

Tourism Village: Challenges and Opportunities in New Normal

A. Risdawati AP^{1*} Dian Karinawati Imron² Cita Pertiwi³

^{1,2,3} Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration

* Corresponding author. Email: andi.risdawati@kemendesa.go.id

ABSTRACT

Tourism at national level is one of largest foreign exchange contributors in Indonesia. Tourism Village is one of the tourism activities bringing an economic impact on the community because the rural community is involved in the development of tourism villages. Tourism Village concept puts the community to be main actors driving the village tourism development. Pandemic outbreak and social distancing situations in 2020 have dominos effect particularly on the community economic sector in rural areas. However, the government attempts to adjust rural tourism with 'new normal' era. The issue of tourism in rural development shows varying opportunities and challenges in Indonesia. This study aims to analyze tourism village management in 'new normal' situation. The study was carried out using a descriptive analysis method. The result shows some efforts taken: the protocol of the tourism village, virtual tourism strategy and government commitment to give economic stimulus to people dependent on tourism. The conclusion of study is that the village is capable of managing tourism in pandemic with cooperation scheme between community and stakeholders.

Keywords: *tourism village, pandemic, community*

1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector is one of sectors contributing the largest foreign exchange in Indonesia. Based on BPS data in 2018, the amount of foreign exchange in the tourism sector reached US\$ 16,426 billion, coming from foreign tourist spending and exerting a very large multiplier effect on job opportunity creation and local economy. Tourism has also contributed to village development. Tourism villages resulted from the presence of regulations supporting the development based on local authority.

Desa Wisata (rural tourism) is the one consisting of entire rural experience, natural attractions, traditions, unique elements that as a whole can attract tourists [1]. Tourist villages have a special character attracting tourists to gain experiences seen as providing new knowledge, understanding and skills for tourists. Tourism is closely related to other sectors such as transportation, arts industry, housing, tourist attraction services and MSMEs. *Desa Wisata* has significant economic impact on the community because rural communities are directly involved in developing tourist villages. The concept of Tourism Village places the community as the main actor in

tourism development in the village.

The incidence of a pandemic in the middle of-March 2020 impacts Indonesian tourism. The government issued a PSBB (Large-Scale Social Restriction) regulation. These regulations limit the flow of transportation and the movement of people. These regulations reduce indirectly the economic transactions behind community activities. Land, sea and air transportations are inseparable from government regulations. Every community is obliged to follow these regulations.

The existence of PSBB regulations also has impacted tourism activities in tourism villages. The reduction in activities outside home has an impact on the decrease in number of tourists coming to the village. The spread of COVID-19 outbreak in Indonesia has affected various sectors, including tourism. The existence of restrictions to population movement in order to suppress the spread of the plague prompted the closure of tourist locations resulting in a long domino effect, particularly on the community economy. The number of tourists has decreased significantly during pandemic, as shown by the BPS' data, from 1,311,911 tourists on March 2019 to 470,970 on March 2020, and to 160,282 on June 2020. In hospitality sector, for example, 90 percents of hotels have

laid off their employees in Bali and 25 thousand hotel employees have been dismissed in West Java since April 8, 2020 [2].

Similar conditions occur in tourist villages. Small traders at tourist sites, tour guides, and tour service providers feel the impact of social restrictions imposed by the government. As a result, the villagers have no income. The large number of people who returned to their respective villages made the conditions in the village even more complicated. Nevertheless, tourism in the village is one of the opportunities to promoting the welfare of the village community. This paper seeks to examine the opportunities and challenges faced by tourist villages during a pandemic, 'new normal' era. This paper is expected to explore the potential for developing the resilience of rural community in developing community-based tourism and local values.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Tourism Village

The concept of a tourism village emerges along with the number of villages in the area offering unique tourist attractions about village life [3]. Village development and empowerment have also begun to develop with the support of the Village Law No. 6/2014. This regulation provides the villages with space for managing tourism and obtaining economic and social benefits for rural communities [4]. The regulation also supports direct community participation in development activities, one of which is tourism activities. Tourism village aims to strengthen local government and empower village communities.

