



The Facilities and Infrastructure Provision for Tourism Development in Semangat Gunung Village, Merdeka District, Karo Regency

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Abstract

This study aims to determine and analyze how the provision of facilities and infrastructure, and what factors that support and hinder the development of tourism in Semangat Gunung village (SGV), Merdeka district, Karo regency. Descriptive research with a qualitative approach was employed as the design of research. This research took place in Semangat Gunung village, Merdeka district, Karo regency. This research was conducted from April to June 2019. The data were collected through field research by using interview. Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that the provision of facilities and infrastructure in the development of tourism in SGV is fairly complete although some of them such as public facilities and infrastructure must be renewed. Furthermore, the factors that influence the provision of facilities and infrastructure in the development of tourism in the village include supporting factors, namely socio-cultural, political and partnership networks. On the other hand, inhibiting factors include lack of awareness, lack of coordination, and lack of funding.

Keywords: Facilities; Infrastructure; Tourism; Karo Regency

Introduction

Tourism is a whole of related elements comprising tourists, tourist destinations, travel, industries and so on which constitute tourism activities. According to Pendit (2003), it is the process of temporary departure from someone or more to another place outside their place of residence. Furthermore, Ethika (2016) adds that it is an activity that directly touches and engages the community, thus it brings various impacts on the local community. Even, it is said to have extraordinary break-down energy which is able to make local people experience metamorphose in various aspects.

The increase in the tourism sector is also able to promote economic activities. It includes employment, community income, regional income, and state foreign exchange earnings. These can be increased through efforts to develop various National tourism potentials. The development in the field of tourism is one of the breakthroughs to increase regional and state revenues. The tourism sector will be

aligned with other sectors in an effort to increase state income, so tourism can be called the tourism industry sector (Widodo, 2013).

Tourism is the mainstay of the main source of foreign exchange because Indonesia is a country that has a wide variety of types of tourism such as natural, social and cultural tourism which is spread from Sabang to Merauke. In addition, Indonesia is also rich in cultural tourism as evidenced by the many historical relics as well as the diversity of art and cultural traditions of local communities that attract local and foreign tourists. So, regarding to those potentials, it is possible to make Indonesia as one of one tourist destinations.

The local government policy in tourism development plays significant role in supporting the success of national tourism development. The development and growth of tourism need to be anticipated so that its development remains on the right track and carrying capacity. The development in the area of tourist attraction will provide a very large contribution if it is managed professionally. The contribution to the area concerned can spur the growth of the area around the tourist attraction.

The development of tourism objects and attractions as main motor of the tourism sector requires the cooperation of all stakeholders consisting of the public and the government as well as direct cooperation from the business community and from the private sector. In accordance with their duties and authorities, the government is a facilitator who has a role and its function in making and determining all policies related to the development of tourism objects and attractions. Attractiveness in tourism objects is one of the main assets that must be possessed as efforts to improve and develop tourism object. Its existence is the most important link in a tourist activity. This is due to the main factor that makes visitors or tourists to visit tourist destinations namely the potential and attractiveness of the object itself (Devy and Soemanto, 2017).

According to Yoeti (2001), things that need to be considered in the development of an area into a tourist destination cover three conditions namely there must be something to see, something to do, and something to buy. Facilities and infrastructure is one important factor that greatly supports the growth of the tourism industry. Tourist area equipped with facilities and infrastructure can create tourist satisfaction. Tourism infrastructure and facilities are actually the main needs of tourists so that it should be prepared or provided in developing the tourism industry. Infrastructures are all facilities that enable economic processes to run smoothly in such a way that they can make it easier for humans to meet their needs. Its function is to complete tourism facilities, so that they can provide services as it is. If the facilities and infrastructure are not well developed, it can result the decrease of tourist interest and willingness to visit the tourism object.

Suwantoro (2004) explained that tourism objects are potentials that drive the presence of tourists to an area. Semangat Gunung Village (SGV), located in Merdeka district, Karo regency, has a natural hot spring tourism object. One of the natural hot springs is located exactly next to Mount Sibayak. With a fairly good accessibility, it has a hot spring with sulfur content which is believed to cure various types of diseases such as skin diseases, aching muscles, blood flow. Moreover, it can also be used as a substitute for a sauna bath. To get to the location, it takes approximately 2 hours from the city of Medan.

The highest number of visitors was in January, July and May. Instead the lowest number of visitors was in June, August and November. Based on the the statistics provided by the government of Karo Regency it is known that the average number of visitors referred to in adulthood in 2018 was 16343 people while the average number of visitors who were at the age of children was 4683. Then, the average result obtained by visitors in 2018 is 21027 people. The increase and decrease in the number of visitors are caused by the holidays. Regional government in this case has not maximally managed the existing tourism sector due to several things such as the arrangement and maintenance of tourist objects.

