RELIGIOUS ECOTOURISM POTENTIAL OF SOUTH COASTAL COMMUNITIES, WEST SUMATERA, INDONESIA

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Abstract

This research was motivated by the viral issue circulating on social media about a mosque floating on water and attracting the attention of tourists from more than 300 congregations with all the advantages (natural resources and human resources) that support it so that it becomes a tourist icon in Pesisir Selatan Regency. The aims of this research are: 1) to describe the potential of floating mosques for religious ecotourism owned by Pesisir Selatan Regency; 2) to analyze the role of the community in developing the potential of floating mosques as ecotourism. This research method uses qualitative descriptive analysis with a field survey approach, in-depth interviews, and observation methods with analytical techniques in this view including three activity streams, namely data reduction, data presentation, and concluding B. Milles and Huberman. Sampling was carried out using a purposive sampling technique. The research results show that there are government programs that are still hampered by political interests that have not yet been completed. The floating mosque with a Malay Arabic design relies on the natural beauty around the beach to provide a spiritual sensation that soothes the soul of every visitor. The floating mosque is a religious tourism icon that is worth visiting.

Keywords: Ecotourism; Floating Mosque; Potential
A. Introduction

The current concept of regional planning and development is more directed towards realizing the aspirations and demands of society. The movement of a community to carry out empowerment began with the emergence of a community-centered development paradigm recognized as an “alternative development.” The regional development movement carried out by the government is regulated in Law Number 9 of 2015 which contains the authority of autonomous regions to regulate and manage the interests of local communities based on community aspirations. The local community aspires to want a comfortable, calm, and peaceful place of worship that can provide coolness in worship and feel comfortable in communicating with the Creator. The aspirations of the community are also demands and challenges which are answered by the government program with the construction of a floating mosque by the Pesisir Selatan government. The construction of a floating mosque is contained in a program that has been established by the government and is a regional reference for being able to manage and regulate the area by the community itself.

Regional development by fulfilling community needs in the development of floating mosques as religious ecotourism adds to the tourism icon in the Pesisir Selatan Region which has become one of the main priorities of the Regional Development Program by Regent Hendra Joni’s tenure\(^8\). Community needs for Ecotourism are defined as a pattern of travel and visits made by a person or group to a particular area to enjoy and study the nature, history, and culture of an area whose tourism pattern is to promote the area by helping the local community’s economy and supporting nature conservation\(^9\). The aim of regional development through government programs is to help the economy of the surrounding community and the floating mosque has become a potential regional development icon by the government\(^10\).

The ecotourism sector in Pesisir Selatan Regency can be used as a potential industrial pattern that can increase regional income while improving the welfare of the surrounding community\(^11\). The potential ecotourism sector in Pesisir Selatan Regency includes Religious Ecotourism (floating mosque), beach tourism, waterfalls, surfing, sunset, and others\(^12\). Floating mosques are one of the most popular and are a serious part of the government’s management, and development\(^13\). Moving on from religious philosophy, the existence of the floating mosque as a religious ecotourism icon (place of worship, and Islamic cultural

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\(^8\) Masram and Mu’ah, *Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia*, Zifatama Publisher, 2017.


\(^13\) Muluk, “Pemetaan Potensi Pariwisata Berbasis Komunitas Melalui Eksplorasi Keunikan Seribu Pantai Di Malang Selatan.”
The concept of religious ecotourism is an offer developed by the community to develop regional tourist objects, and attractions. Religious ecotourism is a tourist attraction based on religion in the form of buildings such as places of worship, several historical heritage sites, unique rituals, and religious celebrations that have tourist value.

Quraish Shihab said that religious tourism is a travel activity that some people undertake voluntarily, and temporarily to enjoy tourist objects, and attractions. The government is taking advantage of the existing moments and advantages by building religious tourism objects which are an important part of spreading the message and education of Muslims. Through this, it can be concluded that the concept of religious tourism is a travel visit to seek comfort, gain tranquility, and at the same time gain knowledge related to the spread of religious values.

