

## The Analysis of the Potential of Sports Tourism in Simalungun Regency

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### Abstract

Sports tourism is all kind of active and passive activities in sports or participation on informal and organized non-commercial activities and requires people to leave home or workplace. This current study aims at (1) determining the condition and status of sports tourism in Simalungun Regency; (2) analyzing the mapping of sports tourism in Simalungun Regency; and (3) analyzing the obstacles encountered in developing sports tourism in Simalungun Regency. This study applied a qualitative approach as its method. Data were collected through observation, interview, and documentation. To ensure data validity, the triangulation technique was applied then the data were analyzed by using interactive model analysis. The results of this study revealed that (1) there were some sports tourism activities existed in Simalungun, but unfortunately they had not developed yet. (2) Tigaras Village was potential to organize sports tourism event since it has Toba lake, hills, fields, and forests. (3) obstacles encountered by parties involving in tourism activities were varied but were interrelated with tourism development problems in Tigaras.

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## INTRODUCTION

Tourism, according to Indonesian Regulation Number 10 (2009) on Tourism, is various kind of tourism activities which is supported by a variety of facilities and services provided by the community, entrepreneurs, government, and local government. Tourism is multidimensional and multidisciplinary activities related to tourism which emerge as a manifestation of the needs of the individual and the state as well as interactions between tourists and the local community, fellow tourists, the government, local governments, and entrepreneurs.

Sport is considered as a thing that can unite all elements of the nation regardless of ethnicity, race or religion. Sport is also seen as the most effective diplomacy tool used by nations in international relations. In general, people in the world love sports, started from civil citizen to state officials or leaders. There are various sport activities people can engage in, above all, they have one goal that is to create a strong body and a healthy soul (Kurniawan, 2012). Whereas according to Law number 3 (2005) article 1 paragraph 4 it is mentioned that sports are all systematic activities to encourage, foster, and develop physical, spiritual, and social potential.

Toho in Suratmin (2018) opines that sports tourism is all active and passive activities in sports or participate in informal and organized non-commercial activities and must leave home or workplace. So that, this requires an understanding of connections between sports and tourism and a concept that does not separate the notions of sports and tourism as well as the elements which construct sports tourism, so that the concept can easily be understood.

Sports tourism refers to the travel experiences of getting involved in sports activities. Sports tourism cannot be separated from the notion of recreational sports since tourism sports is generally used to attract tourists to come to an area. Recreational sports is a sports activity done by someone in his leisure time to obtain emotional satisfaction, such as fun,

excitement, happiness, and satisfaction (Husdarta, 2010).

Improving the quality of the society is an important indicator to increase human development index in Indonesia. Efforts to improve human quality cannot be taken for granted so that it can bring an impact on national development (Aji, 2013). One of the efforts of improving the life quality of a society is through the exploration of existing natural resources by using the latest technology. This can be done by managing natural resources into tourist attractions. There are many reasons why an area cannot be developed, one of which is the fail in utilizing and developing its potential. This leads to a low status in the social and economic life of a society (Soetomo, 2006). The facilities provided by the government to increase tourism are the provision of quality and adequate human resources, this can be done through education, workshops, and training on tourism awareness (Pardede & Suryawan, 2016).

The development of sports tourism has some benefits. Some of them are it: increases the income of the society; increases employment and business opportunities; increases ownership and control of the local community; and increases government revenue. On the other hand, the negative impact in the form of the rise of the prices for goods is not found (Hermawan, 2016). This economic impact occurs due to the velocity of the money between tourists, business units and labor. The more tourists who visit Tidung Island, the greater the income of the business units (Dritasto & Anggraeni, 2013). Besides, it can also increase the income of people who work around tourism sites. The increase of visitor can also impact the regency revenue from the tourism sector. Tourism development has succeeded in providing new job opportunities to people. This requires the construction of new tourism objects which directly relates to the need for workers. In general, it can be said that there are socio-economic changes in the community around tourism sites (Kurniawan, 2015).

Indonesia has considered the tourism sector as one of the mainstay sectors in adding foreign exchange as evidenced by the increase of

foreign exchange yields obtained from the tourism sector from year to year. In 2014 the tourism sector contributed to the US \$ 10.69 billion or equivalent to Rp 136 trillion, in 2015 the tourism sector created about the US \$ 11.9 billion equivalent to Rp.163 trillion, and in 2016 the tourism sector contributed amounting to 172 trillion. The number keeps increasing in each year (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2016).

The national tourism potential which is used as an object and tourist attraction can be in the form of natural conditions, flora, fauna, national culture and regional culture both in the form of ideas, social life and in the form of objects of human work that need to be preserved in order to strengthen the national identity in realizing the *Wawasan Nusantara* (archipelagic concept) (Government Regulation Number 67 of 1996).

