

## The Level of Sustainability of Serang Village, Blitar Regency Based on the Spiritual Aspects of the Community Sustainability Assessment (CSA)

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### ABSTRACT

*This study assesses the sustainability level of Serang Village in Blitar Regency, Indonesia, focusing on the spiritual aspects of the Community Sustainability Assessment (CSA). The background highlights Serang Village as a notable tourist destination, recognized among the top 50 tourism villages in Indonesia, with rich natural, cultural, and spiritual attractions. The research aims to evaluate the village's sustainability using the CSA framework, particularly emphasizing spiritual dimensions such as cultural practices, community engagement, and traditional rituals. A qualitative method with an empirical juridical approach was employed, combining secondary data analysis from the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) and primary data from field surveys. Findings reveal that Serang Village excels in spiritual sustainability, scoring 418 out of a possible 999, indicating "excellent progress towards sustainability." Key strengths include cultural festivals, traditional ceremonies, and community-led spiritual activities. However, the study underscores the need for holistic integration of social, ecological, and spiritual aspects to achieve comprehensive sustainability. The implications suggest collaborative efforts among government, private sectors, and communities to enhance Serang Village's identity as a sustainable coastal tourism destination.*

### KEYWORDS

*Sustainability Level, Serang Village, Spiritual*



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### INTRODUCTION

Community Sustainability Assessment (CSA) is a subjective tool that requires collective interpretation and active engagement. To optimize the results of this exercise, community members are encouraged to engage in collaborative sessions, which enhance collective understanding and shared responsibility for local development (Roseland et al., 2015). This method provides a meaningful overview of both achievements and areas for improvement within the community, serving as a baseline for future strategic planning (Magis, 2010; Reed et al., 2014). Items with low scores can be prioritized as targets for community-based initiatives, contributing directly to enhanced sustainability outcomes (Agyeman & Evans, 2013). Communities that engage in structured planning and sustainability efforts tend to perform better in CSA evaluations due to increased awareness and institutional learning (Boström, 2012; Soini & Birkeland, 2014). Although high CSA scores are desirable, there is always room for improvement as sustainability is a continuous and dynamic process (Dale et al., 2020). CSAs are designed to be applicable across various geographic, social, and economic contexts, making them adaptable for diverse community structures (Sharma & Ruuska, 2022). Overall, CSA scores can guide local stakeholders in assessing and enhancing sustainable community development by highlighting core priorities and encouraging evidence-based decision-making (Moir & Carter, 2012).

One of the villages that is interesting to know the level of sustainability is Serang Village, Blitar (Alim et al., 2021). Serang Tourism Village, located in Panggungrejo District, Blitar Regency, was included in the top 50 tourism villages during the final selection stage of the 2021 Indonesian Tourism Village Award (ADWI), which is a government effort to develop

sustainable and competitive tourism destinations (Utami & Nugroho, 2021). Located about 40 kilometers southeast of Blitar City, Serang Village represents one of six East Java villages that made it to the ADWI 2021 list, showing its advancement in tourism governance and infrastructure (Susanti et al., 2022). This village lies in the southern part of Blitar Regency, around 35 km from the capital, geographically surrounded by karst hills and coastal zones, which provide both ecological assets and conservation challenges (Fandeli & Nurdin, 2019; Pranadji et al., 2020). Since its tourism development in 2015, Serang Village has been managed by Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) in collaboration with local tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis), emphasizing a participatory model in village-based tourism (Suryawan & Eka, 2021). This synergy supports sustainable rural development, especially in increasing income and preserving local culture (Marpaung & Marbun, 2017). The village features multiple attractions including natural tourism, cultural tourism, artificial attractions, and educational tourism, which align with the principles of community-based and diversified tourism products (Pitana, 2016).

