

The Village Economy: An Intrinsic Analysis of Two Kiput Villages in Marudi District

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses the village economies of two Kiput villages in the Marudi District, examining the relationship between traditional practices, resource utilisation, and modern economic forces. Using qualitative research methodologies, the study reveals the distinct socioeconomic systems, cultural values, and livelihoods that constitute these communities. Agricultural methods, local trade dynamics, and community-based resource management are among the key areas of inquiry. The findings demonstrate the Kiput people's inherent resilience and adaptation in balancing customary traditions with external economic demands, sustaining sustained livelihoods while preserving cultural legacy. This approach contributes significantly to the broader discussion of rural economies and indigenous development in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, it emphasises the significance of combining ancient wisdom with modern economic tactics in order to promote resilience. By investigating these complex links, policymakers might design more effective measures that promote both economic growth and cultural preservation in similar areas.

Keywords: Village economy, agriculture, Subsistence farming, Fishing, Marudi, Kiput community

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to explore the intrinsic analysis of the economic structures, practices, and social dynamics of a village economy in the 21st century. The intrinsic analysis of the village economy focused on two Kiput villages in the Marudi District in Sarawak. By focusing on unique economic activities, resources, and cultural practices that are specific to these Kiput communities, the study seeks to uncover the underlying principles and localized factors that shape their economic lives. This article is valuable for understanding how traditional and subsistence-orientated economies function, as well as how these villages adapt to external pressures or influences. Additionally, the research highlights the importance of community resilience and innovation in the face of changing environmental conditions and market demands. By examining the interplay between local traditions and modern economic challenges, the study provides insights into sustainable development practices that could benefit similar communities worldwide. However, some critics may argue that focusing on traditional practices will overlook the potential benefits of modernization and technological advancement, which can offer new opportunities for economic growth. Furthermore, there is a concern that highlighting resilience might inadvertently romanticize the struggles of these communities, potentially ignoring the urgent need for systemic change and support from larger economic frameworks. Yet, there is a need to explore societies or communities living in the periphery of large cities with huge economies. This is because, according to data from the United Nations, the overall trend points toward continued urbanization: as of 2023, approximately 43 percent of the world's population resides in rural areas. As urban centres expand, it becomes increasingly important to address the disparities faced by those in rural regions who often lack access to essential resources and opportunities. Understanding the dynamics of these communities can inform more equitable policies and initiatives that bridge the gap between urban prosperity and rural disadvantage.

The village economy refers to the economic activities and systems that exist within a rural or small-scale community. Although people often use the terms "rural" and "village" interchangeably, their meanings can vary depending on the context and country. Both refer to areas outside urban areas and share similarities in economies. However, distinctions between rural and village economies can vary significantly across countries and within

regions. The terms are not universally defined and can be context-specific. "Rural" and "village" are not universally defined, and their meanings can be context-specific. In some cases, the differences between the two may be subtle or practically non-existent.

However, the village or rural economy typically involves the production, consumption, and exchange of goods and services within the village or its immediate surroundings. The village possesses a variety of resources, including natural resources, local authority, local wisdom, and village funds. Most of the world's poor and nearly half of humanity live and work in villages. Most of their production and consumption activities take place in small units, such as households. In spite of this, these units do not behave in isolation from one another. In the factor and commodity markets, village households interact with each other to create local income linkages and general equilibrium feedbacks. Village institutions shape these interactions. Economic linkages and feedbacks alter the quantitative and qualitative effects of policy, market, and environmental changes on rural economies (Oktarina and Nababan 2020). These institutions, which may include cooperatives, social networks, and informal agreements, play a crucial role in facilitating cooperation and resource sharing among households. Consequently, understanding the dynamics of these interactions is essential for policymakers aiming to develop effective strategies that enhance rural resilience and promote sustainable development.

In a village economy, the primary economic activities often revolve around non-subsistence fishing¹ or agriculture, as many rural communities rely on farming and livestock raising for sustenance and income. Villagers may cultivate crops, rear livestock, and engage in fishing or forestry activities to meet their basic needs and generate surplus for trade or sale.

