



DEEPENING THE ISSUES OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN LAKE TOBA TOGETHER WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND CULTURE OF TOBA REGENCY

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Abstract	Info Artikel
<p><i>This community service project aims to discuss the development, potential, and challenges of the tourism sector in Toba Regency as a factor in regional economic growth. The implementation of this activity takes the form of directed discussions in the Forum Group Discussion, primarily conducted with the Department of Tourism and Culture of Toba Regency along with other relevant authorities. The potential of natural, cultural, and historical tourism is identified as vital assets that have not been fully utilized. Efforts to develop the tourism sector are evident in various programs by the Department of Tourism and Culture of Toba Regency. However, the availability of facilities, infrastructure, and public awareness of environmental preservation remains a challenge in the development of tourism in this area.</i></p>	<p>Diajukan : 11-08-2023 Diterima : 5-10-2023 Diterbitkan : 25-10-2023</p> <p>Keywords: Tourism, Lake Toba, Department of Tourism and Culture, Toba Regency.</p> <p>Kata kunci: Pariwisata, Danau Toba, Dinas Dinas Pariwisata dan Kebudayaan, Kabupaten Toba.</p>
<p>Abstrak</p> <p><i>Kegiatan pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bermaksud membahas pengembangan, potensi dan tantangan sektor pariwisata di Kabupaten Toba sebagai faktor pertumbuhan ekonomi daerah. Pelaksanaan kegiatan ini berupa diskusi terarah dalam Forum Group Diskusi yang dilakukan terutama dengan Dinas Pariwisata dan Kebudayaan Kabupaten Toba beserta aparat terkait lainnya. Potensi wisata alam, budaya, dan sejarah diidentifikasi sebagai aset penting yang belum sepenuhnya dimanfaatkan. Upaya pengembangan sektor pariwisata terlihat dalam berbagai program dari Dinas Pariwisata dan Kebudayaan Kabupaten Toba. Namun, ketersediaan sarana, prasarana, dan kesadaran masyarakat tentang pelestarian lingkungan masih menjadi tantangan dalam pengembangan pariwisata di daerah ini.</i></p>	
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INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector in Toba Regency has significant potential for regional economic growth, albeit with challenges. Tourism development is essential to increase local income, create jobs, and support economic growth. Toba Regency has a variety of tourist attractions that have not been fully utilized, and increasing the number of tourists can enhance the contribution of the tourism sector to the local economy.

The tourism sector in Indonesia currently has significant potential to drive regional economic growth, especially in Toba Regency. Benefiting the people's welfare, justice,

equality, and proportionality is one of the principles established by the 2009 Tourism Law (UU-RI, 2009). Tourism is a rapidly growing industry that can provide economic benefits, including job opportunities, increased income, and improved living standards. Tourism can also stimulate other production sectors in the region, area, and country that are tourist destinations (Sihombing & Hutagalung, 2021).

To develop the tourism sector, cooperation between the government and the private sector is crucial. This involves providing attractive facilities, attractions, and entertainment for tourists. It is also essential to emphasize the importance of regulations to manage and develop the tourism sector. This is necessary to ensure that tourism development is safe, comfortable, sustainable, and environmentally conscious.

Toba Regency has various tourist attractions scattered across several locations. However, this potential has not been fully utilized to increase local income. The development of these tourist attractions is expected to create opportunities for increasing the Regional Original Income (PAD). The number of tourists, both domestic and foreign, has a significant impact on the development of the tourism industry and local income. A decrease in the number of tourist visits can be attributed to various factors, including a lack of facilities, infrastructure, and access to tourist locations. Despite its potential, the tourism sector still has a relatively small contribution to the economic structure of Toba Regency compared to the agricultural sector and others. However, efforts to develop tourism are expected to increase its contribution.

The government of Toba Regency needs to implement effective policy to pursue sustainable tourism development. "Tourism development emphasizes the integration of economic, social, cultural, and environmental considerations, ensuring sustainable tourism growth that preserves the local environment and culture. Therefore, any policy strategy implemented in the Lake Toba area must consider these aspects and strive for sustainable tourism development (Awaritefe & Ejemeyovwi, 2019; Pardosi, Bangun, & Putra, 2021)." (Kennedy et al., 2023).

METHOD

The community service activities were carried out by visiting the Toba Regency Regent's Office in North Sumatra Province. This activity is part of a research project in the Lake Toba Tourism Area in Toba Regency, Simalungun, and Samosir Regencies. The activity involves the Regional Secretariat and the Department of Tourism and Culture of Toba Regency, along with other relevant authorities. Individuals involved in the Discussion Forum for in-depth exploration of this issue are those with knowledge and authority related to the discussion topic. Additionally, individuals with significant roles and in-depth knowledge of the discussion topic are included. The methodology used in this activity is a qualitative descriptive method, which describes and explains phenomena in-depth.



