Case Study
"SALAK PONDOH"[1] AGROTOURISM: A MOUNT MERAPI GREEN BELT[2]

Setiyono Miharjo
Hargo Utomo

Master of Management Program, Faculty of Economics & Business
Universitas Gadjah Mada

"*Among the good deeds that are desirable in God's eyes are teaching and planting trees"*

Most people in Indonesia are already familiar with salak, especially "salak pondoh", a variant of salak or snake fruit that is grown and developed in the District of Sleman, Special Province of Yogyakarta. Salak pondoh is getting more and more popular because it tastes sweeter than the other types of salak found in other provinces in Indonesia such as Sumatra, Java, and Bali. Nowadays when people hear the word "Salak Pondoh", they will instantly accredit it to the special snake fruit from Sleman, Yogyakarta. One of the villages in the District of Sleman that is now known as the main producer of Salak Pondoh is Bangunkerto.

[1] Salak Pondoh is a variant of "Salak" (**Latin:** *Salacca zalacca*). Salak is also known as "snake fruit" because of its skin. In this case, the term "Salak Pondoh" and snake fruit are used interchangeably.

[2] We thank Willy Abdillah for his assistance in the development of this case.

The popularity of Bangunkerto village as the production center for Salak Pondoh cannot be separated from the role of a man named Sudibyo. Sudibyo was born and raised in the village of Bangunkerto. He is probably the only graduate among the few villagers who attended university. He pursues his career as both a dentist and a professor at his almamater.

As a dentist, Sudibyo has served the needs of dental care in his community over the years. According to Sudibyo, serving the community is a need for his soul. His heart lightens up if people come to him when in need for his help either as a dentist or a lecturer. In fact, since earlier in his career as a dentist, he has never applied any rate for his patients who are mostly traditional farmers. The patients pay voluntarily and it is not out of the ordinary if they pay with agricultural products.

It was also for the same reason that Sudibyo invited the people in his village to develop themselves and improve their living standards. He encouraged people in the village of Bangunkerto to turn to his farming methods to increase the snake fruit productivity. Efforts are pursued through soil cultivation in the areas to make the land filled with greenish snake fruit plantation. The decision to promote “Salak Pondoh” as a distinguished variant of snake fruit did in fact make a big change in the lives of the Bangunkerto people. According to Sudibyo, among the good deeds that are desirable in God’s eyes are teaching and planting trees.

Bangunkerto Village at Glance

Aside from being a producer of agricultural, livestock, and suppliers of several kinds of handicrafts, Sleman regency is full of attractive tourist potential. One of the most unique countryside villages in the Sleman Regency that attracts many nature explorers is Bangunkerto which is located around 30 kilometers north of the city of Yogyakarta at the slope of Mount Merapi. The majority of the villagers work as both rice or crops field farmers and snake fruit cultivators.

According to Sugianto, a local resident in the Bangunkerto village, the Dutch colony authority started the snake fruit plantations in the region. He recalled that in 1935 the villagers received a gift of snake fruit trees as well as a set of carved furniture from the Dutch colony authority through the village local chief. It was an expression of gratitude and farewell, to the local people who worked in a cigarette factory in the Sleman Regency.

Later on, the snake fruit plant, which is closely related with the coconut plant, was began to be cultivated. "Well, it started with just a few snake fruit plants. Now, it has grown into thousands of hectares of snake fruit plantation" said a man who owns a 1000 square meters salak plantation. The name “Pondoh” according to Arfan Fachruddin, another resident of Bangunkerto, was derived from the coconut plant. "Pondoh is the name of the tip end of palm trees’ trunks that has a sour-sweet taste," he said, "Because of their similar taste, people then referred to their variant of snake fruit as “Salak Pondoh”, to distinguish it from other kinds of snake fruits."

As the largest snake fruit producer in Java, it is no wonder that there are hundreds of hectares of registered Salak Pondoh plantation in the village of Bangunkerto. Carpet of this prickly plant stretches wide and deep, almost covering the villager’s homes, can be seen from the road to the village. Along the streets which can be easily passed by trucks, the snake fruit vendors line up their crop. Some showcase

their merchandise in traditional huts, while others, usually young village women, offer it directly using a 'bakul' (basket made of woven bamboo) to every visitor they met.

