CHALLENGES FOR TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN WEST-SUMATRA PROVINCE OF INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

The synergy between central and local governments, between the governments and the business community, or among adjacent regions are crucial to increasing the potential for regionally based tourism development. One of the primary keys for developing decent tourism industry is fulfilling the convenience of visitors (tourists), which may be achieved with friendly culture and societies, and reliable infrastructures between tourist destinations. West Sumatra Province has been known for rich cultures and beautiful landscapes. However, those does not help to attract tourists and the province has not yet become one of main tourist destination in Indonesia. Furthermore, there is a decline in tourists arrival in West-Sumatra, by 13.2% in 2015. It indicates that there are obstacles and challenges in the tourism industry in West Sumatra Province. To support the industry, this study has an aim to determine the capacity of infrastructures for tourism in West Sumatra. Several discussions with local governments officials had been conducted in this research, together with distributions of questionnaire survey and focus group discussion. The study portrayed the current condition of the infrastructures that may be served as a benchmark for future tourism development in the province. This study shows that many areas on infrastructure that are in need to be improved, so that tourism industry become lead sector in West Sumatra province.

Key words: Capacity, Infrastructure, Tourism, West Sumatra, Assessment

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1. BACKGROUND

Despite slow growth of national and global economies, the increasing number of foreign tourists’ visits to Indonesia has been bringing a new hope to boost the national economy. Infrastructure provision to support tourism development is one of critical factors in many parts of Indonesia. Investment of infrastructure development is the main issue in developing countries [1, 2]. Private sector participation in the tourism infrastructure development should be promoted. However, many risks of financing infrastructure under public private partnership must be investigated properly [3].

The Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) released the information that in 2015 foreign tourist visits raised by 3.12% to 9.73 million compared to the previous year. The increase generates more revenue and now tourism industry become one of five main sectors in generating national income. In term of income from foreign exchange, tourism industry now at rank four after oil and gas, coal, and palm oil.

The growth of tourism industry also bringing growth to other fields, since the tourism industry has a multiplier effect on the surrounding community. The hospitality industry, creative industry, culinary industry are getting benefits from the growth of tourism industry. The government of Indonesia has set the tourism industry as one of leading sectors and projecting that there will be about 20 million foreign tourists coming to Indonesia. On contrast, West Sumatra Province has a declining number of tourist visit in 2015. Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) of West Sumatra Province recorded 48.755 tourists visited the province, a decrease of 13.1 percent compared to the previous year. The province only contributed 0.5 percent of total foreign tourists visiting Indonesia[4].

The provincial government of West Sumatra has established tourism as the leading sector in the economy in the next five year. The province has beautiful natural landscapes and rich of culinary and culture. The government considers that tourism industry may bring welfare to society when natural resources are depleting. For example is the city of Sawahlunto. The city has been transforming from mining town to a tourist destination city. The coal industry in the city has been abandoned, but factories, mines and facilities now functioning as tourist destinations. The city now has the lowest poverty level in Indonesia after the city of Denpasar in Bali.

One of the primary keys for developing good tourism industry is fulfilling the convenience of visitors (tourists), which may be achieved with friendly culture and societies, and reliable infrastructures between tourist destinations. On June 6, 2014, has been issued West Sumatra Provincial Regulation No. 3 of 2014 on Tourism Development Master Plan (RIPK as abbreviation in Indonesian) of West Sumatra province for the year 2014-2025. The regulation aligns the development of tourism and used as a guide for local authorities to develop tourism in the province[5].

There are four aspects set out in RIPK West Sumatra province, namely a) Development of tourism destination; b) development of tourism marketing; c) the development of the tourism industry, and d) institutional development of tourism[5]. In order to build tourism destination, public infrastructure for tourism, public spaces and facilities must be provided sufficiently in quantity and quality. Accessibility of tourist, to go to a tourist destination, also must be carefully planned, which includes providing transportation system and its infrastructures and facilities. Therefore, with ease of tourists movement from one place to other places and supported by friendly local cultures and societies, the tourism industry may grow.

