



THE TOURISM AS COMMODIFICATION IN PRESERVATION AND IMPLEMENT LOCAL WISDOM SIMALUNGUN ETHNIC

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Abstract

Efforts to realize the implementation of the vision and mission of the Regional Government of Simalungun in the field of tourism, the Regional Government of Simalungun District has carried out several steps in developing rural tourism objects, i.e., conducting tourism market analysis studies, formulating marketing strategy and promoting tourism in collaboration with travel agencies, implementing events and entertainment in potential rural tourist locations. The purposed of this study is to analyze the use of rural tourism objects in Simalungun Regency is expected to be an added value that can be felt economically by the surrounding community. The result of this study showed that locally based rural development strategy focused on the process of economic growth and structural change driven by local communities and utilized local potentials for development in an effort to improve the level of welfare of local communities. This locally based rural development strategy sought to meet local needs and demands through active participation of local communities in the development process. This strategy didn't only to improve the productive side (agriculture, industry and services), but also encouraged and enhanced the social and cultural dimensions that affect people's lives. The potential of rural development, based on this approach didn't only limited to conventional potentials known like: availability of natural and human resources, but also relies heavily on institutional potential, social and cultural capital. Therefore, recommendation of this study will provide cultural education for the younger generation shall not have to be done in "quirky" ways, for example by requiring all Simalungun people to be able to read or write using the Simalungun language.

Keywords: *tourism, local wisdom, rural development, Simalungun ethnic*



A. Introduction

Tourism is one of important things in some areas which has profit, i.e. regional income and well-known by people outside the area. Tourism is someone activity from their staying to visit the other place with time difference in visit and visit motivation. Tourism can be formulated as whole tourist activity on trip and stopover while with variation of motivation until generate demands for goods and services (Suryadana, 2013).

The prominent impact of tourism in the lives of local people is the impact on social stratification and social mobility because tourism is a vehicle for democratization. According to Greenwood, tourism has a great impact on vertical mobility (Pitana and Gayatri, 2005). Economic development caused by tourism led to the growth of new middle classes, which were always present in competitive situations with it. Social stratification which was originally based on old values, such as birth or blood, turned to the basis of new stratification which prioritized economic aspects. In Greece, for example, even though at first tourism development tended to benefit people who did have higher social status, but with changes in livelihoods, tourism raised people from low status.

Tourism for local people needs to preserve their local tradition as one of local wisdom. Local traditions, value systems and behaviors, customs, social structure and cultural are the potential and also the main drivers in the dynamics of the rural development process. All of this contributes to human resources and financial, facilitates employment and social relations and encourages the exchange of goods and services formally and informally as well as the dissemination of information and knowledge through networks of local companies and organizations (Arsyad, *et.al.*, 2011).

Local wisdom is the result of certain communities through their experience and not necessarily experienced by other communities. These values will be very strongly attached to certain communities and it has gone through a long time journey, throughout the existence of the community. The management of Simalungun tourism object based local wisdom is suitable to be used as a basis for raising awareness that humans



are part of nature. The potential of local tourism should be managed wisely (Ridwan, *et.al.*, 2016)

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B. Material and methods

This study as qualitative research used phenomenology approach. Phenomenology is performed within the framework of empirical social research, it is usually neither necessary nor meaningful to do any more than eidetic reduction, because the essential feature of phenomenological description. In this context, is that it aims to describe objects of consciousness exactly-starting, with their specific modes of appearance and working toward their essential elements or their general structures, which, from a phenomenological perspective, are the (only) reliable basis for the reconstruction of all possible kinds of "systems" of claims to reality, stocks of knowledge, sedimented memories, references to meaning (sense), and modes of givenness into which our lived experience and our meaningful experiences are interwoven and out of which, in turn, our reality is built (Honer and Hitzler, 2015).

Chosen location was Pematangraya, capital city of Simalungun Regency, and the informants were Simalungun citizen. Researcher did observation, indepth interview used interview guidance, and browsed through secondary data i.e. Museum Siantar Foundation and internet. The analytical method used refers to the general principles of qualitative methodology were like reduction and data triangulation.



