

Application of Ecotourism Principles in Improving Tourist's Interest

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Abstract: Tourism development has significant value and benefits for the progress of other sectors. However, developing tourism requires many activities that can have a negative impact on the environment. To minimize the risks or negative impacts of the development of the tourism industry, tourism development needs to be developed according to the uniqueness and conditions of the existing area. A good tourism sector must apply the concept of sustainability and be environmentally sound to minimize the negative impacts of tourism. One form of sustainable tourism is ecotourism. Ecotourism is a form of tourism activity to natural areas with the aim of conserving the environment and culture as well as the welfare of local communities. The application of good ecotourism principles, in ecotourism areas can make an important contribution to the welfare of the community, on the contrary if it is managed badly, it will leave damage. Therefore basic information about ecotourism visiting behavior; sensitivity to the environment; The intention to visit ecotourism and the perception of ecotourism visitors can be the basis of ecotourism economic arrangement, conservation value, environmental damage costs. and auditing the impact of ecotourism activities.

1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism stakeholders participate in tourism development in Indonesia. Then, Indonesia itself has a lot of potential in developing tourism whether it is based on nature, culture and artificial. In the current development of the tourism industry, stakeholders continue to improve and engage in tourism development to improve the quality and quantity of tourism as well as the number of domestic and foreign tourists. The number of tourist visits and purchasing power also continues to increase if the components of tourism products are of high quality so that tourists get benefits and satisfaction in the tourist destinations they visit.

According to Pendit (2002) there are 2 (two) types of tourism, namely mass tourism or commonly known as mass tourism and alternative tourism which is commonly known as alternative tourism. One form of alternative tourism is ecotourism. According to Arida (2010), ecotourism is a tourism product that respects the culture of the local community, does not damage the environment, and develops on a small scale. Marine tourism is one type of ecotourism where this tourism utilizes the marine area directly or

indirectly. The usual activities are snorkeling, fishing or just seeing the natural beauty that exists.

Indonesia has Tangkahan, which is a representation of ecotourism managed by local communities and has been around for a long time. The area is located in the TNGL buffer zone and is directly adjacent to PTPN II Kuala Sawit and rubber plantations in Batang Serangan District, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province (Simanjuntak, 2009). The air temperature in the Tangkahan Ecotourism area is 21.1 C-27.5 C. The average rainfall is around 2,000-3,200 mm/year with the rainy season lasting evenly throughout the year. The area is still partially covered by forest and the rainy season is evenly distributed, so water is not a problem in this area. Most of the water needs for the community are obtained through river water. The type of soil consists of podzolic and lotosol.

The Tangkahan Ecotourism Area has now become a leading tourism destination in North Sumatra Regency. The ecotourism area, which opened in 2001 and was inaugurated in February 2004, is an example of an ecotourism area with local community participation in nature conservation. The Tangkahan Ecotourism Area is a representation of how

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ecotourism development with the participation of local communities can make a major contribution to conservation with the 17,000 hectares of Gunung Leuser National Park area, North Sumatra. Until now, the ecotourism area has been operating under the auspices of the Tangkahan Tourism Institute (LPT) for 14 years.

The Tangkahan Ecotourism Area is located at the end of two villages, namely Namo Sialang and Sei Serdang Villages, Batang Serdang District, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra. Tangkahan ecotourism is tourism with the category of ecological tourism and conservation tourism because this tour focuses more on natural areas dominated by forests and wildlife. The beauty of nature and the very cool air is the main attraction of this ecotourism. In addition, the tourism activities in Tangkahan ecotourism also vary from elephant attractions, bathing in waterfalls and hot water, jungle trekking/walking through the forest, to tubing river/rafting. The icon of this ecotourism is the elephants in the ecotourism destination.

The Tangkahan Natural Tourism Object area has been designated as a buffer zone for the Gunung Leuser National Park (TNGL). Tangkahan is a tourist area that has a stretch of tropical rain forest with lowlands. In addition, the Tangkahan area also has a very wide area and a lot of biodiversity such as flora and fauna. The community has developed the Tangkahan Area as a natural tourist area by making elephants as one of the objects of tourist attraction (Irni et al., 2016).

