



# Religious Tourism Destinations Samana Santa: Solutions for Economic Improvement for Tourism in East Flores

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**Abstract.** This study aims to determine the impact of the existence of the Semana Santa Religious Tourism object is usually carried out routinely every year in East Flores Regency. Religious Tourism influences economic actors, income, and Business Opportunities for Traders around the City of Larantuka in implementing the Parade Process. The study results show that the existence of this religious tourism object can increase traders' income compared to previous income and open up great business opportunities for traders who want to sell in the area during the display of the Tuan Ma Statue during the Easter celebration. The emergence of various supporting businesses provides space for all people to feel the maximum economic value for increasing income. Overall, the celebration has a real impact on business actors and small traders because all products and souvenirs can be sold well, increasing income and business opportunities for traders; it is hoped that the welfare of business actors and the community will be better than before.

**Keywords:** Tourism · Income · Business Opportunities · Traders

## 1 Background

The tourism industry has an important role in developing and developing a region. Even in some areas, it shows that the tourism industry can increase the backwardness of the regions and make it the main source of income. The effects of their tourism are good such as job creation, increased income, and increased crowds. While the adverse impacts such as high prices of goods, damage to the surrounding area, and loss of culture.

Religious tourism has a special attraction for tourists with spiritual values and inter-religious tolerance, which can be a guide for life. Indonesia, which is guided by its cultural wealth and tourism areas that are spread from Sabang to Merauke, the diversity that is owned makes the Indonesian nation one of the centers of tourist destinations for the world community. The cultural diversity that lives in society is expected to be a catalyst in accelerating regional development according to the level of development, which is utilized through its management, for example, by making it a quality tourism area through supporting facilities. This management hopes to be realized well, especially

with the opening of fresh air for each region to develop its area through a decentralized government system following the conditions and wealth of the tourism area.

East Flores Regency is one of the regencies located in East Nusa Tenggara Province, which has the potential to be developed as an alternative tourist destination, namely spiritual tourism. The spiritual tourism attraction in this area is in the City of Larantuka. Larantuka is a sub-district in East Flores Regency. This city is already known as a city for pilgrims, especially for Catholics. This city is more suitable as a resting place, spending old age and retreating from the hustle and bustle of the modern world. [1] explained that the City of Larantuka has long been known as the City of Reina Rosary for Catholics, which is a milestone in the history of the discovery of the statue of Tuan Ma. Reina Rosari, which means Mother of Sorrows, with most of the population adhering to the Catholic religion. According to Christian tradition, every April is the month of Easter celebration. All Larantuka Catholics will carry out an annual ritual known as *Semana Santa* in the Catholic church, called Holy Week.

*Samana Santa*, or *Bae Day*, is a celebration of Easter Holy Week carried out for seven consecutive days by Catholics in Larantuka [2]. *Samana Santa* comes from the Portuguese *Samana*, which means “week,” and *Santa*, which means “holy.” Overall, *Samana Santa* means holy week, which starts from Palm Sunday, *Trewa/Abu* Wednesday, *Maundy* Thursday, Good Friday or *Sesta Vera*, Saint/Holy Saturday, to *Hallelujah* Sunday or Easter Sunday [3]. *Semana Santa* is an icon of the Flores people. East and become the main attraction, both for pilgrims and tourists. Apart from stimulating the economy and tourism, this tradition is also a form of inter-religious tolerance in East Flores [4].

The discussion about *Samana Santa* as a tradition from the people of East Flores is interesting to study more deeply. This is because the inculturation of local religions, Portuguese traditions, and church traditions are reflected in the *Semana Santa* celebrations. Until now, the *Semana Santa* procession has become an annual agenda of the East Flores regional government as spiritual tourism to attract domestic and foreign tourists. Based on this description, the researcher formulated several problems, namely the impact of religious tourism on changes in the community's economy and business opportunities that could arise in the implementation of *Semana Santa* destinations and the tourism and religious values contained in the *Semana Santa* procession.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Religious Tourism

The term tourism comes from Sanskrit, consisting of the syllable “*pari*,” meaning around or together, and “*wisata*,” which means travel. Tourism means traveling around from one place to another. Wowor et al. [5] explain tourism can be interpreted as a planned trip carried out individually or in groups from one place to another to get satisfaction and pleasure. Three main characteristics are emphasized in the definition of tourism: The existence of an element of travel (travel): the movement of people from one place to another. There is an element of “temporary stay” in a place that is not your usual residence. The main purpose of human movement is not to find a living/work in the destination.

