Tourism Development as a Form of Local Community Empowerment

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Abstract. Bima City, Indonesia, possesses significant tourism potential through its natural beauty and cultural heritage. However, low tourist visitation hinders its growth due to ineffective development programs, limited community involvement, inadequate infrastructure, and suboptimal promotion. This qualitative study, employing descriptive research methods, investigates tourism development as a means of community empowerment in Bima City. Data was collected through interviews with 15 informants, including the mayor, legislators, tourism officials, community members, and tourism actors, as well as through analysis of policy documents and official reports. Findings reveal that community involvement in all stages of tourism development is crucial for strengthening cultural identity and economic growth. Skill enhancement for local businesses, particularly MSMEs, is vital for economic advancement. Developing cultural tourism strategically preserves heritage while generating economic benefits. Active social media promotion and improved tourism infrastructure are essential for attracting more tourists to Bima City.

Keywords: Community empowerment, tourism development

1. Introduction

The city of Bima, which is located on the island of Sumbawa, West Nusa Tenggara, has abundant tourism potential. According to [1] Bima City has natural beauty and rich culture, making it an area that has the potential to be developed as a tourist destination. However, tourism conditions in Bima have not fully developed according to the existing potential. Various efforts have been made to increase tourism in Bima, including cultural festivals and infrastructure development. However, as noted by [2] "Even though there are development programs, the level of tourist visits to Bima is still low when compared to other regions in Indonesia." This shows that existing efforts have not provided satisfactory results.

The low effectiveness of tourism development programs is one of the main factors hindering the progress of this sector. According to [2], many programs designed by local governments are not implemented well, resulting in minimal positive impacts on tourism development. This requires an in-depth analysis of the implementation of existing programs. The involvement of local communities in tourism development is often ignored. Based on research by [3], without active participation from the community, tourism development programs will be difficult to be sustainable and relevant. Therefore, understanding the challenges faced in engaging communities is critical to the progress of the sector.

Infrastructure problems are also a significant obstacle in developing tourism in Bima. According to [4], Supporting facilities such as accommodation and transportation are still inadequate, which has an impact on tourist comfort. This clearly hinders tourists' interest in visiting Bima City. Promotion that is less aggressive is also a problem. As stated by [5], information about Bima's tourism potential has not been widely spread, and unattractive marketing strategies mean

that many people do not know about the attractions of this city. Therefore, better marketing strategies are needed to attract tourists.

The social and cultural conditions of the Bima community also influence tourism development. Research by [6] shows that the community's lack of understanding about the value of tourism often hinders their participation in development programs. This shows the need for better education about the importance of tourism to communities. This research aims to analyze the conditions of tourism in Bima City with a focus on the effectiveness of the programs being implemented. According to [7], understanding the challenges and opportunities in tourism is very important for formulating effective development strategies. With this approach, it is hoped that the right solution can be found.

Tourism development not only aims to improve the economy through increasing tourist visits, but also as an important tool in community empowerment. Community-based tourism (CBT) has been recognized as an approach that can improve the welfare of local communities by involving them directly in tourism activities. According to [8], CBT offers communities the opportunity to participate in local resource management and obtain direct economic benefits from tourism activities. This approach is not only economically oriented, but also encourages active community participation in preserving and managing the local cultural heritage and environment.

In the context of empowerment, tourism development allows local communities to become main actors, not just passive recipients of economic benefits. The community can be involved in various sectors, from providing accommodation, food, to managing tourist attractions. As stated by [9], empowering communities through tourism means giving them control and responsibility for the development process, as well as strengthening their position in decision making. In this way, communities not only receive positive economic impacts, but also have control in preserving and exploiting their local potential.

Community empowerment-based tourism development also has a significant social impact. By getting involved in tourism activities, people can improve their skills and knowledge, both in tourism management and local resource management. As stated by [10], community empowerment through tourism increases local capacity in terms of technical and managerial skills, which can have long-term positive impacts on the economy and social structure of communities. This knowledge will help them to become more independent and economically sustainable.

