

Recovery of the Tourism Sector after the Covid-19 Pandemic in Merauke Regency

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Abstract. The Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19) pandemic, which has had a significant impact on changing the world, has resulted in the decline of various aspects of life ranging from economic, social, educational, even daily life, including the tourism sector. The tourism sector in Merauke Regency has also been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This study uses a qualitative research type. The limitation of the analysis in this study is focused on governance collaboration carried out in an effort to restore the tourism sector in Merauke Regency after the covid 19 pandemic. The problem of decreased tourist visits is also due to the lack of promotion of tourism potential. Therefore, it is necessary to have a solid collaboration among tourism stakeholders, as well as policies that regulate such collaboration. Collaboration between fellow actors, namely the government, academia, the private sector, the community and the mass media as a unit that complements each other in efforts to recover the tourism sector after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Tourism sector, COVID-19 pandemic, Lack of promotion

1 Introduction

At the beginning of 2020 the world was shocked by the emergence of the Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19) Pandemic which had a significant impact on changing the world. The government through Presidential Regulation Number 12 of 2020 concerning Determination of Non-Natural Disasters has determined the spread of Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19) as a national disaster. Throughout 2020, all government efforts were more focused on preventing the spread of Covid-19, resulting in a decline in various aspects of life ranging from economic, social, educational, even daily life, including the tourism sector. The tourism sector in Merauke Regency is also feeling the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The decline in tourist arrivals in Merauke Regency can be seen from the number of tourist visits in 2020, only 132 foreign tourists visiting Merauke. In contrast to 2019, the number of foreign tourists visiting was 2,744 people, there was a decrease in foreign tourist visits by 95.19 percent or equivalent to 2,612 people. Meanwhile, domestic tourists also experienced a decrease of 76.36 percent or equivalent to 13,900 people [1]

Tourist visits in Merauke Regency, seen from the performance achievement, the decline experienced was due to inappropriate planning, namely a mismatch between programs and activities so that the implementation of tasks and functions was less effective [2].

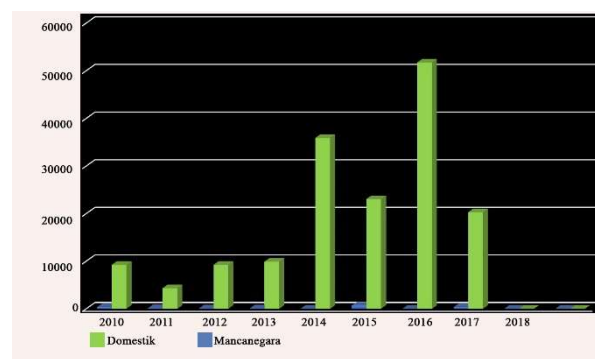


Fig 1. Tourist Visits in Merauke Regency

Source: Merauke in Figures for 2022

The problem of decreased tourist visits is also due to the lack of promotion of tourism potential. Tourism promotion is not only the responsibility of local governments, but also the business world and society. Therefore, it is necessary to have a solid collaboration among tourism stakeholders, as well as policies that regulate such collaboration.

Tourism development always refers to the national tourism master plan, provincial tourism master plan, and district/city tourism master plan. Merauke Regency with the vision of regional tourism development, namely "The realization of Merauke Regency as a competitive, sustainable national tourism destination, based on unique ecosystems and local wisdom, as well as

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encouraging regional development and community welfare", as stated in the Merauke Regency Regional Regulation Number 4 of 2019 concerning the Merauke Regency Tourism Development Master Plan for 2018-2032. The vision of tourism development can be realized if collaborative governance is created which is regulated in a policy, so that the functions and roles of stakeholders can be optimized. "The ratification of Regional Regulation Number 4 concerning the Master Plan for Tourism Development of Merauke Regency in 2018-2032, is also a mandate from Law Number 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism. The Regional Tourism Development Master Plan (RIPPARDA) is expected to provide the right direction in the management of tourism development.

The Regency Tourism Development Area is a tourism destination on a Regency scale and is a geographical area within one or more district administrative areas in which there is a Regency scale tourist attraction (DTWK), General Affiliations, Tourism Facilities, Accessibility and communities that are interrelated and complement the realization of tourism.