Tangkahan has tourist activities such as beautiful natural scenery, elephant baths, hot springs, white water rafting, patrolling with elephants, waterfalls and river cruises. River cruising in the Tangkahan area is one of the natural tourist attractions. The area which is known as a nature tourism with clear rivers and conservation of Sumatran elephants has a strong attraction to attract visitors to come for tours. If the ecotourism approach is implemented properly, the tourism industry has the potential to have a positive, beneficial impact on the environment through environmental protection and conservation efforts where tourism can be a source to finance efforts to protect environmental resources and increase the economic value of resources/environment, as well as empowerment in the social sector. and the culture of the surrounding community.

2 DEVELOPMENT ECOTOURISM HOLD

The natural beauty that is very beautiful and awake is a separate assessment for tourists, such as the natural panorama which is one of the attractions in the Tangkahan Natural Tourism Object Area. In the Tangkahan Natural Tourism Object Area there is also a waterfall. Tangkahan waterfall is a place where cold water mixes with hot water. To reach the waterfall, tourists must cross small rivers, because the location of the waterfall is between rocks and trees that are quite shady. The waterfall in the area is very cold and fresh, the waterfall is about three meters high, under the waterfall there are large chunks of rock that form a small pond. Access to unspoiled waterfalls provides a special attraction for tourists.

Hot springs in the Tangkahan Natural Tourism Object Area have its own charm for tourists. Visitors have to cross a river that is deep enough to reach the hot springs, during the rainy season the depth of the river reaches more than two meters. Hot water that gushes from behind a small cave on the edge of a cliff forms a small pool that makes the hot spring bath in Tangkahan unique.

Today's tourism development strategy is starting to be directed at extracting natural tourism objects that have not yet been developed or have not been excavated. This is done with the aim of attracting tourists who have started to change in the orientation of their tourism activities through Special Interest Tourism or Alternative Tourism. The current trend shows that domestic and foreign tourists prefer special interest types of tourism. The development of this tourism object becomes very important, especially in the era of regional autonomy which is useful as an acceleration of the economy in the region. A tourism object to be developed must be studied by experts in a multidisciplinary, integrated and cross-sectoral manner.

This is done to prevent the development of tourism objects that only focus on the exploitation of beauty and profit alone without considering the negative impact of the results of the development. The development of environmentally friendly tourism objects is an alternative tourism as an effort to anticipate the decline in the popularity of mass tourism. Ecotourism is a tourism activity that pays great attention to the sustainability of tourism resources. There is rules and ethics related planning and development ecotourism, there are three necessary perspective _ note, namely:

- a. Ecotourism as product
- b. Ecotourism as a market
- c. Ecotourism as approach development

From this perspective, it is clear that ecotourism is one of the alternative products of tourism activities that provides its own charm, a different market share from other tourism marketing, and the efforts that must be made in planning and development are also very different from other types of tourism. Ecotourism is a tourism product that focuses more on aspects of education and information, socio-cultural aspects, environmental aspects, aesthetic aspects, ethical aspects and reputation. Therefore, ecotourism planning must be directed at the concepts, principles, and market analysis.

According to From (2004) there are three ecotourism concepts, namely: outdoor; accommodation created and managed by local communities; and have attention to the natural environment and local culture. Therefore, ecotourism activities have the following principles: Reduce impact negative

- a. Build awareness and appreciation
- b. Offer experiences positive
- c. Give profit financial
- d. Increase sensitivity to situation social & environmental
- e. Respect human rights

Based on the principles so activity ecotourism is activity tours that put attention big to sustainability resource tourism. Because of that activity ecotourism is very different with activity tour more more character bulk. Following is characteristics from activity ecotourism:

- a. Activity tour related with conservation environment
- b. Provider service prepare attractions and offers traveler for value environment
- c. Activity tour based on natural
- d. Tour operator shows not quite enough answer financial in preservation environment
- e. Raising funds for activity preservation environment
- f. Use transportation and accommodation local, character simple, frugal energy, and involves participation society.
- g. Scale small

Notice ecotourism as one tours that have separate products and markets, then in effort development need notice various consideration in the planning. A number of necessary considerations noticed is as following:

- a. Development product tour worth ecology tall
- b. Selection area tours that offer diversity biological
- c. Abandonment many products and services _ consume energy and generate waste
- d. Standardization and certification product tour based on ecology
- e. Training and strengthening awareness environment among _ inhabitant Public
- f. Engage population local in activity provision and management service tour
- g. Collaboration trans-sectoral management in development.