With the above-mentioned background, it is essential to determine the current capacity of infrastructures in West Sumatra Province to support tourism industry. This research has an aim, to determine the capacity of the infrastructure, so that the result of the study may be used as a
benchmark or starting position in the future development of infrastructure for tourism industry in West Sumatra Province. This research identifies the current level of condition/capacity of infrastructure in each city/regency in West Sumatra Province and identifies stock generating the capacity of the infrastructures in tourism industry economics. The outcome of this research is a mapping of infrastructure condition in each area of city/regency in the province. The research may assist the provincial government in planning and development of tourism industry, so they may have a rigorous and mature planning.

2. OVERVIEW OF TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE IN WEST SUMATERA PROVINCE

Infrastructures are very important parts in supporting the grow of a nation economy [6, 7]. Investment in infrastructures will bring benefit in Indonesian’s economy [8-10]. The existing infrastructures in West Sumatra province are strongly support tourism, which the transport infrastructures in the province are consists of air, land, and sea transportation. There are adequate number of hotels and restaurants that also support the transportation system in tourism industry. Availability of transport infrastructure, which can be measured from the ease of accessibility towards a particular travel destination, is one of the determining factors for the success of the development of a tourism object.

In general, the accessibility into and out of the West Sumatra province is very good. West Sumatra province has an international airport, Minangkabau International Airport (BIM), which serves both domestic and international flights. Domestic flights are served by six major airlines and international by one airline. At present, direct flights served by BIM airport are to Jakarta, Bandung, Batam, Medan, Mentawai, and Kuala Lumpur. The number of domestic flights from BIM to those cities listed above is 195 flights in one week; and for international flights is 14 flights per week [4]. The Mentawai Islands is one of the main tourist destinations of West Sumatra can also be reached by air transportation. Flights to the Mentawai Islands are served by a carrier with a frequency of one flight per day from BIM airport.

Sea transportation facilities and infrastructures also support the development of tourism in West Sumatra province. Port of Teluk Bayur is a seaport that can be harboured by large tonnage ships, such as cruise ships. However, the port is still underutilized, only served very small number of passengers, around 1.300 passengers per year. Transportation between the main island Sumatra toward small adjacent islands, especially to the Mentawai Islands, served by docks in Bungus and Batang Arau. Foreign tourists who are going to Mentawai to surf are usually use chartered ships that provided by private through travel agents.

The main tourist destinations are located on the mainland Sumatra can be accessed easily by land transportation. According to statistics in 2014, the length of state roads, provincial roads, and district/city in West Sumatra is the 1.212 km, 1.230 km, and 19.834 km respectively. Percentage of road conditions that are in an excellent state is very good, reaching 98.60% and 82.68% for the national road and the provincial road respectively. However, although there are sufficient length of road, still there are congestions on the road during main holidays. So that widening the road or traffic arrangements towards tourist destinations are need to be the attention of the government and all stakeholders to support accessibility to tourist destination.

Among cities in West Sumatra, only Padang city and Bukittinggi City that have proper infrastructures to support the tourism industry. The provincial government is now reviving the railway lines that have been long abandoned, to support transportation for tourism. Railways to city of Padang Panjang, Bukittinggi and Payakumbuh have been repaired. When the train back in service, it would boost tourism transportation in West Sumatra.

From the above descriptions, it seem that the existing transportation strongly supports West Sumatra tourism. However, intermodal transportation services is still need more attention. For
example, the connectivity between air and land transportation. Currently it is difficult to go directly to tourist destination by land public transport from the airport.

Beside the transportation sector, another sector that also support infrastructure in tourism is the availability of the accommodation, hotel rooms and restaurants. Availability hotels in West Sumatra is quite good. By the year 2015, the number of star hotels available are 60 hotels with 3,611 rooms and 5,924 the number of beds [11]. Star hotels’ average occupancy rate is 50.22% in the year 2013 and average length of stay is 1.50 days.

As a region that is famous for it’s culinary, availability of restaurants with a wide variety of traditional foods in West Sumatra has been unquestionable. The restaurants can be found easily, at the tourist destinations and along the way to the tourist destinations. Though, the cleanliness of the restaurant and availability of food price information are common problems on the restaurants. It becomes common knowledge that during major or national holidays the food prices rose very sharply, but sometimes beyond expected price. It brings disappointments to the tourist.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The research activities in this study are: 1. Identify tourist destinations (including potential) in West Sumatra; 2. Identify the performance of tourist destinations and supporting infrastructure installed at current time; 3. Develop a strategy development of tourism infrastructure. Several discussions with local governments officials had been conducted in this research, together with distributions of questionnaire survey. At the late stage of this research, a focus group discussion also had been conducted to discuss tourism in West Sumatra province.