Village economies tend to be localized and self-sufficient to a certain extent or degree. The villagers may produce and consume most of their goods within the community, minimizing their dependence on external markets. Local craftspeople and artisans may contribute to the economy by producing handmade products, such as textiles, pottery, or handicrafts. Trade and exchange within a village economy usually involve barter or the use of local currencies. Villagers exchange their surplus agricultural products or handicrafts with one another based on mutual needs and preferences. Traditional marketplaces or periodic fairs often serve as meeting points for villagers to trade and sell their goods (ibid.). These gatherings not only facilitate the exchange of goods but also strengthen community ties and foster a sense of collaboration among villagers. As a result, the local economy thrives through these interpersonal connections and shared resources.

However, with the influence of modernisation and globalization, village economies have evolved in some regions. The integration of transportation networks, improved communication technologies, and access to external markets have enabled some villagers to participate in regional or national economies. This may involve selling agricultural produce to urban markets, engaging in off-farm employment opportunities, or establishing small-scale industries in the village. As a result, many communities are witnessing an enhancement in their overall quality of life, with increased income levels and better access to education and healthcare. Nonetheless, this transformation also brings challenges, such as maintaining cultural identity and managing the environmental impacts of increased economic activity. These challenges require careful consideration and balanced approaches to ensure that economic growth does not come at the expense of cultural heritage or environmental sustainability. Communities must navigate these complexities to achieve a harmonious development that benefits both their residents and the surrounding ecosystem.

Overall, a village economy is characterized by its close-knit nature, where social relationships, traditional practices, and natural resources play vital roles in shaping economic activities. It is often influenced by the specific cultural, geographical, and historical contexts of the village and its surrounding region. These contextual factors not only dictate available resources and skills but also foster a unique identity that can affect trade, labour, and communal support within the economy. Consequently, understanding these influences is essential for comprehending how village economies operate and evolve over time.

¹Non-subsistence fishing in these villages (study areas) is not commercial or recreational. However, if there are surpluses, the villagers often sell them to earn money for other essentials or necessities at home. It can be vital for food security, preserving communal customs, and establishing social networks.

Problem Statement

In many rural areas, the economy is essentially agricultural, with little diversification into other sectors. This has resulted in low revenue levels, a reliance on uncertain weather patterns, and limited access to modern farming practices. The absence of infrastructure, such as roads, electricity, and educational institutions, exacerbates the problem.

The researcher's pilot study, conducted prior to the main data collection, revealed that the residents of the two villages had limited access to financial services and markets, which prevented them from obtaining fair prices for their produce, thereby stifling economic growth. This, in turn, has a negative impact on their quality of life. Limited access to financial services and markets restricts the villagers' agricultural growth and ability to sell their produce at competitive prices, leading to lower income levels or stagnation. Subsequently, this economic stagnation adversely affects their overall well-being and living standards. Without a comprehensive strategy for increasing agricultural output, diversifying revenue sources, and improving access to critical services, these village economies would continue to struggle, resulting in enduring poverty and stagnation. This is based on data from the pilot study, which indicates that the agricultural output of farmers in the two Kiput villages is limited.

Moreover, one notable factor is the fact that farmers struggle to reach larger markets due to limited transportation infrastructure, which middlemen frequently exploit by offering below-market pricing. Furthermore, financial services such as inexpensive financing are few or non-existent, discouraging investment in agriculture and small businesses. The village has environmental difficulties. This is due in part to persistent flooding, overlogging, and river pollution. These concerns jeopardize not only agricultural productivity but also the health and sustainability of local ecosystems.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studying village economies provides valuable insights into rural development, agriculture, and the socio-economic dynamics of smaller communities. There is a wide range of literature available on this topic, covering various aspects of village economies, including agriculture, governance, rural livelihoods, and more. Here are some classic and contemporary books and academic papers that can serve as a good starting point for your research on village economies.

Edward-Taylor and Adelman (2012) noted that villages in less developed countries often are very complex in their social, cultural, and political structures, yet the structure of their economic activities can be reasonably simple. They note that agricultural production forms the core of economic activity for the villages. According to the writers some of this produce is consumed by the production units themselves and hence does not enter the trade economy, either within or outside the village. Many of the inputs utilized in production are supplied by the same production units, either through family factors (labor(sic), draft animal power) or intermediate inputs produced by the household (e.g., stored seeds).

