

# The Existence of The Fulan Fehan Festival Towards Indonesian MICE Tourism Destination

(Case Study on Dirun Village, Lamakmen District, Belu Regency, NTT)

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**Abstract**— This research is conducted in Fulan Fehan which is located in Dirun Village, Lamakmen District, Belu Regency, East Nusa Tenggara. This Fulan Fehan Tourism Destination is designated as one of the event venues or destinations that organizes the annual event in the form of a Festival. The Fulan Fehan Festival is carried out on a mass basis by the people of Belu Regency in general to promote Belu tourism and preserve the unique and interesting culture of the local community. This research is focused on the process of identifying the supporting and inhibiting factors for organizing the Fulan Fehan Festival Event, as well as on the analysis stage of efforts to improve the Fulan Fehan Festival towards the Indonesian MICE Event. The approach in this study uses descriptive qualitative analysis, which analyze, describe, and obtain a clear and objective picture related to the problems studied. While the data collection uses in the form of observation, interviews, literature study and documentation. The results of the study indicate that the supporting and inhibiting factors in organizing the Fulan Fehan Festival are the existence of superior cultural tourism attractions, the existence of a supporting agenda for the festival, strategic location of the event, enthusiasm from stakeholders. Furthermore, there are factors that hinder the implementation of this event, namely the emergence of the pandemic covid-19, the lack of amenities, inadequate accessibility conditions, and the weakness of Tourism Human Resources. The efforts that need to be made in increasing the existence of the Fulan Fehan Festival can be viewed from the 3A+1S aspects, namely: improving accessibility, maintaining

and preserving cultural tourism attractions, providing tourism amenities or facilities, and increasing human resources through education and training and support from stakeholders.

**Keywords**—*Tourism Destination; MICE; Cultural Festival*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country that has many choices of destinations that have the potential to be developed into competitive MICE destinations. Organizing Meeting, Incentive, Convention, and Exhibition, which is abbreviated as MICE is an asset for the development and development of tourism destinations where the era of globalization has the impact that MICE business competition has shifted from competition between companies to competition between destinations. However, not all regions can understand about MICE destinations, so it is easy for each destination to declare its area as a MICE destination [10].

MICE destinations which have become one of the tourism industries are believed to have an impact in increasing income, expanding employment and employment opportunities and encouraging investment. In addition to the economic benefits, the MICE industry also provides opportunities for knowledge sharing, networking and a key driver of intellectual development and

regional cooperation. MICE is a business tour that is different from leisure tourism which prioritizes "quality tourists" who tend to stay longer and have a daily expenditure of 7 (seven) times greater than ordinary tourists (leisure).

In order to advance the MICE tourism sector, the Ministry of Tourism has selected and offered 14 cities as leading MICE destinations, namely Medan, Batam, Padang-Bukit tinggi, Palembang, Jakarta, Bandung, Surakarta, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Bali, Lombok, Balikpapan, Makassar and Manado. The determination of MICE Tourism Destinations is based on the existence of complete and international standard facilities and infrastructure so as to be able to support the implementation of MICE in these cities, such as: (1) availability of convention centers, (2) accommodation, (3) transportation, (4) telecommunications, and others. These fourteen leading MICE destinations have encouraged the holding of hundreds of national and international events in Indonesia. Organizing events that have been held in Indonesia have a positive impact on the host's destination areas.

In the context of developing MICE tourism destinations in Indonesia, NTT is one of the areas targeted for organizing MICE events. Through the Komodo Festival/Sail Komodo, Tour de Flores, Sandelwood Horse Parade and Sumba Ikat Weaving, the Fulan Fehan Festival showcases the uniqueness of Timorese culture, namely the Likurai dance, Tebe and various other cultural tourism activities. The Fulan Fehan Festival in addition to aiming to preserve the culture passed down from generation to generation by the ancestors, this festival is also one of the tourism promotion events of Belu Regency which was first held in 2017 by winning the MURI record as a festival with the highest number of participants reaching 6.000 people.