The concept of tourism village is integrated into the economy, socio-culture and environment [5]. The three components indirectly support the sustainable tourism principles. Indonesian government develops tourism villages to encourage village development and community welfare. In addition, the government has tried to drive income distribution to the village. In addition to income, the tourism village has a positive impact on the community. Firstly, village tourism prompts the community's openness to the visitors. The community's openness will increase the understanding and the tolerance of different cultures. The community also gains knowledge and skill concerning tourism services without neglecting the local values. The village community will learn the village potential and human resource competency available in the village.

The implementation of tourism development conducted from basic infrastructure to tourism management that linked to government, private sector and local organization. The tourism basic infrastructure in the village can be developed from road facilities, home-stay, vehicle availability and safe travel accommodation. Next, tourism villages require tourism management which has become the main system and regulation. Tourism management in villages can be carried out by the village-owned enterprise, tourism awareness group (Kelompok Sadar Wisata), youth organization etc. The villages generally have different management organizations depending on the village needs and culture. The tourism village management integrates well developed environment ecosystems into local economy. The management organization in the village has been established through community.

The reasons behind the necessity of the development of tourism village are (1) it is a relevant way to attract humanity and cultural-oriented tourists who also have environmental awareness; (2) it increases the local community welfare by opening a higher profit opportunity; and (3) it could stimulate the development of the village. A prime tourism activity is based on quality resources management. They have by protecting the environment and respecting cultural values in the community. The viability of tourism in the village is evidence that traditional activities of the village are the main attraction to the different culture visitors. Moreover, the village community can preserve the historical activity, values and culinary.

2.2 Tourism and Disaster Issues

Tourism and disaster nowadays are closely related where tourism is affected by the disaster. Tourism has its development history where tourism is vulnerable in the face of disaster [6]. Various disasters can be mapped ranging from natural to non-natural disasters. Natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods and headwinds become disasters that often destroy tourism infrastructure. Non-natural disasters are also seen as having an effect on tourism activities such as social conflicts. A non-natural disaster that is considered to drastically decrease tourism activity is the spread of disease in an area. Non-natural disasters closely related to tourist safety aspects.

Research related to disaster relations and tourism shows that catastrophic events have a profound impact on tourism upstream conditions [7]. Economy is one of tourism sectors that had the first impact during the disaster

[8]. The impact of virus spread is particularly disturbing the value chain of tourism industry and revenue from the tourism sector to the government. The rationale behind the importance of tourism resilience in today's situation is that the tourism is connected to the mass population, characterizes food production and product value chains [9].

Non-natural disasters such as infectious diseases have occurred several times. The incident has also had an impact on the tourism sector. The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic is seen as one of the disasters that has negative implications for tourism activities. This is because pandemics have a high rate of transmission and have direct implications to the decrease in tourism visits [Rothe et al., 2020]. People are required to perform physical distancing in public space or wearing mask and self-isolation if they have high mobility from an infected area.

Tourism is affected by disasters in infrastructure, economic, social and cultural aspects. Pandemic cases decrease tourism activity due to restrictions of people to visit destination areas. Some countries even implement lockdowns to limit people's activities outdoor. Border access is also closed; air, sea and land transportations limit travel mobility and the order of staying at home is enforced for several months.

The pandemic incidence also reflects the needs for safety within the tourism activity. Tourism management needs to pay attention to disaster risk mitigation. There are important steps that need to be taken in tourism management related to disasters: a) developing planning and preparedness, b) responding to disaster impacts and c) system improvements. Then, it is necessary to ensure that different parties can collaborate to make changes and improvements.

