

# Tourism Development Policy Strategy during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Tanah Datar Regency

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**Abstract.** The study about the Policy Strategies of Tourism Development during COVID-19 pandemic in Tanah Datar Regency aims to determine the condition and the development of tourism in Tanah Datar Regency as well as analyze the policies and efforts that will be made by government in formulating policies and strategies of tourism development during COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia especially in a region based on Tourism and Creative Economy Ministry of Indonesia and also from the international regulation by UNWTO (World Tourism Organization). This study used qualitative descriptive as the method, and the data used in this study will be obtained from the interviews, field observations, and literature studies. From the result of the study, the condition of tourism development in Tanah Datar West Sumatera during COVID-19 pandemic as well as the efforts made by the government in tourism development strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic will be known.

**Keywords:** Policy; Tourism; Pandemic COVID-19; Tanah Datar Regency

## 1 Introduction

The importance of tourism development in a region is closely related to a regional economic development, in terms of benefits and advantages that can be obtained by local communities. If the tourism business developed properly, it will automatically have a very good influence on regions with regional tax revenues and regional levies that will automatically increase as well, providing job opportunities and reducing unemployment, as well as improving local economy which raises new demands for agricultural products, livestock, plantations, home industries, handicrafts, and weaving due to the expenditure money spent by tourists) in tourism destination objects. According to 2009 government regulation no 10 in the article 1, Tourism is a collection of diverse tourism activities that are supported and developed facilities and services provided by government, local governments, entrepreneurs, and the community. The government is a party that has a very significant role in tourism development, because their task is to have the authority to regulate, provide, facilitate and allocate various infrastructures related to tourism and tourist needs. As stated in 1990 government regulation no. 9 about tourism that the government has a role as a legislator and regulator in tourism development planning.

Tanah Datar which its capital Batusangkar city is one of the regencies in West Sumatera which has a great potential in tourism development because it has a beautiful nature. Based on the data on the number of tourism objects in each district and city in West Sumatera, Tanah Datar regency is one of the regions that has quite a lot of potential tourism objects and is quite

diverse. It has 135 tourist objects consisting of natural, historical, and cultural tourism objects. Local government should consider this policy to improve and make a better regional tourism sector. Apart from the natural geographical, historical and culture conditions, the other two factors are safety and service awareness, and government need to assure tourist are safe while travelling in the region.

Due to the big case of pandemic that is COVID-19 that appeared suddenly, national income, including tourism industry has fallen drastically, especially in the Tanah Datar area, West Sumatera Indonesia. The COVID-19 pandemic is caused by the corona virus 2 which causes acute respiratory illness (SARS-CoV-2). The coronavirus pandemic is another name for it. In December 2019, this virus was first discovered in Wuhan, China. By the first quarter of 2020, the virus is believed to have spread to more than 200 countries. This is a problem that the government must address. Data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) shows the big impact of the Pandemic COVID-19 virus on the worldwide tourism sector. According to UNWTO [1], the COVID-19 pandemic has drastically reduced tourist arrivals globally by 22% in the early quarter of 2020 and is expected to decline again 60% to 80% by the end of the year. This resulted in a drop of 67 million international arrivals and an estimated \$80 billion in lost revenue (tourism exports). If the case continues, international tourists will fall by 850 million to 1.1 billion, resulting in a loss of 910 billion to 1.2 trillion US dollars in export earnings and a risk of 100 to 120 million jobs.

Almost all of the countries have enforced lockdowns, apply restricted international travel extensively regulation, banned foreign visitors, released travel restrictions from various places with confirmed cases, suspended all commercial international flights, required 14-day quarantine for all travelers, and suspended all visa operations in order to slow the spread of this pandemic [2].

Several researches have projected the COVID-19 as a pandemic effect on the tourism industry. However, few studies have concentrated on the government's capability to restore the tourism sector during the pandemic. During a pandemic, the government's role is critical because it can boost market confidence and reduce the risk of the virus spreading through public policies [3]. Aim of this study to review and examine the state of development of tourism in Tanah Datar Regency, as well as to evaluate the policies and measures taken by the Tanah Datar Regency government in formulating tourism development policies and programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, based on direction from the Indonesia government that is Tourism and Creative Economy Ministry of Indonesia and also from the international regulation by UNWTO (World Tourism Organization).