The Development of Snake Fruit Plantation in Bangunkerto

Snake fruit plantation is one of the traditional plants cultivated by the people of Bangunkerto village and other surounding villages at the foot of Mount Merapi, Yogyakarta. Local snake fruit seedlings are the kind that have been grown and bred since the early development of the villages. However, because of the unoptimal result, snake fruit plantation could not yet be the population's mainstay of livelihood in the region. In addition, the region's *regosol* soil type, which is poor in nutrients, caused the traditional snake fruit cultivation even less optimal.

The Salak Pondoh plantation development was an expansion of the seeding and planting methods used by a non-profit community. Seeding was the gateway for early salak pondoh development, since at that time (circa 1970s) salak pondoh seeds were still rare and expensive. Thanks to the helping hand of the local government that came up with a revolving seed lending system, the community was able to start cultivating salak pondoh seeds. The method then was accelerated by a revolving seed system development in transplanted seedlings. This system was able to produce as many as 10-15 seeds for each seed provided by the government. This has much greater advantage than the traditional one, namely: seed development systems with seed transplants and cuttings (planting some of the parent tree that was cut). Not only does it give the people a choice of more superior seedling, this revolving seed method has also accelerated the spread of salak seedlings en masse. However, at that time, this method also had the potential of causing the superior snake fruit seedlings to fall into the hands of the outsiders who might exploit the situation if there was no strict monitoring from the local government

The local government seed relief efforts would have never succeeded if it was not supported by a strong participation of all communities. The biggest obstacle faced by the communities around the slopes of Mount Merapi has been the geographical conditions, especially the soil condition. *Regosol* soil type which is not suitable as agricultural and plantations soil is the main issue that has yet to resolve. Meanwhile, the attention and the assistance of the local goverment were not the solution to the problems. Therefore, it was not surprising that the surrounding fertile region was overgrown by hard-type plants, *such as acacia, petai, guava and wood-producing plants, and shrubs*.

It was Sudibyo who developed a method of land preparation and planting system. He experimented and converted most of the slopes of Mount Merapi into a salak pondoh plantation area. The land treatment system that was developed by Sudibyo (and taught to the entire community around the slopes of Mount Merapi) is soil cultivation system using the compost fertilizer.

Regosol soil type, which is made from sand and gravel, has a distinctive character. It is lack of nutrients and not capable to withstand water. In the rainy season, landslides easily erode regosol soil; while in the dry season, this soil type is not able to reserve the rainwater. This condition will almost guarantee that all types of plants will die if they are planted on the regosol soil during dry seasons.

The land treatment system is conducted by infusing compost nutrients into the regosol soil as deep as 1 - 1.5 meters. This procedure is carried out before the *regosol*

land is cultivated. Compost fertilizers are derived from goat manure as it has the best nutrient elements-than the other types of compost. This system provides agricultural development synergy around the slopes of Merapi because a lot of farmers also owned Etawa goat farms that produced milk, meat and manure as fertilizer.

Land treatment system can be done by providing non-organic fertilizers such as urea or HCL. However, using compost fertilizer has the benefit of better land-nutrient elements. In addition, goat manure compost maintains the balance of nature because it does not generate negative externalities from the use of chemical elements from non-organic fertilizers. This type of land treatment system optimizes the continuous production of the salak pondoh crop. Besides better quality of fruits, long-term sustainability of snake fruit plants is also guaranteed. In fact, snake fruit plantation has managed to cover most of the Mount Merapi slopes so as to preserve the environment while improving the welfare of the community. Multiplier effects of these activities are not merely business matters, but also the development of salak pondoh agrotourism which could give added value to the society through the innovation of this type of snake fruit.

Sudibyo's Experiment of Salak Pondoh

Neither a botanist nor an agriculture expert that made salak pondoh plantation area, which later became Agro region, possible - but a dentistry professor named Sudibyo. Aside from his educational background, the professor has actually had the experience of developing snake fruit plant since junior high school (about 1958). In his experiences, he managed to deal with various problems at his parents' snake fruit garden. He found a way to move the plants without killing them.