As for natural tourism, *Serang Beach* is a tourist icon in Blitar with its beautiful sunset, especially during the months of October–February, when the sunset is right in the middle of the beach—an exotic beauty. In the *Serang* beach cluster, there is *Serit Beach* with colorful rock deposits and a 1.5km-long lagoon, and *Maesan Beach*, which is located southeast of *Serang Beach* and is a place for fishing boat landings. *Serang Tourism Village* also has natural tourism of karst rocks, namely *Kedungkrombang Cave* with the beauty of exotic stalactites and stalagmites decorated with lighting; in this cave, tourists of all ages can visit it, and *Grontol Cave* is a cave with a length of 1.5km for tourists who like adventures along the cave with the beauty of karst rocks, which are also very exotic.

*Serang Tourism Village* in *Blitar Raya* offers a unique combination of natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and innovative tourism initiatives. Beyond its inherent natural attractions, the village actively cultivates cultural tourism through the development of local arts and traditions. The *Serang Culture Festival*, established in 2015, stands as the largest tourism village festival event in *Blitar Raya*, showcasing a diverse array of activities annually in September–October, including the *Kite Festival*, *Sand Sculpture Festival*, *Serang Barong Festival*, *Jaranan Parade*, *Hatchling Release*, *Serang Beach Jazz Festival*, *Serang Fishing Festival*, and *Kroncong Serang Festival*. This consistent annual event, however, was unfortunately interrupted in 2020 due to the global Covid-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, the *Larung Sesaji 1 Suro* traditional ceremony exemplifies the village's deep-rooted customs. This traditional ritual offering is performed on *Serang Beach* every first day of the *Javanese* month of *Suro*, involving the symbolic release of *Buceng Lanang* and *Wadon Mountains* (rice cones) into the sea. This act serves as a profound expression of gratitude to the Almighty for abundant agricultural and sea harvests. Complementing these events are captivating village art attractions, such as the sacred and mystical *Jaranan Jawi* (or *Jur*), featuring horse and *barong* dances, and the *Jaranan Pegon*, performed by millennial teenagers. The *Langen Beksan* Dance, accompanied by *gamelan* music and a *sinden* (traditional singer), further enriches the cultural experience for visitors.

A notable innovation in *Serang Tourism Village's* cultural offerings is the *Barong Turtle Dance*, created in 2017. Inspired by the philosophy of sea turtle conservation, this unique *barong* dance is the only one of its kind in Indonesia, performed by millennial artists for guests and tourists on the beach at sunset. To diversify its appeal beyond natural and cultural

attractions, *Serang Tourism Village* has also developed several artificial and educational tourism initiatives. These include *Cemara Educamp*, an expansive outdoor area for camping, outbound activities, playgrounds, and family gatherings; *Turtle Conservation Education*, a dedicated facility for turtle breeding and conservation on *Serang Beach*; and *Surfing Education*, offering surfing lessons. Tourists can also explore the outskirts of *Serang Beach* with ATV rides.

Completing the comprehensive tourism experience is culinary tourism, featuring local specialties such as grilled fish, squid, and octopus, served with fresh young coconut drinks and the distinctive chili sauce of *Serang Tourism Village*. Traditional foods like *Sego Tiwul* and local snacks such as *Pala Pandem*, *Kicak*, *Cenil*, and *Jenang Sumsum* are also available. To support these diverse offerings, *Serang Tourism Village* has established essential infrastructure, including a tourism terminal for large bus parking and shuttle services, homestays, car parking, and toilets at each destination. The village remains committed to the continuous development of community-empowering and sustainable tourism.

Sustainable development has become a critical focus in rural and tourism studies, particularly in communities where cultural and spiritual practices play a significant role in shaping resilience and identity. Previous research by Widyarti and Arifin (2012) applied the Community Sustainability Assessment (CSA) to evaluate the *Baduy* community in Indonesia, highlighting the importance of integrating cultural and ecological dimensions for long-term sustainability. Similarly, Irifiani and Mussadun (2016) examined coastal communities in *Sarang District*, emphasizing the role of local traditions in fostering environmental stewardship. These studies underscore the value of spiritual and cultural assets in sustainable development but often overlook the specific mechanisms through which these aspects contribute to holistic community resilience. This gap suggests a need for deeper exploration into how spiritual practices, as a standalone dimension, influence sustainability outcomes in rural tourism villages.