## **2 Method**

Qualitative descriptive method was used in this study, which was interpretatively analyzed using appropriate theories or literatures, and then inductively drew conclusions to answer the existing problems. This study relied on both primary and secondary data. Tanah Datar Regency's Government or Department of Culture, Tourism, Youth, and Sports provided data in the form of interviews as the primary data. Meanwhile, the secondary data is in the form of a circular task for the acceleration of handling COVID-19 obtained from the Tanah Datar regency's department of Culture, Tourism, Youth, and Sports, as well as some regulation modules from the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. As well as the rules regarding the COVID-19 pandemic issued by UNWTO (World Tourism Organization).

### 3 Result and Discussion

Many countries in the world nowadays have been considering tourism as one of essential sectors in their economy, and the COVID-19 pandemic's immediate and severe shock to the tourism sector is having an impact on the economy as a whole. Restrictions on travel, company activities, and people-to-people connections have brought the tourism economy to a standstill as governments around the world take unprecedented measures to contain the virus. Many countries are now entering a new period in their war against the virus, as well as planning the reopening of their tourism economies.

Tanah Datar's tourism sector is a priority program, with over 100 existing tourism sites, including Singkarak Lake, Istano Basa Pagaruyuang, Puncak Pato, Aua Sarumpun, Batu Batikam, Lembah Anai Waterfall, and the most beautiful village, Pariangan. However, due to limited local budgets, they are still not properly managed. As a result, we must work together to advance tourism objectives. Currently, in the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus must not only be on the number of visitors, but also on the quality and local culture as an attraction, and this must be a concept for service tourism in West Sumatra. There has been a significant decline in the number of tourists, both local and international, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Not only are international tourists, who are usually dominated by Malaysian tourists, declining, but so are domestic tourists, who are typically from Riau, Jambi, and Java Island. The number of international tourists has dropped by nearly 100 percent. Meanwhile, tourism revenue has decreased by 80 percent. According to Mr. Afrison from the Tanah Datar the Tourism Department, this policy for evolving tourist attraction destinations has not provided directions and a more comprehensive review of the improvement of attractions specifically for existing tourist objects during the pandemic, our efforts to go along with that compared to the tourism conditions prior to the pandemic. We always talk about the number of tourists (quantity), but during the pandemic, it is the quality of tourism that matters, so how do we increase spending and the length of stay of tourists?

Assaf and Scuderi [3] mention some of the activities that the government should ideally take to reestablish the tourism industry during a pandemic as follows: (1) giving financial assistance to tourism businesses in the form of interest-free loans, loan repayment deferrals, and subsidies; and (2) enabling local governments to develop rules and regulations based on regional needs; (3) preventing predatory shareholders from posing a threat to business owners; (4) assisting in the expenditure of funds to promote tourism destinations Giving local travelers flight discounts, for example, can help boost demand for diverse tourism locations; (5) lowering the tax burden for travelers during the pandemic; and (6) assisting in the expenditure of funds to promote tourism destinations Giving local travelers flight discounts, for example, can help boost demand for diverse tourism locations. All of these measures should be implemented by the Tanah Datar Regency government.

Government capacity is crucial for recovering local and national economy after a pandemic. Increased unemployment and the potential of bankruptcy for a range of businesses are among the pandemic's implications, which must be addressed by government initiatives. There are several programs to stimulate the economy to save a country's economy, some for a short period of time and some for a long period of time. The introduction of this economic stimulus package serves as a "safety valve", preventing more layoffs while ensuring sufficient money or funds to continue production and operations. These economic stimulus measures can greatly help local and national economies get back on track within a certain period of time.

The Indonesian government did not make a strict lockdown policy that includes Tanah Datar Regency as well. This is because the impact of the policy for lockdown will have an

impact on a larger workforce and on the economy for sure. Moreover, the majority of workers in Indonesia are in the informal sector. Indonesia has prepared Rp 1 trillion in funds to assist the industry in recovering from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. An urgent need plan before any additional new cases or catastrophic cases that occur in the economy. This is highly prioritized to reduce the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in a more effective way. Local governments should also create additional policies to stand on top of their own national mitigation plans.

