

## A Change in Event Tourism: Developing Business Model for *Sulayau* Fabric as Community-Based Tourism Event Attraction

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**Abstract:** This study explores the best model for community-based tourism events (CBTE) model with the inclusion of social innovation as part of the process. Producing *Sulayau* fabric is seen as a factor that contributes to the development of social innovation activities among the community in Sabah. Two workshops were conducted to empower communities to understand the use of the new social innovation tool known as *Memating* and gave support to those communities to improve the quality of their participation in tourism. Semi-structured interviews and observation were used as data collection techniques. The results revealed two interesting findings the need for using the social innovation tool of *Memating* in increasing efficiency among craft traders and the need for marketing strategies in creating visibility of *Sulayau* fabric in Sabah. Future studies are required for an empirical discussion in understanding how the role of social innovation shapes community-based tourism events.

**Keywords:** *Community event-based tourism, Thread, Social innovation, Rural community*

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### 1. Introduction and Background

The booming of community-based tourism events (CBTE) in Malaysia has raised the demand for the development of new tourist destinations across the country. CBTE refers to engaging local communities in an event or celebration. It involves tourism as part of the local community engagement created experience because of the unique activities of the community. It promotes visitors and local interactions in the community. The interaction contributes to an increase in the local economy and community development. However, whether the community is ready with the local products as part of the event attraction in the community? these questions remain unexplored. For this reason, the involvement of grassroots innovators is deemed important to overcome the challenges faced by the community to increase efficiency and indirectly contribute to social and economic well-being. Our main contribution is the development of a business model process for *Sulayau* fabric as part of community event tourism attraction activities. Our second contribution is that we demonstrate the traditional process of yarning as part of the process of producing *Selayau* fabric, challenges, and strategies to overcome the challenges faced by social entrepreneurs among Murut Bookan, Kg, Pauh, Sook, Keningau Sabah.

### 2. Literature Review

Yarn is a versatile and essential component in the world of textiles, weaving a thread of creativity and functionality into every fabric. It serves as the building block for countless garments, furnishings, and works of art, possessing the power to transform simple fibers into intricate designs. But before yarn can begin its transformative journey, it undergoes a crucial process known as warping. Warping is the initial step in the weaving process, where individual yarns are carefully arranged and aligned on a loom to create a strong and stable foundation (Hoffmann, 1964). This meticulous technique sets the stage for the interlacing of weft threads, ultimately giving birth to beautiful and durable woven fabrics.

The art of warping involves precise calculations and careful planning. Yarns are measured, stretched, and

arranged in parallel, forming a systematic grid that will dictate the structure and design of the final textile (Murphy, 2000). Whether it is a delicate silk scarf, a sturdy cotton canvas, or an intricate tapestry, the quality of warping directly influences the integrity and visual appeal of the finished piece. Warping is a harmonious marriage of science and artistry, requiring a deep understanding of textile properties, weaving techniques, and aesthetic vision. It demands patience, attention to detail, and a keen eye for symmetry. Skilled weavers navigate the complexities of tension, spacing, and color placement, ensuring that each yarn aligns flawlessly to create a cohesive fabric. The opinion by Chandler, 2009) is focused specifically on warping techniques for rigid heddle looms, and beyond its technical significance, warping carries a symbolic weight in the textile world. It symbolizes the careful preparation, dedication, and commitment necessary for any creative endeavor. Just as the warp yarns provide strength and structure to a textile, the process of warping serves as a metaphor for the underlying foundation of any project, where careful planning and meticulous execution lay the groundwork for success.

Yarn and warping intertwine to form the very fabric of our creative pursuits. From the simplest knitted scarf to the most intricate tapestry, the careful arrangement and alignment of yarn during the warping process breathe life into our textile endeavors. It is a testament to the human ability to transform humble fibers into remarkable works of art. As we reflect on the artistry and significance of yarn and warping, we are reminded of the timeless traditions and cultural heritage embedded within the world of textiles. According to Eriksson, Gustavsson, and Lovallius, 2011), across generations and continents, the techniques of warping have been passed down, preserving the knowledge and expertise of our ancestors. It is a connection that binds us to our roots and reminds us of the enduring nature of craftsmanship.