Not only that, tourism based on community empowerment also contributes to environmental and cultural preservation. By promoting the concept of sustainable tourism, communities will be encouraged to better maintain and protect their natural and cultural heritage. According to [11], community participation in tourism makes them more concerned about environmental conservation and cultural heritage, because they experience direct benefits from preserving these resources. This preservation not only supports the sustainability of tourism, but also improves the quality of life of the community through a healthier and more sustainable environment. Tourism development that focuses on community empowerment has broad long-term benefits, both in economic, social and environmental aspects. Tourism developed with active community participation can create economic equality, maintain cultural and environmental sustainability, and increase local capacity. This is as concluded by [12], tourism development aimed at community empowerment is the key to creating equitable and sustainable development, because it strengthens local communities and maintains control over their resources. Thus, this approach is an important solution in facing the challenges of globalization and economic inequality.

The role of local communities in tourism development is also an important focus. According to Sutrisno et al., (2024), community involvement is very crucial for creating sustainable and attractive tourism products. This research will explore ways to increase community participation in the tourism sector. It is hoped that the research results can provide recommendations for local governments and tourism industry players. According to [12], constructive recommendations can help increase the effectiveness of tourism development programs and encourage growth in the sector. This is important for the future of tourism in Bima City. [13] explained that Bima could

become an attractive tourist destination and provide economic benefits for the community, as well as preserving its culture and nature. This research will explain tourism development as an effort to empower the community in Bima City.

2. Literature Review

A. Community Empowerment

Community empowerment is a systematic effort that aims to increase the independence and bargaining position of the community through utilizing its potential. According to [8] empowerment is a process of social, economic and political change carried out in a participatory manner, where the community plays an active role in solving the problems they face. This process prioritizes community power as the main capital and tries to avoid external intervention that could weaken independence. This concept emphasizes the importance of society learning and developing together so that a more independent and prosperous life can be achieved in a sustainable manner.

[11] added that community empowerment involves three main stages, namely enabling, empowering, and protecting. Enabling is the process of creating an atmosphere conducive to developing people's potential, where awareness and motivation are important aspects. Empowering means increasing community capacity by providing access to various opportunities and resources that support them to be independent. Protecting, on the other hand, is an effort to protect vulnerable groups of society from exploitation and unequal competition with stronger groups. These three steps play an important role in building community resilience and competitiveness.

The principle of empowerment according to [9] is also very essential in its implementation. Empowerment not only involves people in the learning process by doing, but also provides real positive impacts. Through the principle of doing, people experience a more effective long-term learning process. The principle of consequences emphasizes that empowerment activities must provide real results, so that they can inspire community enthusiasm to continue to be involved. The principle of association underlines the importance of linking empowerment activities with daily activities, so that people more easily connect lessons with real life.

The aim of community empowerment, according to [12] covers various aspects of life, starting from improving institutions, business, education, income, the environment, to the quality of life of society as a whole. Institutional and business improvements are expected to trigger increased income and ultimately improve physical and social environmental conditions. Thus, community empowerment not only impacts individuals but also creates positive changes in society at large. The ultimate goal of this empowerment is to achieve a better and more sustainable life for the entire community.

Community empowerment strategies, as explained by [13] includes various approaches, ranging from taking sides with the community, granting autonomy, to modernizing the socio-economic structure through active community participation. The generation of empowerment strategies includes various stages, from meeting basic needs to building sustainable systems, as well as organizing community movements to achieve broader change. Apart from that, the importance of training and advocacy for poor communities is also emphasized to increase their awareness, skills and abilities in managing existing resources and social networks. This strategy shows that community empowerment is a complex but essential process for building independence and sustainable prosperity.

B. Tourism Development

Tourism is a phenomenon that develops in response to the human need to travel, whether for recreational, educational, health or religious purposes. The term tourism first appeared in the 18th century, especially after the Industrial Revolution in England. [4] explains that tourism is a temporary change in a person's place of residence outside their place of origin for purposes other than earning income. In addition, tourism includes activities and services produced by the tourism industry that are able to create experiences for tourists [14]. In this sense, tourism is not only limited to travel for pleasure, but also includes activities such as research, sports and conventions.

Law Number 10 of 2009 defines tourism as a series of tourist activities supported by facilities and services provided by various parties, including the community, government and the private sector. Tourism is considered a basic human need that can fulfill various needs, such as education, health, culture and commercialization. Tourism can also be carried out individually or collectively, either by families, groups or organizations. There are various types of tourism, from cultural tourism to maritime tourism, which reflects the diversity of tourist destinations and tourists' interest in exploring various aspects of human life [15].