Religious tourism is a journey or part of a trip carried out voluntarily and temporarily to enjoy tourist objects and attractions. Religious tourism is closely related to cultural tourism for religious reasons. Paramita [6] stated that some of these things were strengthened by a religious dimension involving personal cult culture. This opinion shows the discourse on the definition of religious tourism,

Religion Tourisme or religious tourism in international events is also known as pilgrim tourism (*pilgrim tourism*) or spiritual tourism (*spiritual tourism*) [7]. Religious tourism is another way to market new tourism by linking religious events and activities to enhance spiritual efforts to get closer to the creator [8]. Even religious tourism can spread and arouse people's awareness of the Almighty God religious awareness.

Shackley stated that religious attractions are natural phenomena of buildings or sites built for religious purposes, buildings with religious themes, religious-themed activities, and sacred places. This form of religious tourism is to visit religious heritage sites such as cathedrals, temples, and mosques or visit holy places that are considered important for one's beliefs. Imandintar and Idajati [9] explain the meaning of religious tourism, a type of tourism product closely related to religion or religion embraced by humans. Religion can be defined as a belief in the human relationship with God Almighty, internalized as a supernatural essence. This relationship manifests itself in the form and system of a cult and an attitude of life-based on certain doctrines. Religious tourism is interpreted as tourism activities to places with special meaning for religious people, usually in places of worship, the tombs of scholars, or ancient sites with advantages [10]. Or the uniqueness and superiority of its architecture.

However, along with the development of the times, religious tourism has attracted tourists worldwide to take religious tourism trips. Not only to meet spiritual needs but also to meet recreational needs, cultural introduction education [11]. This is due to the frequent emergence of motivation that tourists have both because of cultural motivation and the desire for something religious.

Therefore, religious tourism is not only about physical sites that smell religious but also offers experiential tourism through the culture that develops in society and religious traditions.

## 2.2 Samana Santa

Samana, Santa Week in Larantuka, is celebrated for almost a full week, starting from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday [4]. While this celebration was taking place, the residents of Larantuka City in East Flores Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, were always enthusiastic about celebrating the discovery of the statue of Tuan Ma (Our Lady). Various pilgrims from several corners of the country will come to the city of Our Lady. They wanted to witness the big celebration, and at the same time, they wanted to get a miracle because most of the visitors were sick people, especially those with strokes and disabilities. Such sick pilgrims are mostly accompanied by their family members so they can worship Tuan Ma [4, 12].

The pilgrims from the mainland of Flores, Timor, Sumba, and Rote Ndao, East Nusa Tenggara, are mostly young people. Flores people who are old and live abroad usually order their children to join the pilgrimage. One of the pilgrims, named, Manecas da Costa, explained that after returning from Larantuka, family representatives would

usually bring water thanks to the results of washing the statues of Tuan Ma and Tuan Ana which was able to cure diseases and drive out demons. Apart from wearing black clothes, pilgrims usually also carry rosaries [13]. While this celebration was taking place, residents of Larantuka City in East Flores Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, were always enthusiastic about the celebration of the discovery of the statue of Tuan Ma (Our Lady). Pilgrims from various corners of the country will come to the city of Our Lady. They wanted to witness the big celebration, and at the same time, they wanted to get a miracle because most of the visitors were sick people, especially those with strokes and disabilities. Such sick pilgrims are mostly accompanied by their family members so they can worship Tuan Ma, and holy images are kept around the statues of Tuan Ma and Tuan Ana. The images are believed to be blessed by Mr. Ma for the whole family's safety.

According to [8], tourism objects are divided into three categories, namely natural tourism, cultural tourism, and tourism related to the way of life of an ethnic group (such as ceremonies, traditions, and so on). *Semana Santa* as one of the tours related to the way of life of an ethnic group has helped make the economy in Larantuka stretch. It is because when this celebration takes place, the hotels in Larantuka are usually full, and hotel room rates will be increased. Intercity car rental services throughout Flores are also selling well. Public transportation with the Maumere-Larantuka route is not easy to find, especially approaching Maundy Thursday and Good Friday [14] Larantuka is also known as *Nagi* and *Kota Reinha* (the city blessed by Mary) [15]. Even this coastal area is a city with the ecclesiastical area governed by a bishop (bishop), the first on the Island since five centuries ago. The interaction began when, in 1511, after conquering Bandar Malacca, Portuguese trading ships sailed to the Maluku Islands and the Banda Islands in search of spices. Some Portuguese ships moved south when they passed the Flores Sea and the Banda Sea, to be precise, in the East Nusa Tenggara region [16].