Figure 1. Visiting the Toba Regency Local Government Office, North Sumatra

Source: Personal Photo

DISCUSSION

The Formation of Toba Samosir Regency: Toba Samosir Regency is the result of the division of North Tapanuli Regency in accordance with Law Number 12 of 1998 (UU-RI, 1998). This division also involved the formation of the District Level II of Mandailing Natal. “Toba Samosir Regency was officially established on March 9, 1999. When it was first formed, the regency consisted of 13 sub-districts, 4 sub-district representatives, 281 villages, and 19 urban wards. However, in 2002, these 4 sub-district representatives were established as definitive sub-districts according to Regional Regulation Number 7 of 2002. Additionally, in the same year, 2002, the Borbor Sub-district was also formed based on Regional Regulation Number 8 of 2002” (Sihombing & Hutagalung, 2021).

Toba Regency is an area with diverse natural resources. The majority of its population relies on agriculture and plantations for their livelihoods. Agriculture and plantations are essential sectors in the regional economy. However, Toba Regency also possesses attractive tourism potential, which can contribute to the welfare of the community and Regional Original Income. Regional Original Income is defined as, “Pure regional revenue, and its role is an indicator of the extent to which autonomy has been implemented widely, concretely, and responsibly” (Putra, 2018). In an effort to increase Regional Original Income (PAD), the Department of Tourism and Culture of Toba Regency is responsible for managing, developing, and optimizing natural resources in the form of tourist attractions. PAD from the tourism sector comes from various sources such as hotel taxes, restaurant taxes, homestay taxes, parking levies, souvenir shops, and also tourist attractions or events.

The tourism sector can be a source of income for Toba Regency through various taxes such as hotel taxes, restaurant taxes, entertainment taxes, and levies. The tourism

sector plays a significant role in increasing the Regional Original Income of Toba Regency. This data also reflects a fairly stable increase from year to year in the contribution of the tourism sector to PAD. The tourism sector has an important role in increasing the Regional Original Income of Toba Regency, and efforts to develop tourism need to be continuously improved to maintain income growth.

Toba Regency has many natural, cultural, and historical potentials that can be utilized and preserved as assets for the development of the tourism sector. "This potential includes various tourist attractions such as spiritual, natural, historical, cultural, and forests. Most of the tourist destinations in Toba Regency are part of the Lake Toba Tourism Area. The government has designated this area for tourism based on "Presidential Regulation Number 81 of 2014 concerning the Spatial Planning of the Lake Toba and surrounding areas" (Perpres-RI, 2014).

Various programs are designed by the Department of Tourism and Culture of Toba Regency. These programs are outlined in the Strategic Plan of the Department of Tourism and Culture of Toba Regency. The goal is to achieve balance and harmony in tourism development in Toba Regency. Tourism development is a long-term and sustainable process that is complex.

The availability of facilities and infrastructure at tourist attraction locations will affect the number of tourists visiting each year. Adequate facilities and infrastructure will influence tourist visits and their comfort. Unfortunately, at some tourist attractions in Toba Regency, facilities and infrastructure are still minimal and limited. This impacts the uneven distribution of visits to certain tourist attractions and the uneven development of the local economy.

Smart tourism needs to be introduced as a platform to "Enhance the value of tourism by integrating Information and Communication Technology into tourism development. Although smart tourism applications in Indonesia are still relatively rare, some regions, including Lake Toba, are reviewing their readiness to adopt smart tourism practices. Smart tourism aims to enhance visitor mobility, facilitate access to information, and meet other needs related to tourism activities. The goal is to make Lake Toba a world-class tourist destination with a competitive advantage compared to other tourist destinations (Kennedy, 2022; Smith, 2015)." (Kennedy, 2022)

The community plays a vital role in tourism development. The community can help manage tourist attractions in various destination locations. They also participate in tourism maintenance to preserve nature and support the local economy. However, many communities are still not fully aware of the importance of preserving and developing tourism assets, so the environmental conditions of tourist attractions are often poorly maintained (Sihombing & Hutagalung, 2021).



Figure 2. Discussion with the Regional Secretariat and the Department of Tourism and Culture Toba Regency, North Sumatra Province

Source: Personal Photo

Tourism Development in Toba Regency

Law Number 23 of 2014 explains that, "Regional Governments have broader authority over their territories, implying an increased role and responsibility to tap into and develop all the natural resources potential within their regions to support the journey of development in the area" (UU-RI, 2014). "Districts/cities are given the opportunity to explore their financial resources by determining types of levies other than those already established, as long as they meet established criteria and are in line with the aspirations of the community. Levies are local collections as payments for specific services or permissions provided and/or granted by regional governments for the benefit of individuals or entities" (UU-RI, 2000). This regulation provides regional governments with flexibility in developing tourist attractions.

Tourism development is an effort to make tourist attractions and destinations in an area better. Every region has unique natural beauty, culture, and history. To develop tourism, various strategies are needed to help achieve government objectives and increase Regional Original Income (PAD). The tourism sector can be a source of income for Toba Regency through various taxes such as hotel taxes, restaurant taxes, entertainment taxes, and levies. The tourism sector plays a significant role in increasing the Regional Original Income of Toba Regency. This data also reflects a fairly stable increase from year to year in the contribution of the tourism sector to PAD. The tourism sector has an important role in increasing the Regional Original Income of Toba Regency, and efforts to develop tourism need to be continuously improved to maintain income growth.