Different types of tourism have different characteristics. Cultural tourism, for example, offers experiences to deepen understanding of local community life, including habits, customs and art. Meanwhile, health tourism and sports tourism provide opportunities for tourists to improve their physical and spiritual health. Apart from that, there is also commercial tourism, political tourism, and industrial tourism which focuses more on specific purposes, such as attending trade fairs or international conferences [2]. This tour shows how tourism can function in a variety of contexts and fulfill a variety of purposes.

Tourism policy in Indonesia is directed at improving the quality of the nation's culture and introducing historical heritage and natural beauty. Amrin et al., (2022) explain that tourism policy includes regulations, guidelines and strategies that influence tourism development in the long term. The government plays an important role in coordinating various aspects related to tourism, from planning to management of tourist destinations. Apart from that, tourism policies must also consider the social and economic impacts resulting from tourism activities on local communities.

In the development of tourism in Indonesia, Law Number 10 of 2009 is the main reference in organizing tourism. This law emphasizes the importance of responsible tourism management, including preserving the environment and local culture. Tourism development must be carried out by taking into account the tourism development master plan that applies at the national, provincial and district/city levels. This policy aims to support economic growth, reduce poverty, and strengthen friendship between nations [16]. Thus, tourism in Indonesia is not only seen as an economic activity, but also as a means to strengthen cultural unity and awareness.

3. Methods

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach which aims to evaluate tourism development policies for community empowerment in Bima City. The focus of this research uses James McDavid's Logic Model to evaluate tourism development policies in Bima City, taking into account program input, supporting activities, results achieved, and the program's impact on community welfare. This research also evaluates the effectiveness, efficiency, and supporting and inhibiting factors of tourism development programs. Data collected through interviews, observation and documentation, using triangulation as a data validity testing technique. Research informants consisted of various parties involved in tourism development, including government officials, business actors and local communities [8]. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants such as the Mayor, members of the DPRD, and the Head of the Tourism Service, as well as the community and tourism actors in Bima City. In addition, secondary data was collected from policy documents, official reports and relevant previous studies. The data analysis

technique used follows the steps outlined by [17], which include data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions by organizing data into relevant categories and themes.

4. Result and Discussion

Tourism in Indonesia, especially in Bima City, has great potential to improve the local economy. Through sustainable tourism development, empowerment of local communities can be achieved, improving quality of life and creating economic opportunities. By paying attention to community involvement in every stage of development, tourism can be a means of strengthening local cultural and economic identity. The city of Bima is rich in cultural heritage and natural beauty. Tourist destinations such as Luta Beach, historical tourist attractions, and cultural festivals provide opportunities for people to get involved in the tourism industry. According to [18], increasing the skills of business actors is one of the key factors in advancing the economy, especially in the MSME sector. By developing this potential, Bima City can attract more tourists and increase people's income.

Empowerment of local communities can be done through training and education in accordance with the needs of the tourism industry. The training program organized by the Bima City Tourism Office aims to improve the managerial and operational skills of local business actors. Developing these skills is critical to ensuring that communities can compete in the ever-growing tourism industry. Evaluation of skills development programs is important to ensure the expected goals are achieved. Community involvement in evaluation is also important so that they feel ownership of the program. Evaluation can be carried out while the program is running or after the program is implemented [19]. This will help in improving and developing existing programs.

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) also plays an important role in improving the skills of business actors. Research by [1] shows that ICT adoption can increase operational efficiency and market access for MSMEs. People who master technology will be more adaptive to market changes, so they can create new business opportunities. MSMEs in Bima City have an important role in supporting tourism development. Typical products, such as Bima songket weaving, can be a special attraction for tourists. The Tourism Department continues to strive to support the development of these MSMEs so that they are able to contribute more to the tourism sector.

The development of cultural tourism is a strategic step to introduce the rich culture of Bima City. According to [20] preserving cultural heritage can provide economic and social benefits for local communities. By involving the community in the development and management of cultural tourism destinations, they can experience direct benefits from tourism. Active community participation in the development of cultural tourism will increase their sense of ownership and responsibility for their cultural heritage. [21] stated, "The involvement of local communities in the management of cultural tourism destinations can provide direct economic benefits." Activities such as cultural festivals can also be a means of attracting tourists and promoting local culture.

Effective promotion is the key to increasing the number of tourist visits to Bima City. The right marketing strategy through social media and tourism campaigns can increase awareness of the uniqueness and attractiveness of Bima City. Research by [13], [22] supports this, showing that active promotions can contribute to increasing the number of visits. The availability of good infrastructure, including transportation and public facilities, is very important to support tourism development. The development of adequate transportation infrastructure can increase the accessibility of Bima City, so that more tourists are interested in visiting. The construction of roads and public transportation must be a priority in the tourism development strategy.

