



Miniature of Tolerance: Pluralism and Religious Tourism Development of Antaboga Banyuwangi

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Abstract. This study aims to determine the role of Antaboga tourism in strengthening religious tolerance in Banyuwangi. The research method used is a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection through observation and semi-structured interviews with research informants selected by purposive sampling. The data analysis technique in this study used the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model which included (1) data reduction, (2) data presentation, (3) drawing conclusions. The results of the study show that Antaboga religious tourism is an open and friendly place for all religious people with different backgrounds where interfaith religious activities can be carried out in the same location. In addition, the Banyuwangi government is also actively encouraging tolerance in society through the implementation of various policies. In the context of Knitter's model of religious pluralism, strengthening religious tolerance through Antaboga tourism can also involve elements of religious conflict resolution. This tourism can be a safe space for interreligious dialogue, where differences are understood as a source of cultural wealth that must be respected.

Keywords: Religious Diversity; Tourism; Miniature of Tolerance.

1 Introduction

Tourism is an important sector supporting the economy, especially in expanding employment opportunities and stimulating local revenue [1]. Of the various tourist attractions, religious sites also have the potential to be developed into the tourism industry. Religious tourism is a pattern of contemporary visits to places that are considered to contain religious elements to meet both religious and recreational needs [2]. According to Turner and Turner (1978), religious tourism consists of at least three important components, namely motivation, travel and goals [3]. The development of religious tourism has a positive impact on economic aspects, as well as social, cultural and religious (Noviarita et al., 2021). Developing tourism requires the participation of social elements to empower the community [4] and align with sustainable development [5].

In Banyuwangi district, the development of religious tourism is not only aimed at increasing regional income, but also to strengthen inter-religious harmony. This religious tour is called Antaboga which is located in the Perhutani area of Mount Raung Glenmore. This religious site is known as an icon of tolerance because 6 places of worship accommodate various beliefs and beliefs [3]. At first this tour was a sacred site for Hindus. But then it was opened to the general public. In its management, this tour also involves interfaith leaders.

Antaboga religious tourism represents religious plurality in Banyuwangi [6]. Through this tourist site, inter-religious tolerance is represented. Because, on this tour there are 6 places of worship side by side to facilitate interfaith visitors. Besides that, it is also to strengthen tolerance symbolically.

Religious tourism in the context of regulations, policies, objectives, management and tourism operations and development objectives are strongly influenced by religious principles [7]. Policies or fatwas issued by the MUI can also influence the existence of these religious tourism entities. Because behind the reality of the plurality of Indonesian society, the Muslim community is the society with the highest majority level in Indonesia. In this case, the MUI gave a fatwa on the implementation of tourism based on Sharia principles Number: 108/DSN-MUI/IX/2016 which is in accordance with religious Sharia such as hotel policies, tour guides and travel agents [8].

The high level of religious pluralism in Banyuwangi is a valuable asset, however, it cannot be ignored that the potential for conflict or friction also increases along with this diversity [9]. As for the level of religious pluralism in Banyuwangi, Islam is 96.85%, Protestant 1.59%, Catholic 0.27%, Hindu 1.56%, Buddhist 0.23%, Confucian 0.01% and others 0.006%. [10]. Therefore, it is important to create facilities that can strengthen the sense of tolerance among various religious communities in the area. In this context, "Antaboga Religious Tourism" in the Gunung Raung Glenmore Perhutani area could be a very important step. This tourism is not just a recreational destination, but is also a concrete symbol of interfaith tolerance and harmony.

This religious site is also known as an icon of tolerance because 6 places of worship accommodate various beliefs [3]. Initially, this tourist attraction was a sacred holy place for Hindus. But then it was opened to the public. In its management, this tour also involves interfaith figures. Antaboga religious tourism represents religious plurality in Banyuwangi [11]. Through this tourist location, tolerance between religious communities is represented. Because, on this tour there are 6 places of worship side by side to make it easier for visitors across religions. Apart from that, it is also to strengthen tolerance symbolically. By celebrating diversity and sharing religious experiences in the same place, it is hoped that it can help foster a sense of understanding and tolerance between religious communities in Banyuwangi, maintain peace, and produce a more inclusive and harmonious society in Banyuwangi, as well as encourage people to live side by side in religious diversity.

Strengthening a sense of tolerance through this tourist site is inseparable from the condition of religious plurality in Banyuwangi. The diverse composition of the population encourages efforts to maintain inter-religious harmony. The function of religious tourism as a medium to strengthen social harmony is very important to study. Several previous studies on religious tourism tended to focus on (1) potential conflicts, efforts

to handle them and the actors involved in managing religious tourism [7] (2) the socio-economic impacts of religious tourism [8] and (3) policies, strategies and infrastructure [9]. No research examines the role of religious tourism as a miniature of tolerance to strengthen inter-religious harmony. This research looks from a sociological point of view on the model of strengthening religious tolerance through religious tourism.

