

# CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES AS A TOURISM DESTINATION IN GORONTALO REGENCY - INDONESIA: ITS POTENTIALS, PROBLEMS, AND DEVELOPMENT

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study analyzed the cultural and natural potentials that become tourism destinations in Gorontalo Regency, related to the attractiveness and problems of tourism, as well as the strategy to realize domestic and foreign tourism destinations.

**Methodology:** This study used a qualitative approach with data collection methods through observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and focused group discussions. Meanwhile, researchers analyzed data by organizing data, grouping data, and analyzing normatively.

**Findings:** Several tourism destinations in Gorontalo Regency are the Soekarno Landing Cultural Heritage House, Pentadio Resort, Limboto Lake, Embung Dumati, Bubohu Religious Tourism, Walima Emas Mosque, Dulanga Beach, and Taluhu Barakati. The tourism problems that exist are specific destinations in dirty conditions; infrastructure is minimal, the educational conditions of residents around tourism destinations are inadequate so that it affects the quality of service. Information on tourism destination objects to the public is still lacking and ineffective; access to roads and human resources managing tourism objects is inadequate. To make Gorontalo Regency a tourism destination, in addition to overcoming existing problems, the development of regional tourism potential is a necessity.

**Implications:** This research is beneficial, both for policymakers, especially the Gorontalo Regency Government, businesses related to tourism, and the local community. The results are expected to increase synergy between local governments, businesses, and local communities. For Local Governments, the results of this study are expected to be an input for formulating policies that can encourage the attractiveness of domestic and foreign tourists. As for the business, the results of this study are expected to be taken into consideration to increase business investment in the tourism sector. Meanwhile, for local communities, the results of this study are expected to encourage local communities to love their local resources and culture more for their sustainability.

**Novelty:** To realize a tourism destination both local and foreign, it is important to solve any problems that arise, as well as developing the existing regional tourism potential.

**Keywords:** *Cultural Resources, Natural Resources, Tourism Destinations, Tourism Potential, Tourism Problems, Tourism Development.*

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism objectives according to Article 4 of the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 10 of 2009 is to increase economic growth; improve people's welfare; eradicate poverty; overcoming unemployment; preserving nature, the environment, and resources; promote culture; lift the nation's image; foster a sense of love for the motherland, strengthen national identity, unity, and strengthen friendship between nations.

In line with the objectives as mentioned above, decentralization since the enactment of the Regional Autonomy Law grants the broadest possible authority to regional governments to explore the potential of their respective regions in order to increase the Regional Budget of Revenue and Expenditure which is ultimately expected to improve the welfare of the people in the area. Article 12 paragraph (3) letter b of Law No. 23 of 2014 concerning the Regional Government states that the decentralization of the field of tourism is a government affair that becomes the authority in the choice of government affairs. One of the chosen governmental affairs includes the handing over of central government affairs to the regions to determine tourist attractions, strategic tourism areas, and tourism destinations.

Tourism development is primarily seen as a driving force for the economy to play an essential role in terms of foreign exchange collectors, saviors, and development passports (De Kadt, 1979). Many studies have shown the vital role of the tourism sector for regional revenue and the improvement of people's welfare through various tourism-based economic activities (Andreu, Claver, & Quer, 2010; Ateljevic, 2009; Salwani, Norzaini, & Chong, 2009). Various potential resources that support tourism in the region are utilized by the local government to increase local revenue. Research conducted by Rani (2014) concluded that the Government of Sumenep Regency was able to encourage the development of tourism so that it provided a reasonably practical impact with an increase in regional income that is quite high in the tourism sector each year.