C. Results and discussion

Tourism in Simalungun, locally based rural development strategy focused on the process of economic growth and structural change driven by local communities and utilized local potentials for development in an effort to improve the level of welfare of local communities. This locally based rural development strategy sought to meet local needs and demands through active participation of local communities in the development process. This strategy didn't only to improve the productive side (agriculture, industry and services), but also encouraged and enhanced the social and cultural dimensions that affect people's lives. The potential of rural development, based on this approach didn't only limited to conventional potentials known like: availability of natural and human resources, but also relies heavily on institutional potential, social and cultural capital.

This locally based rural development strategy focused on the process of economic growth and structural change driven by local communities and utilized local potentials for development in effort to improve the level of welfare of local communities. The locally based rural development strategy was a rural development strategy that used a regional approach that relies mainly on needs, all potential and local actors from a particular area. The longer tourists in these tourist areas would increase their spending and possibly increased the urge for more people to take part in the next visit, if the impression was bring on an interesting tourist experience, which would be able to generate service companies such as transportation, entertainment, accommodation and other services which supported the implementation of tourist trips (Marpaung, 2002).

Therefore, the main characteristic of this rural development strategy was first, development activities within the framework of non-sectoral regions. The region was not only considered as a place where resources and economic activities occur, but also as agents of change because companies and other actors in the region interact with each other to jointly develop the economy and society; second, economic activities and other developments were directed at maximizing benefits for local areas



through the use of local, physical and human resources and their culture; third, development was contextualized through focusing on the needs, capacities and perspectives of local communities, which means that a region should develop its capacity to carry out social-economic development that was typical of the region; fourth, development was not only limited to economic aspects, but also to treat economic, ecological and social problems equally so that it could be expected to create sustainable development; fifth, the participation of local people in the political decision-making process was very important because this strategy was primarily determined by the local community and refers to local needs (Pitana and Gayatri, 2005).

Locally based rural development strategy related to social-cultural. Assessing the social-cultural impact of tourism on the lives of local people was a very difficult job, especially in terms of methodology. One obstacle that almost insurmountable was the number of contamination factors that play a role in influencing changes which occurred. It was very difficult to isolate a causative factor because people couldn't be treated like treating specimens (experimental samples) in a laboratory, which various factors could be controlled. In relation to the impact of tourism on the social-cultural life of the community, it might be seen that there were other factors that play a role in changing the social-cultural conditions such as education, mass media, transportation, communication and other development sectors which were vehicles for social change-culture and internal dynamics of the community themselves (Miswanto and Safaat, 2018).

Preserving local culture was very important considering the changing lifestyle of society, in general and especially Simalungun, starting to show in a westernized direction because the influence of westernization that was very strong and free to influence the culture, customs and habits which had so far begun to fade within the Simalungun society. One of local culture that could be local wisdom is RondangBintang. Formerly RondangBintang was held in Prapat, now it is carried out in every sub-district in Simalungun Regency, so RondangBintang is done not after one month, only a week. In the past, the big event was in Prapat, in the sub-



district there was none, now its held just in sub-district, with the hope that tourism was driven by the opening of sub-districts in implementing RondangBintang. So, there RondangBintang's activities were held in competitions, in addition to showing and marketing the results of each sub-district.

Therefore, efforts needed to be made, to save local wisdom from now on. This was not only the responsibility of the government, but this burden might also be borne jointly by the Simalungun society, especially the role of the Simalungun district government and the young generation might work together in determining whether local wisdom would continue to fade or develop. One effort to save local wisdom that can be done is by providing local cultural education as early as possible to the younger generation, and later the younger generation is expected to be more loving local culture and they are expected to continue to preserve it.

D. Conclusion

Tourism in Simalungun was locally based rural development strategy. So, local wisdom always preserve and implement not only in center of Simalungun, but also in every sub-district. The government of Simalungun Regency had to pay attention to tourism resources, which could link with increasing culture as well as to improve the welfare and economy of the Simalungun ethnic group. Tourism should be able to succeed as a commodification of cultural preservation and in carrying out local wisdom, this situation is evidenced by the roads that lead to tourism access so that the Simalungun District government is more concerned. Therefore, recommendation of this study will provide cultural education for the younger generation shall not have to be done in "quirky" ways, for example by requiring all Simalungun people to be able to read or write using the Simalungun language.



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