In later developments, Sudibyo began to invite local people to cultivate special type of snake fruit called "salak pondoh". Although initially there were some doubts because they had to put aside other plants; they eventually followed Sudibyo's advice. Gradually, this activity became the local community distinctiveness; and ultimately Sudibyo sparked the idea to establish the region as Salak Pondoh Agrotourism in 1988. The agrotourism itself was officially opened in 1994.

Impelled by the environmental conditions that were not fully agriculturally supportive, Sudibyo's family, together with the communities, started to develop a superior species of snake fruit seedlings. However, the limited resources had compelled the people to depend on natural conditions. Although it was fortunate that the government stepped in to help them by providing high quality seeds of salak pondoh, the policy itself was unable to completely solve the problems of agriculture and social welfare in the communities.

Since his early childhood, Sudibyo is used to doing experiment in the snake fruit cultivation. Since the third grade, he has already started to help his parents cultivating snake fruit. During primary school, he had managed to find a snake fruit transplanting method. This method was then adopted by all snake fruit farmers; which later has successfully been developed en masse in almost all parts of the slopes of Mount Merapi.

Sudibyo's love for snake fruit was distracted by his busy life as a student in the dentistry school at Universitas Gadjah Mada. As a village boy, his success in completing dentistry education was considered an extraordinary achievement; not only for his family, but also for all communities in Bangunkerto and its surrounding

villages. However, the peasants' blood running in his vein invoked Sudibyo's soul and spirit as a farmer. This can be seen in his efforts to develop the village and improve the community welfare.

Sudibyo's effort to rebuild his village re-emerged while he was working as a dentist. He noticed the lack of improvements in the socio-economic conditions and the surrounding village communities. He felt that the government had not yet put optimal attention to the development of rural communities. He was dissapointed to see the government's half-hearted efforts in building the village. Driven by these conditions, Sudibyo was determined to improve the welfare of the society using the community existing resources.

The efforts to improve the rural communities' welfare had not been easy. The natural geographical conditions, the availability of financial resources, and building a shared awareness had become a challenge for Sudibyo. He realized that the sustainability of community development could not be left entirely in the government's hands; the development process would never start if they were to wait for the government. Sudibyo believed that one's fate would never change without one's effort to change it. Therefore, Sudibyo started his development mission by building community awareness.

Building community awareness had also been difficult. A consistently high awareness and determination should have started from an individual. Sudibyo was grateful that he came from a family that was well known to public. His profession as a dentist could also allow him to be a role model for the village community. The status of his uncle as the chief of the Bangunkerto village and his own high level of community activities involvement had become a strong foundation to launch his mission in building community awareness.

For Sudibyo, the community awareness development is a part of his personal mission inherented in the religious values that he adhered firmly. "Islam has taught us to spread good deeds to the faithfuls. One of the primary good deeds is the development of science. Community awareness development should be based on the dissemination of both religious and scientific knowledge," said Sudibyo. By conducting a series of social activities, which are mostly in the form of religious activities, Sudibyo started to build community awareness and encourage them to work together to rebuild their village.

The first program undertaken by Sudibyo was not the snake fruit cultivation but the development of the road infrastructure. Sudibyo believed that road infrastructure is the lifeblood of rural development. The communities would have enjoyed the follow-up effects of development, if only rural transportation had been easy to access by the public.

Sudibyo convinced people to work together to build the village roads. He insisted that they must not wait for the government's assistance. He considered that the government has a lot of homework to do and not all the problems in the village community are a priority for the government.

Sudibyo's brilliant idea to build village roads received positive response from the community. However, those efforts were not fully effective because the moral support must be accompanied by real participation. Sudibyo realized that the development of the road infrastructure required immense resources. Therefore, he was aware that the relatively poor people of his village could not be forced to fund the

village road development. To leverage existing resources in the village, Sudibyo initiated the process by giving stimuli in the form of private funding for truck transportation rental service. He suggested that the needs of rock and sand could be derived from the surrounding nature (residual rocks of Mount Merapi) while he was trying to get asphalt and seeking support from the local governments. Sudibyo's efforts bear fruits; the stimuli could provoke the spirit of the whole community to be involved in the development process. The whole community eventually participated both morally and materially. The communities voluntarily processed natural stones and sand to be made base for the village roads. Mothers, children and village women had worked on breaking stones alternately which lasts until midnight. Fathers and village youths joined hands in contributing according to their abilities and eventually managed to build the roads.