This research was an effort to support the Gorontalo District Government in particular and the Gorontalo Province in general to realize a superior program in the field of tourism. In addition to identifying the potential of resources that had the attractiveness of tourism destinations and the root of the problems that hinder the utilization of existing resources into tourism destinations, this study also analyzed the causes of tourism destinations that have been known for a long time why they are unable to increase domestic and foreign tourist visits. Knowing the root of the problem would facilitate the analysis of the strategies carried out to overcome it so that it is expected to make Gorontalo Regency a domestic and foreign tourism destination.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Tourism Concept

Tourism is a trip from one place to another, temporary, carried out individually or in groups, as an effort to find a balance or harmony and happiness with the environment in the social, cultural, natural, and scientific dimensions (Kodhyat, 1983). According to Muljadi (2009), tourism is a series of travel activities carried out by individuals or groups from their original place of residence to various other places to make tourist visits and not to work or earn income at their destination. The visit in question is temporary and, in time, will return to its original residence.

Vanhove (2005) defines tourism as a temporary visit activity of at least 24 hours in an area visited, intending to travel that can be classified to take advantage of free time such as recreation, vacation, rest, study, worship, and exercise, including doing business, family visits, field trips, conducting missions and particular gatherings. Tourist activities in a tour are influenced by certain factors, both the pull factors and the driving factors in carrying out tourism travel activities. Fandeli (1995) explains these two factors. The driving factor is the factor that drives a person to travel, which is to be released even for a moment from routine daily life, polluted environment, traffic jams, and the hustle and bustle of city life. Meanwhile, the pull factor is a factor related to the existence of tourist attractions in the area or tourist attractions. This attraction can be in the form of fame in tourist attractions, places that many people talk about, and are in the news.

### Tourism Destinations

Spillane (1987) states that tourism must have five essential elements so that tourists can enjoy their tour, namely: attractions, facilities, infrastructure, transportation, and hospitality. Attractions are what is at the center of a tourist attraction. Attractions can attract tourists to visit and can be classified on a local, provincial, regional, national, and international scale. The facility is needed in order to serve tourists when enjoying attractions. Meanwhile, what has considered necessary infrastructure in tourism is water, electricity and energy sources, communication networks, drainage systems, health services, and roads. In addition to these three things, transportation is also an essential element that must be present in tourist attractions. The existence of proper transportation, such as the availability of buses, travel, etcetera, allows tourists to more easily reach tourist attractions. With the ease of transportation, of course, it will affect the number of tourists visiting. Finally, hospitality is also an essential element in order to make an attractive tourist attraction for tourists.

Ismayanti (2010) explains that tourism is divided into several types, namely culinary tourism, sports tourism, commercial tourism, marine tourism, industrial tourism, honeymoon tourism, and nature reserve tourism. Meanwhile, Spillane (1987) distinguishes types of tourism consisting of pleasure tourism, recreation tourism, cultural tourism, sports tourism, business tourism, and convention tourism.

### Problems and Potential of Tourism

The implementation of tourism is inseparable from several problems. Tjahyono (2010) states that the problems that arise in tourist destination areas are 1) the conditions are dirty; this can occur because in the dry season many plants around the tourism destination lack water, so that the leaves are shed; 2) infrastructure that is still very limited, such as inadequate mosque, and the limited and dirty facilities for bathing, washing, and toilet; 3) the inadequate condition of the education of residents around tourism destinations that affect the quality of services, and 4) information on tourism destination objects to the public still lacks and ineffective.

The problems that often hamper tourism development can also be seen from the results of research by Itamar, Alam, and Rahmatullah. (2014), namely 1) Access roads and facilities, where not all tourist attractions are located on the side of the shaft road, damaged and perforated roads are one of the factors inhibiting tourism development; 2) inadequate human resources managing; 3) Lack of strong regulations and legal basis; 4) The form of management overlaps with the government, foundation or family, and the private sector.

The problem of tourism development is also illustrated in the study of Devy and Soemanto (2017). In their research on the Jumog Waterfall tourism area, the researchers revealed various obstacles that arose in developing the tourist area, namely 1) the absence of processed products or crafts that are characteristic of the Jumog Waterfall tourism object, and 2) the lack of assistance and training provided to the local community so that the creativity of human resources in the village of Berjo is not yet maximal.

