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DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM AWARENESS IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN BERASTAGI, KARO REGENCY, NORTH SUMATRA PROVINCE

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Abstract

Community Service at the Berastagi Tourism State Vocational School 1 (SMKN1) aims to develop tourism awareness in tourism development in Berastagi, Karo Regency, North Sumatra Province. The purpose of this service is to increase students' understanding of local tourism potential, so that they can become agents of change in tourism development in the local area. The methods used in this service include delivering material about tourism and local tourism potential, group discussions, and field practice activities. The activity was carried out for one day and involved 100 students from SMKN 1, 9 lecturers from the Darma Agung Academy of Tourism and Hotel, and 1 lecturer from Darma Agung University. The material presented covers aspects of tourism such as tourism history, types of tourism, tourism marketing, and the importance of maintaining cleanliness and environmental sustainability. The results of this community service show that students understand more about the tourism potential in the local area and the importance of preserving the environment in tourism development. In addition, they also understand the importance of tourism promotion to increase tourist visits. It is hoped that this activity can help increase tourism awareness and promote Berastagi tourism as an attractive tourist destination in North Sumatra and internationally.

Keywords: Community service, Tourism, Berastagi.

Abstrak

Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat di SMK Negeri 1 Berastagi bertujuan untuk mengembangkan kesadaran wisata dalam pembangunan kepariwisataan di Berastagi, Kabupaten Karo, Provinsi Sumatera Utara. Tujuan dari pengabdian ini adalah untuk meningkatkan pemahaman siswa tentang potensi pariwisata lokal, sehingga mereka dapat menjadi agen perubahan dalam pengembangan pariwisata di daerah setempat. Metode yang digunakan dalam pengabdian ini meliputi penyampaian materi tentang pariwisata dan potensi wisata lokal, diskusi kelompok, serta kegiatan praktik lapangan. Kegiatan dilakukan selama satu hari dan melibatkan 100 siswa dari SMK Negeri 1 Berastagi dan 9 dosen dari Akademi Pariwisata dan Perhotelan Darma Agung serta 1 dosen dari Universitas Darma Agung. Materi yang disampaikan meliputi aspek-aspek pariwisata seperti sejarah pariwisata, jenis-jenis wisata,

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pemasaran pariwisata, serta pentingnya menjaga kebersihan dan kelestarian lingkungan.

Hasil dari pengabdian masyarakat ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa lebih memahami potensi wisata di daerah setempat dan pentingnya menjaga kelestarian lingkungan dalam pembangunan pariwisata. Selain itu, mereka juga memahami pentingnya promosi pariwisata untuk meningkatkan kunjungan wisatawan. Diharapkan, kegiatan ini dapat membantu meningkatkan kesadaran wisata dan mempromosikan pariwisata Berastagi sebagai destinasi wisata yang menarik di Sumatera Utara dan dunia internasional.

Kata kunci: Pengabdian Masyarakat, Kepariwisataaan, Berastagi.

1. INTRODUCTION

Community Service at SMK Negeri 1 Berastagi aims to develop tourism awareness for the development of tourism in Berastagi, Karo Regency, North Sumatra Province. The goal of this service is to improve students' understanding of local tourism potential, so that they can become agents of change in tourism development in the local area. According to the views of scholars and books written by David Weaver (2000), Buhalis (2008), Ritchie (2003), and Crouch (2003), there are several principles in sustainable tourism development.

First, community participation in tourism development is very significant so that the community can benefit from tourism development and be involved in decision-making related to tourism development.

Second, preserving the environment and local culture in tourism development is crucial to ensuring that tourism can provide long-term benefits to the community and the local environment. Therefore, tourism development must be done by considering the local environmental and cultural impacts and taking action to reduce negative impacts.

Third, appropriate and sustainable tourism promotion is essential to increasing tourist visits. Tourism promotion must be done by considering local uniqueness and wisdom so that tourists can experience different and authentic experiences. In addition to these scholars' books and views, there are several well-known scholars in the field of tourism, such as Jafar Jafari (2000), who introduced the concept of "tourism paradigm," John Urry (1990), who discussed "holiday economics," and Chris Cooper (1998), who wrote a book about "sustainable tourism."

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The contributions of these scholars are essential in developing an understanding of sustainable tourism development and can inspire tourism practitioners to develop sustainable tourism in their regions. In this case, community service at SMK Negeri 1 Berastagi can be an example of activities that apply sustainable tourism development principles and the contributions of these scholars.

This activity involves community participation in the form of SMK students, emphasizing the importance of preserving the environment and providing materials about appropriate tourism promotion. It is expected that through activities like this, tourism awareness in the local area can be increased, and sustainable tourism development can be achieved. Additionally, this activity can serve as a positive example.