3. METHODS

The study was implemented through a qualitative method with descriptive analysis approach. The method provides tools to analyze social change and behavior of community existence in tourism village discourse. The pandemic occurrence has brought an effect to multilayer life of institutions such as government, community and organization. The descriptive analysis approach guided the researchers to explain the phenomena of pandemic effect on the community especially linked to tourism villages. The fact and evidence can be explained through narration of research findings.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Situation in Tourism Village

The Covid-19 virus outbreak which began to spread in Indonesia in the first half of 2020 resulted in paralysis in various economic activities, especially tourism. The government has issued an appeal to stop all tourism activities. The cessation of tourism activities has an impact on the loss of community income, so it is necessary to switch to other sectors to survive. The village as one of the tourism actors or known as a tourism village also feels the impact of the large-scale social restrictions carried out by the government.

A study conducted by the Research and Development Centre, Hutabolon village in Samosir District found that when the government appealed to close all tourism activities, the community switched to farming due to favorable conditions. The village government then makes lodging businesses a place for isolation for migrants while waiting for tourism programs from the corresponding government.

In Putukrejo village, Gondanglegi sub-district, Malang district, people who work in the tourism sector can only rely on government assistance because they do not have other alternative jobs such as farming labor because it is not the planting or harvest season.

4.2. Challenges and Opportunities

4.2.1 Challenges

Tourism activities during the pandemic in the village deal with serious challenges. Village communities depending on tourism activities have experienced changes both in terms of economy, social and culture. The regulation of large-scale social restrictions (PSBB) limits the movement of tourist transportation including value chain activities in the industrial sector in the village. A decrease in the number of tourists to the village automatically reduces the income of the village and the people in the tourism business circle in the village. Micro, small and medium enterprises, industrial and village-owned enterprises are trying to address similar conditions where it is difficult to increase buying and selling transactions. Business actor organizations generally find it difficult to carry out production activities to product distribution.

In terms of tourism village infrastructure, there are also a quite serious challenge related to the maintenance of infrastructure including buildings and tourist destinations. There are villages with historical building infrastructure and requiring maintenance or tourism maintenance. The maintenance of infrastructure is costly. The process of

building maintenance in a tourist village cannot be done optimally. Apart from historical buildings, the tourist village also has public facilities used by tourists, such as a game center or a place to stay in the forest area requiring regular maintenance as well.

The regulation of large-scale social restrictions also affects the pattern of social life in society. PSBB limits interactions between personal and community groups. Community activities where members of community generally gather such as recitation, PKK activities, sports activities have stopped. One of the effects of the pandemic on the social life of community is the decline in public trust in carrying out social activities. The government put considerable effort to encourage economic stability through a variety of programs. Tourism sector obtains assistance, for instance: Pre-employment card, business fund assistance and reduction of business tax. Moreover, there is a policy that the government assures to implement. It is the 'New Normal' policy. The government developed understanding to cope with pandemic.

The 'New Normal' has been socialized widely to the community. Government, private actors and organizations are expected to adopt the new culture. 'New Normal' relinquishes the large-scale social restriction regulations but follows the strict rules for the public to do activities outside home. Entering into the new normal era, as conveyed by the government, is a difficult choice for the village government. The reason is, like or dislike, the tourist village must start to open tourism objects in the middle of village's unpreparedness. This is a challenge in itself to tourist villages to open tourist objects with various innovations to make it safe and comfortable to visitors.

In addition, the village community cannot easily practice the new normal suggestions. The village community, particularly with less education and skill to perform health protocol, is threatened to be unable to implement new normal culture. The condition will harm both village community and visitor. Therefore, the village government has to elaborate development planning to address the issues.