Efforts to develop the tourism sector have experienced many obstacles, so far as if there seems to be no significant development. As research by [Soedarso, Nurif, and Windiani, \(2014\)](#) in Bojonegoro Regency found that most of the tourism objects in the Bojonegoro Regency were in the area controlled by the forestry service. Meanwhile, coordination with the forestry service has not proceeded as expected. Because of this situation, tourism development is somewhat constrained. Although there are several problems, there are also many potentials. Tourism potential can mean tourism objects or attractions that allow being published, marketed, managed, and developed into a resort or have fun in a while (recreation) and can take advantage of these objects. [Sujali \(1989\)](#) stated that the potential of tourism objects occurs because of a process, it can be caused by natural processes or because it is caused by human cultivation.

Tourism potential is something that has its strengths and added values to be developed into a tourist attraction. [Yoeti \(1982\)](#) divides three tourism potentials, namely natural potential, cultural potential, and human potential. The natural potential is the condition and type of flora, fauna, and landscape of an area, such as beaches, forests, and others. The cultural potential is all human creations, tastes, and intentions in the form of customs, crafts, arts, historical relics of ancestors in the form of buildings and monuments. Meanwhile, humans also have the potential that can be used as a tourist attraction, through dance performances and cultural performances of a region.

## RESEARCH METHODS

Data collection in this research was carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and focused group discussions. This study used a qualitative approach that aims to describe the results of research and try to find a comprehensive picture of a situation. According to [Bogdan and Taylor \(1993\)](#), qualitative methods make it possible to understand the community personally or in groups that express their world views from experiences in the community that is not yet known. [Denzin and Lincoln \(2009\)](#) suggest that qualitative methods study everything in a natural context, to understand or interpret phenomena of meaning inherent in humans or researchers.

In carrying out the research, researchers observed tourism destinations in Gorontalo District and interviewed informants. The selection of informants was conducted purposively, namely the Gorontalo regency government who handles tourism, tourism businesses, people in tourism sites, and tourists. The researcher also determines informants in a snowball manner, in which researchers interview certain informants who then expand the number of informants. To confirm the interview data, researchers conducted a method of focused group discussion. Through this method, researchers can explore data in more depth, where each participant can confirm the truth of the explanation from other informants. In addition, document review is also important to strengthen existing data through the results of previous studies. Researchers analyzed data qualitatively by organizing data, grouping data, and analyzing narratively. Existing data was sorted, categorized, and grouped according to analysis needs. Sorting the data is done by completing and transforming the raw data written in the field notes, so that it becomes a regular report, supplementing the information collected with other supporting sources.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Potential of Tourism Destinations in Gorontalo Regency

#### 1. Cultural Heritage of the Landing House of Soekarno

The Soekarno Landing House was built to perpetuate the arrival of the first President of the Republic of Indonesia, Sukarno, to Gorontalo, who made use of the Limboto coast as a landing site. The first landing of Soekarno was in 1950 using an amphibious aircraft in order to build a consolidation to maintain Gorontalo so as not to be separated from the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, while the second landing was in 1956. This tourist attraction is located in Iluta Village, Batudaa District, Gorontalo Regency, not far from the City border Gorontalo, especially Dembe II Village, Kota Barat District.

#### 2. Pentadio Resort

The attractions of the Pentadio Resort are on the coast of Limboto Lake, precisely in Pentadio Village, Telaga Biru District, Gorontalo Regency. This attraction has several tourist attractions, such as hot spring baths, swimming pools, water bicycles, family karaoke, and others.

#### 3. Limboto Lake

Limboto Lake, which covers thousands of hectares, is located in Limboto District, Gorontalo Regency. Gorontalo Regency Government, which concentrates on developing Lake Limboto attractions, routinely organizes the Lake Limboto festival every year. This vast lake is overgrown with a variety of aquatic plants, such as water hyacinth, water flowers, and various types of fish. The existence of this lake supports the economy of residents who live on the shores of the lake, by cultivating fish in it.