Activities in the community program are “a movement carried out by several communities in the form of steps that have been designed/mapped in a certain area which aims to increase

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18 Maharani, “Analisis Kelayakan Potensi Ekowisata.”


independent abilities in the community, both by active participation and the initiative of certain community groups.”21. In this case, the role of society and government is very much needed to work together to develop the country22. The main actor in the village development process is the community itself, while the government’s role is only as an outside party which is more of a facilitator, mediator, and motivator as well as a donor of aid funds23. The uniqueness of Pesisir Selatan Regency which prioritizes tourism makes Pesisir Selatan Regency a favorite visiting area for the surrounding community and this is no exception for tourists who come from outside the Pesisir Selatan Regency area24.

Mapping the potential for religious ecotourism which is well managed by the government, and community requires various thoughts, and efforts that are sustainable, and serious in its management, both conceptually, orderly, systematically, and always continuously from one development stage to the next25. The development of this area takes into account the natural conditions, and the problems experienced as a challenge, and special focus for the government in managing, and increasing regional income through religious tourism which has developed rapidly but management, socialization, and promotion have not been carried out optimally26. Community participation in efforts to provide socialization wherever possible can help government programs in


developing and increasing regional income\textsuperscript{27}\textsuperscript{28}. Therefore, the author attempted to conduct a study by analyzing the mapping of the potential for community-based religious ecotourism in Pesisir Selatan Regency\textsuperscript{29}. Through the results of this research, it is hoped that it will be the formulation of a regional development sector model that utilizes and maximizes natural potential. Also, existing community resources by cooperation between the Government, and the community. This means that through government programs the community also gets direct results in regional economic development.

B. Method

This research uses a descriptive research method with a qualitative approach. In collecting information, researchers used purposive sampling techniques. In this research, researchers had several criteria for informants, including the selected informants were able to provide broad, and in-depth information regarding mapping the potential of community-based religious ecotourism. Data collecting techniques use observation, interviews, and documentation. In this research, researchers used data analysis techniques proposed by Miles and Huberman which consisted of three activity streams, namely data reduction, data presentation, and concluding\textsuperscript{30}. The data validity technique used by researchers is source triangulation by exploring the truth of certain information using various data sources such as documents, archives, interview


\textsuperscript{28} Lampung et al., “Peningkatan Kesejahteraan Masyarakat Petani Melalui Program Upsus Pajale.”

\textsuperscript{29} Asy’ari et al., “Kajian Konsep Ekowisata Berbasis Masyarakat Dalam Menunjang Pengembangan Pariwisata: Sebuah Studi Literatur.”

results, observation results, or also by interviewing more than one subject who is considered to have a different point of view.

![Figure 1. Research Methodology](image)

C. Results and Discussion

1. The geographical location of the Samudra Ilahi Floating Mosque, Pesisir Selatan Regency

   The Samudra Ilahi Floating Mosque as an ecotourism icon is located in the central tourist area of Carocok Painan Beach, IV Jurai District, Pesisir Selatan. The distance from the city of Padang to Pesisir Selatan is approximately 100 km. distance from Padang city to Pesisir Selatan Regency is around 1 hour 30 minutes using a 4-wheeled vehicle. The road to the location is smooth with beautiful views of the beautiful coastline. The location of the floating mosque is in the heart of Parang Pariaman Regency and can be used as a stopping place/rest area for visitors coming from the south of Sumatra Island. The floating mosque located on the beach with beautiful natural views gives a beautiful charismatic aura to the design, and existence of the floating mosque. The calm and comfortable atmosphere with the crashing waves gives a unique sensation to the floating mosque building.