Despite the growing body of literature on sustainable tourism, few studies have quantitatively assessed the spiritual aspect of sustainability using standardized tools like the CSA. Research by Gilman (1991) and Butcher (2007) theorized the moral and ethical dimensions of community-based tourism but lacked empirical validation in specific cultural contexts. For instance, Utami and Syamsun (2018) analyzed the sustainability of the “*Blue Village*” in Malang, yet their work primarily focused on socio-economic factors, leaving spiritual practices underexplored. This gap is particularly evident in Indonesian tourism villages, where spiritual rituals and cultural festivals are deeply embedded in daily life but rarely measured for their sustainability impact. Addressing this gap could provide actionable insights for policymakers and community leaders aiming to balance modernization with cultural preservation.

The urgency of this research lies in the rapid transformation of rural villages like *Serang*, where tourism development risks diluting traditional practices if not managed sustainably. The village’s recognition as one of Indonesia’s top 50 tourist destinations underscores its potential as a model for sustainable tourism, yet unchecked growth could erode its spiritual and cultural foundations. Studies by Pawitro (2017) on *Kampung Kota* communities demonstrate how urbanization can disrupt local traditions, further highlighting the need for proactive sustainability assessments. By evaluating *Serang Village*’s spiritual sustainability now, this research can inform strategies to mitigate such risks, ensuring that development aligns with the community’s values and long-term well-being.

This study introduces novelty by applying the CSA framework to quantitatively measure the spiritual sustainability of *Serang Village*, a dimension often neglected in favor of ecological or economic metrics. Unlike prior studies that treat spirituality as a peripheral factor, this research positions it as a core pillar of sustainability, leveraging empirical data to validate its significance. The inclusion of unique local practices, such as the *Barong Turtle Dance* and *Larung Sesaji* ceremonies, further distinguishes this work, offering a culturally grounded perspective on sustainability. By bridging the gap between theoretical frameworks and on-the-ground realities, the study provides a replicable model for assessing spiritual sustainability in similar contexts.

The primary objective of this research is to evaluate the level of spiritual sustainability in *Serang Village* using the CSA tool, identifying strengths and areas for improvement. Specifically, it aims to analyze how cultural rituals, community engagement, and traditional arts contribute to the village's overall sustainability score. By disaggregating the spiritual aspect from broader sustainability metrics, the study seeks to demonstrate its standalone impact and interdependence with social and ecological factors. This granular approach not only refines the CSA methodology but also offers practical benchmarks for other communities striving to balance tourism growth with cultural integrity.

The benefits of this research extend to multiple stakeholders, including local governments, tourism planners, and community organizations. For policymakers, the findings provide evidence-based guidance on integrating spiritual practices into regional development plans, ensuring that cultural heritage is preserved amid economic progress. Community leaders can use the results to advocate for resources that sustain traditional arts and rituals, fostering pride and continuity among younger generations. Academically, the study enriches the discourse on sustainable tourism by validating the role of spirituality as a measurable and actionable dimension. Ultimately, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of sustainability, one that honors the intangible yet invaluable spiritual fabric of rural communities.

## METHOD

The method used in this study is a qualitative method with an empirical juridical approach, which is an approach that examines secondary data first and then continues by conducting primary data research in the field. The secondary data in question is the theoretical foundation and formal provisions that have been determined by the *Ecovillage Network (GEN)* in the *Community Sustainability Assessment (CSA)* method, while the primary data in this study is the result of a field survey of the situation that occurs in the community with the intention of knowing and finding the facts and data needed (Sumitro, 1994).

Data analysis to assess the level of community sustainability was conducted using the *Community Sustainability Assessment (CSA)* tool by the *Global Ecovillage Network (GEN)*. The spiritual aspect is assessed with a predetermined weight so that an overall score can be determined to show the sustainability value of certain aspects. The spiritual aspect itself consists of seven parameters, each of which is considered to represent the entirety of the spiritual aspect.

**Table 1. Parameters of the spiritual aspect**

Parameter	Weight
<b>Spiritual aspects</b>	
1 Cultural sustainability	-
2 Art and fun	-
3 Spiritual sustainability	-
4 Community attachment	-
5 Community spring style	-
6 New holographic, worldview	-
7 Peace and global consciousness	-
<b>Total value for the spiritual aspect</b>	-

Each parameter has question points that have a value in the form of numbers, each point chosen also has a different value which will be added to the total of the overall spiritual aspect and can be determined how the level of sustainability in Serang Village is.