The good tourism facilities and infrastructure is one indicator of tourism development. According to Bahiyah, Riyanto, and Sudarti (2018), tourism facilities is anything that can facilitate the senses (intangible), for example; transportation, accommodation, food / drink, tour guides (information), information. Then, infrastructure means everything that is the main support of the implementation of the process of tourism activities and non-tourism activities, for example; road, airport, terminal, port, clean water, electricity and telecommunications networks. With the facilities and infrastructure that support the tourist location, it will certainly provide its own added value in addition to the advantages of natural potential that has been exist.

There are several studies related to the development of tourist areas. Simamora and Sinaga (2016) in their research in North Tapanuli showed that the role of the government in the Development of Tourism Potential in North Tapanuli Regency was dominant as a facilitator compared to other roles, namely as a motivator and a dynamist. Ghani (2017), in his research showed that one way to increase the level of tourist arrivals was to build and improve existing tourism infrastructure through innovation by combining cultural elements with existing or undeveloped tourism infrastructure. Furthermore, Soebiyantoro (2009) states that by developing facilities and infrastructure, it will be able to increase tourist attractions, affect the availability of entertainment, increase the availability of transportation which gives the effect of increasing tourist satisfaction so that increasing community income in the Kebumen Regency. Whereas Wardana, Witjaksono, & Enderwati (2018) said that the availability of tourism infrastructure in Sipelot Beach, Malang Regency was still lacking. They recommended some additions and improvements to the quality of facilities and infrastructure applied at the study site. Sinulingga, Humaizi, & Lubis (2019) examined the supporting and inhibiting factors in the development of the Lau Hot spring tourism object. Their results present the supporting factors for the development of tourism objects including strategic locations, facilities (hotels, restaurants & attractions), and environments (accessibility, amenities & attractions). On the other hand, the inhibiting factors are insecurity (epidemic disease, natural disaster, human error, crimes), and services

Nowadays, the tourists start to love the tourist attractions that present the natural beauty of the countryside. To exploit the potential that exists in SGV, it can be done by analyzing the provision of infrastructure in the area, to find out how the availability of facilities and infrastructure that will later have an impact on the development of tourism adapted to the physical condition of the area and the desires of tourists, so that it can be said to be worthy of being used as a destination tour. Based on the facts above, the purpose of this study is to find out and analyze how the provision of facilities and infrastructure, and what factors that support and hinder the development of tourism in Semangat Gunung village (SGV), Merdeka district, Karo regency.

Methodology

Descriptive research with a qualitative approach was employed as the research design. It is since this method is suitable to explore in-depth disclosure of social phenomena. The location of this research was carried out in Semangat Gunung village, Merdeka district, Karo regency. This research was conducted during April to June 2019. The data were collected through field research and interviews. The informants used as data sources in this study were the secretary of the tourism and culture office of Karo regency, the village head, and local residents.

Results

General Description of Semangat Gunung Village

Semangat Gunung village is located in Merdeka district, Karo regency. It was originally named Raja Berneh village. Around 1902-1903, one of the Karo tribes with the surname Surbakti from Jaranguda Village migrated to the valley (called *Berneh* in Karonese language) Mount Sibayak. Because the location of the area led by Raja Merga Surbakti, the area is called Raja Berneh Village, which simply has the understanding of the King who controls the village in the Sibayak Mountain valley.

After the Dutch Military Aggression, the villagers, Raja Berneh villagers returned home and the village authorities at that time handed over sovereignty to the Republic of Indonesia. In the 1950s, based on government regulations, the name of Raja must be removed from the name of the village. Since then, the name of Raja Berneh Village changed its name to Semangat Gunung village, Simpang Empat district. In 2006, Simpang Empat district was divided into three districts, namely Simpang Empat, Naman Teran, and Merdeka districts. Since then, Semangat Gunung village has become one of the villages in the Merdeka district area.

Tourism Potency of Semangat Gunung Village

To go to Semangat Gunung village, it takes about two hours from Medan. This area was once a vast agricultural land and the largest producer of celery exports in Sumatra. Historically, the hot springs were discovered when the community wanted to leave the village to go to Berastagi for going to school, shopping, and trading. To go to Berastagi the community must pass through the hills under the foot of Mount Sibayak and valleys, from the road every day the community passes, there is a small pond. From the pool there are springs that come out and heat.