Along with the construction of thevillage roads, Sudibyo started to teach the public about how to cultivate salak pondoh; ranging from the land preparation to the harvest methods. The major contribution he gave to the farming community was the method of land preparation (soil cultivation). This method is a great solution to overcome the classical problems faced with the regosol soil type around the slopes of Merapi. Thanks to this method, Sudibyo successfully cultivated the entire region of the Mount Merapi slopes with salak plants. In addition to providing an economic added value, salak plantation is also capable of greening the barren region, not only in the village of Bangunkerto but also for all the districts in Sleman and Yogyakarta province in general.

In accordance with the values upheld by Sudibyo, the main good deed of men - in addition to the teaching of science - is to plant crops. He believed that the vegetation planting would provide significant benefits for all humans. Not only will it generate the economic added value but also preserve the human life for present and future. Therefore, no wonder that the salak plantation that extends around the slopes of Mount Merapi could become a green belt that serves as the lungs of the world.

Rural developments carried out by Sudibyo were not just limited to physical construction such as village roads and salak plantations. Mental-spiritual developments were also conducted because he believed that a physical development would be sustainable if it has a strong mental-spiritual development as its foundation. Therefore, efforts to preserve social values and religion in the environmental community of Bangunkerto and surrounding villages remain a priority to Sudibyo. He regularly discusses, shares knowledge and builds *silaturrahmi* to the entire community. These efforts create good impacts for the simultaneous development mission he had run. Not only that it can improve the intellectual level of the community, but the mental-spiritual development effort becomes a method for developing highly effective social control. For example, there is no guardrail or fences for every salak plantation owned by a given society. As a mutually caring community, the security of the plantation is a shared responsibility. The public commits no crimes because they recognize the ownership rights of others and it is an act of sin. Crimes committed by outsiders will have severe social sanctions. Those examples will later become a lesson for the public to continue raising their mental-spiritual awareness.

Sudibyo realized that the Community-based efforts to improve community welfare would not stop at the production process (i.e. land preparation to harvesting) but would still continue on to the crop management issues. To maintain the sustainability of the development efforts, Sudibyo started a functioning cooperative to

manage all activities in the value chain: from providing seeds to harvesting crop. The cooperative acts as a facilitator in the crop selling process to middlemen (the mediators). The results of these collective sales will help to maintain price stability and protect people from unhealthy price competition. The cooperative will also help to manage public funds to be channeled in productive activities for the cultivation of salak. Obviously, the fulfillment of basic needs of society, like the need for food, clothing and education contribute to the attention of the cooperative activities. Today, the cooperative has been established in every region in Sleman.

Initially, the cooperative was centralized in the Bangunkerto village. But after the deployment of snake fruit plantation which spread evenly across the region of the Mount Merapi slopes, each region has now had a cooperative that manages the activities in the region itself. Thus, it can be concluded that Sudibyo's vision to develop and improve the welfare of 2000 heads of families and the rural-based communities has resulted in an economic and social success. Not only that, salak pondoh agricultural development was also able to improve the quality of the environment by creating a circle of green belt along the slopes of Mount Merapi.

Salak Pondoh Agrotourism Development

Bangunkerto Village is currently popular as an agrotourism area. Local village officials, together with the Tourism Office of the Sleman Regency, are responsible for managing the agriculture tourism areas. Bangunkerto Salak Pondoh Agrotourism (AWSPB) has a land area covering 27 hectares. Not only that it produces Salak Pondoh, the plantation itself attracts thousands of visitors from the nearby cities, major cities in Central Java, East Java, Jakarta, and even from outside Java each month.

According to Arfan Fachrudin, the AWSPB Section Head, they are not only planting the salak pondoh variant, but also dozens of other salak species such as *salak lumut* and *salak madu* - that tastes very sweet. In addition, they also cultivate salak gading, which is characterized by its ivory-yellow skin. These various types of fruit - harvested three times a year – have then become a unique charm and special attraction for tourists.

