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The Implementation of Tourism Policies in Sikka Regency: Tracing the Role of Local Government in Maintaining Tourism Places

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Abstract: The tourism sector plays a significant source of foreign exchange profits and promotes national economic growth, particularly in terms of lowering unemployment and boosting a country's productivity. However, a tourism destination located in a village frequently produces conflicts of interest between stakeholders and tourism service providers in the community. Thus, this research is intended to find out what are the government policies towards the sustainability of the tourism sector in Sikka Regency. In addition, this research aims to investigate the impacts of Tourism policies conducted by Sikka Regency Government. This research uses qualitative research design by employing interviews and documentation to gain the comprehensive data. The results of this study indicate that there are several programs conducted by the Tourism and Culture office in Sikka Regency. The programs are increasing attractiveness of tourist destinations program, tourism marketing program, and tourism and creative economy resource development program. In implementing the programs, several activities carried out starting from maximising socialisation, implementing several programs by involving all stakeholders to work together in optimizing tourist destinations. In addition, the Tourism and Culture office also provides tourism personnel with education and training related to the program. Furthermore, the Tourism and Culture office establishes rules for each tourist destination to record and report the Regional Original Revenue. The implementation of tourism policies in Sikka Regency has been effective. It can be seen from the increase of Regional Original Revenue 2021-2024, especially in the tourism sector. Several suggestions are that the Tourism and Culture office need to improve infrastructure and collaborate with other tourist attraction managers to build links.

Keywords: Local Government, Policy, Tourism Places, Tourism.



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1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector is a sector that is of concern to both the central government and local governments currently [1]. The tourism sector consists of various elements and parties that synergize with each other with attribute support for the tourism experience for tourists. Various tourism destinations offer various characteristics of tourism which are commonly referred to as components of tourism. In this case, the main components of tourism consist of attractions, amenities, accessibility, available packages, activities, and ancillary services. These various components can support the emergence of a multiplier effect on the global economy and can encourage the creation of supply and demand for goods and services to maximize the potential of the tourism sector [2]. In Indonesia, the tourism sector has presented a multiplier effect for the national economy, especially in regional income, regional development, development of micro, small and medium enterprises, foreign exchange earnings as well as investment and employment absorption in various parts of Indonesia [3].

The contribution of the tourism sector can be suspected from various tourist activities, ranging from the use of land, water and air transportation services, food and beverage accommodation, souvenirs for MSME products, lodging, restaurants, and the craft industry [4]. Regions that have assets in the form of tourist attractions can bring benefits to the tourism sector itself where the number of tourist visits is highly beneficial for the development of the tourism industry and local revenue [5]. Therefore, the benefits that can be obtained by the government from the tourism sector are sources of foreign exchange earnings and taxes. The prospect of tourism in Indonesia reaches 15% annually, so that tourism can accelerate the equitable distribution of urban development, build up new job vacancies, increase the production of Indonesian arts and culture, and expand the small product market to the international world [6].

Indeed, the tourism industry benefits not only the Indonesian government but also the locals in the vicinity of the tourist attractions. Communities benefit from the increased revenue that comes from the presence of community-owned cottages that are rented out to tourists; these cottages also require a number of employees to keep running smoothly, which means that the establishment of these cottages indirectly creates jobs for other communities. Additionally, guides are needed in the tourism industry, and the only people who can become guides are locals because they are familiar with the area. Additionally, transportation is necessary for travelers to experience tourist places. The comfort of travelers when enjoying tourist attractions might be impacted by efficient transportation. By leasing or maintaining

automobiles, motorbikes, and bicycles for visitors, this mode of transportation can help boost local revenue [7].

However, maintaining the tourism sector is not easy and there are some obstacles. There are some obstacles found in the tourism sector which is managed through individual business. For example, a tourism place located in a village often creates conflicts of interest between stakeholders and tourism service providers in the village. Research showed that the value of the benefits of tourism development is low, so customer satisfaction is also low [8].

Various constraints and challenges faced by the community in the development of tourism need to be carried out by policy that can provide legal protection for the development of the tourism sector. Policy is everything that is chosen by the government to solve a problem [9]. Therefore, the policy is an effort to achieve predetermined goals/targets, such as problem-solving efforts and the use of special supporting facilities, and at a specific duration level. Policies are usually basic in nature because policies only outline general guidelines as a reference to act/apply in order to achieve predetermined goals [10].