1 Methods

This research is located in the Antaboga religious tourism area, more precisely in the West Banyuwangi Forest Management Unit (KPH) Perhutani area, Glenmore District, Banyuwangi. Location determination is based on the focus of the research problem. The research method used is descriptive qualitative [15], which deeply explores social phenomena by emphasizing descriptions [16]. This approach is felt to be in line with research problems where researchers want to explore data in depth regarding the role of Antaboga Tourism in strengthening religious tolerance. Data was collected using participatory observation techniques, interviews and documentation studies carried out in several stages. Data was collected through a series of steps involving participatory observation methods to see the reality of natural social settings around Antaboga, then followed by semi-structured interviews with research informants selected through purposive sampling techniques. The selection of informants was carried out based on the objectives and focus of the research, so that the data obtained was representative and comprehensive. The research informants consisted of (1) Antaboga religious tourism managers (2) Banyuwangi City culture and tourism service staff (3) tourist visitors (4) and local residents. In this interview, the researcher wanted to collect data related to the social context and dynamics of Antaboga as a miniature symbol of inter-religious tolerance in Banyuwangi. This research also used secondary data sources in the form of document studies, reports and literature reviews, to complete the data. The research instruments used were interview sheets, observation sheets and other tools needed in the data collection process. After the data was collected, the researcher carried out the data analysis process using the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model [17]. With stage (1) data reduction through selection, simplification, abstraction and data transformation. (2) presenting data (3) concluding by analyzing the data obtained with the theory used.

2 Result and Discussion

2.1 The Portrait of Banyuwangi: Geographical and Demographic Context

Banyuwangi is a district located in the eastern part of East Java Province. Based on demographic data, the people of Banyuwangi are dominated by Javanese, Madurese, and Osing ethnic groups. There are also several communities as minority groups, with Balinese, Mandar, and Bugis ethnicities. The diversity of the existing community makes Banyuwangi have many unique cultural arts and local traditions. With an area

of 5,782.50 km² which is divided into 24 sub-districts, Banyuwangi has the longest coastline on the island of Java, which is around 175.8 km and has low to high land areas such as the Ijen mountains which are located in the west to the north south. With this in mind, Banyuwangi has a variety of natural attractions. In other parts, Banyuwangi also borders the island of Bali, one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world.

The Banyuwangi government uses the slogan "Sunrise of Java" which means that Banyuwangi is like a shining sunrise from Java Island and "Diamond Triangle" which shows natural tourism in the concept of a Tourism Development Area (WPP). This is intended to develop tourism potential and tourist attraction.

Referring to BPS data for 2022, Banyuwangi has a population of various religions, namely 1,694,730 Muslims, 18,532 Protestant Christians, 27,318 Hindus, 4,802 Catholics and 179 Confucianists [7]. The diversity or plurality of religions in the Banyuwangi community has been seen since the colonial era. The concept of religious tolerance in a plural society like Banyuwangi can be found easily [10]. This can be proven by the existence of statistical data in 1930 which were classified based on race and ethnicity during the colonial period which showed that there was diversity in the people of Banyuwangi.

Antaboga is used as a means of strengthening tolerance in diverse communities and is also a strategic area for religious tourism in Banyuwangi. In line with the statement that religious tourism is one of the popular destinations inherent in Indonesian society [13]. It is hoped that the sustainable development of religious tourism can improve the economy of local residents. The derivative effects of religious tourism which can have a multiplier effect on other sectors require special policies from the relevant parties [13].

Antaboga, in strengthening tolerance, needs to manage potential conflicts efficiently so that it is easier to make decisions or policies. Each related party can transform into a peace actor in a pluralistic society that influences each other. Meanwhile, previous studies stated that each component of interested parties has rights, but not all components have a significant influence on the management of religious tourism areas.

With this diversity, plural society in Banyuwangi is vulnerable to social friction between religious communities. Potential conflicts and social tensions often arise based on problems such as differences in interests and beliefs between religious communities. Therefore, it is necessary to instill a strong attitude of tolerance between religious communities, among others by strengthening a sense of mutual belonging, harmony and solidarity.