Local governments, especially the Department of Tourism and Culture, play a crucial role in managing, developing, and utilizing the region's tourism potential. Strategies for tourism development must involve the community in planning,

implementation, and oversight. The goal is to ensure that tourism development can increase regional income and the well-being of the local community. The role of the community is essential in tourism development, and community awareness needs to be increased. The community must play a role in maintaining tourist attractions and ensuring their proper management. Additionally, the management of tourism levies also needs to be well-regulated.

Tourism development in Toba Regency includes various types of tourist attractions, whether natural, cultural, or man-made. The government seeks to optimize this tourism potential to increase PAD and the welfare of the community. The results of these development programs include an increase in the number of tourists visiting tourist attractions in Toba Regency. This also includes efforts to improve accessibility, supporting facilities such as restaurants and hotels, attractions, and community activities as tourism entrepreneurs and artists.

However, there are still some challenges, such as inadequate transportation access, especially in some tourist attractions. Facilities and infrastructure in some places are also inadequate. Therefore, further efforts are needed to address these issues. Although there are already development programs, there are still some problems to be faced, such as the lack of quality and quantity of human resources in the field of tourism, inadequate quality and quantity of tourist destination attractions, and a lack of cooperation between sectors in the development of tourism and culture. In facing these problems, the role of all parties, including the community, is crucial to achieving better tourism development in Toba Regency.

Although the people of Toba Regency play a significant role in tourism development, some find it difficult to release their land for use as roads to tourist attractions. This makes access to tourist destinations difficult. Some also have not fully utilized the tourism potential and consider tourist attractions as a source of income, reducing awareness of their preservation and maintenance.

The quality of human resources, especially tourism actors and managers, is crucial. However, in Toba Regency, there are still constraints related to the quality and quantity of professional human resources to support tourism advancement. Tourism services and the attractiveness of tourist destinations are not yet optimal due to this.

Easy access to tourist destinations is crucial. Tourist attractions that are difficult to reach will not be visited much. Infrastructure such as roads, water, and electricity greatly supports tourism activities. However, in Toba Regency, public transportation to tourist attractions is still limited, causing tourists to rely on private vehicles. Additionally, communication is also an essential accessibility factor for tourists. The condition of roads to tourist destinations in Toba Regency is still concerning, with many potholed and poorly maintained roads. This hinders tourist access to tourist locations.

Budgets and funds are essential for tourism development. Without sufficient funds, tourism development cannot be effectively implemented. Each development program requires a budget to achieve its goals. All these factors play a role in tourism development in Toba Regency, and efforts must be made to overcome these obstacles for better tourism growth.

The Tourism Sector's development, "Carried out by the Department of Tourism and Culture of Toba Regency, has not been fully optimized and maximized. This is evident from

the lack of supporting facilities and infrastructure at tourist locations, inadequate accessibility and infrastructure, insufficient community awareness and participation in the preservation and development of various tourism assets, and suboptimal function and cooperation among tourism institutions. In the development of the tourism sector, there are obstacles and challenges in its implementation, including community factors, the lack of quality human resources, and budget limitations in the tourism sector. Nevertheless, the tourism development carried out by the Department of Tourism and Culture of Toba Regency has shown that income from the tourism sector has had an impact on the Regional Original Income of Toba Regency.”(Sihombing & Hutagalung, 2021)



Figure 3. Together with the Department of Tourism and Culture and the Regional Secretariat of Toba Regency

Source: Personal Photo

CONCLUSION

The implementation of community service activities proceeded smoothly. Successful discussions were held with the Regional Secretariat and the Department of Tourism and Culture of Toba Regency, thus enhancing insights into tourism development in Toba Regency, North Sumatra Province. Toba Regency has developed the tourism sector as one of the main sources of Regional Original Income. Toba Regency has diverse tourism potential, including natural, cultural, and man-made attractions such as beaches, waterfalls, cultural sites, and museums. Some tourist attractions have been developed, while others are still in the development stage.

The development of the tourism sector in Toba Regency still faces several challenges, such as inadequate facilities and infrastructure, the need for improved accessibility and infrastructure, and the lack of awareness and community participation in preserving and developing tourism assets. Factors such as the quality of human resources and limited funding also pose obstacles to tourism development. The Department of Tourism and Culture of Toba Regency has made efforts to address these challenges. They have formed tourism awareness groups to engage the community in tourism development. Furthermore, they focus on improving the quality of human resources involved in tourism efforts, upgrading facilities and infrastructure, and collaborating with other agencies.

Some recommendations that can be provided include the government being more open to opportunities and changes in tourism. Improve tourism facilities and infrastructure, including accessibility and accommodation. Utilize social media as a marketing and promotional tool. Conduct cultural attractions regularly to introduce local

culture. Enhance the quality of human resources involved in tourism. And maintain the cleanliness and sustainability of the environment at tourist attractions.



Figure 4. Photo with the Deputy Regent of Toba Regency, North Sumatra

Source: Personal Photo

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