



## **PROTECT BALI: THE EVOLUTION OF REGULATIONS IN ADDRESSING CHALLENGE TO OVERTOURISM IN BALI**

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### **Abstract**

Bali Island is a premier tourist destination known for its natural beauty and rich cultural heritage. However, uncontrolled tourism growth or overtourism has triggered significant environmental, social, and cultural challenges. This research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of existing regulations and examine the urgency of establishing new ones to address the growing complexity of tourism impacts. This study employs a normative legal method using a conceptual approach, comparative analysis, and legislative review. The findings indicate that although national and regional laws, such as Law No. 10 of 2009 and Bali Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2020, promote sustainable tourism, their implementation faces challenges, including weak enforcement and limited community participation. Thus, new, more adaptive regulations are needed that integrate environmental, social, and cultural principles. These measures are essential to safeguard Bali's identity and ensure the sustainability of its tourism industry amidst globalization and increasing visitor pressure.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Bali Island stands as one of the most prominent tourist destinations, renowned both within Indonesia and across the globe. Its extraordinary natural beauty, rich biodiversity, and profound cultural heritage have earned it a variety of prestigious titles, including "Pulau Dewata" (Island of the Gods), "The Island of a Thousand Temples," and "The Last Paradise." Bali's diverse natural landscapes—ranging from exotic white-sand beaches and serene lakes to majestic mountains and terraced rice fields—have long captivated international traveler. On the cultural front, Bali is equally remarkable, preserving centuries-old traditions and local wisdom through performing arts, this ibis reflected in its numerous temples, rituals, and festivals such as *Nyepi* (Day of Silence) and *Galungan*. Performing arts like the Barong Dance and Kecak Dance have

become symbols of Bali's cultural tourism, while daily offerings like canang sari reflect the spirituality ingrained in Balinese life. These cultural expressions have not only become symbolic of Balinese identity but have also evolved into major attractions within the island's cultural tourism framework.

Tourism has become a cornerstone of Bali's regional economy, playing a strategic role in driving local development. It contributes significantly to local government revenue (*Pendapatan Asli Daerah/PAD*) and generates substantial employment opportunities for residents across various sectors such as hospitality, transportation, handicrafts, and cultural performances. The economic ripple effect of tourism also benefits related industries like agriculture and retail. Nevertheless, the rapid and often unchecked growth of tourism particularly in the form of mass tourism or "overtourism" has given rise to a range of critical issues. Without proper sustainable management, this surge in tourism exerts tremendous pressure on public infrastructure, including transportation networks, sanitation systems, and waste disposal mechanisms. In many areas, existing public facilities are unable to keep pace with the increasing influx of tourists, leading to environmental degradation, traffic congestion, and a declining quality of life for local communities.

The socio-cultural ramifications of overtourism are equally concerning. The external cultural influences and the commercialization of Balinese culture to meet tourist demands have begun to erode its traditional values. What was once a deeply spiritual and community-oriented society is now facing a gradual transformation toward consumerism and materialism (Urbanus & Febianti, 2017). Cultural performances and rituals are increasingly commercialized, often detached from their original sacred context. This cultural shift threatens the preservation of Balinese identity and raises questions about the authenticity of the cultural experiences offered to visitors. Additionally, the tourism-driven economy has given rise to social and economic disparities. While large-scale investors and external stakeholders reap substantial profits, the majority of the local population is often relegated to low-wage service jobs with limited upward mobility. This unequal distribution of economic benefits fosters social injustice and deepens existing economic inequalities within Balinese society.

Environmental consequences of tourism expansion are also profound and multifaceted. The widespread conversion of agricultural and green lands into commercial zones for hotels, restaurants, and recreational facilities has dramatically altered the island's ecological balance. Green open spaces, which are essential for maintaining environmental resilience and biodiversity, are increasingly replaced by concrete structures serving short-term economic gains. One of the most alarming outcomes of this trend is the growing crisis of solid waste, particularly plastic pollution, which threatens both terrestrial and marine ecosystems. This escalating waste problem highlights the urgent need for a robust and comprehensive waste management strategy tailored to the island's tourism profile.

In light of these pressing challenges, the formulation of regulatory frameworks that promote sustainable, equitable, and culturally respectful tourism has become imperative. Legal and policy measures must be enacted to mitigate the negative impacts of overtourism while preserving the environmental and cultural integrity of Bali. Such regulations should prioritize community involvement, environmental stewardship, and cultural preservation as fundamental pillars in the future development of Bali's tourism sector. Within this context, the establishment of a well-defined and enforceable tourism law specific to Bali is not merely desirable it is an

urgent necessity. By addressing these issues thoughtfully and proactively, Bali can ensure that it remains a paradise for both its residents and visitors for generations to come. (Suweta, 2020)

### **Formulation Of The Problem**

1. To what extent is the effectiveness of existing regulations in controlling excessive tourism growth in Bali?
2. Is there an urgency to establish new regulations in facing the increasingly complex tourism challenges in Bali, especially regarding environmental, social, and cultural impacts?