**Table 2. Assessment Level**

Assessment Level	Value	Community Sustainability Conditions
<b>Parameter</b>	50+	Showing excellent progress towards sustainability
	25 - 49	Showing a good start towards sustainability
	0 - 25	Shows that action must be taken to be sustainable
<b>Aspect (1-7)</b>	333+	Showing excellent progress towards sustainability
	166 - 332	Showing a good start towards sustainability
	0 - 165	Shows that action must be taken to be sustainable

As per the weight, the CSA has categorized that value of 999+, as a value towards perfect progress towards sustainability. A score of 500-998, indicates a good start towards sustainability. The value of 0-449, indicates the need for action to achieve the desired result. The classification of this category is also carried out in the assessment process. From the results of the assessment, it will be continued with the direction of its development to be better.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Overview of Serang Village

#### *Geographical conditions*

Blitar Regency is one of the areas of East Java Province which is located in the Southern region, directly adjacent to the Indonesian Ocean. Geographically, Blitar Regency is located between 111o 40' – 112o 10' East Longitude and 7o 58' - 8o 9' 51" South Latitude. Blitar Regency is recorded as one of the strategic areas and has quite dynamic development. Blitar Regency borders three other districts.

1. Area: 1328.6 Ha.
2. There are three hamlets:
  - a. Serang Hamlet I,
  - b. Serang II Hamlet, and
  - c. Serang Hamlet III.
3. 27 RTs and 7 RWs.
4. The boundaries of Serang Village are as follows:
  - a. Northern Boundary: Kalitengah Village, Panggungrejo District
  - b. West Boundary: Ngadipuro Village, Wonotirto District
  - c. Southern Boundary: Indonesian Ocean

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d. Eastern Boundary: Kaligambir Village, Panggungrejo District

Serang Village is naturally surrounded by two rivers north to west crossed by the Kaliklatak River and east to south of the Serang River which flows into the Indonesian Ocean, for the northern region (Serang II Hamlet, Serang III) is a limestone and rocky hill so that the soil is infertile and barren while the south (Serang I Hamlet) is a lowland with a rather fertile soil texture so that food crops such as rice can be planted But only by relying on rainwater.

b) Serang Village Facilities

Means:

1. Village office
2. JUNIOR
3. Early Childhood Education
4. 3 SD
5. Klatak Market
6. MCK
7. Kamling Post
8. Auxiliary Health Center

Tourist Facilities:

1. Serang Beach
2. Serit Beach
3. Selo Kancil Beach
4. Selo Gogor Beach
5. Maesan Beach
6. Kedung Krombang Cave
7. Tourism Terminal
8. Sports Field
9. Klatak Market
10. Art Barn

c) Demography of Serang Village

The population of Serang Village until January 2019 consists of 1.537 KK, with the total number 4,715 people, with Male details as much as 2,411 people and women as many as 2.304 soul. The number of residents based on the data of the Village Population Master Book by gender and age as listed in Table 3 follows:

**Table 3. Demography of Serang Village**

No	Age (Years)	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
1	0-4	105	98	203 people	4.31%
2	5-9	147	153	300 people	6.36%
3	10-14	166	151	317 people	6.72%
4	15-19	182	154	336 people	7.13%
5	20-24	163	152	315 people	6.68%
6	25-29	195	182	377 people	8.00%
7	30-34	203	227	430 people	9.12%
8	35-39	201	180	381 people	8.08%
9	40-44	199	165	364 people	7.72%
10	45-49	194	197	391 people	8.29%
11	50-54	165	173	338 people	7.17%
12	55-58	107	92	199 people	4.22%
13	>59	384	380	764 people	16.20%
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,411</b>	<b>2,304</b>	<b>4,715 people</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

From the data above, it appears that the productive age population at the age of 20-49 years in Serang Village is around **2,258** or almost **47.89%**. This is valuable capital for the procurement of productive personnel and human resources.

d) Serang Village Education

Education is an important thing in advancing the level of human resources (Human Resources) which can have an effect in the long term on improving the economy. With a high level of education, it will boost the level of community skills which in turn will encourage the growth of entrepreneurial skills and new jobs, so that it will help government programs in

alleviating unemployment and poverty. The percentage of education level in Serang Village can be seen in Table 4 below.