However, Louhichi, et.al. (2011) argued that:

If all agricultural households were self-sufficient and supplied their own inputs – that is, if all goods were household non-tradables – production and expenditure linkages among village households would be non-existent. At the other extreme, if all households were perfectly integrated with goods and factor markets outside the village and all goods and factors were village tradables (i.e., in a perfectly neoclassical world), production and expenditure linkages among village households would again be non-existent. All input and output prices would be exogenous, fixed by markets outside the village. An increase in a village household's demand for goods produced in the village would simply decrease the availability of these goods for sale outside the village (i.e., village-marketed surplus).

According to Townsend (2016), villages can be viewed as economies— not closed and self-contained economies, of course, but spatially concentrated units that trade with other villages and with the larger regional and national

economy. More broadly, a set of villages may be connected to each other in the way that households within a village are connected to each other. The author observed that;

...starting with villages made sense from the standpoint of general equilibrium theory. To some, general equilibrium theory may seem abstract and irrelevant. But in villages, the entire endeavour of modelling actual economies comes to life. In particular, assumptions about endowment, technology, and heterogeneity as well as contracts, markets, and institutions can be based on measured reality. Research on village economies has become commonplace in development economics, although often not proceeding from this general equilibrium perspective.

An 'economy' in the language of general equilibrium theory consists of a specification of the fundamental objects, as in Debreu (1959), Arrow (1964) and McKenzie (1959). This includes an underlying commodity space which includes consumption goods and other outputs; land, labour, capital and other inputs; locations; the passage of time to recognize dynamics; and states of the world to capture uncertainty. These commodity spaces can be rough, as with indivisible goods (think of savings and loan rotating credit associations which are winner-take-all or an investment that requires a minimal scale which limits entry). Commodities can be transformed into one another as in production, or moved from one point in space to another at a cost, as in the transport of goods.

Indonesia has initiated various measures to boost the village economy and ensure sustainable development (Rashid et al., 2020). According to a report titled "Solusi Naik Tak Turun Turun," these measures aim to improve the competency and productivity of rural communities, increase opportunities for wealth generation, enhance the usage of modern techniques and technologies, and develop marketing capabilities and infrastructure. These efforts are crucial as the village economy still lags behind urban areas in terms of economic growth, welfare, education, and other facilities (Firmansyah et al., 2018). However, the government's programs have not had significant success in improving the welfare of rural communities.

According to Sara et al., one of the factors contributing to the lack of progress in village development is excessive government interference, which hampers the creativity and innovation of rural communities in managing their own villages and economies (2021). Furthermore, the lack of knowledge and management skills among village entrepreneurs has also hindered the performance of their businesses (Firmansyah, et. al 2018). To mitigate these challenges, it is necessary to create a conducive environment for village entrepreneurship. This can be achieved by providing resources, facilities, and support from the village community itself. To mitigate these challenges, the government has implemented village entrepreneurship strategies.

James C. Scott's 1972 book 'The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Subsistence and Rebellion in Southeast Asia', which Kishor Subba Limbu reviewed in 2021, offers an analysis of the village economy during the 1960s and 1970s. Scott (1972) examines the economic and social systems that shaped the lives of Southeast Asian peasants in the 1960s and 1970s. Scott explores how these communities navigated the constant threat of subsistence crises, driven by a "safety-first" mindset that prioritized survival over profit. He characterizes the peasantry's worldview as a "moral economy," grounded in notions of fairness and economic justice, which defined acceptable and exploitative demands on their labor and resources. The "safety-first" ensures establishing patron-client relationships with landlords and tenants, engaging in sharecropping, selecting different seeds and fields for "eating" and "selling" rice, and engaging in labour exchange and wage labour, among other practices.

Overall, Scott highlights how the moral economy provided a framework for resistance against exploitation and structural inequities, emphasizing that the stability of peasant societies was deeply intertwined with their ability to maintain subsistence security.

