



The Potential of Sustainable Tourism in Pagar Alam, South Sumatra, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable tourism development is an idea that is quite widely recognized in tourism development. Pagar Alam has tourism potential by prioritizing stunning natural panoramas such as the Mount Dempo tea garden and several waterfalls that have received attention by the government. However, the development planning implemented in the city of Pagar Alam is still not optimal even though nature tourism in Pagar Alam has very diverse benefits for the surrounding community. This research fully uses qualitative research methods. Pagar Alam as a tourist area can be used as sustainable tourism, with a variety of natural, cultural and artificial tourism potential that exists, it is hoped that visiting tourists can participate directly to develop environmental conservation and understanding of the importance of preserving the ecosystem around tourism potential. So that the main purpose of this type of tourism is to be able to form awareness in implementing an attitude of ecosystem conservation in the present and future known as Eco Tourism.

Keywords: Pagar Alam, Eco Tourism, Sustainable Tourism.

1. Introduction

Pagar Alam City is a city located in South Sumatra Province which has many potential tourist attractions. Pagar Alam City is a city that is a tourist destination that has an area of 633.66Km or 63,366 Ha. With its wide area, Pagar Alam has a lot of interesting natural tourism potential, especially because of its location surrounded by Mount Dempo and hills.

Pagar Alam City has tourist attractions such as natural tourism which has a good climate, culture, history and friendly people. Pagar Alam has the slogan BESEMAH which means Clean, Cool, Safe and Friendly. In accordance with the slogan Pagar Alam City is still very safe to visit, clean environment, cool natural atmosphere, coupled with the presence of Mount Dempo.

There are still many plantations, and the most interesting is the friendliness of the people-making Pagar Alam City which has a high level of tourist interest to visit the Pagar Alam City area. As for the potential of other attractions to be developed in Pagar Alam City, namely Green Paradise, Cughup Embun, Cughup Mangkok, Cughup 7 Kenangan, Puncak Gunung Dempo-Merapi and Bamboo Forest. The tourist area is a type of natural tourism that has potential regional economic value. The tourism sector is an important sector that cannot be separated from Pagar Alam City because it has been stated in the vision of the development of Pagar Alam City from 2005 to 2025, namely "Pagar Alam as the Agro-tourism-based Service City in South Sumatra in 2025" (Strategic Planning City Pagar Alam 2016). The development of the tourism sector stimulates the growth of infrastructure development. This sector also encourages the development of other sectors. Finally, the tourism sector also contributes to the growth of employment opportunities and income (Purwahita et al, 2020). Sustainable tourism development is a widely recognized idea in tourism development. *Sustainable* tourism is tourism that takes into account current and future economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts.

Regulation of the Minister of Tourism Number 14 of 2016, writes that sustainable tourism is tourism that takes into account current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, meets the needs of visitors, industry, the environment, and local communities and can be applied to all forms of tourism activities in all types of tourist destinations, including mass tourism and various other types of tourism activities. Fandeli and Muhammad (2019) added that sustainable tourism is expected to pay attention to the

environment in its development, empowering local communities, developing local culture, and the economy of the surrounding community.

The principles of sustainable tourism must underlie the development of tourist destinations. If it exceeds the physical carrying capacity, it will have a major impact on the socio-cultural life of the community and also on the natural environment (Hadiwijoyo, 2018). Sustainable tourism is an integrated effort in the process of developing the quality of life by balancing the provision and development, utilization and maintenance of natural and cultural resources in a sustainable manner for the future. The meaning of sustainable tourism is tourism development that suits the needs of tourists while still showing the environment remains sustainable and provides benefits both in the present and the future (Sulistiyadi et al, 2017).

Pagar Alam many tourism potential by prioritizing stunning natural panoramas such as the Mount Dempo tea garden and several waterfalls that have received attention by the government. However, the development planning implemented in the city of Pagar Alam is still not optimal even though natural tourism in Pagar Alam have very diverse benefits for the surrounding community such as a supporting area and has a very diverse tourism sector, both natural and cultural tourism, such as megalithic sites. (Heriansyah *et al*, 2023).

Both in terms of the economy of the surrounding community or in terms of other socio-cultural aspects. So that in the development of tourism in Pagar Alam, both the government, the private sector and the community try to maintain the natural environment so that it is not damaged and remains sustainable (Rosana, 2018). Thus, sustainable development is carried out in Pagar Alam tourism so that tourism can be useful and can be felt by the next generation.