4. RESULT ADN DISCUSSIONS

4.1. User Perception of West Sumatera Tourism Infrastruktur Service

In this research was conducted a survey about tourist perception about condition of infrastructure. An online survey was setup at the address https://mkiunand.typeform.com/to/EDEjMm. This survey was to determine the user's perception of West Sumatra tourism services on the performance of the infrastructures at tourism destinations. The online survey was conducted in August to September 2016. The survey have collected 105 respondents with a percentage of 66.67% originated from within West Sumatra Province and the rest are tourists outside the area of West Sumatra.

Some indicators are used and respondents were asked to rate the performance of the infrastructure of tourism destinations of the district or city. One of the indicators is the condition of the access road to tourism destinations that include surface conditions, wide roads and smoothness of traffic. Other indicators include availability, cleanliness, conditions of service and fairness of the price of a number of parking facilities, cleanliness, toilet, place of worship, place to eat, hotel / lodging, electricity and communications in the destination location.

The districts or cities that assessed at random by the respondents are Pesisir Selatan, Padang, Pariaman / Padang Pariaman, Solok, Sawahlunto, Padang Panjang, Agam, Bukittinggi, Payakumbuh / 50 Kota and Pasaman. For the method of assessment of the user's perception, scale 1 to 5 was used. Score 1 means very bad and the opposite scale 5 is very good.

Results of the survey shown that accessibility towards tourist destinations in eight regions, with the exception Bukittinggi, is an indicator with the best value according to the perception of respondents, with mean value in the range of 3.5 to 5. As for parking indicator, lodging and communication only have good score in two cities /district. The worst indicators in West Sumatra tourism infrastructure based on the survey is the hotel indicator, because there are not enough accommodation in proper quality and quantities in any city or tourist destinations.
Respondents give rating of 1 to 2.5 for indicators of accommodation in the five areas of the city/district Tanah Datar, Padang Panjang, Pariaman and Pesisir Selatan and Sawahlunto. For other indicators such as parking lots, restrooms, places to eat and religious places have average low value which indicates it need to be improved.

4.2. Various Problems In West Sumatera Tourism Infrastructure

Assessment travel user's perception of the performance of the tourism infrastructure of West Sumatra has indirectly provide information about problems that still plagued the West Sumatra tourism infrastructure. There are still many areas need to be improved based on the information of value in survey’s indicator. To better capture the range of issues involved, this research has done several field survey, interviews with local tourism department officials and conducted a focus group discussions with local stakeholders.

The following problems are identified from those activities:

a. The absence transportation systems that support tourism

The transport system is organized with a vision to coordinating the movement of passengers and goods by regulating the components where the infrastructure is a medium for the transport process, while the vehicle is a tool used in the transport process.

The first element of the transport system is terminal. Current condition is that not all cities in West Sumatra province has a terminal in the cities. For worse case, Padang as the provincial capital, a node in any direction of transportation movement, have no terminal passengers. As the result of no terminal condition, ‘shadow terminal’ raises in some locations, especially in the city of Padang. Transportation system in the terminal in West Sumatra are still very conventional, yet based online. There are no scheduling arrival and departure of buses. Buses’ departure are more based on the aspect whether or not a bus have had a full of passengers.

The next element of the transport system is modes of transportation that allow tourist to go to the desired destinations. There is no the mode of transportation from the airport that service directly to the Minangkabau from the tourism destination. The train from the airport to downtown city of Padang not yet in operation. Connectivity between regions in West Sumatra are now much more served by the minibus or chartered bus. Besides, there is no proper connectivity between tourist destinations, because there is inadequate mode of transport to serve them.

The above mentioned bring difficulties for tourist where they cannot have accurate data in planning their itinerary to visit West Sumatra. Tourists mobility is more reliant on rent minibus services. For backpacker tourists, this is difficult because they are generally have nomadic nature of the trip, not long settled in the destination, and want a low cost.

b. The problems of accessibility and connectivity between destinations and between regions.