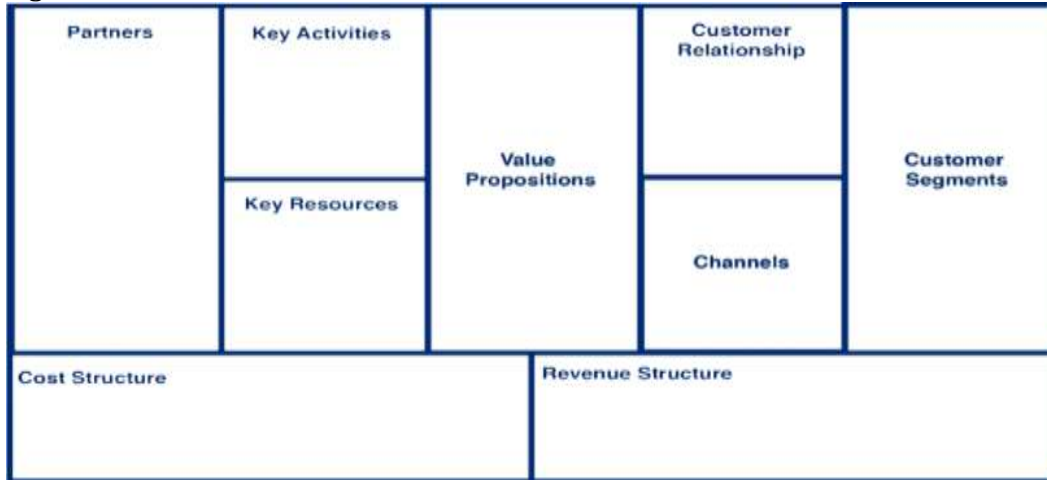
Furthermore, yarn and warping teach valuable lessons beyond the realm of textiles. This field exposes the importance of preparation, patience, and attention to detail in any creative pursuit (Garrett, 1974). They remind us that the strength and beauty of a final product are often determined by the careful planning and execution of its foundational elements.

As yarn and warping are both essential to unearthing creativity and tacit knowledge, eventually it falls under grassroots innovation. Their innovations start from the frugal idea stage, with some common tacit knowledge, and they develop non-disruptive innovations in their backyards and through hardship (Joshi, Chelliah, & Ramanathan, 2015) leading to pre-commercialisation. Furthermore, being given less attention by stakeholders and authorities, their activity is not as impactful as profit-making industries. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovations (MOSTI) through its agency, *Yayasan Inovasi Malaysia* (YIM) has spearheaded the initiative to nurture and support grassroots innovation to discover innovative processes and products at the grassroots level, with more applied research to enhance stages of development up to pre-commercialization. YIM was founded in 2008 to promote and champion innovation. With a great past track record in catalyzing the translation of innovation to wealth, YIM facilitates the development of innovations.

The inclusion of culture in the community business model is important for nurturing value in the process of cultural sustainability and as an extra economic incentive for community entrepreneurs. Operating from remote regions may provide a challenge for entrepreneurs from rural areas sustainability as the supply chain is different from mainstream entrepreneurs and limitations of management skills, education, and capital (Jacobsen, 2017). Supply chain, limitation of skill, knowledge capital, and reflection of culture between tribes play a role in differentiating the differences between mainstream and rural entrepreneurs. These factors reflect the whole process of the business model among social entrepreneurs.

For the past few years, business canvases have been used by several scholars in elaborating and understanding the whole process of business development strategy. The business model canvas is a model that involves several components of business marketing, operation, and financial capability for producing a product. It is a tool that provides a visual map to record details related to infrastructure management, product, customer interface, and financial aspects. The right of the canvas highlights several key activities that represent the customer relationships, customer segments, channels, and building blocks while the left of the canvas represents the infrastructure management quadrant of the business. The business model describes the rationale of how an organization creates, delivers, and captures values (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2018) as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Business Model Canvas**



Source: Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010)

There are 9 building blocks of the business model canvas (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010):

- Customer segments is an organization that serves one or several customer segments.
- Value proposition that seeks to solve customer problems and satisfy customer needs with value proposition.
- Channels of value proposition that deliver to customers through communication, distribution, and sales channels.
- Customer relationships that are established and maintained with each customer segment.
- Revenue streams that result from value propositions successfully offered to customers.
- Key Resources are the assets required to offer and deliver the previously described elements.
- Key Partnerships are some activities that are outsourced, and some resources are acquired outside the enterprise.
- Cost structure is the business model elements that result in the cost structure.