Discussing government policy, previous research on the government's policy in tourism has been conducted. For example, the Korean government seeks to bridge the divide between cities and villages by promoting urban rural exchange programmes, tourism, or leisure activities such as green businesses and farm tourism, in rural, mountainous, and coastal areas. examined the Honduran government's role in agro-tourism development through a top-down strategy (central and local government) and bottom-up initiatives for agro-tourism development. In this situation, the bottom-up method incorporates the private sector, specifically farmers and tourism operators, such as hotel and restaurant managers and travel agencies. The research utilized stakeholder interviews to ascertain the government's role in tourism growth. The results of the interviews were utilized to create a semi-structured questionnaire to help better understand the government's role. The findings indicate that the government is involved in policy formulation (registration and licensing, taxes, and bureaucratic procedures), marketing and advertising, financial opportunities, information access (education and training, statistical data gathering), and infrastructure development [11].

To take advantage of the economic opportunity in the tourism industry, the Indonesian local government should develop programs to utilize the natural tourist attractions spots and improve infrastructure around those tourist spots. Programs to develop tourism potential in

the regions are aligned with the National regulations No.10 Year 2009 which stated that tourism activities are aims to improve social welfare, increase both regional and national income, widen job opportunities, give equal opportunities for small and medium business, and hence will contribute to regions' overall development. The Tourism Law No. 10/2009 explains the role of local governments in increasing tourism potential, namely, facilitating, encouraging investment, developing tourism, managing tourism, and allocating budgets to increase tourism potential. In developing or creating tourist attractions, the government has an important role because the tourism sector cannot develop optimally if there is no intervention from the government, especially in providing road access facilities, finding tourists and promoting these tourist attractions.

Based on the explanation above, it is important to explore more about Indonesian local government policy in the tourism sector. One of the Indonesian local governments that should be undertaken is in Sikka regency. It is important to find out tourism policy in Sikka regency because Sikka regency has various tourism places that should be protected legally by the Sikka government. Therefore, this research has two research problems, namely:

- (1) What are the local government policies on the sustainability of the tourism sector in Sikka regency?
- (2) What are the impacts of tourism policies conducted by the local government of Sikka regency?

1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In qualitative research, the researcher himself becomes a tool in the data collection process [12]. In addition, qualitative research focuses more on the application of self as an instrument. This research is intended to gain a detailed description about the government policies on the sustainability of the tourism sector in Sikka regency and the impacts of tourism policies conducted by the government of Sikka regency.

The research location is the Department of Tourism and Culture of Sikka Regency and the time of research will be held from April 17th up to May 17th, 2024. The first data source from the head of the Department of Tourism and Culture Mr. Ferdinan Evansius Edomeko, S. Fil as primary data. While the second data is tourism policy, namely Decree of letter. Here the researcher uses the Decree of letters in 2018 – 2022.

In collecting the data, this research uses interview and documents techniques. Interviews are one of the most widely used tools for collecting qualitative research data.

Interviews allow researchers to collect diverse data from respondents in various situations and contexts [13]. The researcher will interview the head of tourism office to obtain the data about the tourism policies and the impact of tourism policies. In addition, documents that need to be analyzed are the decree of letter to the tourism policies in Sikka regency.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Local Government Policies on The Sustainability of The Tourism Sector

There are three programs conducted by the Tourism and Culture office in Sikka Regency.

3.1.1. Increasing Attractiveness of Tourist Destinations

Increasing a destination's attractiveness to tourists can be understood as an attempt to make the place more visually appealing. The goals of increasing a destination's tourist appeal are often to draw more visitors, encourage them to stay longer, or charge more for their trips. The natural and artificial resources such as roads, electricity, water, bridges, and so forth that tourists absolutely require when visiting a tourist destination are referred to as infrastructure improvements. In order to ensure that tourist destinations are prepared for their arrival, infrastructure needs must be developed and met by modifying the location and circumstances of the relevant tourist destination. In order to ensure that tourists visiting tourist attractions feel safe and comfortable during their vacation, supporting facilities like parking lots, cleaning facilities, souvenir shops, public restrooms, places of worship, and security and order facilities are provided. Therefore, adding a transportation system to tourist attractions is also crucial for the development of tourism, and improving security and cleanliness in tourist areas in this instance helps to ensure that visitors feel comfortable. The government and business sector, destination managers or local communities interested in destination management can undertake this task. The results of an interview with the Head of Tourism and Culture Department in Sikka Regency, he said that:

"Tourism destinations in Sikka Regency are being improved starting from infrastructure improvements, providing supporting facilities, adding transportation systems and improving security and cleanliness in tourist areas." (FEE)

This is also regulated by Indonesian Law Number 10 of 2009, which states that tourist attractions are everything that has the uniqueness, convenience, and value of diversity, natural wealth, culture, and man-made products in the form of products targeted or visited by tourists. Ref. [14] defines tourist attractions as everything that is unique and contains elements of beauty from natural resources, culture, and man-made products. Three

indications can be used to measure the attraction of a tourist destination: something to see, something to do, and something to buy. According to Ref. [15], visiting interest is a person's desire to visit a tourist attraction. Interest in visiting is basically a feeling of wanting to visit an interesting place. Ref. [16] added that visiting interest is a consumer action in choosing or deciding to visit a tourist attraction based on the experience of traveling. The concept of tourist interest is also closely related to the concept of consumer buying interest. According to Ref. [14], tourist interest in visiting can be measured based on indicators including tourists' activeness in seeking information related to products, determination to visit, and decisions to visit.