3 ROLE ECOTOURISM TO SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN THE COMMUNITY

Tourism, as the core economy, is now a common goal, not only for all personnel of the Ministry of Tourism, but also for the entire Indonesian nation. In the next few years we will transform into a large country whose economy is partly supported by the tourism sector. The WTTC report also adds that in most countries, coastal tourism is the largest tourism industry and makes a significant contribution to GDP. As one of the important economic sectors, tourism has multiple impacts, both positive and negative, for humans and the environment. Broadly speaking, the impacts of the tourism industry can be classified into three impacts, namely environmental impacts, socio-cultural impacts and economic impacts (Mulyana, 2019).

Ecotourism or Ecotourism is one of the environmentally friendly tourism activities by prioritizing aspects of nature conservation, aspects of socio-cultural economic empowerment of local communities as well as aspects of learning and education. Ecotourism begins when a negative impact on conventional tourism activities is felt. This negative impact is not only stated and proven by environmental experts but also culturalists, community leaders and tourism business actors themselves. The impact is in the form of environmental damage, the uncontrolled influence of local culture, the reduced role of the local community and business competition which has begun to threaten the environment, culture and economy of the local community.

The benefits of ecotourism impact in various aspects. These benefits include aspects of

conservation, empowerment and environmental education. These benefits in full are as follows: Benefit ecotourism impact in various aspect. Benefit the covers aspect conservation, empowerment and education environment. Benefit the by complete is as following:

1. Conservation.

The link between ecotourism and endangered animals is very close, even positive, as a study by Griffith University researchers. Tourism is positively correlated with conservation means providing effective economic incentives to conserve, increase cultural biodiversity, protect natural and cultural heritage on planet earth.

2. Economic empowerment.

Ecotourism involving local communities means increasing the capacity, employment opportunities of local communities. The concept of eco-tourism is an effective method to empower local communities around the world to fight poverty, achieve sustainable development.

3. Environmental education.

Involving environmental education means that the tourism activities carried out must enrich the experience, as well as environmental awareness through interpretation. Activities should promote understanding, full respect for nature, people, local culture.

Ecotourism business is an activity that utilizes natural resources or areas that are relatively undeveloped (as well as the original culture) with the following characteristics: promoting nature conservation, having the least possible impact on the environment and providing economic benefits for the local community (Ceballos-Lascurain, 2003). Although in general the definition has included the empowerment of local communities where ecotourism business activities are carried out, ways to empower local communities to improve their economic status have not received proper attention from researchers, especially in developing countries such as Indonesia. The negative impact of the ecotourism business and other alternative tourism as well as the potential for ecotourism in developing underdeveloped regional communities is still very lacking (Scheyvens, 2000 in Mulyana, 2019).

Ecotourism principles are various governing principles to unite environmental conservation, community development and sustainable tourism, go hand in hand. This means that the parties who implement, participate in ecotourism must comply with these criteria and principles. The principles of ecotourism are as follows:

- a. Minimize the impact of physical, social, behavioral, psychological.
- b. Build environmental awareness, culture and respect.
- c. Provide a positive experience for visitors and hosts.
- d. Provide direct financial benefits for the conservation or preservation of the environment.
- e. Generate financial benefits for local communities, private industry.
- f. Provide an impressive interpretive experience for visitors to increase sensitivity to the political, environmental, social climate of tourist destinations.
- g. Build, operate a facility or infrastructure while minimizing environmental impact.
- h. Recognize the rights, spiritual beliefs of indigenous communities and empower them.
- i. Ecotourism development must also involve local communities in its management so that it can provide economic benefits to the community or local government.

