

# Local Government Efforts to Attract Tourists to Silokek Geopark Tourism

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## ABSTRACT

The Silokek geopark tourism object is currently one of the leading natural tourism assets located in Sijunjung Regency, West Sumatra Province. The Silokek tourist attraction is about 16 KM from Muaro Sijunjung (the capital city of Sijunjung Regency). Several tourist attractions, namely rafting, natural scenery, caves, waterfalls, traditional houses, towering rock cliffs are also great sights that spoil the eye, and others. However, currently the number of tourist visitors to Silokek continues to decline every year. A series of previous studies found that facilities were inadequate, road access was damaged, telecommunication signal was not good, and so on. This research was conducted to find out and discuss the efforts of the relevant agencies from the local government in an effort to increase the number of visitors who visit the Silokek tourist attraction. The method used in this research is an effort to increase the number of visitors to come to this geopark tourism object. This is a descriptive and qualitative approach as well as the results of discussions with related agencies, namely the tourism office, district government, and investment office in Sijunjung Regency. It is hoped that the results of the research can boost the number of visitors to Silokek. One of the efforts made is to conduct a large-scale promotion through video media in every tourism event. And also provide better service and information during tourist visits.

**Keywords:** *Coordination, Effort, Development, Tourist.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In some economic developments in a region or region, tourism potential is one of the leading sectors in encouraging the economy in the region. With the existence of tourism activities, either artificial tourism or natural tourism by utilizing its natural beauty, it encourages a better community economy. Through these tourism activities, many other business activities have developed such as hotel and restaurant accommodation businesses, handicraft businesses, transportation businesses, providing tourism activity facilities and for the government to encourage increased income through local taxes. For the surrounding community, activities also feel the impact, such as more available job opportunities, opportunities to open and develop businesses and the occurrence of cultural exchanges between regions that will increase knowledge for the surrounding community. If it is optimized properly, the tourism potential, especially natural tourism objects in an area, can be used as an economic driver for an area.

Several studies, such as that conducted by [1] shows that tourism has a positive impact on economic growth in the Western Balkan countries. More research from [2] prove that tourism has a positive impact on long-term

economic growth through part of an income-generating development strategy. In addition, research conducted by [3] proves that with the development of tourism, it will improve the welfare of the surrounding community. [4] in his research concluded that tourism has a positive effect on the surrounding community and encourages an increase in living standards in the surrounding community. Broader research looking at the influence of tourism from [5] shows that increasing tourism activity will increase GDP, foreign direct investment, development of the energy and agricultural sectors and reduce poverty. In some of these studies, it is shown that there are benefits from tourism activities for the surrounding community and the economy in general so that it can be one of the drivers in advancing the economy in a region or region.

Each region can take advantage of the potential of its territory in encouraging tourism activities, especially those related to the natural beauty or uniqueness of the area. One example is the Silokek Geopark Tourism Object in Sijunjung Regency which has been designated by the government and UNESCO as a geopark tourist attraction because of its natural beauty that is still maintained. These tourist objects have great economic potential which can be seen from the many surrounding

communities who depend on life or have businesses related to tourism activities in these attractions. In addition, the relevant government also supports tourism developments in these attractions. However, in recent times there has been a significant decrease in the number of visits to the Silokek Geopark Tourism Object. So, it has a broad impact on the economy of the surrounding community.

## 2. METHOD

Previous research in previous studies had the same focus on the participation of the community, government and the environment in developing tourism objects, and in this study the Silokek geopark tourism object, Sijunjung Regency. In addition, the research also focuses on overcoming the current problem, namely the decreasing number of tourists. This study uses qualitative data, where visitors are asked to fill out a questionnaire regarding their perception of the tourist attraction, suggestions for improvement, and the wishes of visitors that can be used as input to attract tourists to increase the number of visitors. This research is expected to provide information related to problems of interest from tourists which resulted in a decrease in the number of tourists and discuss with relevant agencies and government in an effort to increase the number of tourists.

Efforts from local governments are obtained by discussing with the Tourism Office, Investment Office, Regional Planning Agency and Communication and Information Office. In this discussion, we found a kind of program in an effort to increase the number of tourists. Data collection techniques in this study also include direct observation to tourist objects, interviews and literature studies. While the data analysis technique used in this research is descriptive qualitative.

