

# Development Strategy to Improve The Quality of Tourism in Kota Lama Semarang, Central Java

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**Abstract** One of the many spots in Semarang, which is being meticulously renovated by the Municipal Government for the purpose of attracting tourists, is Kota Lama Semarang. This Kota Lama Semarang, are old buildings which were built in the ages of the Dutch colonisation in Indonesia. Recently, there have been attempts at registering Kota Lama Semarang under the World Heritage List by UNESCO. Despite its prestige as so conveyed by the fancy European buildings, Kota Lama Semarang is prone to flooding. Mitigation plans are highly required for the perseverance of the cultural values in Kota Lama Semarang. Moreover, such plans are further required to maintain the sites which are of touristic importance. The most feasible and do-able solution plan to this problem is applying ecotourism. Ecotourism suggest that the best way to deal with disaster is to make the best out of it by promoting tourism potential by cultivating it sustainably involving local people. Therefore, this paper is trying to propose how ecotourism works in order to improve the tourism quality in Kota Lama.

**Keywords** Kota Lama, Semarang, flood, ecotourism

## I. INTRODUCTION (HEADING 1)

Semarang City is the capital of the province of Central Java and is also one of the major cities in Indonesia that has a lot of historical value. The city of Semarang consists of hilly, lowland and coastal areas. The topographic conditions of Semarang City make Semarang City have an area called the upper city and lower city. The hilly area is an area in the South, with a slope of between 15% and 40% and some areas with slopes above 40%; the lowlands are located in the Middle, with a slope of between 2% and 15%; and the coastal area is an area in the North, which is directly adjacent to the Java Sea, with a slope of between 0% and 2% [1]. Semarang City is an area located at the foot of Mount Ungaran, where there are several large rivers, such as Besole River, Beringin River, Silandak River, Siangker River, Kreo River, Kripik River, Garamg River, Temple River, Bajak River, Kedungmundu River, and Penggaron River.

As a downstream area, the city of Semarang becomes an area of overflow of water from passing rivers; resulting in flooding in the rainy season. This condition is exacerbated by the characteristics of the city of Semarang, which makes rainfall in the upstream area quickly flow to the downstream area [1]. The relatively flat land contour in Semarang makes it difficult for the drainage system to function properly. The nature of water is to flow from a high place to a low place (upstream to downstream). If rain falls on land, excess water is collected by the drainage system and flowed to the downstream / sea area. However, the contour of the land surface in the city of Semarang which is relatively flat makes the flow of water downstream / sea runs slowly and is hampered. This condition then causes flood.

The phenomenon of flooding that occurred in Semarang City was not only seen as a natural phenomenon, but also caused a disaster. The Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 24 of 2007 concerning Disaster Management defines disaster as an event or series of events that threaten and disrupt people's lives and livelihoods, whether caused by natural and / or non-natural factors, as well as human factors, so that the resulting victims human soul, environmental damage, property loss, and psychological impact. Flood disaster is a natural disaster, because the disaster is caused by nature, namely flood. Flood handling in the city of Semarang is the concern and responsibility of the Semarang City Government. Efforts to deal with the problems of floods and robs have been started since the Dutch era, namely by building the East Flood Canal (BKT) and the West Flood Canal in the 19th century [2]. The handling of floods and robs was made by the Semarang City Government as a program of development priorities in the Semarang City RPJMD in 2010-2015. Flood handling will help the Kota Lama area to be able to improve its tourism sector because flooding will be one of the obstacles in improving

infrastructure and in carrying out daily activities by people around the Kota Lama area.

## II. LATEST CONDITION ON FLOOD IN KOTA LAMA

One of the corner from Semarang that is currently being intensively built by the Semarang City Government to lure tourists is the Kota Lama of Semarang [3]. Kota Lama of Semarang or often referred to as "The Little Netherland" is an area that has a high historical value because it has a very high cultural diversity considering the many relics of the Dutch colonialism and many buildings that are still strong today such as the GPIB (Indonesian Protestant Church section West), Tawang Station, and many other buildings that are still tourism objects. Until now, the number of historical buildings in the Kota Lama area itself was the result of the settlement of the Dutch and other European nations who had the main livelihood as traders. Not only that, the infrastructure in the Kota Lama area of Semarang has also been very developed. According to data from the Semarang City Government in 2011, the total buildings in the Old City area of Semarang reached 274 units consisting of residential buildings and also offices. At present, the Old City area of Semarang is being proposed to become a UNESCO world cultural heritage city [3].

Semarang City Government continues to revitalize in order to improve the tourism sector to make the Kota Lama of Semarang as a "Cultural World Heritage 2020". This is also due to an increase in the number of foreign tourists entering the city of Semarang through Ahmad Yani Airport. Based on data from the Central Java Province BPS (2015), the number of foreign tourists passing through the Ahmad Yani Airport entrance in February 2015 reached 869 people. In the same month in the following year, February 2016, the number of foreign tourists entering Ahmad Yani Airport reached 1,080 people [4]. Accumulatively, the number of foreign tourists entering Semarang City through Ahmad Yani Airport in 2015 reached 14,279 people. This number increased in 2016, to 17,079 people. At the end of 2017. Central Java Province BPS (2017) again issued the Official Gazette of Statistics which discussed the development of tourism in Semarang City from January to November 2017, which if accumulated reached 22,951 people. This number proves that foreign tourists entering the city of Semarang continue to increase over the past three years.