#### 4. Embung Dumati

Embung Dumati is located in Dumati Village, Telaga District, Gorontalo Regency, right on the edge of Gorontalo Ring Road. This tourism object is relatively new, which was initiated by the Dumati Village Government and its development

utilizes the Village Fund Program. Currently, this attraction is managed by the Dumati Village-Owned Enterprises. This attraction is relatively crowded, both local and regional tourists. The average monthly visit reaches 2,500 - 2,600 people; even when the holiday season in December, the number of visitors is booming.

#### 5. Bubohu Religious Tourism

Bubohu religious tourism is located in Bongo Village, Batudaa Pantai District, Gorontalo Regency. Traveling in Bubohu's religious tourism object, tourists can increase their knowledge of Gorontalo history, even at the same time knowledge of Islamic religion. Not far from this place, there are attractions of the Golden Walima Mosque and Dulanga Beach tourist attractions.

#### 6. Walima Emas Mosque

Attractions Walima Emas Mosque is located in the mountains of the village of Bongo, Batudaa Pantai District, Gorontalo Regency. By visiting this mosque, tourists can pamper themselves enjoying the beautiful scenery towards the sea and the villages below.

#### 7. Dulanga Beach

Dulanga Beach tourism object is located not far from Gorontalo City and also located in the same village as Bubohu religious tourism object, namely Bongo village. This attraction presents a vast expanse of white sand, as well as several locations designed to take pictures for visitors. The advantage of this tourist attraction is that in addition to being visited during the day, it is no less attractive when visited at night.

Dulanga Beach tourist destination under the moonlight at night has its uniqueness that is designed in such a way by the local community, which is the main attraction of this place. In this location, a row of stalls is also built where residents peddle local culinary, so tourists who visit this place can get food quickly. The establishment of this tourist attraction was originally conceived by the local community, which in its development, received support from the Gorontalo Regency Government.

#### 8. Taluhu Barakati

Taluhu Barakati tourism object is located in Barakati Village, Batudaa District, Gorontalo Regency. This place is located not far from the cultural heritage attraction of the Soekarno Landing House in Iluta Village. According to Gorontalo folklore, this location in ancient times was a bathing place for the empress and members of the kingdom of Batudaa. The name of the place itself is taken from the Gorontalo Language, where taluhu means 'water,' while barakati means 'blessed'. So, Taluhu Barakati means 'water that blessed.' It is said that, according to residents' beliefs, the water in Taluhu Barakati can cure skin diseases, if people who suffer from skin diseases bathe in this place.

Taluhu Barakati attractions are quite beautiful and are equipped with various facilities, such as swimming pools, changing rooms, and stands. This location has been held several times for the selection of *nou* 'son' and *uti* 'daughter' Gorontalo.

### Problems of Existing Tourism Destinations

There are quite a lot of tourism resources in Gorontalo Regency and are so exciting, even though there are many problems that surround it. A number of these problems are explained below

#### 1. Its condition is dirty.

Observation data in several tourist destinations look dirty and seem neglected. The condition is caused by several things, such as leaves that fall in the dry season and is not routinely swept away, used rubbish, and even animal dung like goat livestock residents are left free to roam in tourist areas.

#### 2. Infrastructure is minimal, such as mosque is not available, as well as bathrooms, washing, the toilet is limited and dirty

Limited facilities at tourist sites become a problem and reduce the attractiveness of tourism. Besides not being available, such as the mosque that is difficult to find at tourist sites, the facilities as for the seemingly neglected. The toilet washing bath facility, which is a basic need for tourists, turns out to be dirty and non-functional.