Besides that, after going home from school, the children would play and bathe in the pool. One of the communities was aware of the potential of this area, so the inhabitants with the surname Surbakti made a small pool so that their children would be easier to bathe and play in the pool. Initially, it was made just for a playground only, but time by time, the pool was added and then became the first hot spring pool in the village which came to be known as the Sibayak natural hot Spring. After being built, in 1984, the local people began to introduce the tourist attraction by word of mouth, so that in 1994, it had become a destination for local and foreign tourists to come to the tourist attraction. Although, their facilities are still said to be inadequate, such as roads leading to locations that are still dirt and are still difficult to pass. According to Information from Mr. S. Ginting,

“In its development, the existence of Sibayak Natural pool triggered the emergence of other hot springs such as the Karona pool. Besides that, other business activities also appeared, such as grocery shops, coffee shops, souvenir shops, rice shops, hotels / inns, educational facilities and religious facilities. From year to year, these attractions are growing”. (Interview with Mr. S. Ginting, one of the people from Semangat Gunung village)

As for the list of pools that have been already operating at the tourist site are,

From 1989-1999, the existing pools are Alam Sibayak, Karona, Purnama, and Rindu Alam. In 2000-2008, there were additional pools that operated the Ginting pond, Anugrah Sibayak. Year 2008-present La Megogo, Paris Leaf, Taman Wisata Sibayak, Tamora Sibayak, Juana, Maka Berena, Meliala, Bringta. Gren Suta, and Pariban. Total pools until now are 16. (interview with Mr. Akhyar Ginting, as the Head of Semangat Gunung Village).

The main attraction of the Semangat Gunung village area is the pool which is also a natural bathing place with hot springs containing sulfur which is believed to cure various types of skin diseases, relieve aching muscles, reduce blood sugar levels, improve blood flow, and can also be used as a substitute for bathing sauna. The natural hot spring pool has an area of 7 hectares. It is equipped with adequate parking arenas, shelter, and bathrooms. In the past, the place was only a natural flow of water, but the private sector has made a pool of cement to help visitors comfort. Similar to the modern spa facilities was also found in many five-star hotels.

The Facilities and Infrastructure Provision

Tourism facilities and infrastructure in the SGV are in the form of the availability of supporting facilities for Hot Springs pool. The facilities are accommodation and transportation. Infrastructure includes educational infrastructure, roads, praying places, communication systems, health facilities, *Jambur* (place to gather or hold a certain ceremony), water and electricity availability, and security. For lodging, there are about 6 inns in this natural attraction which are all managed by the owner of the pool and each inn can accommodate up to hundreds of people. In addition, cafeterias / restaurants are available at each inn. It is supported by the interview with Mr. S. Ginting.

For lodging, it is now available around attractions in each of each pool. The price of the hotel is around Rp 500K with comfortable stay facilities such as beds, televisions, cabinets, shelves and bathrooms as well as amenities. But for backpackers who want affordable prices, there are also lodgings with prices of Rp 100K to Rp 250K, with the same facilities, but the condition of the rooms is not too luxurious. The entrance cost for hot spring baths in Semangat Gunung Village around RP. 6000 rupiah (\$2) (one car with 7 people), while when entering the bathing location it is also cheap (around Rp. 5000-Rp. 10000 per person) (interview with Mr. S. Ginting, one of the local people of Semangat Gunung Village).

Based on the results of interviews and observations, accommodation facilities such as lodging places around the tourism object here are already available. Accommodations like inns can support tourists because basically, tourists will need a place to stay for a while while on the way to be able to rest. With this facility, it will encourage tourists to visit and enjoy objects with a relatively longer time.

The transportation is an important thing to consider in developing a tourist destination. In SGV, transportation is very important to attract attention and visits. It is due to the distance of the tourist attraction is quite far from the intersection.

“The transportation used to reach this tourist attraction is public transportation, but public transportation is very rarely passed. Then, visitors can use private four-wheeled vehicles and two-wheeled vehicles. For this reason, it is necessary to pay attention and improve the transportation system to these attractions in order to increase the flow of tourist visits” (Interview with Mr. S. Ginting, one of the people of Semangat Gunung Village).

In addition, many people also complained about the condition of damaged roads. He adds that the government has taken the retribution. But, the attention to tourism facility is very minimal.

“If the road is good, it will be more crowded. More and more government will get the retribution. The government should have thought that tourism could contribute a large income to local cash income”.

Of the 16 pools in SGV, only the road leading to Pariban and Meliala Baths is in poor condition, consisting of gravel and stones and road conditions that rise and fall rather difficult for riders who are not accustomed to riding a car or motorcycle at the steep location. But, this condition is also a challenge for those who like to try new things, because the scenery and the charm of the tourism offered will eliminate all tired on the trip. As for the other infrastructures, namely educational infrastructure, praying places, communication systems, health facilities, Jambur, water and electricity availability, and security are well available.

