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The Effect of Covid-19 on Sustainable Tourism in Goa Pindul Yogyakarta

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Abstract

This study aims to look at tourism activities in Pindul Cave before the pandemic, during the pandemic and after the pandemic. To examine the impact of tourism activities in terms of natural sustainability. The impact of tourist visits to tourism destination have experienced peak times to overcrowded, what are the consequences of excessive tourism activities on nature conservation? Data obtained from interviews with stakeholders and literacy studies. It is known that there are factions in the management of Pindul Cave. Disputes between stakeholders cause chaos in the management of this tourism destination. So that attention to the sustainability of this tourism destination has become somewhat neglected. The sustainability of nature in Pindul Cave has become somewhat neglected because it still prioritizes economic benefits. The events of the COVID-19 pandemic can be used as a moment for reflection.

Keywords: mass tourism, sustainable tourism, tourism destination

Introduction

This tourism activity in tourism destination (TD) generates a large income for its managers. Due to imbalances in management, it creates a dispute between parties who feel they are entitled to this TD. Colored by conflicts involving land owners, Pokdarwis and Bumdes causing chaos in TD management system (Akbar Farid*, 2022). This causes attention to environmental sustainability to be somewhat neglected.

Tourist visits that exceed capacity have an impact on the environment. The surrounding environment is also experiencing changes and even damage. The large volume of waste generated by visitors, and the economic activities around the TD cause problems for the environment.

Other environmental problems that arise apart from garbage are the conditions of the soil, water, temperature, and humidity in the cave. This can have an impact on the sustainability of the fauna in the cave and the fauna around the area. The stalactites and stalagmites that are there gradually begin to change because the humidity in the

surrounding air decreases.

In 2013 it was found that the condition of the biota, especially the fauna in Pindul Cave, had changed. There is a reduction in the number of cave crickets in Pindul Cave due to reduced humidity in the cave. Cave crickets are very sensitive to temperature. Caused by the number of visitors into the cave makes the temperature in the cave rise. Meanwhile, in terms of cave ornaments, from the observations of the Tourism Conservation Development Agency from the Acintyacunyata Foundation, there has been no weathering that has occurred due to reduced humidity (Qomah, 2013).

These damages do not only occur in Pindul Cave, sometimes occur in other tourist objects that are still unable to implement and take into account future sustainability. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the elements in tourism development. In tourist areas, it is not only beneficial for the economy but also for the environment and human resources.

This phenomenon at TD Pindul Cave lasted until the end of 2019. At the beginning of 2020, tourist visits began to decline and after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, this TD was closed for tourist visits. Based on data (Gunungkidul, 2021) the number of visits in February 2020 decreased by 28.85% compared to the number of visits in February 2019. In addition, compared to January 2020, the number of visits in February 2020 also experienced a significant decrease, which decreased by 30.42 %. And no tourist visits were recorded from April to July. The number of tourists in 2020 was only 34,979, a significant decrease from 136,030 in 2019.

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced the government to issue policies that limit public activities to reduce the spread of the virus. Starting in 2020, various policies limiting community activities such as lock down, Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) to the Enforcement of Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM) which restrict people's movement and affect the flow of human movement. This is very influential on the number of tourist visits to all tourist destinations.

The effect of decreasing the number of tourists was also experienced by TD Gua Pindul. The drastic decline in tourist arrivals in TD was felt by tourism businesses. This decline lasted long enough to cause the community's economy to begin to decline and many people returned to their livelihoods that were originally farmers and many became unemployed.

For almost some time the Pindul cave does not accommodate tourists, there are also some minor changes in its natural conditions. Many biota are re-emerging because the humidity around is more beautiful again. In addition, the volume of waste that is usually generated due to the large number of tourists is starting to decrease.

After the Covid-19 pandemic began to end, many tourists began to travel again. Tourist visits also began to gradually improve. However, the activities are not the same as before the pandemic. This is because tourists are very concerned about safety and health. According to Susanto (2022), the application of sanitation in a tourist attraction is also one of the factors that tourists consider

visiting. Until now, the number of tourist visits to Pindul Cave began to increase with a percentage from 10% to 60%-70% with a tourist quantity of around 100-250 tourists from Monday to Friday and on weekends between 200-500 tourists per day. This was conveyed by the officer that it would be a challenge when tourist visits became normal as before the pandemic.