Therefore, based on the background of the problem and some literature reviews, this study wants to reveal the factors causing the decline in tourism activity in the Silokek Geopark Tourism Object, Sijunjung Regency and the solutions and efforts made by the relevant agencies and other stakeholders in overcoming these problems in order to develop the potential of the tourist attraction.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In [6] It is explained that if you want to get back the benefits of tourism activities, then the government will develop significant initiatives in specific proposals to increase tourism. This shows that the government has an important role in overcoming problems due to the pandemic, especially for tourism activities.

In some literature reviews, the government plays an important role in maintaining the sustainability of tourism activities. The government has an important role in encouraging tourism activities as expressed by [7] that the government has a role in the manifestation of regulation, promotion and ownership of resources at tourism objects in certain areas. [8] states that the government has a responsibility as the main stakeholder in tourism development with a collaborative approach. [9] stated that the government has an important role in promoting tourism businesses, especially small, medium and macro businesses. In research conducted by [5] revealed that consistent and coherent policies are essential for competitiveness, sustainability and maximizing the benefits of tourism.

In some cases of decreased tourism activity, in general the government has a role such as increasing promotions, increasing the availability of supporting facilities and regulations that support conducive conditions in encouraging tourism activities so that the problem of declining tourism activities can be overcome. In research [10] revealed that the government has a role in planning, building institutional capacity, conducting investment projects, creating safe areas, building image and branding, making connections with other tourism activities, advertising and publications, human resource development and operations in SMEs. (*Small Medium Enterprise*).

Other research such as [11] revealed that the government in this case the tourism office plays a role in overcoming the decline in tourism activities such as through programs from the service by increasing the availability of facilities, adding attractions, increasing human resources and raising events that will attract tourists to visit. Apart from the government, other efforts can also be made from other parties such as business actors related to tourism and the surrounding community. [12] explains that the success of developing a tourism is born from the success of planning and involvement of the government, industry or business actors and communities who are stakeholders. Apart from these three parties, in [13] also added two other parties, namely educational institutions and non-government organizations (NGOs) in the development of sustainable tourism where all of these parties have an important role in tourism development.

Research conducted by [14] stated that related parties consisting of the tourism office, business actors and the surrounding community play an important role in providing infrastructure, developing human resources, developing the surrounding area, promotion and CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility).

The decrease in the number of visits certainly has a negative impact on the economy of the surrounding community, especially those who have jobs or business businesses related to tourism activities in these attractions. There needs to be an effort from related parties, especially from the government or non-governmental organizations in attracting visitors back to make tourist visits to these attractions. One of the causes of the decline in tourism activity during the analysis period (June-December 2020) was the Covid-19 pandemic which caused various community activities to be limited, especially those related to mobility activities. The condition is as expressed by [15] where the fear of COVID-19 is causing significant uncertainty and chaos in many industries.

The tourism industry has seen revenues fall sharply and is the sector of the economy among those most severely affected by the pandemic. Shocks affect both the demand side (restrictions on freedom of movement, border closures, fear of infection) and the supply side (closures of accommodation and catering as well as recreational facilities used for tourism).

Other research [16] revealed that the Covid-19 pandemic had a negative impact on the industrial sector and related sectors such as travel and hospitality services. From these unexpected shocks to tourism activities, the government needs to intervene in overcoming these problems through effective policies. The importance of the government's role in this pandemic crisis can be seen in [17] where policy makers and practitioners need effective contingency plans.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Research in an effort to increase the number of tourists to come to the Silokek geopark tourist attraction found that currently visitors are complaining about the access road that enters the tourist attraction where the road has collapsed and there are no landslide signs so that visitors are wary of traveling. It was once covered by local news that a car had fallen due to a collapsed road. In addition, the telecommunications signal is not good while in the tourist area also causes disinterest of visitors to come to Silokek. Other causes, such as the absence of tourist attraction guides, make tourists confused about the distance from one object to another.

Efforts made by local government agencies agreed to make improvements in tourist facilities, collaborate with stakeholders, local communities, and academics to be able to make this tourist area develop. In addition, it also conducts promotions at regional, national and

international levels in every tourism event. It is also expected to coordinate with other agencies to realize the development of the Silokek geopark tourist attraction as one of the leading tours of Sijunjung Regency.

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