To visit the agrotourism, visitors only need to pay one thousand rupiah per person. However, the price is only for the front area of the agrotourism. To be able to get into the inner garden and to get additional facilities, visitors must pay a ticket for Rp. 6.000 per person. With that extra charge, visitors are also free to eat as much salak as they like directly from the tree. Visitors are also free to choose their preferred type of salak. "This is one of the most exciting parts of the agrotourism in Bangukerto: picking and eating salak as much as you like inside the garden," said Arfan Jurugan who lives in the Jurugan Village, not far from his workplace.

Besides the fruits, salak plant seeds are also sold to public. For salak tree seedlings, per stem is sold for only Rp2.500. Seeds can be planted directly because it is about a year old. According to Arfan, if the snake fruit plant is treated correctly, in a period of three years, it can produce fruits. The unique characteristics of salak pondoh are brownish black skin and a distinctive sweet taste.

For the Bangunkerto residents, December is the crop's peak time. According to Sugianto, during the rainy season salak trees will grow rapidly and produce abundant harvest. The great harvest that occurs at the end of the year can make salak

prices go down to around Rp2.000-3.000 per kg. The second harvest will take place in April. "The highest prices, between seven to ten thousand rupiah, usually come about in the summer around August," added Sugianto. The high prices in that month are actually in line with the number of the existing production. "During summer, fruit production declines," he asserted.

Salak is also a mainstay for the population in some other villages in the District of Turi. Thousands of square meters of land area are capable of packing 500 trunks. One salak tree will contain approximately 4-5 bunches which yield about two kilograms of salak per bunch. It is then no wonder that the salak cultivation could become the mainstay of livelihood for the majority of villagers.

Although located deep inside remote hills, the road to Bangunkerto is not so difficult to travel to. Visitors can get there by bus from Umbulharjo terminal in no time but they have to be careful not to get off at the wrong place. They would have to alight first at the Murangan Hospital in the Sleman District. From there they should precede using angkot at a rate of a thousand rupiah per person up to the destination.

Bangunkerto is not like any other tourist destination. We would not find an official area for camping, let alone a restaurant. Visitors can stay overnight at the villagers homes. Because it has not been managed like homestays in general, the villagers would not charge a dime. However, servings of hot tea, light crop food and the friendly words decorate their conversation with every guest who comes. Peace seems near, while enjoying a simple life of rural communities.

In addition to the condition of well-maintained ecosystems, Turi agrotourism region has become special because of its Salak Pondoh. It is lovely how thousands of salak pondoh plants were arranged in such a way in the Turi agrotourism region. Tourists can witness the uniqueness of salak pondoh plants which shapes resemble palm trees at the top.

In the agrotourism region which lies at an altitude of 200 meters above sea level, accompanied by experienced guides, tourists can enjoy salak pondoh, handpicked from the plantation. Meat on the fruit that grows on the roots of this plant is very sweet and not attached to the seeds such as fruits in general. Furthermore, while enjoying the cool air in this area, tourists can continue their journey in a particular garden which is the symbol of the agrotourism, called the *Nusantara Garden*. In these two hectares of garden, the tourists will be invited to witness the 17 species of salak plants. These 17 types of snake fruits include *salak super pondoh, salak pondoh yellow, salak pondoh hitam, salak condet, salak manggala, salak gading, salak bali, salak semeru, and salak tanonjaya.* In addition to the fruit garden, guides will also bring tourists to observe some herbal medicinal plants such as ginger, turmeric, blimbing wuluh, kencur, and various other traditional herbal plants that are also constantly being cultivated.

Besides displaying the beauty of the fruits universe, the agrotourism area also provides other facilities, i.e. swimming pool, fishing pond, paddle boat on the pond, and playground for children. If people want to bring few souvenirs back home, the agrotourism stores provide many unique and traditional foods. One of them is the snake fruit chip that has become one of the breakthroughs; a byproduct to cope with the excess production which is also pioneered by Sudibyo. Chips are derived from the dried salak pondoh.