From previous experience before the outbreak of covid with the number of visits that were over crowded, followed by the occurrence of covid 19, it is natural that the management should rethink the sustainability of this TD. Restructuring needs to be done as a responsibility for environmental sustainability. A study is needed to determine stakeholders that pays attention to environmental aspects so that this TD remains sustainable. This study aims to identify the effect of the covid pandemic on tourism activities and on the Pindul Cave environment. Furthermore, it can be used as a basis for determining policies to improve TD management, so that the benefits can still be felt by the surrounding community without damaging the environment.

Literature Review

The COVID-19 has given the global adventure tourism industry an opportunity to reset. The adventure travel sector has the opportunity for turning its attention away from haphazard development to one that repositions itself as a major partner in contributing to sustainable and mindful travel. (Nepal, 2020). According to Nepal the things to do are 1). Improving and reorienting adventure travel destinations' 2) dramatically improving tourism infrastructure and service provisions, particularly at remotely located destinations. New Zealand appears to have done a very good job in this aspect, for example, there are well-placed tourist information centers and high-quality interpretive signs across the country. Hygiene, sanitation, access to quality health services, and trustworthy health and safety information are going to be critical for adventure tourists, particularly for those who are on extended travel. This matter can be adopted by TD Pindul Cave.

Correa Martínez et al. (2020) reported that the spread of the coronavirus outbreak at the sport ski site in Austria has made the ski season finally terminated (Correa-Martínez, 2020). The effect of global travel restrictions and stay at home behavior on tourism and the projected global change is primarily noted (Gössling, 2020).

Small tourism business entrepreneurs (STBEs) are important stakeholders in rural destinations, so that their community citizenship behavior for the environment (CCBE) greatly influences the sustainable development of rural tourism communities (Mao-Ying Wu, 2022). They examines the impact of perceived justice on CCBE and the mediating roles of place identity and subjective well-being in that process. Results indicate that perceived justice positively relates to place identity and subjective well-being. Furthermore, place identity and subjective well-being fully mediate the effect of perceived justice on CCBE. It is offer a newer

understanding of the underlying mechanism between perceived justice and CCBE and offer implications for destination managers to promote sustainable development of rural destinations.

Research Methodology

Qualitative method is used to examine more deeply the object under study and is inductive. Qualitative is research that uses methods, steps, and procedures that involve more data and information obtained through respondents as subjects who can pour out their own answers and feelings to get a holistic general picture of the thing being studied (John W. Creswell, 2019).

Interviews and observations were conducted to collect data in this study. Interviews were conducted with the manager of the Goa Pindul TD. The resource persons are representatives of TD Gua Pindul. The interview was conducted on August 30, 2022. A list of interview questions was compiled to ascertain how the condition of the Goa TD was before covid, during covid, and after the pandemic passed.

Observations were made by looking at the condition of Pindul Cave. Observed the changes that occurred after the gradual recovery of tourism activities. Observations are carried out online from the media which is managed directly by BUMDes (Badan Usaha Milik Desa) and from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS).

Literature studies were also conducted to strengthen the data from observations and interviews. Articles in journals related to the topic of discussion in this study are used as references to complete the data obtained.

Results and Discussions

There has been a discourse to make TD Pindul Cave a special interest tourist destination. But so far it still can't be done. Head of the Gunungkidul Culture and Tourism Office, Saryanto, said it took extra hard work to make Pindul Cave a special interest tourism. Currently, management is still concerned with the business aspect alone, where environmental sustainability and conservation around the object have not been considered. It is undeniable that careless management can have an impact on the existence of these objects. Evidence that management is still concerned with the business side can be seen that there is no restriction on the number of visitors who enter (Kurniawan, 2016).

Pindul Cave is currently still categorized as mass tourism-based tourism because there is no restriction on the number of tourist visits implemented in this TD. Managers and the surrounding community still use this tour as a business that can provide economic benefits or livelihoods without prioritizing the existing environmental conditions. The awareness of the local community about the existing waste is also still very low. Every tourist who wants to visit is always welcome without being limited. This is what causes overcrowding. Tourists cannot move and are always queuing

up to do river cycling activities in this pindul cave.