Sustainable tourism development must pay attention to environmental aspects. Integration of policies that consider environmental sustainability can produce more sustainable economic growth.

[23] shows that economic growth integrated with environmental conservation practices can increase people's productivity and quality of life. Tourism development cannot be separated from challenges, such as climate change, social impacts and economic uncertainty. Therefore, it is important to have clear mitigation strategies to overcome these challenges. Increasing awareness and training for local communities will help them better face these challenges.

The government's role is very important in supporting tourism development. Policies that support community empowerment and infrastructure development must be implemented. According to [24], pro-people policies can create a conducive environment for the growth of the tourism industry. Regulatory support and funding from the government will really help local communities. Creating unique and attractive tourism products is very important to attract tourist interest. Developing products based on local culture, such as handicrafts and typical culinary delights, can be a special attraction. This will help increase added value for regional tourism. Monitoring and evaluation of tourism development programs must be carried out periodically. This is to ensure that the program is implemented in accordance with the expected objectives. A good evaluation will help in identifying problems and finding appropriate solutions.

Improving the skills of business actors is the main goal in tourism development policy programs. This program aims to empower the community through improving skills facilitated by the government, as stated by [18], [25] that entrepreneurship training has a positive impact on the managerial and operational abilities of business actors. Program evaluation is essential to ensure goal achievement. According to the explanation in this research, evaluation is carried out both during program implementation and after completion. Program objectives must be in line with expected results, which is a fundamental evaluation principle in program development. Increasing the skills of business actors contributes significantly to the economy, especially in the MSME sector. As stated in the literature, training and education are the main foundations for improving the skills of business actors. The Bima City Tourism Office has an important role in supporting tourism businesses. With large tourism potential, developing the tourism potential of MSMEs is important to increase the income of local communities, which is the main focus of the Tourism Department's programs. The adoption of information and communication technology (ICT) also greatly influences the skills of business actors. [26] found that the use of ICT can improve operational efficiency and market access for MSMEs, which strengthens their ability to adapt to the market.

Social networks enable businesses to access information and resources. According to [27] interaction with other business actors and mentors can provide valuable insight, which is very important for collaboration and business development. People involved in tourism must be equipped with adequate skills. Research shows that improving the skills of tourism actors can increase professionalism and community income in the tourism industry.

The existence of local products, such as typical food, really supports the tourism sector. As exemplified in various regions, the presence of typical food can increase tourism attractiveness and provide unique experiences for tourists. Tourism actors need to continuously improve their skills. Training that focuses on understanding the industry is very necessary, where increasing skills and expertise will support quality tourism activities. Skills improvement is a process that involves various aspects, including training, technology and social networks. Research shows that a combination of these three aspects can support the sustainable development of MSMEs [24], [28].

Tourism development in Bima City has great potential to empower local communities. Through skills improvement, effective promotion, and supportive government policies, communities can experience direct benefits from the tourism industry. With a sustainable and inclusive approach, tourism can be a major driver of local economic growth while maintaining cultural and environmental preservation. Increasing the skills of business actors is very important for tourism development. As various studies show, through training and education, the use of technology, and social networks, businesses can increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their

businesses. This will have a positive impact on economic growth and service quality in the tourism sector.

5. Conclusion

Tourism in Indonesia, especially in Bima City, has great potential in boosting the local economy through sustainable development. Involving communities in every stage of tourism development can strengthen their cultural and economic identity. Various tourist destinations, such as Luta Beach and cultural festivals, provide opportunities for local communities to get involved in the tourism industry. Increasing the skills of business actors is the key to advancing the local economy, especially through the MSME sector. By developing this tourism potential, it is hoped that Bima City will be able to attract more tourists and increase people's income. The training program organized by the Bima City Tourism Office aims to improve the managerial and operational skills of local business actors. This training is important so that people can compete in the tourism industry which continues to grow. Evaluation of these programs is also needed to ensure the success of the program and increase its effectiveness. Information and communication technology (ICT) plays an important role in facilitating market access and increasing the operational efficiency of MSMEs. The development of cultural tourism is also a strategic step in preserving local cultural heritage, which also provides economic benefits. Active promotion through social media and the development of good tourism infrastructure can increase the number of tourists visiting Bima City.

Acknowledgment

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