

TOURISM BLAMED FOR WATER CRISIS IN BALI



Despite the increased tourism in Bali, there is a problem with reduced water resources which are essential to maintain the facilities needed by tourists. According to a recent survey, little has been done to address this issue.

Dr. Stroma Cole a senior lecturer at University of the West of England conducted a research about the water scarcity and documented her findings in a book. She is a former chair of Tourism Concern which is a nonprofit organization in London that deals with the promotion of ethical tourism worldwide.

80% of Bali's economy is dependent on tourism and good water supply. The tourism industry provides jobs for up to 25% of the population supporting 50% of Bali's GDP.

According to Dr. Cole, water is one of the most important resources when it comes to tourism in Bali since tourism makes use of 65% of the island's water. However water availability has reached a critical point in most tourist destinations in Bali and this can be attributed to political, environmental and social factors.

The situation is so serious that there are cases where water has to be diverted from agriculture to tourism and this affects the balance between locals and tourists. The stakeholders in the tourism industry are unaware of how important it is to conserve water, said Dr. Cole. The impact of the overuse of ground water on the environment cannot be underestimated. This is because it has resulted in the reduction of water quality, reduced water table, land subsidence and salt water intrusion.

The water crisis is felt more by the poor people in the society who usually depend on hand dug wells. When their water sources get depleted they cannot afford to get connected to city tap water supply. **According to the latest data, up to 1.7 million people lack access to clean water in Bali.**

According to the executive director of Bali Hotel Association Djinaldi Gosana, four star and five star hotels need up to 50,000 liters of clean water daily and this number has not factored in non starred hotels, villas, apartments, condominiums and villas.

There is also a lot of pressure to the water resources coming as a result of sophisticated water requirements by the tourists such as spas, pools and Jacuzzi according to Cole. Mass tourism in particular was identified as the major strain on the water scarcity.

The number of hotels and tourist facilities has increased massively since the start of the rule of Soeharto in the 1970s which opened the door for mass tourism. The amount of hotel rooms in Bali has surged from 5,000 to 90,000 between 1987 and July 2012.

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