yang tradisional dalam melakukan pengolahan ikan asin, pemberdayaan yang telah dilakukan terhadap pengolah ikan asin yaitu pelatihan pengolahan produk berbasis ikan dan pemasarannya, pelatihan pengemasan ikan dan pelatihan cara reproduksi pangan olahan yang baik. Program yang belum dilaksanakan yaitu penguatan usaha dan penguatan nilai tambah produk. Maka dari itu perlu adanya dukungan dari pemerintah yang lebih berfokus pada pelatihan keterampilan terhadap pengolah ikan asin serta pembangunan infrastruktur yang memadai untuk pengolah ikan asin.

Kata kunci: Pemberdayaan, Pengolahan Ikan Asin, Wisata Bahari

1. Introduction

Jorong Sikabau, located in Nagari Ranah Koto Tinggi, Pasaman Barat Regency, is an area with significant potential for the development of maritime tourism, thanks to its stunning beaches. In addition to offering breathtaking natural scenery, Jorong Sikabau is rich in maritime traditions and culture that have been passed down through generations, including the processing of salted fish. The salted fish processing industry in the coastal region not only serves as the primary source of livelihood for the local community but also holds the potential to become a unique culinary tourism attraction, capable of drawing more visitors (Zakariya, 2020).

Nevertheless, the challenges in maximizing this potential are limited access to broader markets, a lack of knowledge and skills in processing quality products, and insufficient supporting facilities and infrastructure. Based on observations, the processing of salted fish in Jorong Sikabau is still conducted traditionally, utilizing manual methods that rely on sunlight for drying. This process requires a significant amount of time, and the results are not optimal in quality and quantity (Achmad, 2024).

Considering the significant potential, the empowerment of salted fish processors becomes crucial. This empowerment includes training in processing techniques and strengthening market access through product promotion and certification. Additionally, support in infrastructure and financing is necessary to optimize existing potential. With appropriate empowerment, salted fish processing in Jorong Sikabau can add value for both processors and the development of maritime tourism at Sikabau Beach. In this context, practical and strategic management is essential to position Sikabau Beach as an attractive and sustainable marine tourism, with salted fish processing as one of its main attractions (Akbar et al., 2023).

2. Material and Method

2.1. Time and Place

This research was conducted from April 5, 2024, to April 15, 2024, in Jorong Sikabau, Koto Balingka District, Pasaman Barat Regency. The location was selected because it has salted fish processors and is an area currently developing marine tourism.

2.2. Methods

This research employs a case study method involving intensive and in-depth scientific examination to comprehensively understand programs, events, or activities at the individual, group, institutional, or organizational level. This method collects qualitative data descriptively through field observations, interviews with informants, and direct observation. As part of a qualitative approach, the case study offers the flexibility to explore detailed information and understand the context and dynamics that shape the reality of the research subjects. This study provides a comprehensive overview using various data sources, such as historical documents, in-depth interviews, and direct observations (Haki et al., 2024).

2.3. Data Collection

The data collected consists of primary and secondary data. The researcher obtained Primary data through fieldwork, including interviews and observations. The secondary data gathered in this study comprises sources used to support and complement the primary data through documentation.

2.4. Data Analysis

Miles & Huberman's Analysis in Sugiyono (2013) reduces data by eliminating unnecessary data, presents data in narrative text, and draws conclusions from the research results.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Characteristic of Informants

Data indicate that most informants are within the productive age range of 26 to 48 years, which is considered the optimal period for active involvement in the processing of salted fish. This productive age supports their ability to engage in the physical activities required for daily work and enables them to contribute significantly to the salted fish processing industry. However, despite being of productive age, most salted fish processors have low educational levels, typically only having completed elementary or junior high school. This low educational attainment can be attributed to economic and cultural factors, where education is often viewed as less important than the immediate need to work to meet living expenses (Wardani, 2024). This highlights the challenges in enhancing the skills and knowledge necessary to optimize the quality of salted fish products.