The use of business canvas as an underpinning process for strategizing business has been discussed by Wrigley, Bucolo and Straker (2016).

### 3. Research Methodology

A case study was chosen according to four criteria: 1) each case should propose a resolution based on innovation usage in the community; thus, Kg Pauh, Sook, Keningau, Sabah was chosen based on the issues faced by the community in producing *Sulayau* fabric, 2) The local individuals involved should have experienced sewing *Sulayau* fabric and 3) The chosen cases should have reached the mature phase in developing innovation for solving the issues faced by the community. Particularly, the new method should have been applied; for this reason, a new warping board that was named the *Memating* board was introduced at the second workshop. Focusing on these locations was expected to identify cases with high problem pressure and a lack of powerful problem-solving institutions. Understanding of the issues faced by the community was strengthened as follows:

Step 1: A foundation model development according to existing Business Model Canvas.

Step 2: Research objective (RO) development: RO1: is to understand the challenges faced by the community and RO2 is to develop a new social innovation board.

Step 3: Interview protocol establishment according to the literature review.

Step 4: Data collection from interviews and observation from Feb 27, 2023, to July 2023. Furthermore, Kg Sook, Pauh, and Keningau Sabah were visited.

Step 5: Data qualitative analysis with constant comparison.

The qualitative data were analyzed as follows:

- Interview protocol reconstruction based on previous literature. Factual knowledge was obtained, assembled, and moved into a process-related and temporal order. Reconstruction via triangulating information from qualitative interviews, participatory observations, and documents and media reports.
- Identification of the support and challenges faced by the community. Interpretative work was required, as such knowledge is less obvious.
- Data categorization and segmentation with constant comparative techniques. Deduction of commonalities and differences between cases based on conceptual framework categories and dimensions. Identification of rural social innovation (SI) process patterns and the SI critical review of conceptual framework based on the results. Exploration of whether the findings provided empirical evidence for the theoretical framework, where they could aid theory specification and suggest further revision.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

With upwards of 5,000 people, the Murut Bookan community is among the most populous ethnic groups in Sabah. The majority of the Murut Bookan community are Christians. This community celebrates the *Kalimaran* festival, which takes place after the rice harvesting season. They are also known for their traditional dances, namely the *Lansaran* dance and the *Mangunatip* dance.

Two series of workshops were conducted at Kg Pauh Sook, Keningau Sabah. Kg Pauh, Sook is located at Keningau, Sabah. It takes about 2 and a half hours to drive from Kota Kinabalu, Sabah which is the main city of Sabah. There are more than 300 residents around Kg Pauh, Sook, and Sabah. Most of them are self-employed and work at crop plantations. The researchers initiated a social innovation community engagement program with the collaboration of the Youth Innovation Foundation in Feb 2023. Community engagement-based initiatives are included under the common umbrella of SI (Baselice, Prosperi, Marini Govigli, & Lopolito, 2021). The Malaysian government introduced several community programs (MyIS, MaGris, and Ruang Daya Cipta) under the YIM ([www.yim.com](http://www.yim.com)) umbrella, which is a Ministry of Science of Technology and Innovation.

The first workshop focuses on understanding the issues and challenges the rural community faces in producing the *Selayau* thread. Figure 2 shows the process of making a *Selayau* thread. The first workshop also encounters several observations on the process of warping among the community.

**Figure 2: The process of making the *Selayau* thread**



Based on interviews with nine (9) informants during the 1<sup>st</sup> workshop. The elaboration on the discussion is discussed above.

Q1. What are the challenges and abstinence among the Murut Bookan Community in preserving the *Selayau* thread?