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

The author employs a normative research method that is qualitative in nature with a conceptual approach. Normative research is a type of legal research methodology that employs a doctrinal approach that is normative in nature, with analysis based on relevant and applicable regulations in accordance with the issues raised. Comparison and regulations in this research. The author analyses opinions and legal writings to later review and gain an understanding and conclusions about the aspects of legality, morality, and legal accountability in the scope of overtourism in Bali.

In accordance with the title of the article, the author employs a conceptual approach, comparative analysis, and legislation to understand the principles used as the foundation for the creation of laws and the practice Tourism to address challenges over mass tourism in Bali. This research utilizes relevant primary, secondary, and tertiary legal sources related to the topic of discussion, which includes journals, written works, articles, theses, books, the Indonesian language dictionary, and legal dictionaries, by gathering information related to keywords associated with Overtourism

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### **To what extent is the effectiveness of existing regulations in controlling excessive tourism growth in Bali?**

The regulation of tourism in general includes the rights and obligations of actors as well as sustainable development regulated by Law Number 10 of 2009 on Tourism. This law also includes efforts to control the environmental impact of tourism, as regulated in Law Number 32 of 2009 concerning Environmental Protection and Management. The protection and preservation of cultural sites are regulated by Law Number 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage. Various regulations within this national scope demonstrate the state's efforts to preserve and maintain the environment and culture in the tourism sector. In addition, there is also Government Regulation Number 50 of 2011 concerning the National Tourism Development Master Plan (RIPPARNAS), which sets the direction and objectives for the development of the tourism sector systematically, sustainably, and competitively. Bali, as one of the national tourism destinations, is regulated in RIPPARNAS as a cultural tourism centre supported by various infrastructures and environmental preservation efforts.

More specifically, the Province of Bali has issued various regulations, including Bali Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2020 concerning the Standards for the Implementation of Balinese Cultural Tourism. This regulation contains standardization based on local wisdom and culture, as well as the principles of Tri Hita Karana (THK) and the local cultural values of Sad Kerthi (Wijaya & Permandhi, 2021).

In analyzing the implementation of Law Number 10 of 2009 on Tourism, according to the law, tourism is part of development. There is a framework that formulated the tourism charter at the World Conference on Sustainable Tourism in 1995, which was then used as a guideline in the principles outlined in Law Number 10 of 2009. One of its main principles is the development and advancement of tourism carried out based on local wisdom, reflecting the uniqueness and diversity of culture and environment. This is reflected in the regional regulations that govern the organization of tourism in the area (Rudy & Mayasari, 2019).

Furthermore, Bali Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2020 concerning the Standards for the Implementation of Balinese Cultural Tourism was established to address legal gaps and inconsistencies with previous policies and regulations. In this regional regulation, the participation of the community and traditional villages in the efforts to recover and manage tourism is explicitly emphasized. Several things that must be considered to ensure sustainable tourism development are as follows: first, the law aims to integrate and maintain the unity of the nation; second, the law must guarantee justice and protection for vulnerable groups to prevent exploitation; furthermore, the development of democratic law must remain in line with the nation's foundation and goals and eliminate elements of discrimination in nation-building and statehood.

It can be concluded that in the implementation of tourism in Indonesia, Law Number 10 of 2009 provides a general overview related to tourism management, while Bali Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2020 offers more specific guidelines oriented towards sustainability with a cultural basis. Although there is an overlap between Law No. 10 of 2009 and Bali Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2020, the implementation of this regional regulation has been quite active, although it still faces various challenges. In general, this regional regulation has been able to accommodate local wisdom values and provide more specific guidelines in tourism management according to needs. However, it is important to re-optimize the role of traditional villages and local communities, so that they do not only become objects but also the main subjects in tourism management. In addition, comprehensive monitoring and evaluation are needed to measure the success of local regulations and provide reports to the community. The integration between implementation and the applicable regional regulation also needs to be considered.

**Is there an urgency to establish new regulations in facing the increasingly complex tourism challenges in Bali, especially regarding environmental, social, and cultural impacts?**

In the context of increasingly complex tourism development, the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) theory proposed by Butler (1980) is used to analyze and understand the dynamics of tourist destination growth. This theory has become an important tool in designing sustainable tourism development strategies. TALC divides the stages of tourism destination development into seven phases, namely exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, decline, and rejuvenation. The exploration stage is the initial phase when an area is still natural and has not yet been touched by tourism development. The engagement stage emerges when tourists start to arrive, especially during the holiday season, and initial interactions occur between the local community and tourists. The development stage is marked by the increasing organization of the tourism market, as well as rising investments, including from foreign parties. The consolidation stage is the phase when growth begins to slow down

but the level of visits remains high. The stagnation stage occurs when a destination reaches saturation point and the negative impacts of tourism begin to be seen. Next, the decline stage shows a decrease in visits and a lack of innovation, while the rejuvenation stage is an effort to recover the destination through new strategies, such as marketing innovation or infrastructure revitalization.