The Factors Affecting Provision of Facilities and Infrastructure

The factors influencing the provision of facilities and infrastructure in the development of tourism in Semangat Gunung village, Merdeka district, Karo regency consist of various factors. The supporting factors include socio-cultural, political, and partnership networks. On the other hand, the inhibiting factors include lack of awareness, lack of coordination, and lack of funding. Then, the socio-cultural factors that is analyzed here is the community kinship system in the management of tourism business management in Semangat Gunung village.

Almost all the owners of these hot spring pools do not use workers from outside to help carry out their tourism activities but are still willing to use kinship personnel. The people employed to serve guests in the restaurant, maintain security, maintain cleanliness, until those who manage finances are close relatives of the entrepreneurs are also the members of a community of Semangat Gunung village itself.) (interview with Mr. S. Ginting, one of the people of Semangat Gunung village).

Not only that, if it is explored further, we will find that there is still a family relationship among the owners of the pool and some of the inn keepers in Semangat Gunung village. It makes this village more unique with its social system.

The next factor is the political factor. It refers to in this case is an analysis of the policy or political changes that occur and gives effect to the organization in carrying out its activities, including in the case of the formulation of a strategy for developing tourist attractions in Karo regency. Political factor that influences tourism in Karo Regency is law number 32 of 2004 as the beginning of regional autonomy regarding delegation of authority. In the community's opinion, the amount of regional income donated to the regency is not in accordance with the development contribution given by the regional government to the SGV, especially in the tourism sector. The problem faced by the village community is the existence of a retribution post for tourists who come to visit to enjoy the hot spring baths or for agro-tourism. Until now, the local community, both entrepreneurs and the Village government, did not know where the income stream from the Semangat Gunung natural bathing tour was given.

The next factor is the partnership network. Semangat Gunung village also has a partnership network with PT. Pertamina company which is located in the hot spring bathing area, as well as partnership with Aqua factory, PT. Tirta Sibayakindo Berastagi. The form of this partnership is in the form of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) from the company to the village community. This CSR is in the form of providing ecotourism education to the community, road improvement, language training, etc.

The inhibiting factor of the tourism industry in Semangat Gunung Village is the lack of awareness of businesses and the community towards the process of developing the tourism industry which causes the quality of human resources in the tourism sector in Semangat Gunung village to be inadequate. Lack of awareness of the importance of innovation in an effort to improve the economy causes everything will also be hampered. The lack of coordination happens between the culture and tourism office and tourism

businesses themselves in which they are not included in the planning process and are only invited during the implementation of the promotion, so the tourism actors do not know the tourism agenda in Karo regency. The lack of funding for the development of the tourism object itself and the lack of promotion costs outside the region resulting in a less than optimal performance of the office of culture and tourism. The lack of infrastructure funds received by the Karo regency tourism and culture office in the context of developing tourism in the regions has an impact on the lack of facilities and infrastructure.

Discussion

Attraction in SGV is a hot spring which is much in demand by tourists from the archipelago. The hot springs contain sulfur. It is influenced by its location at the foot of Mount Sibayak. Tourism facilities indicate in a quantitative manner the number of tourist facilities that must be provided, and quantitatively shows the quality of services provided and which is reflected in the satisfaction of tourists who receive services. In relation to the type and quality of tourism facilities in tourist destinations, a standardized tourism standard has been developed, both nationally and internationally, so that the providers of tourism facilities simply choose or determine the type and quality to be provided (Suwanto, 2004). Based on the results of research facilities and infrastructure of man-made products in the SGV, it is very supportive of the journey of visitors for tourism activities. It can be seen that roads, places of worship, restaurants and other public facilities have been provided in tourist areas. So, there are no more obstacles in the form of public facilities for visitors to travel to hot spring pools.

In order to develop tourism potential in SGV, good cooperation and synergy between various parties are needed, including the government, private sector and the community. Good governance itself according to Sedarmayanti (2003) is a process of implementing state power in implementing the provision of public goods and services. The role of the office will not be able to run properly by itself but the office requires several supporting factors so that its role in tourism development can be optimal.

Conclusion

Based on the findings that have been described, it can be concluded that the provision of facilities and infrastructure in the development of tourism in the Semangat Gunung village, Merdeka district, Karo regency is fairly good. There are 16 complete hot spring pool locations. All of which are managed directly by the community or the private sector, and it employs family management. However, some of them such as public facilities and infrastructure must be renewed. Furthermore, supporting factors for the provision of facilities and infrastructure in the development of tourism in this village include supporting factors, namely social, cultural, political, and partnership networks; and inhibiting factors which include lack of awareness, lack of coordination, and lack of funding.

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