#### 3. The condition of the education of residents around tourism destinations is inadequate so that it affects the quality of service

The education of citizens around tourism destinations is crucial in supporting tourism success. Attractive tourism destinations, tourists are often not interested because of the inadequate response of residents in interacting with tourists.

#### 4. Information on tourism destination objects to the public is still lacking and ineffective

Tourism destinations are not well socialized to the broader community. Existing destinations are only socialized in a limited way through interpersonal communication among citizens; consequently, it is difficult to attract tourists from outside the area, especially foreign tourists

##### **5. Inadequate access to roads and facilities**

Tourism objects are not always located on the side of the shaft road so that the damaged and potholed road that connects to the tourism destination becomes an obstacle to tourist attraction.

##### **6. Human resources who manage attractions are incompetent**

It is often found that human resources managing tourist objects is incompetent. These incompetent resources often lead to improper management of attractions, which disappoints tourists.

#### **Making Gorontalo Regency as Tourism Destinations**

The realization of tourism destinations in the hope of each region, because it can increase revenue for the region concerned. To realize Gorontalo Regency as a tourism destination, the development of regional tourism potential is a necessity. In addition to developing existing tourism potential, it is also essential to overcome problems in tourism locations. Existing tourism potential, such as the beauty of the beach, the beauty of the lake, the beauty of the local culture, and other beauties must continue to be developed as an attraction, which is a tourist object and attraction. It is in line with research by [Fakana, Choudhary, and Mengist, \(2019\)](#) who explain the rich flora, fauna, and cultural attractions as potential ecotourism, which can increase tourist visits in Gambella, South West Ethiopia.

[Yoeti \(2001\)](#) explains things that need to be considered in the development of an area into a tourist destination so that it can be interesting to be visited by tourists must meet three conditions, namely a) The region must have a "something to see" that must have attractions and tourist attractions, which are different from what is owned by other regions. b) In that area, there must have "something to do" in that place a lot that can be seen and witnessed, and many recreational facilities must be provided that can make tourists feel at home in that place. c) In that area, what must be called "something to buy" must be available, in that place souvenirs and people's gifts must be available as souvenirs to take home to their respective places of origin. Besides, there must also be other facilities such as money changers, banks, post offices, telephone counters, and etcetera.

Meanwhile, [Hadinoto \(1996\)](#) revealed that five types of components support or determine the development of a tourist attraction, namely a) tourist attractions. The identified attractions, such as natural resources, human resources, culture, etcetera, need to be developed to become tourist attractions. b) Promotion and marketing. Promotion is a design to introduce tourist attractions offered and ways on how attractions can be visited. c). Tourist market. The tourist market is an important part. Even though planning does not yet require a complete and in-depth research, information about behavior trends, desires, needs, origin, motivation, and so on from tourists needs to be collected. d). Transportation. Transportation has a significant impact on the volume and location of tourism development. e). Tourist recipient communities, provide accommodation and travel support services.

Factors that can determine the success of tourism development ([Yoeti, 1996](#)) are a) the availability of tourist objects and attractions, b) the availability of accessibility facilities, namely facilities and infrastructure that allows tourists to visit an area or tourist area, and c) the availability of tourism facilities and facilities which can provide services to the community.

The development of tourism as an industry should ideally be based on four basic principles, as stated ([Sobari in Anindita, 2015](#)), namely a) Ecological sustainability, namely that the development of tourism must guarantee the creation of maintenance and protection of natural resources which are the main attraction of tourism, such as marine environment, forests, beaches, lakes, and rivers. b) Continuity of social and cultural life, namely that the development of tourism must be able to increase the role of the community in the supervision of life systems through the value system adopted by the local community as the community's identity. c) Economic sustainability, namely that the development of tourism, must be able to create employment opportunities for all parties to engage in economic activities through a healthy and competitive economic system. d) Improve the quality of life of local people by providing opportunities for them to be involved in tourism development.