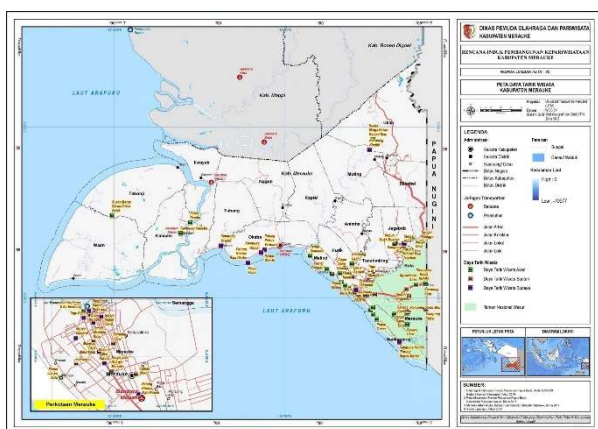


Fig 2. Distribution of Merauke Regency Tourism Development Area

Source: Merauke Regency Tourism Development Master Plan 2018-2032

Merauke Regency with tourist attractions (DTW) that are considered the most potential include (1) Cultural Tourism for historical, religious/spiritual tourism, culinary and tourist villages spread throughout the Merauke Regency district; (2) Nature tourism for ecotourism, marine tourism and adventure tourism in Sota, Merauke, and Kimaam Districts and (3) Man-made Tourism will develop cross-border tourism events/attractions in Sota and Semangga Districts. The tourism potential in Merauke Regency, which is growing so rapidly from year to year, requires a policy set that regulates collaborative governance for the development of tourism potential. Collaborative Governance for the development of tourism potential in Merauke Regency is the right strategy to provide space for multi-stakeholder roles in the context of tourism recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic.

2 Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative research type. Qualitative types of approaches are methods for exploring and understanding meaning, which some individuals or groups ascribe to social or humanitarian problems (Creswell 2016:4). A qualitative type of approach strategy is used to answer the phenomenon (Y. S. Lincoln and E. G. Guba 1985). The limitation of the analysis in this study is focused on governance collaboration carried out in an effort to restore the tourism sector in Merauke Regency after the COVID-19 pandemic. Data collection was carried out by observation, in-depth interviews and documentation studies. This study uses analytical methods, generally including qualitative descriptive analysis using analysis from Miles and Huberman in the form of interactive analysis, where the existing data is analyzed together, namely reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing/verification [3].

3 Result and Discussion

Based on "Law Number 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism is an integral part of national development which is carried out in a systematic, planned, integrated, sustainable, and responsible manner while still providing protection for religious values, culture that lives in society, sustainability and environmental quality and national interest."

As tourism is an integral part of national development, collaboration is needed in its management. Collaborative Governance is a government that is managed through the direct involvement of the government or stakeholders outside the country, based on consensus and deliberation in a joint decision-making process that aims to make or implement public policies and public programs [4].

Collaborative governance is defined as an integrated system of managed relationships that transcend formal and informal organizational boundaries, rethinking organizational principles and providing a clear definition of success. Furthermore, collaborative governance is defined by Agrawal and Lemos [5] not only limited to stakeholders consisting of government and non-government but also formed on the existence of "multi-partner governance" which includes the private / private sector, society and civil society and is built on the synergy of stakeholder roles and the preparation of "hybrid" plans such as public-private-social cooperation.

Public-private partnership based on Bovaird is simply a work arrangement based on mutual obligations beyond what is stipulated in contracts between public and non-public sector organizations [6]. Referring to the opinion expressed by Bovaird, it is clearly stated that a partnership involves a form of cooperation that is more than a cooperation contract. The concept of partnership explains that cooperation between the public and private sectors is the cooperation of all parties who have interests beyond what is stated in the contract. National private sector partnerships are different from other forms of cooperation such as employment contracts, privatization, and outsourcing.

The elements of collaboration involved in the recovery of the post-pandemic tourism sector are the government, academia, the private sector/business people, the community or the community, and the mass media or better known as the Pentahelix model. These elements are further elaborated or further detailed as follows:

3.1 Government

The government organization, namely the bureaucracy, is seen as the most responsible administrative agent in policy implementation. One component of backward mapping that supports implementation is the implementing structure [7]. The local government bureaucracies that are expected to be involved in the collaborative model of tourism development in Merauke Regency are the Regional Technical Service or Institution that has a role in tourism, culture and arts affairs; tourism development planning arranged in the Strategic Plan (Renstra); providers of access and infrastructure related to tourism; facilitate industry and trade; facilitate agriculture; facilitate investment and one-stop integrated services; enforcing regulations and controlling the area around the tourist attraction; as well as the service or technical institution that manages the border, considering that several tourist attractions are located in the border area.