In accordance with the Minister of Home Affairs Regulation Number 33 of 2009 concerning Guidelines for Ecotourism Development in the Region which states that "ecotourism development must empower local communities" which in this case is in accordance with ecotourism principles, namely the active role of the surrounding community in planning, utilizing, and controlling ecotourism activities by respecting the socio-cultural and religious values of the community around the tourist area. With the development of ecotourism, the community is empowered through tourism activities.

Regarding the development of ecotourism in terms of empowering local communities towards ecotourism business activities, it is more focused on economic problems, in fact the development of ecotourism business is a multidimensional activity, not just an economic problem. Linberg (1999) argues that the ecotourism business has a very big role in terms of generating economic benefits because the ecotourism business helps create jobs in remote areas that are not economically profitable for both the government and the community.

Although sometimes the scale is very small, it will still have a big enough impact on both individuals and society. Furthermore, Linberg (1999) suggests that studies on ecotourism business in Australia have proven a positive influence from an economic point of view, although the level of profit varies greatly from place to place. When discussing the issue of economic empowerment from the point of view of the

ecotourism business, it is necessary to discuss the formal and informal sectors as well as the available business opportunities, because seasonal tourism activities have a significant impact on local communities. Moreover, income inequality often occurs for individuals which can cause problems (Wilkinson & Pratiwi, 1995).

Social empowerment is defined as a situation in which the sense of unity and integrity of a community group becomes stronger (Scheyvens, 2000). The function of the ecotourism business as a factor that supports social empowerment is very important, because the construction of 'community-based tourism' will have a strong influence on social dynamics for these community groups. As a result, community members will feel included in ecotourism business activities, which are successful. Social empowerment that can be seen directly and indirectly by carrying out ecotourism business activities is the more open opportunities for local communities to public access such as clean water, better roads and health clinics.

Meanwhile, from a cultural perspective, Zeppel (1999) argues that a well-managed ecotourism business is also possible to be used as a means to maintain the existence of the indigenous culture of the local population. Adequate social empowerment of local communities allows them to have political power over the construction of public facilities or the development of an ecotourism business. Tourism activities as an alternative to earn income for the community and foreign exchange for the state are no longer in doubt, although in Indonesia this sector has had its ups and downs.

4 TANGKAHAN ECOTOURISM IN INCREASING TOURIST INTEREST

The problem of accessibility in the Tangkahan ecotourism area when viewed from the observations made by researchers, the current condition of infrastructure is still far from being ideal for a tourist area. This can be seen from the access to the location of the Tangkahan ecotourism area, especially the paths in oil palm plantations, until now it is still dominated by gravel to large stones and yellow soil for 10 km, when it rains the damaged roads are often flooded. This of course greatly hampers the travel of tourists.

In addition, the unavailability of tourist facilities such as the availability of ATM machines, clear

directions and limited communication networks are also still unresolved problems in the Tangkahan area. The problem of road infrastructure and incomplete supporting facilities for the Tangkahan ecotourism area is still a major problem in this area, and is a PR in the collaborative development of Tangkahan ecotourism, this problem has actually existed since the Tangkahan ecotourism area became a tourist area, but until now the problem has not been resolved overcome. This will certainly have an impact on the development of the Tangkahan ecotourism area and it is feared that people will assume that their area is not being cared for, even though the Tangkahan area has actually had a lot of positive impacts not only on the balance of the Gunung Leuser forest ecosystem and the local community but also on the local government of Langkat district.

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To achieve sustainable ecotourism development, things that must be put forward include the principles of environmental improvement, increasing visitor satisfaction, and sustaining the life of local communities. In addition, there are also various responsibilities in ecotourism development. Responsibility should be directed towards the

protection of the natural environment, including the flora and fauna that are the object of observation by tourists. Another responsibility is to visitors, such as the presence of interesting attractions that can increase visitor satisfaction. Meanwhile, the responsibility to the community is an improvement in the quality of life of the community around the area, both for a short period and a long period of time. If all of these principles are implemented, ecotourism will guarantee "ecological friendly" development from community-based development to support sustainable development.