Table 1. Characteristics of informants in Jorong Sikabau, Nagari Ranah Koto Tinggi

No	Information	Education	Age (Years)	Dependents (Person)
1.	Village Head of Ranah Koto Tinggi	D3	38	3
2.	Extension Worker	S1	26	-
3.	Head of Group (POKDARWIS)	S1	42	3
4.	Salted Fish Processor	SMP	47	5
5.	Salted Fish Processor	SD	48	4
6.	Salted Fish Processor	SMP	45	2
7.	Salted Fish Processor	SMP	48	3
8.	Salted Fish Processor	SD	42	3
9.	Salted Fish Processor	SD	40	4
10.	Visitor at Sikabau Beach	SMA	46	3

3.2. Marine Tourism at Sikabau Beach

The estuary tourism at Sikabau Beach is terrific and still pristine. Currently, Sikabau Beach is relatively clean, with lush greenery. Large rocks serve as photo spots for tourists. The open sea at the estuary of Sikabau Beach, adorned with coral reefs, presents a unique charm. The natural and distinctive characteristics of Sikabau Beach are further enhanced by the presence of estuaries on both the left and right sides. Additionally, there are small islands featuring coral reefs and clear waters. Surrounding the estuary of Sikabau Beach, the beach is beautiful, and there are also various salted fish products sold by local processors, providing a unique attraction for tourists who appreciate these delicacies.

The Kajang Stone tourism site, located across from the Sikabau Beach estuary, is a unique attraction characterized by its natural tiered structure. This site is directly managed by the Pokdarwis (Community Awareness Group) of Jorong Sikabau. It offers an adventurous experience with challenging trekking routes that test the adrenaline of visitors seeking to reach the summit.

In addition to the Sikabau Beach estuary and Kajang Stone tourism, there is also a mangrove forest tourism site that is equally appealing to visitors at Sikabau Beach. This involves visiting the mangrove forest areas along the coast of Sikabau Beach. Besides exploring the mangrove forest, tourists can also utilize available facilities around the Sikabau Beach estuary, such as motorboats owned by local fishermen, which are available for rent at approximately IDR 10,000/person. By taking these motorboats, visitors can better enjoy the beauty of the mangrove forest at Sikabau Beach.

3.3. Characteristics of Salted Fish Processors in Jorong Sikabau

Salted fish processors in Jorong Sikabau employ relatively simple methods to process salted fish. This process involves several types of processors, including those who catch fish themselves, purchase catch from others, or buy pre-dried salted fish. The fundamental processing tools include buckets, trays, knives, bamboo baskets, and drying racks. Indrastuti (2019) indicates preservation and environmentally friendly processing methods, although they have efficiency and production quantity limitations. Meanwhile, research by Lestari et al. (2022) emphasizes the necessity for technological innovation to enhance productivity and the quality of the final products.

Table 2. Data on salted fish processing in Jorong Sikabau

No.	Name of Processor	Type of Salted Fish	Business Experience Age
1.	Badul	<i>Johnius carouna</i> , <i>Geres punctatus</i> ,	10 years
2.	Kiran	<i>Eleutheronema tetradactylum</i> , <i>Leiognathus equulus</i>	8 years
3.	Andi	<i>J.carouna</i> , <i>G.punctatus</i> , <i>L.equulus</i> , <i>E.tetradactylum</i> , <i>Lethrinus nebulosus</i>	20 years
4.	Epi	<i>J.carouna</i> , <i>Scomberomorini</i> , <i>G. punctatus</i> , <i>L.nebulosus</i> , <i>E. tetradactylum</i>	15 years
5.	Jasri	<i>J.carouna</i> , <i>E.tetradactylum</i> , <i>L.equulus</i>	7 years
6.	Supi	<i>E. tetradactylum</i> , <i>L. equulus</i> , <i>G.punctatus</i>	5 years

Data from Table 2 indicate that salted fish processors have varying business experiences ranging from 5 to 20 years, with the types of fish processed including *J. carouna*, *E. tetradactylum*, *G.s punctatus*, and *L.equulus*. The salted fish processing involves three main stages: preparation, salting, and drying. The preparation stage includes washing and gutting the fish, sometimes with inadequate sanitation. The salting method employs a salt solution in trays, with a soaking duration of 1 to 2 days, depending on the fish's size and the desired saltiness level.