Bureaucracy as the main actor in the implementation of public policy, but in the implementation of policy another actor who is also involved is the legislature. The legislature is involved in implementation when it determines various specific regulations, and carries out the roles of legislation, budgeting, and controlling. The tourism sector is always developed as one of the assets to receive local revenue as well as to improve the economy and welfare of local communities. The government is committed to strengthening the resilience of the tourism sector as one of the pillars of post-pandemic recovery.

3.2 Academics

Academics as actors who are often involved in policy, have expertise and are research institutions that play a role in policy implementation. In tourism development, academics in this case universities and research institutions play an important role in shaping a knowledge-based society. The capacity of academics in the study of Halibas, Sibayan & Maata (2017) is to shape society through the provision of the required skilled workforce, so that economic knowledge can develop. In addition, it prepares students to think critically and develop talents and produce knowledge and skills that are innovative, enterprising and entrepreneurial [8].

Innovation is the key word in the involvement of academics, in the dissemination of information as well as the application of technology, entrepreneurship through beneficial collaborations and partnerships between academia, government, business, community and mass media. The involvement of universities in Merauke contributes to the advancement of tourism, as

well as local socio-economics. Such involvement, such as the involvement of lecturers and students in community service which is carried out as a form of practicing the tri dharma of higher education. Information and technological innovation are forms of service that are often carried out by universities such as the development of fishing technology, management of mangrove ecosystems, and other forms of innovation that support local tourism and the role of academics in conducting tourism development studies. In the midst of recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic, academics also play a role in educating the implementation of health protocols in various community activities, as well as raising awareness of public participation in implementing vaccines aimed at maintaining immunity.

3.3 Business

The number of tourist attractions in Merauke is an opportunity for the community to be able to move the regional economy by becoming a businessman/entrepreneur. Business in the tourism sector is quite busy, this is influenced by the role of social media in promoting existing tourist destinations. Thus, providing opportunities for the community to do business in the tourism sector. Business products that can be developed in this case are services provided to consumers, such as: tourism objects as the main product offered; transportation (tour&travel airline ticket providers, vehicle rental/transportation providers); tour guides (business owners can employ people around tourist objects to become tour guides); accommodation or lodging; and culinary businesses, as well as services or products that are tailored to the needs and desires of customers. Post-Pandemic, business people always compete to create comfort for customers by providing supporting facilities for health protocols, such as hand washing facilities as well as a clean and comfortable business environment.

3.4 Community

Another actor who plays a role in tourism is the community. Communities in this study are defined as local communities in the broadest sense, as well as customary law communities as owners of ulayat rights, as well as groups formed such as regional arts councils, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or groups based on interests or hobbies, which aim to explore or promote tourism in the area. The community is one of the stakeholders, has a role in tourism development. The role of the community, starting from planning to implementing tourism development in the region. The concept of Community Based Tourism (CBT) tries to explain the role of the community in tourism, which is placed as the main actor through empowerment, so that the priority of tourism benefits is allocated as much as possible for the welfare of the local community.

3.5 Mass Media

One of the actors in tourism development is the mass media. Mass media as a means of policy socialization and communication, as well as a link between government and society [9]. The mass media in today's modern society continues to experience rapid development. Initially, we only knew that mass media was divided between print media such as newspapers, magazines and other print media, as well as electronic media in the form of television and radio broadcasts. Meanwhile, nowadays, along with the development of technology and the internet, new media have emerged, namely social media such as; Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and more. A medium that is able to combine/integrate/converge all media characteristics from previous forms, while still focusing on the communication process.

The presence of new media that continues to grow is useful for social interactions between humans that are digital, networked and computerized as an effect of sophistication in technology, information and communication [10]. Social interactions that are easily established in communicating for example through the use of social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter and so on, prove that modern communication is not hindered by distance and time. The ability of the mass media to disseminate information without being limited by the dimensions of space and time is utilized in the tourism sector. The region continues to promote tourism objects that can attract the interest of tourism connoisseurs themselves, be it natural tourism, cultural tourism, spiritual tourism and other types of tourism.

Currently, with the ease of accessing social media by anyone, anytime and anywhere, people are starting to leave conventional promotional methods such as through print and electronic media, and switch to the use of social media which is considered effective. This is evidenced by the emergence of accounts that are officially managed by the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), communities, and private property by displaying and recommending tourist destinations that are worth visiting and implementing health protocols after the COVID-19 pandemic.

4 Conclusion

The government in this case the bureaucracy as the most responsible administrative agent in the implementation of tourism policies in the region has a very important role in building collaboration links between other actors, namely academics, the private sector, the community and the mass media as a unit that complements each other in an effort to recovery of the tourism sector after the COVID-19 pandemic.

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