2. Literature Review

Concept of Sustainable Tourism Development. According to Hadinoto (1996) in Widodo, (2016) tourism is considered as something that has a multi-dimensional nature with a series in the development process. tourism is an inseparable part of human life, especially in social and economic activities, in the face of challenges and opportunities, changes in the role of government in the field of culture and tourism have been made. Tourism, which in the old days played a role as an executor of development, is now more focused on government duties, especially as a facilitator so that activities in the field of culture and tourism are carried out. Hidayat, (2011) argues that *Sustainable Tourism* and *sustainable development* are terms that result in various responses from managers, tourism planners and environmental defenders/advocates, both skeptical and concerned. Sustainable tourism is defined by UNWTO as tourism that takes full account of current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, responding to the needs of visitors, the (tourism) industry, the environment and host communities (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2012).

According to Noor & Pratiwi, (2016) the concept of sustainable tourism development, namely:

1. Undertake efforts that can ensure the preservation of the existing socio-culture and environment and protect it from things that can threaten its existence;
2. Provide education and training on tourism to local communities and include them in the process of planning, developing, preserving, and assessing tourism development;
3. Using the concept of *carrying capacity*, which limits tourist visits according to the capacity that can be accommodated by the tourist attraction so as not to cause negative impacts on the environment and local communities;
4. Provide information and education to tourists as well as the local community on the importance of maintaining and preserving cultural heritage;
5. Conduct periodic research to determine developments and deviations that occur in relation to the application of the concept of sustainable tourism development.

3. Research Methods

This research fully uses qualitative research methods. According to Creswell (2016) qualitative research methods are research used to examine natural environments, researchers are key instruments in collecting data from various data sources, analyzing data inductively

and deductively, paying attention to the meaning conveyed by participants, following the development of problems in the field, and emphasizing the process to describe the problem under study as a whole. Data collection is done by interview, observation, documentation, and audiovisual. What needs to be understood in qualitative research is that literature searches and reviews are used by researchers as guidelines, and are not intended to determine the direction and content of their research activities. In accordance with the inductive nature, researchers using qualitative methods must be open to the possibility of new concepts emerging from research, especially when conducting preliminary research. Therefore, it is not impossible if the *researcher* has to change the *research problem* which is different from the original plan. In addition, the literature search and review was not intended to be the basis for the questionnaire. The literature search and review were used solely to enrich ideas as the researcher prepared to think of various things and possibilities related to the interview guidelines. In qualitative research, the researcher is the research instrument (Ihalauw, 2021).

4. Results and Discussion

Geographically, Pagar Alam City is located between 03°59'08" to 04°15'45" South latitude and 103°07'00" to 103°27'26" East longitude with an area of 633.66 Km² or 63,366 Ha which is divided into 5 (five) Districts, namely North Pagar Alam District, South Pagar Alam District, North Dempo District, Central Dempo District and South Dempo District. Pagar Alam City is included in Sub-Center Development Area IV for regional South Sumatra. Geographical conditions at the foot of the Dempo Mountains at an altitude above 700 m above sea level, make Pagar Alam City synonymous with agricultural production areas and mountain tourism. The current potential is also supported by the location of the city which is crossed by the South Sumatra regional transportation route that connects between cities and provinces.

Pagar Alam City is located at an altitude of 100-3159 meters above sea level (from sea level) of the highland area in this area is at the foot of Mount Dempo (\pm 3159 M). Pagar Alam City has always experienced a very drastic increase in population which initially in 2000 the population was only 112,025 people, even ten years later the population was approximately 126,363 people with a population growth rate of 1.22%. Due to the Transmigration factor who want to settle in the city of Pagar Alam. The population of Pagar Alam city consists of various ethnic groups. In addition to the indigenous population (Besemah tribe), there are also many Javanese, Minang tribe, Batak tribe, Peranakan people, Arab-Indonesian, and Indian-Indonesian. Pagar Alam City is one of the cities in South Sumatra province formed based on Law Number 8 of 2001 (State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia Year 2001 Number 88, Supplement to State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4115), previously Pagar Alam city was included as an administrative city within Lahat Regency. The city has an area of about 633.66 km² with a population of 139,194 people and has a population density of about 218 people/km². The city is about 298 km from the city of Palembang and is also about 60 km to the southwest of Lahat Regency. Pagar Alam City, a city located at the foot of Mount Dempo, has cool, fertile air, abundant coffee and vegetable producers.

Pagar Alam is one of the cities in South Sumatra Province with abundant tourism potential. As a "service" industry sector, tourism is able to make a positive contribution to increasing foreign exchange and regional income, as well as increasing the people's economy. The development of a tourism sector that does not damage the environment should utilize the condition of the natural environment in its natural form and preserve nature in order to attract more tourists, it turns out to be a solution that benefits various parties, both for the central and local governments, local communities and especially the main support of life, namely the environment. For local governments, tourism can have a double impact not only as a source of Regional Original Income (PAD), but also as a place for populist economic development

and labor distribution. The Pagar Alam City Government through the Culture and Tourism Office plans development and development in the tourism sector according to the type of potential owned by Pagar Alam City.