The Fulan Fehan Festival is a cultural event held in the valley at the foot of Mount Lakaan, located in Dirun Village, Lamaknen District, Belu Regency. This event is set in the National Calendar of Events (CoE) as an annual event since 2017 with the aim of preserving and promoting tourism culture so that it is known and can be witnessed by tourists. The location of the Fulan Fehan Festival is very strategic as a trans-nusa route as well as the gateway to Indonesia and Timor Leste which is believed to be able to attract local, domestic and foreign tourists if the event is held annually. To support the implementation of this festival, local governments need to increase the existence of this event through packaging unique and interesting cultural-based attractions, increasing accessibility and amenities to support the implementation of

CoE every year. Through adequate access and supporting amenities, it is expected to provide comfort for visitors and tourists.

Therefore, the problems in this research are: (1) What are the supporting and inhibiting factors in organizing the Fulan Fehan Festival? (2) What are the efforts to increase the existence of the Fulan Fehan Festival as a MICE Tourism Destination in Indonesia?. The objectives to be achieved through this research are to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of the Fulan Fehan Festival, then to analyze the efforts to improve the Fulan Fehan Festival towards Indonesian MICE Tourism Destinations.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 *Tourism Destinations*

The concept of tourism destinations is one of the most important and complex in the discussion of tourism. Tourism Destination or Tourism Destination Area is a geographical area located in one or more administrative areas in which there are tourist attractions, public facilities, tourism facilities, accessibility, and communities that are interrelated and complement the realization of tourism [7]. Tourism destinations are tourism travel market areas and refer to travel destination zones, namely geographic areas that include regional and community development in order to satisfy tourist travel destinations. Therefore, tourism destinations can be described at different scales from the village level to regions, cities or resorts, special sites and even only in the form of special attractions visited by tourists [4].

A tourist attraction in principle must meet three conditions, namely: (1) Something to see, in that place there must be objects and tourist attractions that are different from those of other regions. In other words, the area must have a special attraction and cultural attraction that can be used as "entertainment" for tourists. What to see includes natural scenery, activities, arts and tourist attractions. (2) Something to do, in a place other than a lot to see and witness, recreational facilities must be provided that can make tourists feel at home for a long time in that place. (3) Something to buy/souvenir. Tourist destinations must have facilities for shopping, especially souvenirs and folk crafts as souvenirs to take back to their place of origin [2].

### 2.2 *MICE Events*

MICE is a tourism activity whose activities are a combination of Leisure and Business, usually involving a group of people who work together. A series of activities in the form of Meetings,

Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions [6]. MICE is a series of activities, where entrepreneurs or professionals gather in a place conditioned by a common problem, discussion, or interest. MICE has become a suggestion as well as a product that can be categorized in tour packages ready to be sold to associations. Organizations, agencies, institutions, corporations, large companies and so on both on a regional, regional, national and international scale [9].

The business of organizing Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, Exhibitions, hereinafter referred to as MICE, is the provision of services for a meeting of a group of people, organizing trips for employees and business partners as a reward for their achievements, as well as organizing exhibitions in the context of disseminating information and promoting goods and services on a national scale. , regional, and international [10].

Each destination to become a MICE Destination should meet the standards set by the competent authority with certain requirements. The development of MICE Destinations broadly includes 4 (four) parts, namely: 1) Accessibility; 2) Attractions; 3) Amenities, and; 4) Human Resources and stakeholder support. MICE Destination Development is clarified through criteria and indicators. Criteria are standards that are used to assess environmental conditions or situations that are studied as a measure that becomes the basis for assessing or determining something. Indicators are tools to measure the realization of these standards.

### **2.3 Cultural Festival**

Festivals are an important means of communication to build, empower, and recognize a cultural identity. Therefore, as a means of communication, it should be an event. Festival is an event that is very unique to the culture in society. Festival is an event that is owned by a group of people who carry special strengths, spirit, knowledge and improvement of family customs [8].

