

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES IN THE COMMUNITY OF MORELLA VILLAGE, LEIHITU DISTRICT, CENTRAL MALUKU REGENCY

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Abstract

This study aims to explain and analyze the socio-economic changes of the Morella Country Community in Tourism Development. This research method is carried out with a qualitative approach with the State paradigm of Post-Positivism. informants as many as 22 people. Data collection using in-depth interviews, observations and documentation. The data were analyzed using qualitative analysis techniques. The results showed that tourism development in Morella Country focuses on the economy, job creation, and preservation of culture and natural beauty. However, it is necessary to strengthen policies in the use and preservation of tourism objects in Morella Country to achieve this goal. The positive economic and social impact of tourism is seen in the ability of local people to save and improve their living conditions.

Keywords: *Tourism Development and Socio-economic Change.*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has now become one of the largest economic sectors with the most rapid growth rate and serves as a primary source of income for many countries worldwide. Through foreign exchange earnings, job creation, business opportunities, and infrastructure development, tourism has emerged as a key driver of socio-economic progress for nations. In recent years, tourism has evolved into a globally prominent industry due to its significant role in boosting trade activities and enhancing international communication (Qian et al., 2018). This development has also played a crucial role in shaping post-industrial economies. As a facilitator of economic growth, tourism stimulates the expansion of various sectors, including hospitality, catering, retail, consulting services, cultural and recreational activities, sports and entertainment, as well as construction and

agriculture (Aimagambetov et al., 2017).

The tourism industry has emerged as one of the leading service sectors in the global economy over the past few decades. The economic flow generated by international tourism has become a vital factor for economic growth and international economic relations in many developing countries. For instance, according to the World Tourism Organization, Ambon Island possesses numerous tourism potentials that can serve as attractions for both domestic and international tourists, including beaches and historical sites, along with its rich cultural diversity and traditions that remain captivating. However, many of these attractions remain underdeveloped and poorly maintained, limiting their visibility to tourists. Historical and cultural sites in Maluku, often featured in major events, also present appealing options for visitors, such

as the Baileo Traditional House, Siwa Lima Museum, Old Church, Wappaue Old Mosque, Gong Perdamaian (Peace Gong), Natsepa Beach, Liang Beach, and Negeri Wisata, among others. Additionally, tourists can enjoy Maluku's traditional cuisine and other local culinary delights.

These tourism potentials should be further developed by Negeri Morella, particularly through the Maluku Provincial Tourism and Culture Office as the leading sector, by organizing and enhancing existing tourism sectors. However, in reality, many of these potentials remain underutilized by Negeri Morella, particularly the Tourism and Culture Office, leaving numerous attractions neglected and poorly managed.

RESEARCH METHOD

Based on the research title and data collection, this study was conducted in Negeri Morella, Leihitu District. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach, aiming to describe Tourism Development and Socio-Economic Changes. Data sources were obtained through observation, interviews with informants, and supporting documents. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and literature review. To analyze the data, qualitative data analysis was used, focusing on the quality of the data to address the research problem, which was then elaborated in descriptive language.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tourism development in Negeri Morella, particularly at the Lubang Buaya tourist site, is expected to enhance the local economy. Through preservation efforts by both the government and the community, the

area can develop sustainably. The development of facilities and tourist attractions must be carefully managed to ensure the sustainable use of existing resources.

The study also recorded positive impacts from Negeri Morella's tourism development, including increased income for the local community. Both tourism operators and local vendors experienced improved earnings and better job opportunities. The income generated from the tourist site helps residents meet daily needs, education expenses, and savings. This economic boost has positively influenced the socio-economic conditions of those involved in Negeri Morella's tourism sector.

Increase in Income and Savings: The primary impact of rising income among residents near Negeri Morella's tourist site is improved individual earnings and savings capacity. Interviews with several vendors revealed that their income increased after the establishment of the tourist attraction, allowing them to save for future needs such as children's education and household expenses.

Changes in Social Aspects: From a social perspective, several impacts were observed. In education, increased regional revenue from tourism contributed to financial support for children's schooling in the area. Similar benefits were seen in health and local security. While social life and lifestyle have not changed significantly, the rise in income has positively affected the economy.

Economic Impact: From an economic standpoint, Negeri Morella's tourism has brought significant changes, including shifts

in employment, trade systems, transaction locations, spending patterns, income, and consumption habits. Locals now have opportunities to open businesses near the tourist site, increasing their earnings. Well-planned tourism development can maximize economic benefits for both the community and local government.

Changes in Social Structure: The presence of Negeri Morella's tourist site has altered the local social structure, providing opportunities for small businesses and services catering to tourists, such as motorcycle taxis (ojek) or selling tourist necessities. Increased income has also fostered greater creativity in seeking business opportunities.

Improvement in Social Relations: The tourist site has positively influenced social interactions among locals, fostering cooperation in running small businesses around the area. The attraction has opened new opportunities for residents to enhance their daily income.

Rise in Community Income: The study found that the tourist site in Negeri Morella has overall increased residents' income. Vendors and tourism operators reported higher earnings, enabling them to save and improve their quality of life. Testimonies from vendors like Mr. Husen Lauselang and Mrs. Masita Selang confirmed that their income grew, allowing them to save for their children's education and household needs.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion on Tourism Development and Socio-Economic Changes in Negeri Morella, Leihitu District, Central Maluku Regency, it can be concluded that: The

socio-economic changes in Negeri Morella due to tourism development align with the community-based tourism (CBT) approach in Indonesia, as regulated by the Tourism Law, which aims to maximize positive impacts and minimize negative effects of tourism growth..

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