Tourism development should pay attention to the quality of the attractiveness of tourist destinations since research results have proven that the decrease of the quality of tourist attractions, such as the decrease of services and infrastructure, can decrease tourists interest to visit (Wiradipoetra & Brahmanto, 2016). To develop tourism destinations, the government should cooperate with investors and consultants. In addition to investors and consultants involvement, the government must also involve local communities participation as hosts (Natan, 2016).

Tigaras is 1 of 16 villages located in Dolok Pardamean District, Simalungun Regency. To reach Tigaras people can use any type of cars and the condition of the road which connects Tigaras and its surrounding is currently in good condition. Tigaras has a boat dock which is the only crossing alternative in Simalungun Regency to get to Samosir Island so that many visitors come to Tigaras Village for travel or just to use a crossing service so that Tigaras has other advantages compared to other villages. Tigaras village has more natural resources in the tourism sector compared to other villages because Tigaras is located on the edge of Toba whose territory consists of forests, hills, and waters of Toba. At present, the Toba Lake area has been designated

as a *Kawasan Strategis Nasional* (National Strategic Area), a region whose spatial planning is prioritized. The Toba lake region has also been proposed to become a member of the Global Geopark Network (GGN), which was founded in 1998 by UNESCO. However, tourism activities in the Tigaras Village have not yet developed. Based on the results of the interview during initial observations in Tigaras Village, the researchers found community and tourism entrepreneurs said that currently, the number of tourists who visited Tigaras Village keep decreasing year to year. This results in a decline in the income of economic actors in Tigaras Village. Tourism activities as early as 5 years ago are still running. Tourism activities that have been existed since 5 years ago and are still running are speedboats, baths, banana boat, photo spots, duck boats. In general, tourism conditions in Tigaras Village are in a good category. However, there is no development of new spots or attractions that can attract tourists to come for a visit. So, they neglect to come since they do not get a new atmosphere.

The results of the initial interview with 8 tourists as the informants revealed that they had a high interest in sports tourism. The informants said that they wanted to enjoy new sports tourism which hardly found in North Sumatera. They also argued that they were triggered to try unique sports tourism activities. In term of the high cost, the informants opined that it did not matter as long as the quality of the services was satisfying for them.

Also, the preliminary interviews with 8 informants as economic and community actors in the area regarding sports tourism, the researchers found that (1) The society did not know what sports tourism was; (2) The society did not know the positive impact of sport tourism; (3) The society did not know how to develop sports tourism; (4) The society only knew that crowd of people meant economic potential, the merchandise would be sold, and they would get a profit. Those facts reveal that society did not fully understand how to give value to natural resources as the selling power of tourism. Based on the results of interviews about the residents' job and income, the majority of the residents of Tigaras

Village are traders, drivers, fishermen, civil servants, and farmers with the main commodity of agriculture of corn and coffee with an average income of Rp. 2,000,000 per month.

The lack of cooperation between government agencies (the Tourism Office), private entrepreneurs and the community, the absence of community companions in managing nature into a tourist attraction, the lack of counseling from the government on how to see sports tourism opportunities in the region whose impact will improve community welfare, lower the level poverty, and improve health, and the quality of education which in the end can help the district to develop.

Tourism is multidimensional and multidisciplinary activities related to tourism which emerge as a manifestation of the needs of individual and the state as well as interactions between tourists and the local community, fellow tourists, the government, local governments and entrepreneurs (Law Number 10 of 2009 article 1 paragraph 4).

The facts that the researchers found during the observation in Dolok Pardamean District, Simalungun Regency are: (1) Lack of optimization of the use of natural resources for sport tourism; (2) Lack of knowledge of the local people about the potential and positive impacts of the sports industry; (3) Lack of cooperation between the government and the community in the development of sports tourism; (4) The high demand for tourists who want to try sport tourism; (5) The income of the Dolok Pardamean District community is categorized into moderate-income group; (6) sports tourism has not yet developed in Tigaras Village; and (7) The number of tourists decreases every year.

## METHODS

This type of research is analytical research. The method used was qualitative research. In qualitative research, the type of data obtained is in the form of narrative information. The data obtained in this research were in the form of field notes, interview transcripts, written documents, photographs, and videos.

The instruments used in this study were (1) Interview guidelines for interview purposes; (2) Observation guidelines for observation purposes and (3) blank checklists for the documentation. Several supporting media were also used such as smartphones, cameras, and notebooks. All of these research instruments contain focus and research indicators to analyze the potential of sports tourism in Simalungun Regency.