Village economies can offer resilience, self-sufficiency, and a low environmental impact through sustainable practices. However, they are often limited by access to resources, employment opportunities, and modern infrastructure, which restricts growth and makes them vulnerable to natural disasters. Supporting rural development can help address these challenges, making village economies more robust and diversified.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed qualitative methods. The principal rationale for employing qualitative methods to examine the village economy of the chosen study areas, is that these approaches facilitate a profound comprehension of the social, cultural, and institutional factors influencing economic activities. Village economies are frequently impacted by intricate sociocultural customs, traditions, and local power dynamics. Qualitative methods, instruments like interviews and empirical observations, allow researchers to capture the subtleties and context-specific information that quantitative data may overlook. Moreover, the methodologies ensure a comprehensive examination of economic activity in villages due to its strong association with individuals' personal experiences. Qualitative research elucidates the motivations, views, and strategies of individuals and households, offering insights into the rationale behind their economic actions. Qualitative approaches are notably adaptive to the local context. We customize focus group discussions to include marginalized voices, such as women whose experiences may otherwise be neglected.

In summary, qualitative research offers a comprehensive, detailed insight into the economic, social, and cultural aspects of a village economy, which is crucial for grasping its distinct dynamics and formulating effective policies or interventions. This depth of understanding enables policymakers and stakeholders to tailor their strategies to the unique characteristics and needs of the village, ultimately fostering more sustainable development. By considering these multifaceted elements, interventions can be more effectively aligned with the community's realities.

Study Area

Kampung Benawa and Kampung Kuala Tutoh are about a one-and-a-half-hour journey by express boat to Marudi, the closest town. Marudi, a town in the Malaysian state of Sarawak, falls under the division² of Miri. The Kampung Benawa is a Kiput Muslim village in upper central Baram. While the Kiput ethnic tribe also resides in Kampung Kuala Tutoh, they practice Christianity (Catholicism).

The Lakiput tribe, part of the Orang Ulu group, is one of the lesser-known communities residing in the Baram Marudi District within the Miri Division of Sarawak, East Malaysia. Affectionately referred to as the "earlier tribe" or Bangsa Asal in Malay, the Lakiput are also known as "Kiput," a name often mispronounced. Like many Orang Ulu communities, they live in traditional longhouses along major rivers, with the Baram River—the second largest in Sarawak—serving as their lifeline (Chang n.a.).

Estimates place the Lakiput population at just over 2,000. Most work as paddy farmers, while some supplement their income by fishing in a nearby oxbow lake, selling their catch in Marudi town or to local fishmongers. Among the educated members of the community, many find employment in government services, the oil industry, or private sectors. A few also work at nearby timber camps. However, a significant portion of the population seeks opportunities in Brunei, particularly in Kuala Belait town, due to its proximity.

Besides the Kiput language, members of the Kampung Benawa community speak other local languages, including Malay, Iban, and Brunei-Malay. This is partly the result of intermarriages and sociocultural contacts with neighbouring villages. At the time of data collection, the population of Kampung Benawa stood at 321, and the household (doors) were 56. Also, land ownership patterns are based on their ancestral land. The community receives recognition or classification as an indigenous people. The use of this ancestral land includes planting rubber, coconuts, paddy, and bananas. The community relied heavily on fishing for protein. This reliance on fishing not only provides essential nutrition but also underscores the community's connection to their local environment and traditional practices. Such activities are integral to their cultural identity and economic sustainability.

Like their cousins, Kampung Kuala Tutoh's main language is Kiput; they also speak Iban, Malay, Kayan, and Kenyah. At the time of data collection, the population of the village stood at 2000 individuals (although many

² The Miri Division is home to a variety of ethnic groups, including Iban, Chinese, Malay, Melanau, Kayan, Kenyah, Lun Bawang, and Kelabit. The name "Miri" comes from the "Jati Miriek" or "Mirek" ethnic group, who were the first settlers in the area.

of them live in the cities as a result of paid jobs) and a total of 74 households (or doors). The community owns ancestral/traditional lands. This ancestral land is used for planting paddy for personal consumption, planting fruit trees, and opening fish ponds. The community's connection to their ancestral land highlights the importance of traditional practices in sustaining their livelihoods. These activities not only provide food security but also preserve cultural heritage and strengthen community bonds.

Ethical Issue

All participants were fully informed about the purpose, methods, and potential implications of the study. They receive a detailed consent form outlining their rights, including voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the option to withdraw at any time without consequences. The data collection process adheres to all ethical rules. We took appropriate measures to secure all collected data, ensuring privacy and anonymity where applicable.