One of the requirements of regional tourism growth is the creation of inter-regional connectivity. The connectivity prerequisite is the presence or the road network and rail network that connects between regions. The condition of the national road network in the province of West Sumatra in fiscal year 2015 are in good condition 84.49% from 1448.81 Km. For provincial roads are in good condition 1525.2 Km 69.24% of the total length of the existing road. The current challenge is the existing road network not yet fully support the connectivity between areas of the city or district.

For example is Pesisir Selatan and Solok district. Tourism destinations located in these districts have no road networks that are interconnected, so that if tourists want to visit the area of Solok district after visited coast region of Pesisir Selatan, the traveler must return pass...
through the city of Padang. Similarly, between the district with Sawahlunto city, the connectivity is still needed at some point.

In general, the accessibility to the tourist destinations in the province of West Sumatra has been quite good, this evident from the results of the perception survey. But in some parts in particular destinations, there are still narrow roads and low quality pavements. For example, the width of the road are still narrow in Harau, main tourist destination in city of Payakumbuh; Puncak Lawang in Agam district; and Puncak Mandeh and Bayangsani in Pesisir Selatan District. Similarly, pavement conditions are in poor condition in the beach of Air Manis, Padang. Narrow roads and poor pavements make difficult for big or middle size tourists buses to enter the area. There is a need to widen the roads as the above mentioned locations are main tourist destinations.

Also the railway service has not been sufficient to support the West Sumatra tourism development. The railway line to the Minangkabau International Airport from Padang city center has not been yet in operation. Train service from Batusangkar to Sawahlunto is no longer active. There are many supports to re-activate Padang to Bukittinggi railway line, but not utilized yet. Now, the active lines are only Padang to Padang Pariaman and Lubuk Alung to Kayu Tanam.

Ticketing for the rail services is also need to develop. In the absence of an online ticketing system, make passengers have to queue for a quite long time before the scheduled departure time. This condition is exacerbate during the public holidays. From FGD, it raised an issue, to coordinate bus transport and train so that it will improve connectivity between the destination and between regions in the districts or cities in West Sumatra.

c. Constraints of land

Sawahlunto is a city that is known to actively move the tourism sector. Based on user perception survey, the biggest infrastructure problems in the city Sawahlunto is lodging and parking. As for the city of Bukittinggi the problems are congestion and poor parking facilities. Those problems are associated with lack of land development. In Sawahlunto city, the old town had developed into a mine town that had minimum land for parking. To develop new parking spots, constrained by the fact that most of Sawahlunto city land is owned by a government own company.

Development of infrastructure in some cities and district are still hampered by land acquisition problem. Most of the lands are communal or tribe own land that need long and tough negotiations for local government to use it. Some infrastructure projects fail due to failure to have access of the land.

d. The absence of appropriate toilet and waste facilities.

Toilet is may consider as a face of tourism industry where good toilets indicate good tourism service. The questionnaire survey shows that toilets in West Sumatra tourist destinations are below standard. Not all the destinations have toilet on site. Solid waste also are not properly managed in the locations.

e. Limited budget.

Although Bukittinggi city has regional revenue about 30% comes from tourism, but only 3% are returned to fund tourism sector. For year of 2017, has been allocated a budget of nine billion rupiah for the tourism sector in West Sumatra province. These funds will be used on scheme of 60: 40 for the division of regions and provinces. With many of cities and districts, if the amount of 60% divided equally, each region will get a smaller amount of fund. It is unlikely to invest
it to physical development. It would be better if these funds are optimized to fund certain tourism activities in the area that have better potential in tourism destinations.

**Tourism coverage**

The development potential of the region in accordance with the uniqueness of each potential to strengthen the structure of the national economy and reduce disparities between regions.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that many areas on infrastructure are in need to be improved, so that tourism industry become lead sector in West Sumatra province. The development of the tourism sector has a strategic role in promoting economic growth and equitable development between regions. To create a sustainable tourism development then it must begin from an understanding of existing conditions of tourism infrastructure. Later can be created a master plan of development of tourism infrastructure to support regional economic development.

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