3.4. Problems Faced by Salted Fish Processors

Conditions in the field indicate that salted fish processors around Sikabau Village Beach face various challenges in developing their maritime tourism potential. The main challenges include limited knowledge and skills in hygienic salted fish processing practices, impacting product quality, and often failing to meet tourist standards. This affects product competitiveness, as processors can only sell their goods at uncompetitive prices in local or traditional markets. In addition to product quality issues, inadequate infrastructure exacerbates the situation. Using traditional tools and simple packaging, along with sales in open areas, not only diminishes product quality but also limits access to broader markets. Better infrastructure and adequate sales facilities are urgently needed to support business development.

Furthermore, competition with salted fish products from other regions that are more recognized and of higher quality adds pressure on local salted fish processors. Support from the government and the private sector in the form of skills training, guidance, and infrastructure improvements is essential to enhance the capacity of salted fish processors. Collaborative efforts are critical to open wider market access and improve product quality, allowing salted fish processors to leverage maritime tourism potential more effectively and sustainably to enhance their economic welfare.

3.5. Empowerment of Salted Fish Processors in Jorong Sikabau

The Smart Fisheries Village (SFV) program is one of the priority initiatives of the Human Resource Development and Counseling Agency (BPPSDMKP) to support the Blue Economy policy of the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (KKP). This program aims to build the fisheries potential in Jorong Sikabau, improve the local economy, and ensure sustainable and environmentally friendly production activities. Strengthening the independence of the Jorong Sikabau community is conducted through tourism-related activities. Fisheries and processing of marine and coastal resources are implemented through training for community groups, one of which focuses on fish-based product processing. This training aims to provide knowledge and skills to coastal community members in processing fishery products into value-added products.

Packaging significantly contributes to product marketing. The use of attractive packaging plays a critical role in the success of product sales. Innovations in packaging, both functionally and as a marketing tool, are continuously evolving. Food product packaging is technique industries use to market their products by containing, protecting, and identifying them, facilitating sales and distribution. As food processing diversification and competition increase, packaging becomes an arena where each product showcases its advantages and uniqueness, ready to compete. In the era of globalization, food processing industries typically allocate 15% of their total production costs for packaging to boost sales.

To produce processed products from fishery resources guaranteed in quality and safety, reference is made to Government Regulation No. 57 of 2015 concerning the quality assurance system for fishery products and enhancing fish processing. Guidelines for sound salted fish processing must consider several factors: the production site must be free from pollution, which may originate from industrial waste, and the site must be well-maintained. The facility for salted fish processing must meet specific requirements, including being easy to clean, having an orderly layout according to the production sequence, and having walls and floors with smooth surfaces that do not allow water to pool.

3.6. Empowerment Programs that have yet to be Implemented

Strengthening salted fish businesses in Jorong Sikabau can be achieved through several concrete steps. One approach is encouraging business actors to register or obtain a Business Identification Number (NIB). Additionally, collaboration with the government to secure registration with the Food and Drug Supervisory Agency (BPOM) and the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) is essential. With certifications from BPOM and MUI, salted fish products from Jorong Sikabau can be marketed more broadly around Sikabau Beach and other regions. The government's role is crucial in supporting the sustainability of salted fish businesses in Jorong Sikabau. The government can assist in the registration processes for NIB, BPOM, and MUI and provide training and guidance to enhance product quality. Programs such as training in hygienic salted fish processing, effective packaging techniques, and marketing strategies to be implemented by the Pasaman Barat Regency Government in collaboration with the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (KKP) under the Smart Fisheries Village (SFV) program are highly relevant in this context, ensuring that community knowledge about better-salted fish processing improves in the future.