There are several types of festivals, including the following: 1) Film festivals, namely festivals held by showing various important scenes that have historical or other important values; 2) Music festivals, namely festivals that are often organized by the community through the performance of national bands or indie bands in certain areas; 3) Art festivals, namely festivals held to commemorate the momentum of regional arts; with this festival the community is also encouraged to participate in promoting various arts in Indonesia; 4) Cultural festivals, namely festivals held in order to preserve traditional culture [5].

Cultural festivals are an important means of communication to build, empower and recognize a cultural identity, therefore as a festival event it is planned through a strategic communication planning process so that it can run effectively. This cultural festival is also one of the government's ways to better introduce the culture that has existed for a long time from our ancestors and can be introduced to the wider community, especially to tourists [1].

## **III. METHOD**

The method used in this study uses a qualitative descriptive approach, namely in its completion using the Research and Development procedure developed by Borg and Gall, namely conducting exploration and implementation as well as dissemination. Without reducing the validity of the process and the findings of this study, Research and Development [2]. The approach to analyzing this problem is to use qualitative descriptive analysis, namely to analyze, describe, and obtain a clear and objective picture of the problem under study. While the data collection consists of direct observation, interviews, literature study and documentation.

### **3.1 Location and Research duration**

This research is in Dirun Village, Lamaknen District, Belu Regency, as the location for organizing cultural events. The research was conducted from July to November 2021, until the saturation point was found in the data in the field.

### **3.2 Research Subject**

The research subjects are people or resource persons who can provide actual information related to the state and existence of the object being studied, so as to obtain precise and accurate research results.

The resource persons who are considered important to be interviewed related to this research are the Head of the District Culture and Tourism Office. Belu, Head of Tourism Destinations, Village Heads, and Dirun Village Community who have provided a lot of information related to the problems studied.

### **3.3 Research Instruments**

In qualitative research, the findings or data can be declared valid, if there is no difference between what was reported by the researcher and the circumstances that occurred in the object under study. In this study, the researcher acts as a data collector and as an active instrument in an effort to collect data in the field. While other data collection instruments besides humans are various forms of aids, other documents that can be used to support

the validity of research results that function as supporting instruments. The instruments used in this study were interview guides, recording devices, cameras, and writing instruments.

### **3.4 Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and compiling data obtained from interviews, field notes, and documentation, by organizing the data into categories, breaking them down into units, synthesizing them, arranging them into patterns, choosing what is important and what is not. will be studied, and make conclusions so that they are easily understood by themselves and others [11].

The data analysis technique used in this study is an interactive data analysis technique using the Miles and Huberman model which includes data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

## **IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In order to support the existence of Fulan Fehan as an Indonesian MICE Event, it is necessary to consider the factors that support and support the implementation of the Fulan Fehan Festival event in order to evaluate to further improve the existence of this event towards the National MICE event.

### **4.1 Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for the Implementation of the Fulan Fehan Festival**

Based on the results of field research, there are several factors that support the implementation of the Fulan Fehan Festival, namely:

#### **1. There are Featured Cultural Tourism Attractions**

The Fulan Fehan Festival which was held in 2018 raised the treasures of art originating from the myth of the origin of humans in this region, namely the "*Likurai Dance*". Until 2016, the Ministry of Education and Culture established the *Likurai* dance as an intangible cultural heritage in Indonesia. The *Likurai* dance is performed at Padang Fulan Fehan as a very unique form of attraction, because it is played by all local people in Belu Regency.

#### **2. There is a Festival Supporting Agenda**

In addition to the *Likurai* Dance performances played by local people, there are various activities scheduled to support the Fulan Fehan Festival event, namely Ikat Weaving Exhibitions and Workshops, Seminars and

Dialogues, Photography Workshops, screenings of short films, to fashion shows of ikat creations.