3.2. Tourism Marketing Program

Tourism marketing program is a set of strategies and tactics aimed at promoting a particular destination and increasing the number of tourists visiting the area. The main objective of a tourism marketing program is to increase awareness, interest, and participation in tourism activities in the place. In addition, due to the community to view these tourist destinations without engaging in socialization, a website must be established. The tourism office is unable to accomplish all of this on its own; in order to promote tourist attractions in the Sikka district, it must collaborate with the communication and information office. Without socialization, tourism marketing is highly unlikely to succeed. The results of an interview with the Head of Sikka Regency Tourism and Culture Department, he said that:

"The role of tourism marketing in addition to our socialization, we also have a website to view tourist destinations, we also collaborate with the Office of Communication and Information to promote tourist attractions in Sikka Regency and elect tourism ambassadors, which continues to be held every year. Because these ambassadors are the face of regional tourism, it is through them that we promote tourism promotion in Sikka. The problem faced is the lack of communication between the Tourism Office and the community, thus making several tourist destinations that could be a source of Regional Original Revenue (PAD) impossible to realize" (FEE).

Based on the results of the interview with the head of the tourism and culture office mentioned above, it can be concluded that the tourism marketing program is actually implemented, as evidenced by the socialization or consultation carried out by the tourism department in collaboration with communication and information services. promoting tourist attractions in Sikka Regency and the selection of Tourism Ambassadors continues to be carried out every year.

The tourism industry is not an industry that stands alone, but is an industry consisting of a series of companies that produce services and products (goods and services) that are

different from one another that are needed by tourists in particular and tourists in general during their trip. According to Suryadana and Octavia (2015), in order to attain visitor pleasure, tourism marketing is a system of coordinating several strategies for tourism industry group companies, both private and government organizations, both local, regional, national, or international. Ref. [17] states that national tourist bodies or businesses handle the management of tourism marketing. Identified as tourists who already harbour travel aspirations by being a member of the tourism industry group.

Furthermore, one of the marketing strategies conducted by the local government in Sikka regency is the use of historical stories behind the tourism. For example, one particular religious site in Sikka Regency that is worth seeing is a church that is over a century old and still sturdy. One of the monuments to the work of Jesuit priests in the Sikka region is this church, which dates back to the period after the Dominicans planted the seeds of the Catholic faith there. The Sikka Old Church is more aesthetically pleasing because of its blend of European and Flores culture. Specifically, Sikka culture is mixed with subtleties from Europe. This local flavor is reflected on the walls, which are patterned with local weaving. Only the king's sarong has the weaving motif, which represents majesty and royalty as well as a sign of God's protection for his people. On December 24, 1899, during Christmas, Father John Engbers SJ officially opened the church.

It is in line with the description from Ref. [18] that one of the things that will draw tourists to these tourist destinations is the stories about the tourism places. So, in addition to enjoying stunning scenery, the tourists will also comprehend the values of the local community. One of the main purposes of storytelling for tourists in tourist areas is to help them discover the background of the location (legend) they are visiting. In Addition, tourists who take the story literally will find recommendations in the mythology.

In addition, promoting cultural heritage becomes one of the marketing strategies. For example, Bliran Sina Cultural Studio is an ikat weaving studio that visitors must see in order to learn about weaving. Since 1988, the studio has worked with the Sikka Regency Tourism Office to expand business capital. Additionally, the company concentrated on developing tourism. The tourism office and additional cruise ships visited between 1988 and 1991. One cruise ship made a port call in big numbers for one month. He disclosed that the studio experienced a three-month void following Romanus's 1991 death, as there was no one left to take the helm. Consequently, the village took over the center's management. For half a year, the center was run by the village. The purpose of tourists' visits is to observe the traditional

ikat weaving technique. Visitors can also enjoy local music and dances performed traditionally. Not only do foreign visitors frequent the Biliran Sina studio, but Sikka locals also go there on a regular basis.

Cultural sites draw large numbers of visitors who are interested in history and the arts and play a significant role in tourism at all levels. Although cultural heritage tourism provides benefits for the economy and society, it can also have drawbacks for local communities and areas [19].

3.3. Tourism and Creative Economy Resource Development Program

Tourism resource development in the context of tourism department refers to efforts made to improve the quality and capability of the workforce involved in the tourism sector. It involves various activities aimed at improving the knowledge, skills, and competencies of workers in the tourism department, so that they can carry out their duties and responsibilities effectively and efficiently in promoting tourism in a region or tourist destination.