A practical method for addressing marketing issues in salted fish processing in Jorong Sikabau is to provide training in processing techniques and product development tailored to market needs. One empowerment strategy

involves purchasing raw fish from local fishermen, which can be processed into higher value-added salted fish products. For example, the purchase price of fresh fish, such as gulama fish, is IDR 15,000/ kg; after processing into salted fish, the selling price rises to IDR 65,000/kg. This approach increases fishermen's income, ensures adequate salted fish stock availability, reduces dependence on intermediaries, and improves production cost efficiency. As expressed in an interview with salted fish processor Mr. Kiran, he stated,

“We salted fish processors also buy raw fish from fishermen because the prices are quite affordable, and if middlemen buy the fish, the prices become high.”

Based on the explanation above, salted fish processors in Jorong Sikabau directly purchase fish from fishermen to avoid increased prices through intermediaries. This situation can enhance the income and welfare of salted fish processors around Sikabau Beach. Therefore, government encouragement is needed to support and assist salted fish processors in managing their businesses and improving their capacities as a unique food offering at Sikabau Beach. Diversification of businesses carried out by fishermen, including salted fish processing, can increase income and create new business opportunities related to marine tourism. Additionally, [Pratama et al. \(2018\)](#) research highlights the importance of training and guidance in enhancing salted fish processing skills.

3.7. The Role of Salted Fish Processing in Supporting Marine Tourism

Sikabau Beach, a promising maritime tourism destination, demonstrates significant potential for development due to the synergy between the tourism sector and local salted fish processing businesses. The presence of salted fish processors provides raw materials for regional cuisine and is a key attraction for visiting tourists. An interview with the chairman of the Jorong Sikabau tourism awareness group (Pokdarwis), Mr. Ateng, emphasizes that the quality of salted fish processing can be a distinctive draw for visitors. “With high-quality salted fish processing, it undoubtedly becomes an attractive option for tourists to purchase salted fish products from Jorong Sikabau as souvenirs.”

This statement indicates that not only are the salted fish products appealing, but also the processing methods visitors can observe firsthand. This enhances the local community's income and enriches the tourists' experience. Meanwhile, Mr. Ridho, a frequent visitor to Sikabau Beach, emphasizes a strong interest in local salted fish products. He states, “Sometimes, we visit Sikabau Beach not only to admire its beauty but also to seek out the salted fish products available around the beach to bring home as souvenirs.”

This statement indicates that salted fish products not only serve as souvenirs but also play a vital role in enhancing the economic value of the salted fish processing industry. Government support is crucial in maximizing this potential. Through training, guidance, and provision of business capital, the quality of salted fish products can be significantly improved, increasing the income of salted fish processors ([Tamboto & Manongko, 2019](#)). This support will not only positively impact the local economy but also bolster the development of maritime tourism at Sikabau Beach. Furthermore, implementing environmentally friendly practices in salted fish processing can enhance the appeal of the tourist destination, especially for environmentally conscious travelers. Processing methods that consider the sustainability of marine resources and employ non-destructive techniques can improve Sikabau Beach's image as a responsible tourism destination.

Integrating the salted fish processing sector and maritime tourism, supported by appropriate strategies, can create a mutually beneficial economic ecosystem. This synergy not only strengthens the economy through increased marketability of local products but also enriches the cultural aspects and identity of the coastal area, which can be a unique attraction for visitors. As a premier tourist destination, Sikabau Beach will become increasingly recognized for its natural beauty and the uniqueness of its salted fish products that serve as local icons. Consequently, this combination can enhance visitor numbers, expand markets for local products, and directly improve community welfare. Additionally, training for the community in salted fish processing and tourism development will create new job opportunities and encourage active participation in community-based economic development. The government's role in supporting infrastructure and promotion is also crucial to ensure the sustainability and success of the integration of both sectors ([Elok et al., 2024](#)).

4. Conclusions

The main tourist attractions travelers visit includes Batu Kajang, Muara Pantai Sikabau, and the Mangrove Forest. The characteristics of the salted fish processing industry still rely on traditional methods for processing salted fish. Empowerment programs implemented for salted fish processors include training in fish-based products and marketing, packaging training, and proper food processing techniques. However, programs aimed at strengthening businesses and enhancing product value have yet to be implemented. Therefore, there is a need for support from the government and the private sector that focuses more on the development of the salted fish industry, such as training in salted fish processing and providing sales venues for processors around Sikabau Beach.

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