Folklore that circulates can be ascertained that the *Semana Santa* tradition began with the discovery of the Tuan Ma Statue on Larantuka Beach in 1510. The statue was thought to have washed ashore due to the sinking of a Portuguese ship in Larantuka waters. On orders from the Head of Lewonama Village at that time, in the Kirke (local language) house of worship. Residents, who at that time did not know the statue's figure, respected it as a sacred object. The community also often gives offerings when celebrating certain events, such as harvest and other celebrations.

*Samana Santa* celebrations occur three times here, which are often called *Baedi Nagi Days*, *Bae Di Konga Days*, and *Baedi Wurth Days*. This celebration places Jesus and the mourning Mother Mary witnessing her child's suffering before and during her crucifixion at the center of the ritual. Wurth, West Adonara, East Flores is a village with a strong influence from Portuguese culture. This village is located on Adonara Island or precisely in the West Adonara District, which can be reached by sea transportation for approximately 20 min from the city of Larantuka [2, 4, 17].

### 3 Method

In this study, the analytical technique used is qualitative, namely using Content Analysis. Identifying the characteristics of the religious tourism village owned by Bejagung

Village is carried out by collecting primary data through direct observation in the field, selecting stakeholders through one-to-one interviews, or data collection is carried out by interviewing each stakeholder individually with a semi-structured approach. Semi-structured interviews are freer than structured interviews. To analyze the data from the In-Depth Interview interviews, the Content Analysis method was used. Abdussamad and SIK [18] describe Content Analysis as a technique for making replicable and valid inferences, considering the context. The stages in conducting Content Analysis are as follows:

## **4 Analysis**

### **4.1 Business Opportunities Around Tourist Destinations**

#### **Accessories and Candle Shop**

The location around the procession activities is the main attraction for visitors who want to feel the spiritual condition of a procession of the statue of the Virgin Mary along the road to the Cathedral Gareja, so many shops and street vendors can be found selling accessories, as well as candles scattered almost along the road.

#### **Lodging Business**

The results of observations in several areas spread across East Flores have lodging businesses at affordable prices that are used to help visitors who come and do not have families so that the choice of lodging is a very profitable alternative for the community.

#### **Food Stalls**

The arrival of tourists certainly changes the availability of food stalls for visitors and available drink stalls scattered along the road to the Samana Santa destination. There are also a wide variety of menu choices at affordable prices.

### **4.2 Increasing the Income of Tourist Attraction Area Traders in East Flores**

#### **A. Utilization of Tourist Objects**

In addition to existing religious tourism activities, the city of Larantuka has various natural beauty and artistic potential. The city of Larantuka is famous for its religious rituals, namely Semana Santa, and has various physical and non-physical potentials. These potentials are expected to be a supporting tourist attraction for visiting tourists. One of the physical potentials is the natural beauty in the form of panoramic views presented in clusters of mountains, islands, and seas surrounding this city.

#### **B. Social Impact**

Religious Tourism Objects will open up jobs obtained by the community, meaning that it will help increase income for their families. This income can finance household needs and pay for their children's schooling. As stated by 45-year-old Mother Maria: "...my income is not very high, but I can meet my daily needs and pay for my children's

schooling. Before selling here, I was just a casual worker whose wages could only be used to eat daily, and my husband bore the children's school fees.

### **C. Economic Impact**

The positive economic impact is the ability of the community to open new jobs for the local community, whether as a team member in the cleaning, security, or other divisions that are following the conditions of the area with the abilities and skills of the surrounding community that can be used by tourism managers, or by selling, such as food, drink or regional accessories around tourist sites so that local people can get an increase in a decent standard of living., the economic impact will also affect local governments who will get income from taxes.

## **4.3 Absorption of Labor in the Regions of Religious Tourism Objects in the City of Larantuka**

### **Communities Can Create Jobs**

Community initiatives by utilizing the location around this religious tourism object open up opportunities for them to open their businesses and even provide jobs for others.

#### **Implementation of Economic Welfare**

To have financial income, an individual must work. Communities carry out economic activities or work by opening various types of businesses that can be carried out, such as people who take advantage of religious tourism sites in East Flores with various types of businesses that are managed by themselves, then economic prosperity emerges.

## **5 Conclusion**

Religious tourism objects have an impact on increasing the income of the people of Larantuka, especially those around tourist sites. This income increase will be felt if there is a moment during Semana Santa -other activities. The existence of religious tourism has a significant impact on the lives of the people of Larantuka because it can create new jobs for residents around tourist attractions, both for families and other people.

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