The ritual ceremonies carried out by the local community at the time of holding this event, including the Fohon Hare Rite ceremony (grain/rice delivery) in the Matabesi Traditional Village, the Ukun Badu Ritus (prohibition on the abuse of customary forests), Antama Rite (hunting ceremony) in the village. The Duarato-Nualain tradition, and the Bei Gege Asu ritual (building a traditional house) and Nokar Ui (begging for blessing) in the Dirun Traditional Village.

#### **3. Strategic event location**

The uniqueness of this Fulan Fehan Festival is the location of the event which is held in a very wide, natural and cool expanse of savanna. This tourist location is also located between two countries, namely Indonesia and Timor Leste. It is very easy to attract domestic and foreign tourists to attend the event. Furthermore, there are various natural and cultural tourist attractions close to Fulan Fehan. This can provide convenience for tourists to be able to visit other tourist attractions.

#### **4. The enthusiasm of the stakeholders**

In order to support the implementation of the Fulan Fehan Festival, the NTT provincial government is collaborating with the regional government of Belu Regency, in this case the Department of Culture and Tourism to organize this cultural event. Currently, the Department of Culture and Tourism is also working with other agencies to continue to improve accessibility and amenities to support the implementation of the NTT Calendar of Events which is held every year.

There are several factors that hinder the implementation of the Fulan Fehan event, including:

#### **1. The Emergence of the Pandemic Covid-19**

There have been very significant changes as a result of the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector, both in terms of social, economic and environmental aspects. In actual fact, it is clear that the existence of this epidemic has greatly affected the activities of organizing events. Many national and international events have been carefully prepared to be held, but the event was cancelled. One of them is the Fulan Fehan Festival event which has only been held in the last 2 years. This can affect the economic income of the community who quite feel the benefits during the implementation of this event.

#### **2. Lack of amenity/tourism support facilities**

As a tourist receiving area, it is certainly more mature in preparing and fulfilling all the

needs and desires of tourists. Facilities are one of the main needs for tourists, such as accommodation/lodging and restaurants or places to eat. Based on observations, tourism support facilities in this area are still very minimal, namely there are not have homestay, cottages, or places to eat provided by the community. Currently, the efforts made by the government are to provide facilities in the form of lopos, photo spots, rest areas, and toilets. If the local community takes the initiative to provide these needs, it can certainly have a positive impact on the community's economy.

### *3. Inadequate accessibility conditions*

Accessibility is the ease of reaching a destination, which involves safety, comfort, and travel time. This is an important point that must be considered because the higher the accessibility, the easier it is to reach and the higher the level of security and comfort for tourists while traveling. The road access from the district capital, namely Atambua to Fulan Fehan, is categorized as quite good and in the form of asphalt, so the distance is only 1.5 hours/40km. However, from the entrance to the Fulan Fehan tourist area, it is not adequate with the damaged and rocky road conditions.

### *4. Weak Tourism Human Resources*

The lack of Human Resources in the tourism sector and the lack of public knowledge about organizing events are also obstacles in the development of the Fulan Fehan Festival as a MICE tourist destination. The Fulan Fehan Festival, which has only been held in the last few years, is certainly inseparable from the shortcomings and limitations in the field of human resources, in particular. there is no professional staff in the field of cultural event management. This is certainly one of the inhibiting factors in event management. The local community admits that so far they do not understand the importance of tourism activities.

## **4.2 Efforts to Increase the Existence of the Fulan Fehan Festival**

To increase the existence of the Fulan Fehan Festival as an Indonesian MICE tourist destination, it is necessary to look at the 3A+1S Aspects, namely: Accessibility, Attractions, Amenity, as well as Human Resources and Stakeholder support.

