



Development Strategy of *Rumah Semut* (Musamus) as a Tourist Attraction (Case Study in Merauke Regency)

Reni Sulistiyowati^(✉), Ni Made Dwiyanas Rasuma Putri, Marya Yenny, and Dewi Fitriani

Politeknik Sahid, Jakarta, Indonesia
reni.sulistyowati@polteksahid.ac.id

Abstract. Indonesia is an archipelagic country that has a variety of natural, ethnic and cultural beauties. This diversity creates a lot of tourism potential, both natural and cultural, which is able to attract the interest of many local and foreign tourists. Indonesia has a lot of potential and natural resources that have not been developed optimally, including in the tourism sector. One of the tourism sectors that want to be developed is the ant's house (*Musamus*) as a local tourist attraction in the city of Merauke in Papua Province. This study aims to find out how the development strategy which is carried out to increase the potential of the *Rumah Semut* as a local tourist attraction in Merauke Regency. This study uses descriptive research with a qualitative approach, through a research design to describe and analyze the development of tourism potential in Merauke Regency which is not yet optimal.

Keywords: Tourism · Tourist Attraction · *Rumah Semut*

1 Introduction

Indonesia is an archipelago country that has a variety of natural, ethnic and cultural beauties. This diversity creates a lot of potential for both natural and cultural tourism that can attract the interest of many local and foreign tourists. "Seeing the tourist attraction in the form of natural beauty and cultural arts wealth, this potential is a very interesting potential to be developed" Pendit (2002: 66) [1].

There is one tourist place that is not widely known by the general public, this place is a quite unique tourist destination, namely "*Taman 1000 Rumah Musamus*." This tour is quite unique, because it displays an ant nest that resembles a building with a nest height that can even exceed human height.

Musamus is actually not an ordinary "*Rumah Semut*". The astonishing masterpiece, built by a kind of termite colony, called *Macrotermes* is a non-destructive bug. At first glance, this small animal looks like an ant. Millions of these termites can build large houses, which can even withstand the weight of humans when climbing. *This Rumah Semut* can reach a height of up to 5 m, with a diameter of 2 m, which are scattered in several areas in Merauke Regency. *The Rumah Semut*, which is familiarly known as *Musamus*, is conical in shape, with a squiggly texture.

Experts say the Musamus, as an *Rumah Semut*, is made of a combination of soil, grass and termite saliva, which acts as an adhesive. Inside the nest form winding passages that actually function as air vents. During the dry season, the ventilation holes can help release hot air from inside the burrow. Vice versa, when entering the rainy season, the ventilation serves as a protector from rainwater.

By looking at the fact that Musamus is only found in Merauke Regency, of course this makes *Rumah Semut* as an attraction tourism that deserves to be developed. Because with the increase in Musamus tourism, the preservation and development of local tourism in Merauke Regency can be more developed.

2 Objectives

This purpose of this study to determine the potential and development of *Rumah Semut* as a tourist attraction in Merauke Regency based on efforts to introduce *Rumah Semut* (Musamus), the government of Merauke Regency as policy makers and Merauke Regency Communities and by looking at the fact that Musamus is only found in Merauke Regency in Indonesia.

According to *Undang-Undang* No.10 Year 2009 about Tourism, there are at least 3 main elements of tourism products or destinations, namely: tourist attractions, amenities and accessibility, usually abbreviated as 3A tourism. The development of tourist destinations need to take into account these 3 key points [2].

An important component in tourism development is a sustainable tourism development that has links between tourists, local residents and community leaders who want a better life. In this case it is clear that a tourist spot must contain these components to become a good tourist object.

3 Methods

This research was designed using descriptive research with a qualitative approach, through a research design to describe and analyze the development of tourism potential in merauke regency which has not been optimal. This study uses a qualitative approach, which is a broad concept that includes several forms of investigation that assist in understanding and explaining the meaning of natural social phenomena without any treatment. The goal of this research is to make a factual description, the nature of the relationship between the phenomena investigated.