[Sondakh \(2010\)](#) states that there are three crucial things in tourism development, namely infrastructure improvements, promotion improvements, and security improvements. According to [Yoeti \(1997\)](#), the development of tourism depends on the production of the tourism industry, which includes tourist attractions, ease of travel, facilities, and facilities as well as promotion. According to Santoso (in [Kurniawan, 2015](#)), elements of tourism development include a) Attractions. Attraction can arise from natural conditions, human-made objects, or elements and cultural events. b) Transportation. The development of transportation affects the flow of tourists and also the development of accommodation. The development of transportation technology also affects the flexibility of the direction of travel. c). Accommodation. Accommodation includes hotels. d) Service Facilities. The provision of facilities and services is increasingly developing and varies in line with the development of tourist flows. The development of shops and services at tourist sites began with the existence of daily necessities, then trade services, then services for comfort and pleasure. Next, services related

to security and safety, and ultimately further development also involves luxury goods sales services. e). Infrastructure. Adequate infrastructure is needed to support services. Infrastructure development indirectly also benefits residents while supporting tourism development. It concerns not only the development of transportation infrastructure, but also the provision of drinking water channels, electric lighting, and also sewage disposal.

Tourism development can also be carried out based on the community in the tourism area, known as Community Based Tourism (CBT). [Suansri \(2003\)](#) defines CBT as tourism that takes into account environmental, social, and cultural sustainability aspects. CBT is a tool for community development and environmental conservation, or in other words, CBT is a tool for realizing sustainable tourism development. [Hausler \(2000\)](#) put forward the definition of CBT, namely a) The form of tourism that provides opportunities for local people to control and be involved in managing tourism development. 2). People who are not directly involved in tourism businesses also benefit. 3). Demand political empowerment, democratization, and distribution of profits to disadvantaged communities in the countryside.

There are some basic principles of CBT conveyed by [Suansri \(2003\)](#), namely: a) Recognizing, supporting, and developing community ownership in the tourism industry. b) Involve community members in every aspect. c) Develop the quality of community life. d) Ensure environmental sustainability. e) Maintain the unique character and culture of the community. f) Respect for cultural differences and human dignity. g) Distributing benefits equitably to community members. h) Role in determining the percentage of income in projects in the community.

[Suansri \(2003\)](#) further conveys six dimensions, which are the main aspects of CBT development. First, the economic dimension, namely the existence of funds for the development of community-based tourism, the creation of jobs, and the emergence of local community income. Second, the social dimension, namely improving the quality of life, is increasing community pride, willingness, and community readiness. Third, the cultural dimension, which is fostering cultural exchange, encouraging people to respect different cultures, and introducing local cultures. Fourth, the environmental dimension, namely awareness of the need for conservation, regulating the disposal of waste, and the availability of clean water. Fifth, the political dimension, namely increasing the participation of residents, increasing the power of the wider community, and guaranteeing rights in natural resource management. Sixth, supporting facilities, namely the availability of supporting facilities and infrastructure.

## CONCLUSION, LIMITATION, AND SUGGESTION

Gorontalo Regency has several attractive tourist destinations, which, if managed well, can increase regional income and improve the welfare of the local community. A number of these tourism destinations are the Soekarno Landing Cultural Heritage House, Pentadio Resort, Limboto Lake, Embung Dumati, Bubohu Religious Tourism, Walima Emas Mosque, Dulanga Beach, and Taluhu Barakati. However, even though there are quite a lot of tourism resources available in Gorontalo Regency and are so exciting, apparently there are many problems that surround it, namely: specific destinations are dirty, infrastructure is minimal, the educational conditions of residents around tourism destinations are inadequate so that it affects the quality of service. Also, information on tourism destination objects to the public still lacks and ineffective, road access and human resources managing tourist objects are inadequate. To realize Gorontalo Regency as a tourism destination, developing regional tourism potential is a necessity. Besides, it is also essential to overcome the problems in the existing tourism location.

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