4.2.2 Opportunities

Utilization of ICT in tour packages (virtual tours). Virtual tours have been carried out by several villages which have become tourist villages. For example in Nglanggeran village, Gunung Kidul district. The tourism program using virtual tours is a form of village collaboration with the Pirtual Project community from students of Masters in Sustainable Tourism at Padjajaran University, Ina Geo, School Tourism, and others [10]. The content of this virtual tour consists of enjoying the Ancient Volcano, Nglanggeran Embung, Kedung Kandang Waterfall, Griya Cokelat, Homestay and Kampung Pitu. In addition, it contains information related to the latest conditions of tourist attractions in Nglanggeran village during the

Covid-19 period. Other opportunities are:

- a) utilization of digital media for micro, small and medium enterprises transactions and tourism promotion. prioritizing the increase in added economic value, environmental resilience and natural resources, and community empowerment;
- b) improvement of environmental cycles for nature-related tourism. Indonesia has a lot of natural tourism, for example: Mount Bromo, Mount Semeru, Dieng and others which have certain times to improve the environment, and during a pandemic like now this type of tourism has more time to improve the environment;
- c) re-care of cultural sites. During a pandemic, cultural sites in the village can be treated according to their needs;
- d) tourism development needs to involve rural communities (community-based tourism);
- e) Exploration of new tourism opportunities in the sample village of Srimulyo Village during the pandemic to find new tourism opportunities that were named ship stones, and now they have been opened after a new normal appeal from the government. By utilizing social media, the new tourism has been visited by many tourists and has made a big profit after being opened for 3 months;
- f) There have been many villages that have reopened their tourist destinations, the new normal regulations emphasizing on the implementation of health protocols must be clear to both tour managers and tourists.

4.2.3 Village government resilience

The tourist village has a character showing the resilience of each. The village government is one of the institutions developing efforts to maintain the existence of a tourist village. Village governments in several regions have shown positive action in responding to the pandemic. Village government initiatives, for example, follow government recommendations to close tourist areas. The village government actively builds communication with tourism groups and actors in the village. Communication that is built in an integrative manner is related to updating data and information relevant to pandemics. The village government also coordinates with the local government sector and stakeholders to deal with the impact of the pandemic in the village. Several village governments have developed special schemes to protect the tourism village development scheme. For example, the Magelang district government implemented the BISA (Clean, Beautiful,

Healthy, Safe) program as a form of real government action in helping village communities work in the tourism sector. The BISA program is a kind of labor-intensive program as an effort to prepare tourism in the new normal era prioritizing cleanliness, health and safety. In addition, coordination with the health sector is to ensure education on health protocols in the village for both the government and the village community. Then the village government collaborates with various parties to distribute aid so that it is right on target.

4.2.4. *Community resilience*

The community in the village has a special character where cultural values and patterns of community life are the subject of tourism development efforts. Communities have resilience in facing shocks such as a decline in economic quality, social conflicts and natural disasters. Community resilience in tourist villages is also supported by the community's ability to withstand difficult conditions.

Community resilience is seen from the efforts of UMKM (MSME) in Nglanggeran Village where UMKM learns to produce products according to health protocols. The community then studies business opportunities in the midst of pandemic. The community practices the learning and understanding gained to implement sales in accordance with government directives.

5. CONCLUSION

The presence of a pandemic has an impact on the development of national tourism. Tourism villages as one of the local development entities are also affected by the pandemic. However, the government is trying to improve the economic and social conditions of the community. The government, which previously implemented large-scale social restrictions, then began to switch to implementing the new normal policy. The new normal policy is seen as stimulating the economy and restoring social conditions. Tourism villages face challenges in carrying out tourism activities in the new normal era, including the PSBB regulation limiting tourist visits, low education of rural communities and the skills to apply health protocols. However, tourist villages also have an opportunity of carrying out tourism activities in the new normal situation. Several villages have proven that tourism activities can continue to run by utilizing Information and Communications Technology through virtual tours, utilizing digital media for micro, small and medium enterprises, improving environmental cycles for nature-related tourism, village government resilience and community resilience. The government needs to provide standard operating procedures in tourism village management in line with health protocol. The last suggestion is to promote tour packages and tourism promotion in new normal.

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