The unit of analysis is the subject or target of a study. Through this subject a researcher can draw research data. In this study the unit of analysis used was the people of merauke regency and the merauke regency government who had the capability to answer questions about ant houses or Musamus.

The value of qualitative variables is not in the form of numbers, so the variables used in this study are concept development to increase the potential of ant houses as local tourist objects in Merauke Regency. Ant's house is a local tourist attraction in Merauke regency. And the obstacles experienced in developing the concept is to increase the potential of the ant house as a local tourist attraction in Merauke regency.

In analyzing the data, the authors use the SWOT analysis technique. This research was conducted in Merauke regency, Papua province. The location where the ant or Musamus house is located. This research is planned to take place from 15 July 2022 to 14 September 2022.

4 Findings and Discussion

Merauke Regency is one of the regencies/cities in Papua Province, and it is located in the southern part of Papua Province. Musamus is actually not an ordinary ant nest. The astonishing masterpiece, built by a kind of termite colony, called *Macrotermes* is non-destructive. At first glance, this small animal looks like an ant. Millions of these termites, can build large houses, which can even withstand the weight of humans when climbing. This ant's house can reach a height of up to 5 m, with a diameter of 2 m, which are scattered in several areas in Merauke Regency. The ant nest, which is familiarly known as Musamus, is conical in shape, with a squiggly texture.

Based on the results of interviews with the Head of the Merauke Regency Tourism Office, data was found in the form of planning for the tourism service to develop tourism places in Merauke Regency, one of which is the 1000 Musamus park located in Salor Indah. In addition, the tourism office is also trying to be active in developing and implementing work programs from the ministry of tourism to develop tourist villages or villages. Therefore, the tourism office is trying to identify 6 candidate tourist villages that you want to develop. Some of these villages are Wasur, Rawa Biru, Yanggandur, Sota, Wayau and Salor Indah which have 1000 Musamus.

The attraction of Musamus is very interesting but the accessibility must also be adequate since the journey is quite far for the vehicle and the poor condition of the road leading to the tourist attraction. Except for special interest tourists, this is a note for the tourism office and the local Merauke community for how to get a solution to this problem. An increase in tourists from outside Merauke Regency will definitely visit tourist objects that are characteristic of Merauke Regency. This is a very good opportunity for the future, because the location of the 1000 Musamus tourist attraction is also very strategic.

Salor Indah Tourism (1000 Musamus) has many Musamus in the area. This is an advantage which is then used as a tourist attraction for 1000 Musamus. It grows naturally and is styled so that the scenery is so beautiful and attracts the attention of the public to travel to the place. Another area where Musamus is located is Wasur or Wasur National Park. However, there is a difference, namely the growth of Musamus which is far apart but can be a special attraction. In addition, along the Wasur area to Sota, it has its own charm which is in the Wasur National Park area which of course has special rules and treatment related to the regulations that apply in the area. So that people not only do development, but it cannot be denied that the people who live in the Wasur National Park area also need attention and touch from the Tourism Office. In addition, the presence of Musamus can also be found at the Zero Kilometer Border Point, Sota. This is also a special attraction because it is in the border area of the zero-point monument Km. The Musamus in Sota is 2–3 m high which is fenced and well protected for its preservation.

Furthermore, researchers visited other places in Sota. Then the researchers got information from Mrs. Atin Kapisa who is a local resident who also owns a craft stall in the

Sota area. Mrs. Atin explained that there are 2 types of Musamus, some are black and some are red. If the red ones are often found, in the Marind language they are called Musamus, which means ants. Meanwhile, the black one is called *Bomisai*, which means *Bomi* = black, so it means the ant house is black and its spread is slow because it grows