The number of tourists who exceed the existing capacity resulted in a decrease in the original biota of the existing cave. This is because the temperature in the cave area increases. However, this can still be overcome by the manager to maintain the beauty of the cave. However, it is possible that if the number of tourist visits cannot be limited, it is not only biota that decreases but the cave ornaments which are a tourist attraction will experience weathering caused by damage to the humidity of the surrounding air.

Natural damage is a threat to TD Pindul Cave because Pindul Cave is a nature-based attraction. Therefore, management must also consider from an environmental perspective. Not only from an economic point of view. In addition to the environment, this riverside activity also affects health. This is because the flow of the river that comes from the springs of the cave river itself is water that is used by the community for bathing. If tourist visits are always dense, river water will become polluted and unhealthy for daily needs.

Tourist visits always increase and are never deserted, especially during the holiday season or weekend, each day can accommodate around hundreds or even thousands recorded at several operators around the TD, but the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in decreased tourist visits. The following information is obtained through the Gunung Kidul BPS website.

Table 1: Number of Visitors to Bejiharjo Post Tourism Object
[Source : (BPS Gunung Kidul, 2022)]

Month	Year		
	2018	2019	2020
January	12 224	9 094	12 448
February	6 825	6 649	6 482
March	6 100	8 140	3 604
April	11 887	16 243	-
Mei	7 551	5 069	-
June	15 040	16 996	-
July	13 108	18 804	-
August	6 980	7 189	2 048
September	6 050	7 542	1 732
October	6 054	7 817	2 721
November	6 513	9 076	2 721
December	16 129	23 411	3 223
Total	114 461	136 030	34 979

The table above shows that the change in the number of tourist visits was very heavy in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Starting in February there was a decline, until April to June there was no recorded number of visits. This is due to Covid-19. However, in the following month, there were records of tourist arrivals coming. This is because Pindul Cave is one of the

destinations that was opened for experiments during a pandemic by minimizing management and severely limiting the number of visits.

With restrictions and government policies, local communities who depend on their daily livelihoods with tourism activities such as tour guides, tour operators, and service providers around these tours are greatly affected. Many tourism workers are looking for new jobs and many also become unemployed and return to their previous professions as farmers. The management of the Pindul cave TD suffered huge losses due to the loss of their main livelihood. However, in the presence of this environment that was originally started to be overexploited there is little recovery. The volume of scattered garbage is becoming less and less biota such as crickets are now starting to appear, and fish in the river are starting to be found because of the absence of excessive tourist visits.

The management of this TD actually already has awareness about the capacity of tourists and has been planned as a special interest tour for tourists. However, the local community's economy is still very dependent on this activity. So the discourse to make this TD a special interest tour has not been implemented. But the management already has an awareness of the impact that will occur if exploitation is carried out continuously and will become a threat in the future. To reduce the negative impacts that will arise, the TD manager opens the dam so that the river flow will continue to flow smoothly and the humidity in the cave will be maintained.

The COVID-19 has given the global adventure tourism industry an opportunity to reset. The adventure travel sector has the opportunity for turning its attention away from haphazard development to one that repositions (Nepal, 2020). The moment of the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic should be used as a turning point to evaluate this TD management. Stakeholders must immediately evaluate the management that has been carried out so far. Unhealthy management such as disputes between stakeholders, competition between operators, price wars makes the management of this TD become chaotic. The sustainability of nature in Pindul Cave has become somewhat neglected because it still prioritizes economic benefits.

Conclusions

There has been a discourse to make TD GP a special interest tourist destination. But so far it still can't be done. Currently, management is still concerned with the business aspect, where environmental sustainability and conservation around the object have not been considered. It is undeniable that careless management can have an impact on the existence of these objects. Natural damage is a threat to TD Pindul Cave because Pindul Cave is a nature-based attraction. From economy perspective, the management of TD suffered huge losses due to the loss of their main livelihood. However, in the presence of this environment that was originally started to be overexploited there is little recovery. The volume of scattered garbage is becoming less and less biota such as

crickets are now starting to appear, and fish in the river are starting to be found. The COVID-19 has given the global adventure tourism industry an opportunity to reset. As well as Gua Pindul. They should take this opportunity to reset

How to manage Pindul Cave for tourism business by paying attention to environmental aspects other than economic aspects

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