The government also implemented the same policy in an effort to reduce taxes in the tourism industry. For tourism actors, Indonesia has a policy for tax relaxation. Tourism industry participants are exempt from paying taxes for a set period of time as a result of the tax relaxation. This policy is thought to be effective because it can keep the economy stable. Despite a significant decrease in tax revenue, the government has been able to save business that employ a lot of people. The number of jobs that can be saved in the tourism industry is enormous. In Indonesia, the tourism industry employs 408.6 thousand people. According to Munandar [4], the government's tax relaxation policy during the pandemic is considered effective to maintain stability in economic. However, the policy of tax cuts must be accompanied by lower interest rates as well. Indonesia Bank (BI) and the Financial Services Authority (OJK) can help the industry by lowering interest rates. The financial burden of tourism industry players will be reduced as a result of this effort.

According to Mr. Afrison from the Tanah Datar's Tourism Department, Foreign tourists are not subject to rigorous limitations imposed by the Indonesian government; this law is also implemented by the Tanah Datar regency authority. It is required by the central and regional governments for tourists from other countries only do a swab test. If the results are negative, tourists will be allowed to enter Indonesia. And if it turns out that the swab test result is positive, international visitors must undergo self-quarantine at their own expense.

By implementing social distancing, adhering to the COVID-19 health protocol, and limiting maximum capacity (crowd control) with technology, such as using digital tickets at every destination entrance to prevent virus transmission, Tanah Datar's government should take some actions and encourage stakeholders to get involved in accelerating infrastructure development for tourism. Furthermore, because the tourism sector focuses solely on local or domestic visitors, the government must foster public trust and ensure that local visitors adhere to health norms without fear of compulsion or intimidation. During the recovery stage, the government must work with a number of stakeholders to adjust to new normal conditions. These actions are a result of UNWTO (World Tourism Organization) and Indonesian Ministry of Tourism guidelines and recommendations.

Development needs to be well prepared and mature in a policy, to support the tourism sector. In carrying out its functions and benefits in tourism development, local governments in Tanah Datar Regency must make efforts to development of facilities and infrastructure during the outbreak and after the COVID-19 hit Indonesia that have made a big disaster on the tourism field. Facility and infrastructure are the important thing that can support tourism business industrial development by making the satisfaction of tourists.

## **4 Conclusion**

Several measures, including economic stimulus, health protocol implementation, and self-quarantine, and describe the government's performance on the tourism field and industries

during and after the pandemic. People are going to prioritize changing their habits, such as avoiding handshakes when meeting other people, keep wearing masks, and realize the importance of vaccination for many people to prevent the spread dangerous diseases other than COVID-19; Naturally, this is a shift in the medical industry. The tourism sector's recovery approach did not entirely guarantee can control of virus transmission during the pandemic. Although there are restrictions requiring foreign tourists to have negative PCR test results, the majority of other places rely on health protocols.

The role of the government in its policies and regulations to control and resolve the unpredictable condition is very important during and after this pandemic. The government must also be able to mitigate the negative impacts that happened as an impact of the spread of the COVID-19 virus outbreak with various steps that are considered efficient, effective and maximal. For additional, to overcome this multifaceted health crisis, the government must act very quickly and appropriately. The conclusion that can be drawn is that tourism development in Tanah Datar Regency during the pandemic has not been carried out optimally, and is not prioritized. this can be seen clearly from the condition of some existing tourist objects. Government policies in tourism development still focus on health protocols and have not discussed the development of tourist objects more specifically so that in practice there has been no significant development of the tourism sector in Tanah Datar Regency during the pandemic. Likewise, the policies and regulations that are set and adopted for tourism in the regions are only by adopting, applying and implementing the rules that have been handed down from the central government, namely Tourism and Creative Economy Ministry of the Republic of Indonesia. The Tanah Datar government does not have specific rules and policies regarding local government policies that are made independently regarding tourism development during the pandemic.

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