Pagar Alam City itself has a lot of tourism potential ranging from natural tourism, historical and cultural tourism, agro tourism, and special interest tourism. The existing potential has a high attraction for tourists and is spread in almost all areas of Pagar Alam City, (Heriansyah, et al, 2023). In the following table can be seen tourist objects that have the potential to be developed which are divided in each sub-district. The data on tourism potential in pagar alam is collected from interviews with the tourism office of the city of pagar alam as follows:

Table 1. Destinations of Pagar Alam City

No.	Nature Tourism	Cultural Tourism	Artificial Tourism
1.	Cughup Heaven's Door	Wangi Megalith Site	Padang Serunting Offroad Circuit
2.	Cughup Cungkuk	Bird Megalith Site	
3.	Cughup Mandian	Old Cawang Megalith Site	
4.	High Cughup	Tiger Relief Megalith Site	
5.	Cughup Kerinjing	New Cawang Megalith Site	
6.	Green Paradise		
7.	Cughup Tebat Leghar	Tomb of Puyang Serunting	Semidang Alas Agrotourism Plantation
8.	Cughup Kemuning	Plang Kenidal Traditional House Village	
9.	Cughup Luang Dangku	Temple Jungle Site	Lematang Dam
10.	Cughup Ayek Melintang		Lematang Rafting
11.	Cughup Seluang		
12.	Cughup Maung	Tebing Tinggi Megalith Site	Outbound
13.	Quiet Muara Cughup	Atung Bungsu Consecration Site	Mountain Bike
14.	Cughup Nibung		
15.	Cughup Karam	Batu Gong Lubuk Bunta	Rock Climbing
16.	Round Wooden Cughup	Besemah Traditional House	
17.	Cughup Besemah	Tomb of Atung Bungsu	

18.	Cughup Panorama	Prahu Dipo Mosque	
19.	Cughup Lematang	Tanjung Aro Megalith Site	Dempo Park
20.	Lime Stone		
21.	Yellow Napal Cughup		
22.	Cughup Ghuse		
23.	Cughup Anginan		
24.	Endikat Rafting		
25.	Cughup Ayek Baghu		
26.	Cughup Blange		
27.	Cughup 7 Buluh		
28.	White Lake		
29.	Cughup Batu Betulis		
30.	Cughup Bowl	Megalith site of Talang Kecepol stone house	Kheban Agung Offroad Circuit
31.	Dew Cughup		
32.	Cughup Alap-Alap		
33.	Cughup 7 Memories	North Square	South Square
34.	Peak of Mount Dempo-Merapi	H. Musa's Besemah House	
35.	The Gunung Dempo Plantation Area	Belumai Site	Rimau Monument
36.	Dempo Magnet		Lap. Paragliding Take Off
37.			2001 Ladder
38.			Lap. Paragliding Landing

Source: Pagar Alam City Culture and Tourism Office (2024).

From the table above, it can be seen that the tourism potential in pagar alam is divided into natural tourism, cultural tourism and artificial tourism. the Culture and Tourism Office of Pagar Alam City has implemented work programs and activities. In compliance with sustainable tourism in the environmental aspect, Pagar Alam has tourism potential by prioritizing stunning natural panoramas such as the Mount Dempo tea garden and several waterfalls that have received attention from the government. This can be seen from the provision of trash bins for tourists and traders around the tourist area. Based on the results of

interviews with the tourism office, the number of tourist visits continues to grow every year despite fluctuating growth. This shows that the economic conditions in Pagar Alam City are quite good. And impact on GRDP (gross regional domestic product), which of course will also increase, other supporting factors such as GRDP, which affects economic growth in the region and has an impact on economic growth in the area and has an impact on every prospective tourist to conduct travel activities.

In addition to several factors and influences on nature, art, and local culture on tourist interest, there is also an influence on the local community with tourist visits. That is the economic increase in the local community through the sale of handicrafts, food, and also tour guide services. Many local people also provide accommodation. The type of accommodation that has experienced a significant increase is homestays. There are many reasons why people choose to stay in homestays, such as the price offered by homestays which can be said to be friendly. Based on previous research (Permatasari, Pratiyudha, 2020) accommodation products can influence guests' decisions to stay.