2.2 Antaboga as Interfaith Religious Tourism in Banyuwangi

Etymologically, Antaboga means food that will never run out, while in Balinese mythology it is stated that Antaboga (Anantaboga) means a giant snake [7]. Besides that, the word anta also means water and food, namely happiness, meaning water that brings prosperity to life. Antaboga was a spring that was only used by Hindus to perform rituals. This spring is believed to have medicinal properties to cure various types of diseases. There are rituals from *Sendang Dewi Gangga* (purification), *Sendang Dewi Uma* (melting), and *Sendang Bedawang Nale* (requests) which are sourced from mountain

water on the slopes of Mount Raung. These three accusations are often referred to as Tri Murti, which means three powers. Antaboga has three large trees that are considered sacred and are the center of religious tourism. There is a former place of meditation in the tree and it is believed that there was a giant guardian snake called the Antaboga snake. In Javanese wayang mythology, the Antaboga snake is a figure of the ruler of the underworld in the form of a dragon with *badhong* hair and wearing a gold necklace which is considered noble. Antaboga is believed to be the legacy of Resi Markandeya, who spread Hinduism in the archipelago. In 2011, the Antaboga religious site began to be built with various shrines and places of worship for 5 religions as a form of inter-religious harmony. Antaboga is a religious tourism destination that represents a form of religious plurality in Banyuwangi. In addition to encouraging economic improvement, religious tourism also has a positive impact on social and cultural aspects. Religion, culture and tourism have a synergistic relationship in creating social transformation [11]. Antaboga is located in the middle of a pine forest in the Perhutani Glenmore Forest Stakeholders Unitary Area (BKPH), more precisely on the border of Selorejo Hamlet, Kaligondo Village, and Genteng Regency with an area of around 30,000 m². Its location is located on the slopes of Mount Raung at an altitude of 400 meters above sea level and is one of 17 potential religious tourism sites to be developed.

Antaboga is managed by the Bhineka Perkasa Foundation from Bali. Its location in the middle of a pine forest area creates a beautiful and calm atmosphere so that tourists who visit feel a distinct sensation in carrying out their religious tourism activities. Antaboga is projected as a medium for strengthening religious harmony in Banyuwangi which involves interfaith leaders to accommodate the community.

Before the Antaboga site was formed, this area was inseparable from conflict because initially it was only intended for Hindu worship. The local community was ordered to follow the rules of the Hindus, namely to build a temple, while the Muslim community was not allowed to build a mosque or prayer room. While the majority of people living around the temple are Muslims. The Balinese Hindu community association only permits the erection of Linjek or statues for Catholic, Christian and Confucian worship. Community stakeholders are trying to continue to find common ground for religious communities around the temple. In the end, the Antaboga site was equipped with a place of interfaith worship as a symbol of religious tolerance.

Antaboga is believed by the local community to improve the economy. But then a gap emerged between the local community and tourism managers due to the lack of openness in tourism management and community involvement. Most of the Antaboga site managers are newcomers, causing social jealousy. The Antaboga management system does not adhere to the principle of openness by not involving the active participation of the community around the Antaboga area.

In its development, the surrounding community then worked together regardless of race, ethnicity and religion in voluntarily constructing the *pelinggih* (building) in Antaboga. This is influenced by the positive impact of tourism which boosted the economy after the opening of the Antaboga site.

2.3 The Roles of Antaboga in Strengthening Religious Tolerance

Banyuwangi has great potential in the development of religious tourism because of the many religious heritage sites ranging from pre-script, classical and Islamic. The government combines tourist attractions such as natural, cultural, historical and religious potential for the development of religious tourism in Banyuwangi. The Banyuwangi government implements a strategy for developing religious tourism, namely with various efforts such as (1) Structuring the area by clearing land areas around religious sites to increase accommodation (2) Improving religious tourism support facilities (3) Maintenance of religious sites by providing empowerment to communities and tourism activity actors related to understanding the history of religious tourism objects (4) Establishing cooperative relationships with investors to develop religious site areas (5) Providing information centers and other tours in strategic locations (6) Providing language training to local communities [12].

The Banyuwangi government also has the functions of service, regulation, development, representation and coordination needed in efforts to develop sustainable religious tourism to minimize the negative impacts that arise [13]. The Culture and Tourism Office of Banyuwangi Regency continues to develop the tourism sector to attract tourists in order to boost the economy. It can be seen from the many worship centers which are now being commodified in order to gain financial profit (commercialization). The commodification of religion is often associated with the concept of capitalism in which religious symbols are transformed into traded tourism commodities. To increase tolerance through tourism, the government is innovating through collaboration with the Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB). Through this forum it is aimed at strengthening the religious moderation of the people of Banyuwangi with various activities such as 'Increasing the Role of Youth, Youth and Interfaith Figures in Accelerating Economic Recovery Towards Banyuwangi Forward, Excellent and Prosperous' which was attended by youth and interfaith leaders to increase the active role of interfaith youth of productive age in regional development and post-pandemic economic recovery. The Banyuwangi MUI Regency Government has also issued a Joint Circular on operating hours for entertainment venues during Ramadan 1443 H as a strengthening of religious tolerance.