Table 1. SWOT Analysis Result

<p>Pariwisata Lokal Kabupaten Merauke</p>	<p>Strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a unique local tourism potential. There are tourist sites that support Musamus. • There is a fairly good management of Musamus tourist attractions by the local community. • Human resources that support the development of Musamus tourism. • Musamus tourism is only found in Merauke Regency. 	<p>Weakness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate infrastructure at several Musamus tourist sites. • Lack of active role from the government for the development of Musamus tourism. • Lack of promotion of tourist destinations
<p>Opportunity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is cooperation in the development of Musamus tourism among the local community. • More and more people want to develop Musamus tourism. • The local community still maintains the existence of Musamus. • Development plan from the Merauke Regency Tourism Office 	<p>Strategi SO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the tourism potential of Musamus through collaboration with the government and private parties that can help develop infrastructure. • Increasing the tourism potential of Musamus which is supported by the development of other tourist attractions around Musamus tourism. 	<p>Strategi WO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the marketing of Musamus tourist destinations through collaboration with related parties such as the government and local community support.
<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some Musamus locations are not monitored by the government and the community. • There is a Musamus which is starting to disintegrate due to natural factors 	<p>Strategi ST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation of Musamus tourism in Merauke Regency. • Maintain and maintain the uniqueness of Musamus tourism which is supported by the development of local community handicrafts. 	<p>Strategi WT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving transportation and supporting infrastructure, and developing other local attractions around Musamus tourism. • Increasing cooperation in cultural tourism between regions and related parties to improve the quality of Musamus tourism.

longer than the red Musamus. The difference is due to the different types of soil so that the manufacturing process and the color are different.

Apart from that, there is also a resource person named Jumadi who is a caretaker of the 1000 Musamus Park. He explained that there were active and dead Musamus. How to tell the difference by looking at the color of Musamus. If the Musamus is black, it means that the Musamus has died or been abandoned by his flock. And if it's still bright and tall, that means Musamus is still alive. In addition, Musamus also grows more actively during the rainy season.

As one of the caretakers of the 1000 Musamus Park, Jumadi said that in the future, he and the local community will make a fishing spot and boat tours to attract more visitors. Apart from that, the flying fox ride that will land on the water is also an alternative development idea.

By looking at the facilities currently available, there are swings, seats and pavilions along with their grills which were built to create a family holiday atmosphere on the weekends.

Jumadi's view of the obstacles lies more in inadequate roads and transportation. Because the road leading to the 1000 Musamus Park from the city is still very bad and muddy when it rains, and there is no public transportation to reach this place. So the inadequate transportation conditions make people think twice about visiting this remote location.

There are various opinions from visitors to this Musamus tour, some of them are of the opinion that Musamus tourism in Merauke is good enough, and there are many locations that have empowered this Musamus tourism. The government less supports local residents who want to develop tourism here. There are also those who argue that many other alternative tours are also available around Musamus Park so that visitors are not bored on one monotonous tour. One of the visitors commented about Musamus tourism, especially in the Sota area and along the way there already has good roads so the Musamus (ant houses) on the roadside can be better maintained (Table 1).

5 Conclusion

Merauke Regency has areas that can be used as tourist villages or tourist villages. To make this happen, the tourism agency needs support from the local community, as well as those who are willing to invest in tourism development in Merauke Regency, so that it can accelerate the development of each tourist attraction.

The existence of Musamus tourism is very profitable for tourism in Merauke Regency. Therefore, by seeing that there are deficiencies in terms of infrastructure and the development of other tourist attractions, it can be said that infrastructure development is very important. Especially on the access road to Musamus tourist sites. So that the process of development and construction at Musamus tourism sites can take place more easily, quickly, and on target.

Beautiful Salor Tourism (1000 Musamus) has many Musamus in the area. This is an advantage which is then used as a tourist attraction for 1000 Musamus. The strategy for packaging local culture, especially cultural tourism in Merauke Regency, which is appropriate based on the results of the SWOT analysis, is packaging local culture in

the form of cultural festival events and improving facilities, both transportation and alternative attractions around Musamus tourism.

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