Analysis

During data collection, community members in both villages discussed the dwindling yield due to unpredictable rainfall and whether they should shift to drought-resistant crops. At the same time, they worried about how adopting a market-driven crop would affect their food supply, especially in the face of fluctuating prices or their lack of knowledge to manage pests for the new crop. Indeed, many were more concerned about the potential impact of flooding on their livelihoods. These discussions underscore the intricate relationship between a subsistence economy, the natural environment, traditional practices, and evolving external pressures. Some respondents considered dedicating their remaining land to oil palm cultivation. But finance remains the biggest obstacle to their dream. Yet, without adequate funding, most of the respondents pointed out that many farmers struggle to transition to more lucrative crops like oil palm, which could provide better economic stability. This financial barrier highlights the challenges they face in adapting to changing agricultural demands while ensuring their livelihoods are secure.

Insights into the evolution of economic activities and their reflection of the social and cultural fabric of these two indigenous communities are provided by field data. Consequently, agricultural cultivation, particularly wet and hill paddy farming, served as the foundation of their economy. This was supplemented by the cultivation of other commodities, including vegetables, yams, and tapioca. In addition, the sustenance and livelihood of the people were primarily reliant on fish, game, and forest products such as sago, which were sourced from rivers and forests. In addition to providing sustenance to their communities, these natural resources also influenced their customs and practices. The profound respect for nature that was cultivated by the interplay between their agricultural methods and the surrounding environment is a critical component of their cultural identity to this day.

In the past, trade was largely informal, involving barter exchanges of goods such as forest produce, woven textiles, and handicrafts. Then there was traditionally an emphasis on sustainability. Most of the respondents pointed out that resource management and sustainability were skills and lessons passed down through generations. These practices not only ensured the longevity of their resources but also fostered a deep respect for the environment that is often lacking in modern economic systems. One respondent elaborated as follows:

As you know, indigenous communities practiced sustainable methods like crop rotation and fallow periods to maintain soil fertility and forest health. To keep the soil fertile and the forests healthy, our people used long-lasting methods like crop rotation and "fallow" periods.

The communal character of economic activities, particularly the significance of collective labour during the planting and harvesting seasons, was emphasized by a significant number of the respondents. The economic paradigm was non-capitalistic and kinship-oriented, as evidenced by the community's sharing of resources such as land and rivers. This method not only fortified social connections but also guaranteed that all individuals were invested in the products' success. The interconnectedness of their prosperity was reinforced as they united to commemorate their accomplishments and mitigate risks.

However, data from the field indicates that these communities have transitioned from solely subsistence agriculture to a semi-cash economy and subsistence. “This is because some community members are into the cultivation of cash crops such as rubber, pepper, and oil palm.” Two respondents noted that this shift toward cash crops can often lead to reliance on fluctuating market prices, which may jeopardize the economic stability of these communities. For example according to one respondent;

The low prices of palm oil have raised concerns, with farmers fearing a decline similar to that of rice and rubber. This could significantly impact the livelihoods of farmers who depend on palm oil as a primary source of income. If prices continue to decline, it may lead to widespread economic challenges in our community.

Other respondents maintained that the focus on cash crops often comes at the expense of traditional farming practices and biodiversity, potentially undermining food security in the long run. Some respondents lamented that crops like oil palm and rubber are gradually replacing traditional crops in many areas. One respondent noted that government policies and market demand often drive this. Most of the respondents noted that this sometimes leads to the commodification of culture and erosion of traditional practices.

Multinational firms participate in logging, wood exports, and the sale of non-timber forest products within these two communities, notwithstanding their involvement in the commercialization of forest resources. Some respondents noted that the commercialization of forest resources by multinational companies in their regions has generated employment opportunities for specific family members; however, this economic activity is frequently unsustainable. This unsustainable practice may result in prolonged environmental deterioration and a decline in biodiversity, ultimately jeopardizing the livelihoods of entire communities. Nonetheless, some contend that these economic activities can offer essential short-term financial assistance for families, enabling them to invest in education and healthcare. Proponents assert that with effective management and regulation, the sustainable utilization of forest resources may harmoniously coexist with conservation initiatives, yielding advantages for both the economy and the environment. However, a respondent added, can the community members solve this problem by themselves? This question raises doubts about the community's capacity to address the issue independently. It suggests that external support or collaboration may be necessary for a more effective resolution.