The activity program plan carried out by the Pagar Alam City Government in the field of Culture and Tourism is as follows:

- a. Organizing the Besemah Festival as a routine tourist attraction in the form of regional cultural arts performances within the scope of South Sumatra Province.
- b. The implementation of the Bujang-Gadis Pagar Alam election as a means of selecting quality tourism ambassadors and being able to support tourism promotion to the regional, national and international arena.
- c. Organizing art performances to welcome guests of Pagar Alam City Government and celebrating national holidays.
- d. Participation in the Putra-Putri Sriwijaya selection event as a supporting tool to improve the quality of tourism ambassadors in Pagar Alam City.
- e. Conducting surveys and mapping of historical and cultural attractions in order to increase the number of attractions.
- f. Organizing an art studio festival to preserve regional culture.
- g. Participation in regional arts festivals as a means of supporting the quality of tourism ambassadors.
- h. Provision of regional music tools for the development of regional arts at the community level.
- i. Organizing learning studies on regional cultural development as a means of increasing human resources in the field of culture.

In connection with sustainable tourism Pagar Alam as a tourist area can be used as sustainable tourism, with a variety of natural, cultural and artificial tourism potential that exists, it is hoped that visiting tourists can participate directly to develop environmental conservation and understanding of the importance of preserving the ecosystem around tourism potential. So that the main purpose of this type of tourism is to be able to form awareness in implementing an attitude of ecosystem conservation in the present and future.

The actual condition of the implementation of *sustainable tourism* can be seen from 3 (three) approaches, namely environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects. From the socio-cultural environmental aspects of the Pagar Alam community, the majority of people are distinguished by employment categories, namely in agriculture with a percentage of 64.97%, followed by retail traders at 14.34%, as educational services at 5.15%, as construction services at 2.99%, road transportation at 2.20%, as government services at 2.15% and 8.2% others in various fields of work. From a tourism perspective, Pagar Alam City contains a high level of soil fertility where it can be seen that the majority of the population works as farmers and Pagar Alam is one of the agribusiness subterminals (STA) in South Sumatra province by producing various vegetables and fruits. With the location of Pagar Alam City at the foot of Mount Dempo which has cool, fertile air and abundant coffee producers. but in this case it appears that the guidelines and standards for the development of tourism areas such as the development of natural, historical and cultural potential of the community; in realizing integrative tourism planning; and protection of the natural and

cultural landscape of local communities. This needs to be a concern in order to create a planned arrangement of tourist areas and provide a positive impact as much as possible for the future interests of Pagar Alam City and its people, it is necessary to determine strategic areas and tourism development areas.

Pagar Alam, which is supported by an agro-tourism area, must be motivated by community awareness in utilizing the sector to obtain sustainable tourism activities. With regulations to utilize agricultural land into one of the tourism sectors, where natural products will be utilized for restaurant or restaurant managers, lodging and households in improving the community's economy. In terms of the environment, the utilization of Mount Dempo as a tourist attraction can have an engative impact where many people and tourists who visit produce garbage scattered around the tourist attraction. It is still not seen a good waste management system. The minimum effort that can be implemented by providing examples to the community in maintaining the importance of environmental cleanliness. Sustainable tourism should be implemented if the surrounding community realizes the importance of waste management for environmental sustainability.

When viewed from an economic perspective, the people of Pagar Alam City have a positive impact on tourism activities. This is in accordance with the culture of hospitality given to visitors who come to Pagar Alam City. There are many people who take advantage of tourist visits by opening lodging services such as *homestays* that are scattered along the access to Mount Dempo. For *homestay* managers, visitors who stay at their place are special guests who need services from the principle of *hospitality*. Not infrequently in addition to the community renting out their residence or room to visitors, there are also those who serve food and drinks typical of Pagar Alam, especially bandrek and Pagar Alam tea. There are also people who open souvenir shops by selling various kinds of processed food, drinks and souvenirs typical of Pagar Alam. One of Pagar Alam's specialty products is coffee produced from the land in Pagar Alam with different flavors and aromas.

Factual conditions related to *sustainable tourism* in Pagar Alam City need to be managed by maximizing the role of the government. This role is related to making regulations or rules that become a reference in running a tourism business in Pagar Alam City. Especially in running nature-based tourism and recreation with the type of adventure tourism activities with the location of the Dempo strategic area and its surroundings.

5. Conclusion

Sustainable tourism is a concept of traveling that aims to have a long-term impact on the environment, social, culture and economy. This concept combines the principles of sustainable development with the tourism industry. Several aspects of sustainable tourism in Pagar Alam City, including awareness to protect the community environment have been implemented, resource development is carried out sustainably and the majority of businesses around the tourist area are owned by the people of Pagar Alam City so it is important to have government support as well as the private sector and the community in maintaining sustainable tourism by increasing the benefits of tourism, reducing the negative impacts of tourism and ensuring tourism activities are not only economically profitable, but also protect the environment and support the welfare of local communities.

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