It appears that the Banyuwangi government is making various efforts through its policies to strengthen plural society tolerance. The pattern of harmony that can be carried out is by facilitating dialogue between religious communities, increasing regional approaches, social work, believing in other people's religions, and praying together. This is intended to prevent conflicts and social tensions such as the emergence of heretical sects, religious blasphemy, egoism, and social inequality in a pluralistic society. The Antaboga site seeks to create religious harmony with people who understand religious teachings comprehensively in order to strengthen a sense of brotherhood and responsibility.

Antaboga Tourism has a place that is open and friendly to various religions. On this tour, visitors from various religious backgrounds can feel acceptance and appreciation of their own beliefs. Antaboga does not favor or promote one particular religion, but instead provides space for everyone to worship, celebrate rituals, or respect religious

practices. This can be seen from the existence of six places of worship for religious people, namely Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Confucianism and Buddhism which can become a connecting energy rope to the Supreme Creator. Antaboga is considered as the crown chakra (sahasrara) which is able to provide more energy to connect humans with God. Inside the Antaboga religious site there is a temple as a symbol of Hindus, a statue of Dewi Kwan Im a symbol of Buddhists and Confucians, a statue of Jesus and the Virgin Mary a symbol of Christians and Catholics, and a statue of Nyi Roro Kidul as a Javanese belief.

The ornaments contained in Antaboga symbolize symbols of tolerance which are packaged into a unique attraction for tourists. Banyuwangi represents its plural character in a plural society. The Antaboga religious site reflects the diversity of the Archipelago's body in miniature form and can be a capital for strengthening religious tolerance in Banyuwangi. Tourists can feel a high love for the motherland when visiting Antaboga which reflects the unity of Indonesia. In addition, Antaboga tourism is also used as a place to hold interfaith activities, such as interfaith dialogue, joint celebrations, or ceremonies involving people of different religions. The existence of these activities provides opportunities for people with different beliefs to interact with each other, share experiences, and learn about each other's religions. In this case, Antaboga tourism is a symbol of unity, cooperation and harmony between different religions.

The model of religious pluralism that can be considered in this context is the Model of Complementary Religion or the acceptance model. This model recognizes that each religion has unique truths and meanings, and complement each other in spiritual understanding [14]. In the context of strengthening religious tolerance through Antaboga tourism, this model can be applied by recognizing and respecting the diversity of existing religious traditions. Antaboga Tourism can be a miniature that promotes religious diversity in an inclusive way. This tour can present experiences that involve various aspects of religion. Through these experiences, visitors can gain a deeper understanding of the traditions and practices of different religions.

In strengthening religious tolerance, Antaboga tourism can promote the principles of dialogue, respect, and mutual learning between religions. Tourists can be invited to participate in activities that promote understanding and respect for different religious traditions. In the context of Knitter's model of religious pluralism, strengthening religious tolerance through Antaboga tourism can also involve elements of religious conflict resolution. This tourism can be a safe space for interreligious dialogue, where differences are understood as a source of cultural wealth that must be respected and enriched. Tourists can be invited to share their experiences and views on their own religion, thereby enabling dialogue and better understanding between individuals from different religious backgrounds.

By combining the concept of developing Antaboga tourism with strengthening religious tolerance, it is hoped that this tourism will contribute to building an inclusive society, respecting religious differences, and promoting better religious understanding and tolerance. However, it is important to remember that the implementation of this model requires a holistic and comprehensive approach, as well as cooperation from various parties such as the government, religious communities and related stakeholders.

3 Conclusion

The development of Antaboga religious tourism in Banyuwangi does not only aim to increase regional income and the community's economy, but also plays a role in strengthening inter-religious tolerance. Places of worship for various religions built in the area of the Antaboga site are miniatures of tolerance in Banyuwangi. Thus, religious tourism can act as a medium that brings together the interests of people of different religions to know and respect one another. The visitors not only travel to enjoy the natural scenery and carry out spiritual activities, but can also mutually strengthen inter-religious harmony. They can travel and worship at the same time in the same place.

This research will provide an overview of future research so that it focuses more on resolving potential conflicts that occur related to a management system that is less open to local residents. With this research, it is also hoped that the Banyuwangi Government can utilize Antaboga's potential to be more fully developed as a religious tourism destination that is worth visiting.

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