With the improvement of infrastructure and the number of local and foreign tourists, this potential can be used to improve the tourism sector in the Kota Lama of Semarang. However, of course there should be a strategy to help improve the tourism sector in this old city. As an area that is still vulnerable to flooding, an environmentally friendly strategy is needed where an increase in the tourism sector can run environmentally friendly. One of the strategy that can be implemented in order to increase the tourism sector is the concept of ecotourism. Ecotourism is basically a concept of

purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the culture and natural history of the environment, taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem, while producing economic opportunities that make the conservation of natural resources beneficial to local people [5]. Here, ecotourism tries to raise environmental consciousness by exploring ecology and ecosystems and by providing environmental type experiences. Taking part in ecology actively and getting first hand impressions of how ecosystems work influence peoples' ways of thinking, which finally raises awareness of conservation and protection [6].

## III. ECOTOURISM FOR KOTA LAMA SEMARANG

According to Patterson (2002), there are some characteristic of ecotourism. Ecotourism Have a low impact upon a protected area's natural resources and recreation techniques. Involve stakeholders (individuals, communities, tourists, tour operators and government institutions) in the planning, development, implementation and monitoring phases Limits visitation to areas, either by limiting group size and/or by the number of groups taken to an area in a season, orients customers on the region to be visited and also respects the privacy and culture of local people.

The improvement of the tourism sector can be done by using an environmentally friendly strategy and making a new innovation for the buildings that have not been touched. One example of a building that has been revitalized and until now has become a tourist spot is Spiegel. But basically, revitalizing old buildings in the old city of Semarang is difficult because it is hampered by ownership of the old building. Most of the buildings in the Kota Lama area are not known to the owner, so there are difficulties for the Semarang city government to renew the building. However, if the government has been able to revitalize the building, it can be ascertained that the existing building will have high economic value so that it can be used to increase tourism in the Kota Lama of Semarang. The improvement of the tourism sector does not have to be done by building new buildings, but can be done by renewing old buildings and adding economic value to the buildings so it won't cause excessive damage to the environment and still increase the tourism value of the Kota Lama area.

Stakeholders involvement is the important characteristic of ecotourism such as society, tourist, tour operators and government institutions. The first stakeholders is society that commonly referred as ecotourism community. They has multiple and diverse role in ecotourism development such as education and training, partnerships, planning, protected natural areas, and financing [7]. The second one is tourist that has role as a subject that facilitates finance in ecotourism and also obliged to safeguard natural resources in the tourism area. There is also tour operators that has role to facilitate tourists to show their responsibility. The last stakeholders is government institutions which has the role

of helping the government to monitor and ensure that ecotourism works well and properly. These four stakeholders are interrelated and work together to create and developing ecotourism.

Another characteristic is limiting visits to certain objects such as Gereja Blenduk. It is intended that some building at Kota Lama Area that are old are not easily damaged by so many tourists who coming. With that rasionalization the cost of building maintenance will be more affordable and the durability of the building lasts longer. These efforts can also bring benefits, like the government can estimate how many tourists will come every day so the government can estimate how much profit will be gained every day.

Directing customers to the area to be visited is also one way to increase the value of tourism in the Kota Lama. According to the data described above, it can be seen that many tourists from local and foreign country come to Semarang. These tourists certainly do not know where they should visit while in Semarang. The city government must strive to promote the Kota Lama area intensively so that it can become one of the tourism choices of tourists visiting Semarang. In addition, the government must also be able to empower local people who are in the old city area so that they can be a guide for tourists visiting the old city area in order to provide recommendations for places that can be used as tourism areas in the old city. Thus, increasing the value of tourism in the old city can be done and the people around the Kota Lama area can participate actively and can increase their community income.

Not only friendly to the environment, the concept of ecotourism is also friendly to the community. In the concept of ecotourism, it is emphasized to respect the privacy and culture of local communities. As a tourists who come from different areas from the places visited, many people are less able to mingle with their environment. As a result, local community will not accept these tourists properly. In other words, the existence of the concept of ecotourism will help make travelers conscious to the cultural differences that exist between them and foreign community, so that tourists who come at least can adjust to the local culture that exists and at the end, the people around the Kota Lama area are not offended by the cultural differences and both parties can respect each other's culture.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Various tendencies also occur in the understanding of tourism upon changing living conditions. More tranquil, natural and original spaces are preferred to ordinary tourism centers. Likewise, individuals have begun to prefer activities, which they can particularly perform in nature and cultural areas and with which they can learn original cultural values and be within the nature, instead of sea-sand-sun tourism. At

this point, "Ecotourism" activities have particularly recently become sectors which can create great changes both in socio-cultural and economic aspects. Main purpose is not only ensuring the socio-economic development but also the protection of natural and cultural landscape values to ensure awareness of nature conservation on the other hand.

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