The results of interviews conducted by researchers regarding the Implementation of the Tourism and Creative Economy Resource Development Program at the Sikka Regency Tourism Office have been running well and effectively. From the results of researcher interviews, the Sikka Regency Tourism Office usually conducts human resource trainings to maximize the management of the tourism potential of cities or villages in Sikka Regency and not only that, the tourism office also provides tourism personnel with education and training related to the program being run and sets rules for each tourist destination.

The Sikka Regency people weave exquisite indigenous ikat, which has great spiritual significance. In the Sikka Krowe society, there are two types of woven cloth (sarongs): *lipa*, which is meant for men, and *utang*, which is meant for women. Women or female artisans with high skill levels passed down from generation to generation typically weave ties. This tie weave is traditionally produced from tree cotton yarn through a laborious and time-consuming procedure. Various kinds of conventional working tools are used in the procedure, depending on the phases and purposes. The *ikat* weave was created by local artists using high-quality artistic features and qualities that demonstrate a high degree of ancestral cultural civilization. These artists also created the working instruments used in weaving. Specific Sikka language phrases are always used for each tool and work stage.

The Sikka Regency Government is really in favor of all initiatives aimed at developing and protecting it due to its historical significance and high market worth. The

government's organization of a national Muri Record of Ikat Tenun Art event in 2015, which was successful due to the participation of 1,000 Sikka Regency Women Weavers, is one example of its support. On November 11, 2015, at Sikka Regency, this triumph was declared, and the certificate was given by Mrs. Mufidah Yusuf Kalla.

The results of an interview with the Head of Sikka Regency Tourism and Culture Department, he said that:

"Training on strengthening human resources (HR) in the field of tourism and creative industries aims to maximize the tourism potential of villages or regions. can innovate to further increase the number of tourists. The Sikka Regency Tourism Department also provides tourism personnel with education and training related to the programs implemented and sets rules for each tourist destination to record and report related to Regional Original Revenue (PAD)." (FEE)

Broadly speaking, tourism development in principle will involve various stakeholders that can be grouped into government stakeholders, the private sector, the media, universities and community groups [20]. Training is an endeavor to enhance individual and collective competency by means of skill development, hence developing human resources. Theory is not as important as direct practice when it comes to training implementation. The training program's main goal is to enhance the information, abilities, and attitudes that employees currently possess in order to help them become competent in their line of work or in the field they are pursuing [21].

Data on the number of tourist visits in Sikka Regency is presented in the following Table 1.

Table 1. Data on the number of tourist visits in Sikka Regency (2018-2022)

Tahun	Wisman	Wisnus	Jumlah Wisatawan
2018	11.5678	38.644	50.212
2019	9.205	34.963	44.168
2020	578	20.408	20.986
2021	124	25.809	25.933
2022	1.329	34.712	36.041

Source: Data Base DISPARBUD Sikka, 2022

The data indicates that there has been a yearly decline in the number of visits from both domestic and foreign tourists. This can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a severe decline in 2020 before starting to increase in 2021 and continuing to do so until 2022 as the pandemic's effects started to lessen. The percentage increase in lodging, dining, and drinking contributions to the PDRB from 2018 to 2022 is shown in Figure 1.

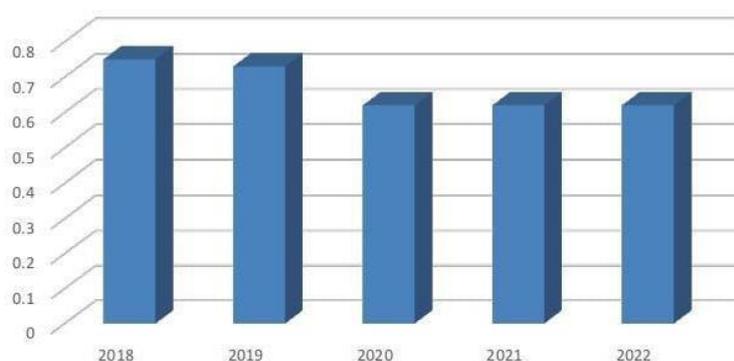


Figure 1. The percentage increase in lodging, dining, and drinking contributions to the PDRB

As presented in the graphic above, the accommodation of foods and drinks sectors' contribution to PDRB has declined since 2018 marked their highest year for contribution between 2018 and 2022. This is a result of the COVID-19 epidemic, which naturally has an impact on Sikka Regency Community's economic standing.

4. CONCLUSION

The implementation of tourism policy in Sikka Regency is going well. This can be seen from the Sikka Regency tourism office who have implemented programs to attract tourist destinations, marketing programs, and tourism development of human resources (HR). In addition, this can be seen from the increasement in Regional Original Revenue in the last three years, namely from 2020-2023.

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