Furthermore, there is Stephen Pratt (1999), a professor at the University of Texas who has expertise in sustainable tourism development. He has written several books on this topic, including "Tourism and Sustainability: Development, Globalization, and New Tourism in the Third World." This book discusses how tourism can be a tool for sustainable development in developing countries. Pratt (ibid.) emphasizes the importance of involving the local community in tourism development so that they can benefit from this industry and become protectors of valuable natural resources in their area.

In the views of these scholars, community service, such as that conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Berastagi, is essential to improving the community's awareness and understanding of local tourism potential. It can also help promote sustainable tourism development and promote the local area as an attractive tourist destination both domestically and internationally.

2. SERVICE METHOD

The service method used for community service at Berastagi Tourism State Vocational School 1 (SMKN1) involves a combination of instructional material delivery, group discussions, and field practice activities. The instructional material delivery covers various aspects of tourism, such as tourism history, types of tourism,

tourism marketing, and the importance of maintaining cleanliness and environmental sustainability.

Group discussions are also incorporated to facilitate student engagement and active participation in the learning process. This provides a platform for students to exchange ideas and opinions on tourism potential and development, as well as discuss ways to promote Berastagi tourism as an attractive destination.

Overall, the service method used in this community service aims to increase students' understanding of local tourism potential and encourage them to become agents of change in tourism development in the local area.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview, Geography, Demographics, Tourism

Berastagi is a district located in Karo Regency, North Sumatra, Indonesia. It is the second-largest district in the Karo highlands after Kabanjahe and is situated approximately 66 kilometers from Medan city. Berastagi is flanked by two active volcanoes, Mount Sibayak and Mount Sinabung, with a hot spring located near Mount Sibayak. The town itself sits at an altitude of more than 1,300 meters above sea level, making it one of the coldest cities in Indonesia.



Figure 1: Berastagi town

The economy of Berastagi revolves around the production of vegetables, fruits, and tourism. It is one of the largest producers of vegetables and fruits in North Sumatra and has even exported them to Singapore and Malaysia. The dominant ethnic group in this area is the Karo people, who communicate using the Gugung dialect of the Karo language. While Berastagi's original inhabitants are Karo people, the area has become a popular tourist destination, leading to an influx of settlers from other ethnic groups, making it one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse districts in Karo Regency. As of 2021, the population of Berastagi district is 48,224 people, with a population density of 1,581 people per square kilometer.



Figure 2: Tourist objects around Berastagi

According to data from the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2021, the majority of the population in Berastagi district is Christian, with 55.48% of the population following this religion, of which 46.04% are Protestant and 9.44% are Catholic. The majority of the remaining population is Muslim (42.84%), while the remaining 1.68% follow Buddhism, Hinduism, or other beliefs. In terms of religious facilities, there are 43 Protestant churches, 24 mosques, 7 Catholic churches, and 3 viharas in Berastagi.

Berastagi has several popular tourist attractions, including Gundaling, the Berastagi Fruit Market, Peceren Village, Lake Lau Kawar at the foot of Mount Sinabung, Lumbini Nature Park in Tongkoh Village, Dolatrayat District, Sikulikap Waterfall, Karo Heritage Museum, Gugung House, Mikie Holiday Funland, Mount

Sibayak, Mount Sinabung, Sidebuk Debuk hot spring, Soekarno's Exile House in Berastagi, Berastagi Forest Park, and Kubu Hill Berastagi. Additionally, Mejuah-juah Park is a favorite spot for visitors to relax and enjoy the natural beauty of Berastagi.

Discussion

Development of Tourism Awareness in Tourism Development in Berastagi, Karo Regency, North Sumatra Province

The community service activities were carried out on February 28, 2023 in the hall of the school. The first speaker was Dr. Padriadi Wiharjokusumo, who covered several important aspects of tourism. These include:



Figure 3: Dr. Padriadi Wiharjokusumo was highlighting the material on Development of Tourism Awareness to the students.

- a. **Tourism History:** Understanding the history of tourism can help visitors appreciate the cultural and historical significance of a place. In Berastagi, for example, tourists may be interested to learn about the Batak culture and the history of the Karo Kingdom, which can help them to better understand the local customs and traditions.
- b. **Types of Tourism:** There are various types of tourism, such as cultural tourism, adventure tourism, and eco-tourism. Educating visitors on these different types of tourism can help them to make informed choices about what activities to

participate in during their stay in Berastagi. For example, visitors interested in eco-tourism may be more likely to participate in hiking or birdwatching activities.



Figure 4: The students were seriously listening to the presentation.

- c. **Tourism Marketing:** Promoting tourism destinations and activities is an important part of attracting visitors. In Berastagi, it may be important to educate locals on how to market the town's unique attractions, such as the local hot springs, fruit market, and the traditional Karo houses.
- d. **Environmental Sustainability:** It is important to ensure that tourism activities do not harm the environment or the local community. Educating visitors on the importance of sustainability and responsible tourism practices can help to preserve the natural beauty and cultural heritage of Berastagi for future generations.