To obtain the data needed about the potential of sports tourism in Simalungun District, it is necessary to develop interview guidelines containing research questions. The techniques used were: (1) Observation; (2) Interview; and (3) Documentation.

The validity of the research data was ensured through triangulation. Triangulation is defined as a data collection technique that combines various existing data collection techniques and data sources. There are four forms of triangulation to maintain data credibility (Meleong, 2004).

The data analysis was done based on interactive analysis model which involved: (1) Data collection (data collection); (2) Data reduction; (3) Data display (data presentation); (4) Conclusion / verifying (Miles and Huberman, 1984 in Sugiyono 2015: 335)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings and discussion in this study refer to the findings of research conducted in Tigaras Village, Dolok Pardamean District, Simalungun Regency, North Sumatra.

The condition of sports tourism in Simalungun Regency. There is a pattern of the relationships that occur from the decrease of interest of tourists in Tigaras. Currently, there is no development of new tourist attraction in the region. The types of attractions existing are baths, speedboats, banana boat, duck boats, tire rental, spot tires, photo spots, and crossing ships. The roads and tourism type conditions are still in good condition. At present, the number of tourists coming to Tigaras Village keeps decreasing. From the interview, it is found that

the decreasing of the number of visitors is caused by the absence of a new type of attraction. So, visitors get bored with the facilities provided. The researchers found that the decrease in the number of visitors is not only due to the boredom, but also the trauma of the KM Sinar Bangun ship accident which claimed many victims.

Based on the explanation of the Head of Research and Development of the Tourism and Culture Office of Simalungun Regency, the Tourism Office was previously located in Raya Subdistrict, the same as other offices. The Tourism Office has now moved to Girsang Sipangan Bolon since Toba Lake has been designated as one of 10 priority tourism destinations in Indonesia. So that all programs implemented by the Tourism Office are focused on Parapat, Girsang Sipangan Bolon and the Tourism Office has not carried out their programs in Tigaras Village yet. Based on the explanation of the Head of Research and Development of the Tourism Office that the Tourism Office has carried out its functions well and is structured, the programs and activities are carried out properly. However, currently, the Tourism Office has not implemented the program in other subdistricts, especially Tigaras. The types of tourism in Tigaras Village are still undeveloped, especially in sports tourism. One of the types of phenomenal tourism exists in Tigaras is a photo spot tour on Mount Simarjarunjung which combines natural beauty with interesting miniatures.

The mapping of sports tourism in Simalungun Regency.

The findings reveal that in addition to Toba Lake, beach, and hills which have already been used for tourism purposes, Tigaras Village also has fields and forests that have not been managed maximally to support the tourism in Tigaras Village. The fields can be used as a camping ground and recreational sports events such as traditional sports, modern sport, and other events that can attract visitors to come. Moreover, the forests can also be utilized for activities such as tracking, outbound, flying fox and many others.

The obstacles in developing sports tourism in Simalungun Regency. From the results of

interviews with several informants in the village of Tigaras, researchers found that there was a pattern of relationships from the decrease in the interest of tourists in Tigaras with the obstacles faced by Tourism Office and the expectations. The first problem deals with the budget. The local government revenue of Simalungun Regency is not large compared to other regencies so that financial problem becomes a major problem for the Tourism Office. Moreover, every program needs financial support. Second, the lack of interesting sport tourism events or activities has led to a decrease in the number of tourists come to the area. And the third, distance and condition of the roads become problems for tourist to come to Tigaras Village.

For the future, the Tourism Office expects every community to be more aware of the environment. It is hoped that people care about their environment by disposing the trash in its place and not throwing family waste in the Lake. The Tourism Office hopes that the government will fully support the programs made by the Tourism Office in terms of budget. Tourism entrepreneurs and the community also hope that the government will further promote Tigaras Village as a reliable tourism village in Simalungun Regency so that tourists want to come to Tigaras Village for a trip. Then, the tourists expect for new tourism activities, so that they can experience something different. They also hope that the government will improve access to Tigaras. Besides, they also request government and tourism entrepreneurs to prioritize the visitors' safety and security. Last but not the least, to shorten the travel time, tourists expect that the highway from Medan can reach Toba Lake and Tigaras.

## CONCLUSION

Based on research results, some conclusions are drawn as follows: (1) The sports tourism in Tigaras Village has not experienced any development for the last 5 years and there is a decrease of tourist interest in using existing sports facilities. (2) The potential of existing natural resources in Tigaras Village has not been

used to its full such as Toba Lake, photo spots, forests and fields which can still be developed for sports tourism. (3) Obstacles and complaints of all parties differ but have an influence on the decrease of visitors and become problems in tourism development.

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