**Table 4. Serang Village Education**

No	Description	Total	Percentage
1	Illiterate (Age 10 and above)	–	0%
2	Pre-School Age	925	19.62%
3	Not Completed Primary School/Equivalent	581	12.32%
4	Completed Primary School/Equivalent	2,246	47.64%
5	Completed Junior High School/Equivalent	675	14.32%
6	Completed Senior High School/Equivalent	253	5.37%
7	Completed College/Academy	35	0.74%
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,715</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the data in the table above, it shows that the majority of Serang Village residents are only able to complete school at the nine-year compulsory education level (elementary and junior high). In terms of the availability of adequate and qualified human resources (HR), this situation is a challenge in itself. The low quality of education level in Serang Village is inseparable from the limited existing educational facilities and infrastructure, in addition to economic problems and people's outlook on life. Educational facilities in Serang Village are only available at the 9-year basic education level (elementary and junior high), while for middle to upper level education is in other places that are relatively far away.

e) Serang Village Health

The issue of health services is the right of every citizen and is important for improving the quality of society in the future. A productive society must be supported by health conditions. One way to measure the level of public health can be seen from the number of people affected by the disease. From the available data, it shows that the number of people affected by the disease is relatively high. The diseases that are often suffered include rheumatic fever, Cikunggunya, acute upper respiratory infections, malaria, diseases of the muscular system and connective tissues. The data shows that health problems that are often experienced by residents are diseases that are quite severe and have a long duration for recovery, which is caused by weather changes and unhealthy environmental conditions. This certainly reduces the productivity of the people of Serang Village in general. The data related to public health conditions can be seen in the following table:

**Table 5. Serang Village Health**

No	Disability Type	Total
1	Cleft Lip	3 people
2	Speech Impairment	8 people
3	Hearing Impairment	12 people
4	Blindness	9 people
5	Paralysis	11 people
6	Mental Disability	7 people
<b>Total</b>		<b>50 people</b>

f) Land Use Planning

Blitar Regency has an area of 1,588.79 KM with detailed land use as rice fields, yards, plantations, ponds, tegals, forests, fish ponds and others, Blitar Regency is also divided into

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two parts, namely North Blitar and South Blitar which at the same time distinguish the potential of the two regions where North Blitar is a lowland rice field and has a wet climate and South Blitar is a dry land that is quite critical and has a dry climate. The southern Blitar region continues to try to develop all its potential. The attractiveness of the potential and wealth owned by Blitar Regency is not only in natural resources, abundant production of agricultural products, livestock products, fisheries and mining deposits spread across the South Blitar area.

### **Spiritual Aspects of Serang Village**

Serang Village is located in Panggungrejo District, Blitar Regency as one of the 50 tourist villages that passed the final selection stage of the 2021 Indonesian Tourism Village Award (ADWI). The village, which is located about 40 kilometers southeast of Blitar City, is one of six tourist villages in East Java that are included in the 50 best tourist villages in ADWI 2021 organized by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy.

In addition to the beach, the Serang Beach tourist area has recently developed a natural cave in one corner of the beach as an additional natural attraction. Artificial and educational tourism objects, among others, consist of an evergreen tree garden and a sea turtle conservation pond. Meanwhile, the attraction of art and culture, among others, is in the form of organizing the annual event of the Serang Culture Festival since 2015. In fact, this village is collaborating with a number of dance artists, his party is developing the contemporary dance of Barongan Turtle. Serang Culture Festival which is always held at Serang Beach, Serang Village, Panggungrejo District, Blitar Regency with various spiritual activities as follows:

1. Festival Layang – Layang
  2. Larung Sesaji 1 Suro
  3. Serang Bersholawat Beach
  4. Hatchery Release
  5. Serang Beach Kroncong Festival
  6. There are Serang Beach tours that are already underway and Kedungkrombang Cave which will be opened to the public
  7. The original culture of the village is still preserved (jaranan, karawitan, larung, ruwatan, and napak tilas)
  8. Gapoktan and KWT are actively engaged in activities
  9. There is the construction of an Arts Hall
  10. There is a Serang Culture Festival which is held annually
  11. Routine recitation is carried out
  12. The Friday Legi Bersih program (community service) is carried out every month
- Activities of 17 are routinely carried out at the village level.