Overall, by providing comprehensive instructional material delivery that covers these key aspects of tourism, visitors to Berastagi can gain a deeper appreciation of the local culture, participate in activities that align with their interests, and help to ensure the sustainability of the local environment and community.

The next speaker was Nirwaty Tarigan, SE.,MM, she outlines that in tourism development, community participation is important because it allows the community to benefit from tourism development and be involved in decision-making related to

tourism. This means that tourism development must be done with the community's involvement and consideration of their needs and perspectives. This can lead to a more sustainable approach to tourism development that benefits both the community and the environment.



Figure 5: Ms. Nirwaty Tarigan, SE, MM, was sharing her presentation with the students.

Preserving the environment and local culture is crucial in sustainable tourism development. Tourism development must be done by considering the local environmental and cultural impacts and taking action to reduce negative impacts. For example, tourism activities should not harm the environment, such as causing pollution or destroying natural habitats. Additionally, tourism activities should not negatively impact local cultures or traditions.

Appropriate and sustainable tourism promotion is also essential to increasing tourist visits. Tourism promotion must be done by considering local uniqueness and wisdom so that tourists can experience different and authentic experiences. This means that tourism promotion should focus on highlighting the local culture, history, and natural environment rather than just commercial attractions.

Nirwaty Tarigan says that by applying these principles in community service activities, such as the one at SMK Negeri 1 Berastagi, tourism awareness can be increased, and sustainable tourism development can be achieved.

In addition, this community service activity at SMK Negeri 1 Berastagi can also contribute to promoting Berastagi tourism as an attractive tourist destination, both domestically and internationally. By increasing local tourism awareness and understanding of the importance of preserving the environment, the community can work together to develop sustainable tourism in the area. This can attract more tourists who are interested in experiencing the unique culture and natural beauty of Berastagi.



Figure 6: Some lecturers were taking pictures after community service activities.

Moreover, through this community service activity, SMK Negeri 1 Berastagi students can become agents of change in tourism development in the local area. As they become more aware of local tourism potential and the importance of sustainable tourism development, they can contribute their ideas and knowledge to future tourism development projects in the area. This can lead to a more inclusive and participatory tourism development process, which benefits both the community and the tourists.

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In conclusion, community service activities such as this one at SMK Negeri 1 Berastagi are essential in promoting sustainable tourism development and increasing local tourism awareness. By involving the community, providing appropriate materials and promoting the importance of preserving the environment, this activity can contribute to the development of Berastagi tourism as an attractive and sustainable tourist destination. It is hoped that similar activities can be conducted in other regions to promote sustainable tourism development and benefit both the community and the tourists.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the development of tourism awareness is essential for the growth and sustainability of the tourism industry in any region. Berastagi, Karo Regency, North Sumatra Province, with its unique cultural and natural resources, has significant potential for tourism development. The delivery of instructional materials covering various aspects of tourism, including tourism history, types of tourism, tourism marketing, and the importance of maintaining cleanliness and environmental sustainability, can help create awareness among the local community and visitors about the benefits of responsible tourism practices. This, in turn, can contribute to the sustainable development of tourism in Berastagi and the surrounding areas, while preserving the region's cultural and natural heritage.

5. Suggestion

Based on the discussion, here are some suggestions for the development of tourism awareness in Berastagi, Karo Regency, North Sumatra Province:

1. Collaborate with local communities: As tourism is closely linked to the local community, it is essential to collaborate with them to promote sustainable tourism. By involving them in tourism activities and providing them with economic benefits, it is possible to create a sense of ownership and responsibility towards the preservation of local culture and environment.
2. Enhance tourism infrastructure: In order to attract more visitors and provide a better experience, it is crucial to improve tourism infrastructure such as transportation, accommodation, and other amenities. This can be achieved

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through public-private partnerships, where the government provides incentives and regulations to attract private sector investment.

3. Promote tourism education: Developing tourism awareness through education can be an effective way to create a sustainable tourism industry. This can be achieved by providing training and workshops for tourism stakeholders, including tour guides, hotel staff, and other service providers.
4. Encourage responsible tourism practices: Encouraging responsible tourism practices such as reducing waste, conserving energy, and respecting local cultures and traditions can help preserve the natural and cultural resources of the area. This can be achieved by implementing regulations and guidelines for tourism operators and visitors.

Overall, by implementing these suggestions, it is possible to create a sustainable tourism industry in Berastagi, Karo Regency, North Sumatra Province, which benefits both visitors and local communities while preserving the area's natural and cultural heritage.

6. Acknowledgment

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