Sudibyo himself is known as the public figure who initiated the salak pondoh development area, which eventually becomes an agrotourism area. Therefore, exploring the nature does not necessarily be in-and-out of the woods or up-and-down the mountains. We could just do a mild adventure down the corner of the countrysides and there we can enjoy the unique natural and cultural life of village community.

Besides the snake fruit cultivation, which has resulted in many social economic benefits for the community, other effort that could provide more value for society is the agrotourism of salak pondoh. The initiator of the snake fruit agrobusiness development is also Sudibyo. He noticed that the government's attention towards the village would not be effective without any sensational exposure which could also improved the image and popularity of the government.

Soedibyo started the Salak Pondoh agrotourism development by cultivating the sugarcane plantation which was owned by his parents as the salak plantation and transforming it into a tourist arena. He formed his own organization in the cooperative with the government on district level and asked the local community leaders to develop and manage the agrotourism business. He initiated the agrotourism development by building salak garden and fishponds at the tourist sites. He then steadily built the other facilities.

Salak Pondoh agrotourism at the Bangunkerto village is the pioneer in the agroindustrial development in Yogyakarta. The management was set by promoting personnels, by the village officials, to manage the area. The revenues earned from the agrotourism business were distributed back collectively to the community. After deducting for the operating cost, the remaining funds were then used for the road infrastructure development, irrigation, provision of seeds and salak farming facilities.

Since the beginning of its development, the incomplete facilities have not been a barrier to prevent this tourist attraction to go public. In each and every occasion, the former Regent of Sleman, Mr. Arifin Ilyas, was proud to introduce the agrotourism. "We want Salak Pondoh Agrotourism to be a haven for tourists heading to the Prambanan Temple and Borobudur Temple," he said at one point. The Regent's determination received full support from the people who lived in those locations.

Since the tourists'arrival, some people have started to feel the impact of the sale of salak or of other foods around that place. The construction of supporting facilities such as the village roads were also paved smoothly. WASP (Salak Pondoh Agrotourism Region) was inaugurated as a tourist attraction back in 1990. The name was chosen for its main asset, which is the cultivation of Salak Pondoh. In Yogyakarta, this was then a new attraction for tourists.

Visiting the location of WASP, the eyes and mind will soon be ambushed by the typical rural atmosphere. Houses with wide yards and salak trees are scattered in every corner. In certain places, there are residents who open small kiosks, offering fruits and snacks. "Foreign tourists prefer to look for salak directly at the house yards," said Sudibyo.

WASP is divided into few sub zones. There are 17 hectares of core zone, which is equipped with various additional facilities, including lodgings, fishing ponds, and stage performances. Outside the core zone there is an area of 60 hectares of village tourism.

WASP area is like an ordinary village with its homes and daily activities, but is arranged in such an interesting way. In this tourist village, tourists can watch the

salak cultivation process, from planting to harvesting. Not only that, tourists can also find parts of the settlements and fruit orchards (other than salak pondoh) covering 633 hectares there.

Improvements to the WASP's infrastructure have continued at an excellent rate. Three years ago the village road was still rocky; but now it is covered with smooth asphalt. The traffic is increasingly crowded, especially with the opening of the Turi-Tempel transportation routes. The presence of the routes made WASP prospects even more promising. According to Sudibyo, WASP can be incorporated into a Prambanan and Borobudur temple tour packages. Tourists visiting the Prambanan temple can continue their journey to Borobudur through the WASP region. The same route will apply to tourists from Borobudur who would like to go to Prambanan. That is why the WASP development is not concentrated only at the core zone, but will be extended to the tourist villages. "We want tourists who passed by to be able to enjoy the unique scenery," said Sudibyo.

The villages nearby are now experiencing a huge facelift: the hedges are now neatly made, the boards clues scattered everywhere, and small stalls decorated with ornaments are put up. If we look at it at a glance, it would look like as if the village is greeting the arrival of goverment officials. However, the effort itself is planned not to damage the local social and economic patterns. Development of tourism village will retain the original patterns and shapes both in layout and appearance of its architecture. Village layout will be adapted to the requirements of environmental health and environmental use of the yard by planting productive plants. Some unirrigated lands are still managed by the residents to become tourist destinations as a supporter of the core zone.