Many of the respondents observed that the increased access to education has enabled younger generations to seek employment in urban areas. Thereby increase some families' income as result of remittance. Indeed, remittances from wage labour have become a major economic contributor for many families. This reliance on relative remittance has some drawbacks, as noted by one respondent. He noted that “this has led to noncommitment to agricultural activities by the younger generation, leaving farming and fishing for older members of their community”. This observation highlights a concerning trend where younger individuals are increasingly disengaging from traditional livelihoods. As a result, essential skills and knowledge related to farming and fishing may diminish, potentially jeopardising the sustainability of these practices in the community.

The village economy of these two communities and many Sarawak villages has shifted from a sustainable, subsistence-based model to a mixed economy influenced by external markets, modern agriculture, and tourism. This transition has brought both opportunities and challenges, as local residents navigate the complexities of new economic structures while striving to preserve their cultural heritage. Furthermore, the influx of tourism and researchers have led to increased demand for local crafts and produce, potentially boosting income but also risking the commodification of traditional practices.

Therefore, while modernization has brought new opportunities, it has also introduced challenges such as land disputes, cultural erosion, and environmental degradation. Balancing development with the preservation of cultural heritage and sustainable practices remains key to the future of these communities. Communities are now seeking innovative ways to integrate traditional knowledge with modern practices, aiming to create a more resilient economy. Collaborative efforts among local leaders, government, and NGOs are essential to ensuring that development respects both the environment and the rich cultural tapestry of Sarawak. The two study areas share the common phenomenon described above. We can summarize these areas' village economy data as follows:

Characteristic	Past	Present
Economic Base	Subsistence farming, fishing, barter trade	Fishing, Commercial farming, Wage labour
Resource Use	Sustainable, community-oriented	Often market-driven, with environmental concerns
Social Structure	Communal and kinship-based	Increasing individualism and external influences
Cultural Practices	Strongly tied to economy	Gradual erosion with some efforts at preservation

In general, while a village economy can include elements of both a subsistence economy and a market-orientated economy, a subsistence economy is more restrictive, focusing solely on meeting basic needs with little surplus for trade. Many rural communities operate within a village economy that blends subsistence activities with small-scale commerce and trade. The village economy emerges as a unique tapestry that intertwines the threads of subsistence and market-orientated practices, creating a system that is both resilient and adaptive. These economies prioritise essential needs to meet basic requirements, while simultaneously fostering small-scale commerce to enhance community interdependence. This delicate balance enables villagers to engage in trade without sacrificing their core values or reliance on local resources. Ultimately, the village economy exemplifies how traditional practices can coexist with modern market dynamics, illustrating a sustainable model that nurtures both individual livelihoods and communal well-being.

CONCLUSION

A village economy is the smallest and most localized unit of economic activity, typically found in rural areas. It is often characterized by traditional livelihoods, dependency on natural resources, and informal systems of exchange. A large part of the village economy operates outside the formal economic framework, with barter systems, informal credit, and community support playing crucial roles. Village economic activities often necessitate more labour than capital due to limited mechanization and industrialization. Localized economic exchange often restricts demand and supply to nearby regions. There is limited access to education, healthcare, transportation, and trade; informal services such as repair and local shops are prevalent. Most of the villagers rely heavily on agriculture as the primary source of livelihood. Subsistence farming is common, with some surplus sold in local or regional markets at Marudi. Often villagers depend on local natural resources, such as water, forests, and soil, for economic activities like farming, fishing, and collecting jungle products. The village economy is a crucial pillar of a nation's development, especially in agrarian societies. While it faces numerous challenges, targeted interventions, better resource management, and infrastructural development can transform rural livelihoods and integrate villages into the broader economy. Yet, as noted above, the economy of these two Kiput villages (Kampung Benawa and Kampung Kuala Tutoh) in Marudi District is gradually moving into commercialization, especially with the forest products in their environment. This shift toward commercialization presents both opportunities and risks for local communities. On one hand, it can lead to increased income and improved standards of living; on the other hand, it may also result in overexploitation of resources and loss of traditional practices. As the villagers navigate this transition, it is crucial for them to find a balance between embracing economic growth and preserving their cultural heritage. Sustainable practices and community engagement will ensure that commercialisation does not harm their environment or identity. This balance is essential for maintaining the community's unique identity while also fostering economic development. By prioritising sustainability and active participation, villagers can safeguard their environment and cultural values amidst changing economic landscapes.

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