CBTE transforms the cultural attractions of rural communities into consumer products that attract tourists to a destination. Event tourism development makes a connection between the cultural-based product of a community and event tourism destination attraction, yet the main challenge is community readiness as an event-based tourism destination. This research focuses on the development of Kg Pauh, Sook, Keningau, and Sabah as community event-based tourism destinations. *Selayau* garment is one of the local traditional garments made by using traditional techniques. The length of time spent producing *Selayau* garment is a challenge as it takes more than 2 weeks to produce 2 meters of *Selayau* garment in the first process and it took about 2 to 6 months to produce 4 meters of *Selayau* garment. Therefore, the inclusion of a *Memating* frame or tool as part of the process of producing a 4-meter garment assists in increasing the efficiency of the garment process among the rural community at Kg Pauh, Sook, Keningau Sabah. Before beginning the event tourism development project, the interests and issues need to be explored for a better understanding of the real phenomenon of community event-based tourism attraction. This paper introduces foresight tools, community arts and culture, and a social innovation of the *Selayau* Fabric garment technique also known as *Memating* among Muruk Bookan in Sabah. *The meeting* is the beginning stage of the social innovation process of introducing the community to using a new innovative technique for sewing yarn. This technique creates an authority of future tourism development in the hands of the local community, which is appropriate for event tourism development in rural Malaysia. A series of inclusive workshops were used to cultivate innovations in sewing thread among Murut Bookan, at Kampung Pauh, Sook, Keningau Sabah. The 1<sup>st</sup> workshop was more on feasibility study on the issues and challenges faced among the community and results show that the challenges are:

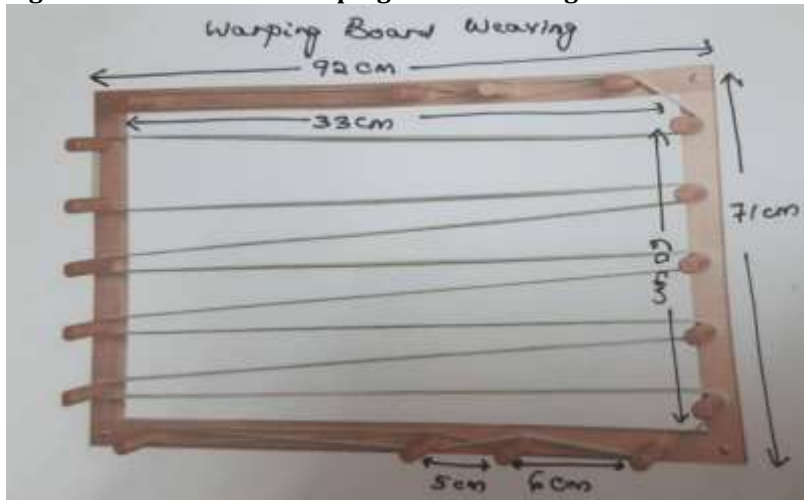
- a. Back pain due to prolonged sitting during weaving.
- b. High cost of the thread used, with prices increasing from RM1.80 to RM3.60 per roll.
- c. Time-consuming process, with the entire weaving taking at least 2 weeks or more, depending on the size of the fabric being produced.
- d. The time required to set up the basic weaving structure alone takes 3 days for a long fabric (*Kain Panjang*).
- e. Lack of interest among the younger generation.
- f. Easily replicated patterns leading to the imitation of designs.

It also found several weaving abstinences. The abstinences are:

- a. Do not consume chili before engaging in the weaving process.
- b. Do not consume grilled food.
- c. Maintain a calm demeanor and avoid getting angry.
- d. Wear beautiful clothing.
- e. Do not pass underneath the loom.
- f. Do not weave after 4:30 PM.

As a result of the 1st workshop, the researcher has drafted a warping board that suits the community and produced a new warping board for weaving. Figure 3 shows a sketch of warping board weaving.

Figure 3: The sketch of warping board weaving



As a result of the sketch draft of warping board weaving the researchers have developed a new warping board that is made from metal. Due to transforming the traditional weaving process into a model weaving process, it is proposed that the Murut Bookan community go through several Phases.

#### Phase 1: Cultural Innovation in the Weaving Process

Phase 1 involves training and knowledge-sharing from academia to the community. It includes learning about the use of a warping board to replace traditional methods with more efficient techniques. 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop was organized to create a social innovation culture in the community.

Q2. What are the methods practiced by Murut Bookan for producing *Sulayau* garments?