The development of rural tourist destination is intended to extend the length of tourists stay. To realize this kind of tourist village, sub-village groups are incorporated into the agrotourism area with a primary focus as fruit tourist villages. Additional fruits to be planted at the site include rambutan, durian, mango, duku, petai, langsem, and so on and so forth. According to Sudibyo, to further increase the attractiveness of WASP, it should be equipped with bonsai garden, orchid garden, and probably also a bird market. A museum might also be included in this development plan. "In addition, we need to build a restaurant that provides food for domestic and foreign tourists," he said. However, Sudibyo explained that the active role of the government through relevant agencies at the local government of Sleman would become a prerequisite for the sustainability of WASP.

After a decade, the current management of WASP was handed over to private parties. Nugroho, one of the Bangunkerto native villagers, described that WASP management has been fully handed over to a third party. This happened because of the inability of the district officials to manage them directly. Sadly, the current management does not have the same commitment as the founding fathers. Many complaints from travelers begin to appear, ranging from poor physical facilities available to the unoptimal services. Sudibyo stated, "I'm not interested in managing the WASP back, not because that I love my homeland no more, but because of the age and time boundaries". Sudibyo is hoping not only for a more responsive government, but also the other stakeholders to have a shared responsibility in the WASP development. Sudibyo is optimistic that if there are investors who are able to professionally manage the WASP, it will recreate portraits of WASP as he had aspired in the early development.

Salak Pondoh Thanksgiving Traditions: The Other Side of the Unique Bangunkerto Culture.

Almost every December and January, the salak farmers in the Turi District, Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta, celebrate the great harvest. To express a sense of gratitude for God-given grace, the people perform a thanksgiving tradition. The tradition, carried out by thousands of farmers in the area of Somohitan Agro tourism in Girikerto Village, Turi District, Sleman Regency, is marked by the Javanese ritual of *gunungan* salak paraded through the village on the last Friday of the month. During the celebration the whole village gathers for a feast and they enjoy the jathilan arts performed by elementary school children. Guests who attended the celebration will get one free *kreneng* (basket) containing 5 kgs of salak pondoh. Edi Widiyanto, one of the local salak farmers, said, "Most of the people here has salak garden and harvest the salak twice a year."

Sukardi, a Bangunkerto villager, who owns 2 hectares of salak garden, claims that he can earn Rp3 million at harvest time. He said that he was proud that he was able to send his seven children to schools from his side business as a salak farmer. "From my seven children, five of them go to college," said the retired elementary school teacher.

The local religious leader, Y. Suyatno Pr., explained that the salak pondoh harvest thanksgiving tradition has been practiced since three years ago. "As believers, we should be thankful for receiving His grace. One of the characteristics of being faithful is being thankful," he said.

Edi and Sukardi, residents of Daleman Village, said that in the great harvest seasons the salak pondoh prices tumbled. At most, salak prices could reach Rp4.000 until Rp5.000 per kilograms. However, in the harvest season farmers could only sell them for Rp1.000 - Rp2.000 per kilograms from normally Rp2.500 until Rp3.000 per kilograms. To overcome this, the function of the cooperative as a facilitator plays an important role to maintain price stability and protect the interests of the farmers.

In general, the residents feel that the harvest season is the time when they enjoy the results of their hardwork and to be grateful. Salak Pondoh development together with its various agrotourism potential will not only provide financial benefits to the community, but will also create a form of genuine cultural traditions which eventually will grow to be a strong social resource advantage.

Case Questions:

1. What are the factors that drove Sudibyo to socialize salak pondoh cultivation system which later grew into an agrotourism attraction?
2. Why did Sudibyo choose to do community-based activities while he actually had a chance to run a commercial business model? Identify the values that he believes that drove him to accomplish his mission.
3. Describe the methods and approaches taken by Sudibyo to develop Mount Merapi Green Belt?
4. What challenges and opportunities faced by Sudibyo in developing "Salak Pondoh" Agrotourism Area (WASP)? Why is WASP, the pioneer of agrotourism industry in Indonesia, decreasing progressively? Identify the problems faced in the WASP management!

5. Identify the characteristics inherent in social business activities undertaken by Sudibyo!