The development stage is the most crucial phase, where tourism is rapidly growing and its management begins to involve collaboration between local communities and foreign investors. In this phase, mass tourism often occurs, which is a significant surge in the number of tourists that has the potential to cause overcapacity. Bali's tourism statistics for 2024 show an increase in the number of international tourists arriving by air by 20.21%, reflecting a significant surge that has a major impact on the environment, economy, and socio-cultural aspects (Bali, 2025). On the environmental side, Bali is facing serious degradation. One of the striking phenomena is plastic waste pollution, leading to the term "plastic apocalypse" to describe the critical condition caused by the accumulation of plastic waste that endangers ecosystems and public health. Tourism pressure also leads to the massive exploitation of water resources for the needs of hotels and villas, resulting in a significant decrease in groundwater reserves. If this continues, it could threaten the fulfilment of the basic needs of the local community.

Furthermore, the conversion of agricultural land to the tourism industry, such as cafes, villas, and hotels, has reduced green spaces and damaged natural habitats. Biodiversity is also threatened due to uncontrolled exploitation. The drastically increasing number of vehicles also causes traffic jams and air pollution due to emissions from motor vehicle fuel. From a religious aspect, there have been no significant changes to the spiritual practices of the Balinese community. However, from a cultural perspective, although most values and traditions are maintained, some aspects have experienced a degradation of meaning due to their adaptation to the needs of the tourism industry. In terms of morals and social values, economic pressure has tempted some members of society to engage in dishonest practices for greater profit, reflecting the erosion of values within the social order.

The local government's efforts to address the issue have been carried out through a number of regulations, such as Circular Letter Number 9 of 2025 on the Bali Clean Waste Movement, Bali Governor Regulation Number 47 of 2019 on business waste management, and Bali Governor Regulation Number 97 of 2018 on reducing the use of single-use plastics. A waste management task force has also been formed as a step for supervision and law enforcement. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of this policy still faces challenges on the ground, especially due to the lack of supervision over business practices and the low awareness of business actors in complying with the applicable regulations.

Seeing the surge in the number of tourists that triggers overcapacity, the need for new regulations has become increasingly urgent. The continuously declining environmental quality, such as water and air pollution, indicates that existing policies are not yet effective enough in addressing the challenges of sustainable tourism. Moreover, local communities often feel marginalized from the economic benefits of tourism, and their low participation in decision-making indicates the need for a more inclusive and equitable approach. The commercialization of tourism also impacts the erosion of local culture, where traditional wisdom is often sidelined in favor of short-term economic interests (Dewi, 2023).

Therefore, the ideal new regulations for the tourism sector in Bali should adopt an environmental, social, and cultural-based approach. Several steps that need to be

considered include increasing local community participation in the planning and management of tourist destinations, implementing stricter environmental standards for businesses—including the obligation to prepare an Environmental Impact Analysis (AMDAL)—as well as a sustainable waste management system. In addition, educational programs are needed for tourists and industry players about the importance of preserving the environment and local culture as part of the tourism experience. To ensure the effectiveness of the policy, it is also important to establish a transparent monitoring and evaluation system to assess the impact of the new regulations and their ability to adapt to social, economic, and environmental changes.

## **CONCLUSION**

The growth of the tourism sector in Bali over the past few decades has made a significant contribution to regional income and community welfare. The natural beauty and cultural richness of Bali have become the main attractions that draw millions of tourists every year. However, the phenomenon of overtourism has caused serious impacts that cannot be ignored, both on the environment, the social order of the community, and the sacred local cultural values.

From an environmental perspective, the increase in the number of tourists has led to massive exploitation of natural resources, such as groundwater crises due to excessive use by the accommodation sector, an increase in waste volume, especially plastic waste, and the conversion of green land into commercial areas. This phenomenon threatens the sustainability of Bali's ecosystem and increases the risk of ecological disasters.

Socially and economically, the dominance of large investors and capital owners from outside the region creates an imbalance in the distribution of economic benefits. Local communities tend to only play the role of low wage labourers, without adequate access to strategic decision-making in the tourism industry. This exacerbates social inequality and creates a sense of marginalization among the indigenous Balinese community. From a cultural perspective, the commercialization of art, ceremonies, and local customs done to meet tourist expectations has reduced the spiritual meaning and cultural identity of the Balinese people. Rituals and traditional performances are often staged not for their sacred value, but merely as objects of spectacle.

Although national and regional regulations such as Law Number 10 of 2009 and Bali Provincial Regulation Number 5 of 2020 have provided a sufficiently adequate legal framework, their implementation is still not optimal. The factors of weak supervision, low awareness among business actors, and minimal participation from the local community are the main obstacles to the effectiveness of these regulations.

Considering the complexity of the issue, new regulations that are more integrative and adaptive are needed. This regulation must be able to respond to the dynamics of social change, maintain environmental sustainability, and ensure social justice and cultural preservation. In addition, enhancing institutional capacity, educating tourists, and strengthening the role of indigenous communities in tourism management are important aspects in the design of future policies. With comprehensive regulations based on local values, Bali is not only able to maintain its position as a world class tourist destination but also to preserve the harmony between humans, nature, and culture in accordance with the principles of Tri Hita Karana.

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