*Sulayau* garment as a Community Event-Based Tourism (CEBT) product has been heavily promoted in Malaysia, particularly in rural communities. For the past few years, most of the community at Murut Bookan has practiced traditional methods of weaving *Sulayau* Garment. It was found that during the early years, the thread was produced by using sheep wool or pineapple fiber and using natural dyes made from various materials. The traditional weaving materials and tools are as stated above:

- a. *Kuun* - Traditional weaving frame or loom.
- b. *Atip* - Shuttle used to pass the weft thread through the warp threads.
- c. *Bulonon* - Comb used to separate and tighten the warp threads.
- d. *Sansag* - Beater used to compact the weft threads.
- e. *Sapayan* - Small bamboo sticks used to create patterns and designs.
- f. *Ansad* - Sword-like tool used to open the shed (space between the warp threads) for weaving.
- g. *Susumad* - Sley or reed used to space and beat down the weft threads.
- h. *Apad* - Sword-like tool used to cut the finished woven fabric from the loom.
- i. *Kain* - Base fabric or cloth onto which the weaving is done.
- j. *Kelerai* - Dried leaves of a specific type of palm tree used for weaving intricate designs and patterns.

The second workshop is more on introducing the *Memating* frame as a social innovation tool in mitigating the efficiency process of producing *Sulayau* thread. *Memantine* frame is a new warping board that was built based on the need to overcome the challenges faced by the community at Kg Pauh, Sook, Keningau Sabah. Figure 4 shows the *Memating* frame used by the community.

Figure 4: *Memanting* frame



Q3. How does the new warping board assist in strengthening the *Sulayau* fabric as a community-based tourism event?

The new warping board increased the efficiency of producing the garment as for the warping process, it only took about 20 minutes rather than 2 weeks to produce 2 meters at the warping stage.

Q4. What is the business model for the Murut Bookan Community in preserving the *Sulayau* thread?

The business model canvas is a model that involves several components of business marketing, operation, and financial capability for producing a product. It is a tool that provides a visual map to record details related to infrastructure management, product, customer interface and financial aspects. The right of the canvas highlights several key activities that represent the customer relationships, customer segments, channels and building blocks while at left of the canvas represents the infrastructure management quadrant of the business. The business model describes the rationale of how an organization creates, delivers, and captures values (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2018). In this study, the researcher found several findings. The discussion on the elaboration of the business model as findings is made in Table 1.

Table 1: Business Model for *Sulayau* Fabric

Opportunities	Value Proposition	Cost	Revenue	Market Segment
Murut Bookan weaving has a high potential to enter the international market.	The unique cultural characteristics that can be seen in the motifs inspired by the surrounding nature and the ancient beliefs of the Murut Bookan tribe offer a competitive advantage to this embroidery art.	The costs involved in weaving would cover the weaving materials, courses and training, utilities, packaging, pricing labels, internet, transportation, and postage.	Income would be generated from selling beads and Takin embroidery, woven fabrics such as Sulayau garments, and woven baskets (" <i>kelarai</i> ").	The products are targeted towards both local and international markets.
Customer Relationship	Channel	Key Partners	Resources	Key Activities
To maintain customer loyalty, excellent, prompt, and friendly	Marketing channels utilized include cultural festivals ( <i>Kalimaran</i> - beauty pageants; <i>Kaamatan</i> - harvest festival),	Key stakeholders involved in driving this business include government agencies, local	Materials used for the products include threads, hardwood, expertise, beads,	The main activities of the weaving art include weaving, basketry, marketing, and