Figure 1. Activities of 17 are routinely carried out at the village level

### CSA Weighting Results

From the results of data collection from the questionnaire above, it can be seen the elaboration of each aspect 1 to 7 which will be described in the following table:

Table 6. Parameters of the spiritual aspect

Parameter		Weight
<b>Spiritual aspects</b>		
1	Cultural sustainability	101
2	Art and fun	42
3	Spiritual sustainability	44
4	Community attachment	55
5	Community spring style	53
6	New holographic, worldview	53
7	Peace and global consciousness	70
<b>Total value for the spiritual aspect</b>		<b>418</b>

Based on the assessment of the measuring instrument using the Community Sustainability Assessment (CSA), the level of assessment of each aspect with the condition of community sustainability is as follows

Table 7. CSA Assessment Level

Assessment Level	Value	Community Sustainability Conditions
Spiritual Aspects	333+	Showing excellent progress towards sustainability
	166-332	Showing a good start towards sustainability
	0-165	Shows that action must be taken to be sustainable

Which means that with a spiritual final score of **418**, the spiritual value of Serang Blitar Village shows "**very good progress towards sustainability**". From the final result between the ecological aspect, the spiritual aspect and the socio-cultural aspect of the graph, it can be seen that the spiritual aspect gets a slanted value from the other aspects. Serang Blitar Village itself has received a very good score towards sustainability, which means that even though Serang Blitar Village is spiritually strong, it must still be able to maintain its spiritual values. However, not only the spiritual aspect is considered, Serang Village must also be able to improve other aspects such as ecological and socio-cultural aspects which must receive special attention so that Serang Blitar Village as a whole gets a good score for the level of sustainability.

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### Blitar Village Recommendations

- a) The right recommendation is to integrate the three aspects (social, ecological and spiritual) holistically and consistently to improve the ability of the community.



**Figure 2. Blitar Village Recommendations**

To achieve the desired sustainability, it is necessary to collaborate with various parties, namely the government, the private sector and the community related to improving the identity of Serang Village into a coastal tourism village. One of them is the preparation of the master plan of the Serang Tourism Village.

### CONCLUSION

*Serang Village* is located in *Panggunrejo* District, *Blitar* Regency, and is one of the 50 tourist villages that passed the final selection stage of the 2021 Indonesian Tourism Village Award (*ADWI*). The village, which is situated about 40 kilometers southeast of *Blitar* City, is one of six tourist villages in East Java included among the 50 best tourist villages in *ADWI 2021*, organized by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. In addition to natural tourism, *Serang Tourism Village* combines cultural heritage with the development of cultural arts in the village—namely, cultural tourism. Among these, the *Serang Culture Festival* is the largest tourism village festival event in *Blitar Raya*, held annually since 2015 in September–October, featuring a series of activities such as the *Kite Festival*, *Sand Sculpture Festival*, *Serang Barong Festival*, *Jaranan Parade*, *Hatchling Release*, *Serang Beach Jazz Festival*, *Serang Fishing Festival*, and *Kroncong Serang Festival*. The spiritual value of *Serang Village, Blitar*, shows significant progress toward sustainability. From the final results comparing the ecological, spiritual, and socio-cultural aspects on the graph, it can be seen that the spiritual aspect reflects a distinct angle from the other aspects. *Serang Village, Blitar* itself has achieved a very good score in terms of sustainability, which means that even though the village is spiritually strong, it must continue to maintain its spiritual values. The appropriate recommendation is to integrate the three aspects—social, ecological, and spiritual—holistically and consistently to improve the community's capacity for sustainable development.

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