### *1. Attractions*

Attractions consisting of natural, cultural and artificial, are the main motivation or attraction that tourists will visit. For MICE tourists, of course they will choose attractions that can provide experiences and education. Cultural tourism attractions owned by the Belu people seem very

unique and interesting. Realizing this, the government is trying to preserve the endangered culture by holding cultural arts performances. For this reason, the next effort needs to be made so that this cultural attraction still exists as one of the national MICE events is to maintain and preserve its cultural attractions. This cultural festival which is the main tourist attraction in Fulan Fehan also needs to be supported and supported by natural and artificial tourist attractions in this area. This needs to be done so that when tourists visit Fulan Fehan, they can also visit other tourist locations so that the satisfaction of tourists' desires can be fulfilled properly.

As for other efforts that need to be done is to increase promotional activities so that this cultural event is known by the wider community. The more intensive promotions are carried out, of course, the wider community will be known, which is expected to generate enthusiasm from the wider community as tourists to visit and participate in organizing the event.

### *2. Amenities*

Amenity is all supporting facilities that can meet the needs and desires of tourists while in a destination. To support the implementation of the Fulan Fehan Festival towards the MICE event, the government needs to make efforts to provide accommodation and add other tourism supporting facilities such as restaurants and food stalls. Based on the MICE destination indicators, a destination is said to be comfortable, if it can meet several indicators, namely: variations in accommodation types, capacity, price, service quality, security, and availability of facilities.

### *3. Accessibility*

Accessibility is the infrastructure provided to destinations such as roads, the availability of transportation facilities, and directional signs. Based on the results of field research, road access to the Fulan Fehan tourist site is said to be inadequate. For this reason, the government needs to make efforts to improve road access, provide transportation facilities to make it easier for tourists when visiting, and the need for road directions so that tourists visiting these tourist sites can get convenience.

Judging from the criteria for MICE tourist destinations, stakeholders also need to provide access that can reach these tourist destinations easily and comfortably, both in terms of time, effort and cost. If all access and transportation facilities are considered, then this can make it easier for MICE tourists to visit.

#### 4. *Human Resources and Stakeholder support*

A destination as good as any if it is not supported by professional human resources will be able to damage the implementation of MICE activities as a whole. Through training, coaching and education programs, local communities are expected to understand and realize that tourism activities place a high priority on the importance of services and hospitality applied by the host community to tourists. Furthermore, there is a need for professional human resources institutions, such as PCO/PEO/DMC/EO, travel agents, tour guides, educational institutions in the MICE sector, art and cultural catering services and other services that support MICE activities.

The stakeholders who can provide support by contributing to the smooth running of a destination for MICE event organizers, such as Professional Associations, Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO) and local governments.

#### V. CONCLUSION

The Fulan Fehan Festival which has been set in the Calendar of Event (CoE). It aims to preserve and promote cultural tourism. The results showed that the supporting factors in organizing the Fulan Fehan Festival were the existence of superior cultural tourism attractions, the existence of a supporting agenda for the festival, a strategic location for the event, the enthusiasm of stakeholders. The inhibiting factors for organizing the event are the emergence of the covid-19 pandemic, lack of amenities, inadequate conditions of the accessibility, and weak tourism human resources. For this reason, the efforts that need to be made in increasing the existence of the Fulan Fehan Festival can be viewed from the 3A+1S aspect, namely: improving accessibility, maintaining and preserving cultural tourism attractions, providing tourism amenities/facilities, and increasing human resources through education and training and supporting from stakeholders.

#### VI. SUGGESTION

Some of the recommended suggestions include:

1. Local communities need to maintain, preserve and promote their cultural attractions.
2. Local communities need to create and package local products so that they can be marketed.
3. The government needs to synergize with private actors and local communities to provide all the facilities needed for MICE tourists.

4. The government needs to cooperate with other agencies in providing good access to Fulan Fehan.
5. Stakeholders need to equip themselves through professional education and training so as to create superior and quality human resources in the event organizer field.
6. 6) It is necessary to organize further events while still complying with health protocols, namely applying the 3M concepts (*Washing hands, Wearing Masks, Keeping your distance*) and CHSE (*Cleanliness, Health, Safety, Environment*).

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