customer service is provided.	expos and exhibitions, and social media.	authorities, and NGOs.	<i>kelarai</i> strips, and bamboo.	courses and training.
<b>Strength</b>				
<b>Cultural Uniqueness</b>	<b>Strong Community Spirit</b>		<b>Experienced Instructors</b>	
The cultural uniqueness of the Murut Bookan tribe is the main attraction in producing Murut Bookan weavings.	<i>Persatuan Kraftangan Kaum Murut Bookan</i> (The Murut Bookan Craft Association) has been established to help preserve cultural weaving practices. Various programs related to learning Murut Bookan weaving are conducted every week at the local community hall. Weekly activities such as weaving, beadwork, and others are held at the community hall in Kampung Pauh, Sook, Sabah. These activities foster close-knit relationships within the village community.		Currently, there are three experienced instructors aged 50 and above. Hence, various parties must undertake weaving preservation programs to ensure that the culture and artistry will continue to thrive and not fade away in the face of modernization.	
<b>Weakness</b>				
<b>Low-quality materials:</b> Weavers are limited to using low-quality polyester threads due to the increasing price of high-quality polyester threads.	<b>Time-consuming production process:</b> It is found that each piece of fabric produced takes a considerable amount of time, ranging from 2 to 6 months, depending on the size of the fabric desired by the weaver.	<b>Limited market:</b> The market is primarily limited to domestic consumers, based on individual or small-scale orders during festive seasons.	<b>Unstable management:</b> <i>Persatuan Kraftangan Kaum Murut Bookan</i> (The Murut Bookan Craft Association) is newly established due to community awareness of the importance of preserving weaving traditions and generating income.	<b>Participant commitment:</b> Weavers' commitment is based on their availability and the demand for their weaving services. Most weavers only visit the community hall during their free time.
<b>Potential Contribution</b>				
Generating income for the local community.	Providing employment opportunities for the local community.		Developing the Sook District through activities related to Community-Based Tourism.	

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This research contributes to the body of knowledge by elaborating more on the issues and challenges faced by weavers, yet the study was only limited to the Kaum Murut Bookan Tribe at Sabah as it found that to develop an event tourism product, it is vital to develop an appropriate business model for enhancing the production of this product and indirectly change the direction of event management industry from emphasizing only during the event, but towards more on community development.

Therefore, future researchers should explore more on other tribes that faced similar issues among weavers. It



is vital to understand more about the issues, challenges, and process of developing *Sulayau* fabric weavers as coping with the issue results in the success of community event tourism attraction in rural areas. Community event tourism is part of tourism success, thus strategizing strategies in coping with challenges faced by weavers assist in overcoming the issue. The inclusion of social innovation as part of the business model for strategizing and identifying the outcome of coping with social issues is important to ensure the success of community event tourism attraction.

The development of the *Sulayau* weaver has brought multiple benefits. Not only has it breathed new life into the craft and provided economic opportunities for the weavers, but it has also elevated the status of the *Sulayau* woven products on the global market. Tourists and consumers from around the world now appreciate and value the cultural significance and unique beauty of these traditional handwoven pieces. The success of the *Sulayau* weaver development also serves as an inspiration for other communities facing similar challenges in preserving their cultural heritage. It highlights the importance of recognizing the value of traditional crafts, promoting cultural exchange, and supporting local artisans in their efforts to sustain their cultural identity. The *Sulayau* weaver stands as a shining example of how cultural heritage can be transformed into a vibrant and thriving part of contemporary society. By honoring and preserving traditional crafts, we enrich our global cultural tapestry and create a more interconnected and meaningful world.

Transforming the cultural attractions of rural communities into consumer products that attract community-based tourism events to a destination can have both positive and negative impacts. On the positive side, it can provide economic opportunities for the local community by generating income from tourism-related activities and creating job opportunities. This influx of tourists can also lead to a greater appreciation and preservation of cultural heritage, as visitors learn about and engage with the unique traditions and customs of the rural communities. Additionally, tourism can foster a sense of pride and identity among the locals, as they witness their cultural attractions being appreciated by visitors from different backgrounds. Moreover, the increased tourism can spur infrastructure development and improvements in basic amenities in these areas, benefiting the local population. However, there are potential challenges and risks associated with this transformation. Over-commercialization and mass tourism can lead to the commodification of cultural elements, diluting their authenticity and turning them into superficial products solely for tourists' consumption. This might result in a loss of the true essence of the culture and its traditions.

Furthermore, an excessive influx of tourists could put a strain on the environment and local resources, leading to issues like over-tourism, pollution, and degradation of natural landscapes. This may negatively impact the quality of life for the residents and diminish the sustainability of the destination in the long run. To ensure a successful and sustainable approach, it is essential for stakeholders, including local communities, government bodies, and tour operators, to strike a balance between tourism development and cultural preservation. Engaging the local community in decision-making processes, promoting responsible tourism practices, and focusing on authentic experiences can help harness the benefits of cultural attraction transformation while safeguarding the uniqueness and integrity of the rural communities' cultural heritage.

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