Ecotourism in Tangkahan where elephants are the main attraction. Several elephants have been cared for by CRU Tangkahan for forest patrols and to protect agricultural areas near the forest from wild elephants. However, these elephants are also an attraction for tourists, such as elephant trekking (Gunawan, 2008). The Tangkahan tourist area has been known as one of the popular ecotourism destinations in North Sumatra Province. However, ecotourism development in Tangkahan is considered to face several challenges, such as: lack of public awareness of nature conservation and environmental health, lack of accessibility and tourism facilities, and lack of support from local government (Langkat Regency) and provincial government (North Sumatra Province).

Wiranatah (2015) analysis of the importance of Tangkahan tourist attractions and facilities, it can be said that:

- a. There are several tourist attractions that are considered very important, namely: fauna diversity, unique fauna, natural scenery, and tourist activities available at the destination.
- b. There are several tourist facilities and services that are considered very important, namely: restaurants / food houses and public toilets.
- c. Several tourist attractions are considered important, namely: the diversity and uniqueness of flora, handicrafts, traditional arts, traditional food, traditional architecture, agricultural plantations, and campgrounds.
- d. Some tourist facilities and services that are considered important, namely: accommodation, travel agents, and banking facilities (including currency exchange).
- e. Several accessibility indicators are considered important, namely: transportation and communication facilities.

Inadequate facilities and infrastructure such as roads, transportation and tourist attractions that are less cared for by the local community. And there is still a lack of construction of lodging places that have

not been reached by local tourists and foreign tourists, bathroom and public toilet facilities are not maintained, and places to sell are not organized. Because other facilities and infrastructure are inadequate and not cared for, tourists do not last long to visit these attractions. And the management of Tangkahan is very much needed or needed to increase the selling power of tourism in an area and can lead to the welfare of the surrounding community. The government must establish an authority body for the management of the Tangkahan area, which is expected to accelerate development in the Tangkahan area.

Another thing related to the development of the Tangkahan natural tourism area is still less optimistic about the objects and natural tourist attractions in Tangkahan. And the government is still not paying attention to the existing facilities and infrastructure in Tangkahan natural tourism. Tangkahan natural tourism objects and attractions also have resources that can create a sense of pleasure and beauty, also have special characteristics that are still rare such as the natural beauty of mountains, rivers, forests that can be supported by the community around Tangkahan natural attractions who always provide good service to tourists visiting Tangkahan and this is what encourages tourists to visit the Tangkahan natural tourist area, this is because the existing tourist facilities and infrastructure of Tangkahan still support the comfort of the tourists.

The Tangkahan natural tourism area has the potential for natural beauty that deserves to be developed, but the current potential is not yet an advantage that can contribute to the economy of Langkat Regency. This is because the Tangkahan tourist area is still in the development stage so it can be promoted. And to build the existing facilities and infrastructure in Tangkahan natural tourism, the government's role is very much needed, such as building infrastructure towards Tangkahan natural tourism. So that all types of contribution taxes that have been set by the Langkat Regency Government have not been realized. Currently Tangkahan is still managed by the community around the tourist attraction. And the government's attention is urgently needed to build facilities and infrastructure for Tangkahan natural tourism.

In developing the tourism potential of Tangkahan, until now there are still several obstacles faced by stakeholders, including the lack of facilities and infrastructure, limited funds, low human resources of the community around tourist destinations in the tourism sector, and low awareness of tourists about the environment. For this reason, it is necessary to

make efforts from stakeholders in efforts to improve facilities and infrastructure, cooperate with investors in order to obtain the funds needed, as well as conduct tourism awareness training to the community around tourist destinations and carry out promotions so that it can be expected to attract tourists to visit. Ritonga, 2017).

5 CONCLUSIONS

Tourism development has significant value and benefits for the progress of other sectors. However, developing tourism requires many activities that can have a negative impact on the environment. To minimize the risk or negative impact of the development of the tourism industry, tourism development needs to be developed according to the uniqueness and conditions of the existing region. The concept of tourism development based on the uniqueness and condition of the region can be developed by implementing ecotourism development or sustainable tourism development in the form of ecotourism. The implementation of environmentally friendly tourism development and adapted to the uniqueness and local conditions, its success can be measured through a sustainable socio-cultural process and involving the identity of the local community; sustainable natural resource and environmental cycles; and economic processes that can provide sustainable benefits.

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