2. The Potential of the Samudra Ilahi Floating Mosque as a Religious Tourism Pesisir Selatan District
Floating mosques as religious tourism in Pesisir Selatan Regency are usually the destination for large events or activities with religious themes. On certain days, Tabligh Akbar is often held, bringing in famous Ustads such as Abdul Somad and Adi Hidayat. The implementation of scheduled religious activities supports the mission of building a floating mosque that is capable of gathering thousands of worshippers for religious purposes which enlightens the minds of every visitor who comes. Religious activities are held on a scheduled basis and have become a routine activity for the floating mosque, with Anton as the administrator of the floating mosque. Mosque administrators are charged with different tasks, such as cleaning, cleaning the environment, cleaning the interior, and cleaning the ablution area, as well as cleaning the mosque facilities. Mosque administrators are also paid salaries by the local government, and the proceeds from visitors’ donations are put into the mosque’s treasury. This mosque, with facilities capable of accommodating 300 worshipers, has lots of activities, especially on religious holidays. According to previous research, Tohiran has a place of worship only as a means of worship without presenting the inner self in worship. There is no spirit of worship in the house of worship. Mosques are also often used as centers for celebrating Muslim holidays. The routine activities carried out in the form of giving lectures by religious figures in the community, and outside the region.

3. Overview of the Potential of Floating Mosque as Religious Ecotourism in Pesisir Selatan Regency using the SWOT measure.

32 Tarihoran and Syafuri, “Masjid Sebagai Pusat Wisata Religi.”
Figure 2. SWOT analysis

An overview of the SWOT analysis of the potential for religious ecotourism at Pesisir Selatan Regency from the results of field research, and interviews is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Floating Mosque Religious Ecotourism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal Factors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Supporting natural resources are available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The building design is unique, and has its own characteristics</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Complete building facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Charming views</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Received 2nd place award in the mosque cleanliness category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Natural ecosystems that are still maintained</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Has a variety of business units around the location</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
of the floating mosque.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Regional government intervention</td>
<td>1. Economic, and political globalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Institutional management of tourist areas is not yet optimal</td>
<td>2. Tourism competitiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Facilities and infrastructure that are not maintained</td>
<td>3. Ecotourism management regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The regional promotion system is still not optimal</td>
<td>4. The investment climate is less conducive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Government politics</td>
<td>5. Conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Interest of Regional leaders/officials</td>
<td>6. The integrity of the environmental community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Promotional media that has not been maximized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. An overview of the SWOT analysis of the potential for religious ecotourism at Pesisir Selatan Regency

4. Characteristics of the attraction of floating mosque as a religious ecotourism

According to Matiro in his research, mosques were only built with minimal architectural conditions and were not widely used for preaching freely due to the limited capacity of the congregation. However, currently, the main attraction of the Samudra Ilahi Mosque is its architecture which seems to float on the ocean. Apart from praying while traveling in the Pesisir Selatan area, many people immortalize the moment by taking photos here. Then, the Samudra Ilahi Mosque has a very beautiful sparkling gold dome. Another function of the floating Mosque in Painan, west Sumatra is as an information center for Islamic culture, and

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34 Mattiro, Nasrullah, and P, “Potensi Ekowisata Pesisir Berbasis Kearifan Lokal.”
The people of Pesisir Selatan Regency often spend time at the destination and beauty of Carocok Painan Beach. As a new icon in Pesisir Selatan Regency, the local government has also added other facilities such as the Asmara Bridge. In the future, this bridge will connect Batu Kureta Island with Carocok Beach. There is also a comfortable playground in an area of 6 hectares in the area.

5. Analysis of the potential of a floating mosque in improving the local community economy

a. Facilities for carrying out religious activities

The floating mosque can accommodate 200 worshipers and is usually used for routine recitation activities once a month which are held by bringing various famous lecturers/preachers to the location. According to the mosque administrator, the floating mosque already has a well-programmed schedule (Anes Interview). This was also conveyed by Walinagari during an interview that “the floating mosque has its agenda which can be managed well for scheduled religious events.” This means that to increase the potential for worship at the floating mosque, it has various series which are its points of attraction, including:

a) Have superior cleanliness.
b) Have a comfortable prayer room with full AC facilities.
c) Have a reading room with a collection of religious books that visitors can read.
d) Have a prayer carpet that is soft, clean, and smells good.
e) Have prayer equipment that tourists can use.
f) Has a unique design

This is also supported by the theory that says a person will feel comfortable in worship if the environment where they worship is supportive, and especially clean (Yohanes, 2018). In general, floating mosques generally have the potential to carry out very

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Ijtimaliya: Jurnal Pengembangan Masyarakat Islam
supportive worship services, and have the opportunity to be able to promote more focused religious programs by the concept of the divine ocean (Samudra Ilahi).

b. Means of implementing educational activities

The educational potential provided in the floating mosque environment teaches us to always be grateful for what happens in life. Many life lessons can be taken from the construction of this floating mosque. The existence of a floating mosque is used by the community internally, and externally to:

a) A direct learning tool to understand the Oneness of the Creator
b) Workshop learning media for Elementary to High School levels
c) A means for tourists to relax, and appreciate God’s creation
d) Media in forming a responsible character with the existence of this mosque.

c. Means of carrying out economic activities

The increase in tourist visits will be directly proportional to the increase in tourist needs in the area. This is used by tourism administrators, and local communities to provide things needed by visitors, including:

a) Providing accommodation such as hotels, homestays, and guesthouses.
b) Provision of a games arena, and rental of goods such as electric bicycles, tricycles, Odong-odong models, play grounds.
c) Provision of tourist attributes, such as; hats, trumpets, glasses, masks, clothes, scarves, etc.
d) Provision of food stalls such as street vendors cafes, etc.
e) Provision of other needs.

The management also uses the increase in visits to add accommodations and playgrounds, so that visits for worship, and to relieve fatigue also provide comfort, and beauty that can be

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obtained from visiting the area\textsuperscript{38}. Based on the results of initial observations, and interviews, there are around 3 – 4-star hotels at the location, and the rest are homestays, and guesthouses which are managed by the local community without government interference. This was confirmed by Mr. Andre that “the mosque area is a place for accommodation, but it is not the government that manages it, but the local community who convert private houses into business areas for them” (Interview on 11 June 2023). The existence of accommodation locations with affordable costs of around 300 – 550 thousand per night, is an economical price that is still affordable for visitors/tourists there.

Besides, the existence of the kiosk, which has been around for more than 6 years, is also still maintained by the regional managers, and administrators of the mosque\textsuperscript{39}. The number of kiosks/stalls in the mosque area is quite large. Mrs. Tati, one of the stall owners, said “Alhamdulillah, now there are a lot of visitors coming to pray, through the coronavirus season many people are starting to come so, the kiosk can be open until the evening, Sir.” (Interview 10 June 2023). Mrs. Tati is the owner of the food and drink kiosk around the floating mosque, who has long depended on visitors to the floating mosque for her income. The large number of visitors has an economic impact on Mrs. Tati’s food and drink stall. The mosque area management has already considered adding kiosks, and food stalls. Based on previous research, many existing religious buildings were only built by paying attention to the art of building design, not many developments were carried out by incorporating natural elements, and community needs. Floating mosque is different from other religious tourism developments which pay attention to development through economic value, education, and worship.


\textsuperscript{39} Stephen Hickson, W Robert Reed, and Nicholas Sander, “To Use Constructed-Response Assessments, Or Not To Use Constructed-Response Assessments? That Is The Question by Stephen Hickson, W. Robert Reed, and Nicholas Sander*,” n.d.
D. Conclusions

The potential for religious ecotourism “floating mosque” was carried out to see the advantages, and disadvantages of this ecotourism icon, and provide an evaluation overview to the government, and community regarding the regional programs being implemented. Several potentials are reflected in the religious ecotourism of floating mosque, including that floating mosque has high worship potential, economic potential, and educational potential. The government’s strategy to develop regional potential by building a floating mosque also has a big impact, and influence on the economy, and welfare of the surrounding community. This means that the government must have special programs, and models as well as its characteristics in regional development, and development that can bring potential economic value to the surrounding community. The government must be able to collaborate with the community to explore the various advantages that the region itself has.

References


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